



Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and  
Fantasy Research  
journal.finfar.org

Editorial 1/2017

*Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen & Jyrki Korpua*

In this issue, 1/2017, *Fafnir* is proud to present our new editor Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay. Bodhi is SAMKUL Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oslo. He brings to *Fafnir* an expertise in postcolonial themes in science fiction with a focus on World SF and Indian SF. He is particularly interested in issues of worldbuilding and narrative in science fiction, and in his most recent work, he has been exploring how one may utilize the relation between technoscientific innovation and narrative strategies in science fiction for conceptualizing new technologies. Among other things, he has also contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (ed. John Clute et al). He is also a huge Olaf Stapledon fan.

This first issue of year 2017 includes two research articles, an interview with Professor and science fiction author James E. Gunn and one book review.

The first article, Eduardo Lima's "The Once and Future Hero: Understanding the Hero in Quest Fantasy" discusses hero's figure in popular fantasy series – George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Fire and Ice* and Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time*. The article compares heroes in these series to classical epic heroes from the Old English poem *Beowulf* and Old Norse poems of (*The Poetic Edda*). There, Lima employs aspects from distinguished theories of Northrop Frye's and Mikhail Bakhtin's genre categorisations in imaginative way. This article in many ways reflects the discussions that went on also in this year's ICFA held in Orlando, Florida that focused on the theme of "Fantastic Epics". So *Fafnir* is, once again, riding on a crest of a wave in science fiction and fantasy research.

The other article in this issue is Chen F. Michaeli's "Back to the Real London'; or Mapping the City of the Past in Gaiman's *Neverwhere*". The article discusses the genre logics of urban fantasy in Neil Gaiman's praised novel *Neverwhere* focusing on two separate spaces of London Above and London Below that manifest in the novel as (almost) parallel levels of existence. Michaeli's text focuses on how Gaiman uses allusions to the 19th century to construct the city "as both asocially oppressive space but also a fantastical one".

In "13 Questions on Science Fiction: Interview with Professor James Edwin Gunn", we have the pleasure to get to know some of the thoughts of the distinguished professor and author James E. Gunn on science fiction genre and its themes and developments. Sayyed Ali Mirenayat and Elaheh Soofastaei present the author pressing questions ranging from technology and human transcendence to religion in the genre. The interview offers us a glimpse of the genre's past but keeps an eye its future, as well.

Last but not least, we present you Jari Käkälä's thorough review on Jerome Winter's new book *Science Fiction, New Space Opera, and Neoliberal Globalism: Nostalgia for Infinity*.

Our next issue, 2/2017, is scheduled for June–July 2017. After that, *Fafnir*'s Issue 3/2017, scheduled for September 2017, will be a themed issue focusing on reception, audience/s and fandom studies. In the end of the journal, you can find the call for papers for the themed issue.

We would also like to remind you that Worldcon 75 will be held in Helsinki, Finland, in August. *Fafnir's* publisher, The Finnish Society for Science Fiction and fantasy Research Finfar (FINFAR), is hosting the academic track there. The program will be published here soon<sup>1</sup>. We, the editors of *Fafnir* will also be present at Worldcon, and we hope to meet lots of you there, as well!

<sup>1</sup> See Worldcon's website: <http://www.worldcon.fi/>.