

### From the Editor

Sean Guynes



THE previous issue of *SFRA Review* appeared in February of this year. Then, there weren't even a dozen cases in the U.S. Now, the U.S. is once again a world leader in deaths caused by political leaders' stupidity and the need by citizens to rebel against authority. Huzzah to this America-made-great and, well, really sorry about those tens of thousands dead. Despite the shittiness of our times, I'm convinced this double issue of *SFRA Review* (the spring issue delayed by COVID) will bring some smiles even as many readers return to universities while administrators look away, put fingers in ears, and shout "LALALALA" in an effort to pretend it's all going to go fine, just fine, nothing to see here.

#### **New Review Website**

As has become the chorus of the editor's note the past few years, this issue brings with it the announcement of several changes—all, we hope, for the betterment of the *Review*. To begin with, you'll hopefully have discovered our new home on the web at [www.sfrareview.org](http://www.sfrareview.org).

Prior to the creation of this website, *SFRA Review* had made the important transition in the mid-2000s to an online publication, providing the PDF of each issue online for free; by the mid-2010s, the *Review* had gone entirely online, with no print option. But, even if a PDF is freely available, presenting a PDF as a downloadable link poses significant issues for contemporary journals publishing—and for the tens of authors published in each issue. For one, PDFs put on a website as a downloadable link are not text-searchable, even if the PDF, once downloaded, is. Say a scholar, reader, fan, or whomever is searching online for an essay on Israeli SF or a review of a certain work of scholarship. That's how most of us begin our scholarly reviews. But an article in a 100+-page PDF (hosted as a downloadable file no less) won't show up in your search. Moreover, at a time when the discoverability and shareability of scholarship is tied to a scholar's ability to promote herself, to be "known" in academia, and thus to get further writing commissions and/or relevance in an increasingly irrelevantizing job market, the inaccessibility of a full-issue PDF

impedes discoverability, makes shareability next to impossible (unless you cut up the PDF and host just your article on a personal website), and ultimately dissuades folks from contributing to a journal. I could go on, but you're already bored.

Tl;dr—ours is a scholarly ecosystem in which digital presence makes or breaks a journal (often regardless of the *content* of the journal!). My day job is spent as the editorial coordinator for Michigan Publishing, part of which means managing a journals program with more than 35 online open access journals. And yet until last month I was helming a journal that, quite frankly, I'd have been embarrassed to have in the program I manage. But no more! We are online, our website looks not bad, and each article and review has a permalink (not a DOI yet, sadly) that ensures authors can share their work on social media and elsewhere. *SFRA Review* has stepped into the present (of online journals publishing). And we're excited to see how this will augment and help our growth in the coming years.

Speaking of growth, some announcements.

### **Editorial Collective**

First, as of this issue, *SFRA Review* has rethought the relationship between the editor and editorial staff. From now on, we are operating as an editorial collective divided into two groups: the general editors and the reviews editors. The reviews editors are the heart and blood of the journal, which properly retains the review focus of the publication in its title and endeavors to publish an increasingly number of fiction and media reviews in the coming year alongside the considerable number of nonfiction reviews we already publish. The main change is that, rather than attempting to divide editorial duties between a “managing” editor and “associate” editors—and recognizing that duties often overlap and that work tends to unfold more as a collective effort than as a neatly oiled machine—the general editors will all take the title of “editor,” with the lone exception of the lead editor whose goal is to guide the overall direction of the journal and ensure timely publication (when the world makes that possible). That person (this is awkward, but: me) will be called the senior editor, with the acknowledgment that this is not a position “above” other editors but rather a recognition that the journal needs an official representative to the SFRA. We have also begun discussing a process for replacing the senior editor, which will involve members of the editorial collective (general and review editors) nominating themselves and submitting their reasoning to the whole collective, which will vote

for a new senior editor that must ultimately be approved by the SFRA Executive Committee. Collectivity rules; rules drool.

### **Active Calls for Papers**

*SFRA Review* has endeavored these past few years to engage the wider scholarly SFF community through two means: (1) *special issues* on topics of particular relevance and importance to contemporary SFF studies, and (2) *symposia* collecting papers originally presented in person or virtually at conferences, institutes, symposia, and other scholarly gatherings of SFF studies nerds. The present issue provides an excellent example of what a solid special issue in *SFRA Review* can look like, thanks to the wonderful editing chops of Virginia L. Conn (recently PhD'd!).

At present, we have two calls for papers active.

### ***Us in Flux: Community, Collaboration, and the Collective Imaginations of SF***

The first is a special issue being edited in collaboration with Arizona State University's Center for Science and the Imagination, which started the *Us in Flux* project in April to curate flash fiction SFF stories about the near-future ends of current crises and has included stories and interviews with authors like Nisi Shawl, Kij Johnson, Tochi Onyebuchi, Sarah Pinsker, Usman T. Malik, Ernest Hogan, and others. We have issued a call for papers for a special issue that builds on the *Us in Flux* stories through critical thinkpieces that address how SFF can help us figure out our shit and build a better future. The CFP can be found here: <https://sfrareview.org/2020/07/31/51-1-cfp/>. Abstracts for thinkpieces are due October 4, with full drafts of 2,000-3,000 words due November 29. Please consider joining this exciting collaboration!

### ***Mormonism and SF***

Much further in the future, and which I'll plug more in a later issue, is a special issue edited by Adam McLain on Mormonism and speculative fiction. The CFP can be found here: <https://sfrareview.org/2020/08/11/51-3-cfp/>. Abstracts will be due March 1, 2021, with full drafts of 2,000-3,000 words (or more) due May 15, 2021.

In the future, please look out for a special issue CFP on Hungarofuturisms to be

co-edited by Beata Gubacsi. The next issue, 50.4, will have two symposia, one spinning out of Lars Schmeink's cyberpunk conference and the other from the German organization Gesellschaft für Fantastikforschung's annual conference in collaboration with German Popular Culture Studies Association.

*SFRA Review* is actively soliciting future special issues and conference symposia. Please reach out to the general editors to discuss possibilities for collaboration: <https://sfrareview.org/submissions/>.

### **In this Issue**

In this issue, the editorial collective is happy to present not only an incredible article by former fiction reviews editor Jeremy Brett on information science in Fran Wilde's *Fire Opal Mechanism*, plus the usual range of features, including Rachel Cordasco's regular column on SFF in translation and an interview with up-and-coming scholar Julia Gatermann, but also a wide-ranging special issue on Sinofuturisms offering the brilliant insights of a dozen scholars from all over the world! Thanks to editor Virginia L. Conn for putting this together and editor Amandine Faucheux for helping with copyedits. Because the summer issue of each Review typically follows the annual SFRA conference, this issue features some Executive Committee musts, including the Treasurer's report on SFRA's financial situation and the Secretary's report on the annual Executive Committee meeting. Moreover, although we couldn't celebrate them in person, this issue presents to you the winners of SFRA's annual awards, along with awards committee statements and the letters from each winner. Finally, but never least, you'll also find an incredible number of reviews of recent works of SFF scholarship, and several fiction and media reviews.

Enjoy, share, and join us, won't you?