

## Letter from the Editor

My name is Aisha Matthews Walker and it is with immense joy and humility that I introduce myself to you as the new Managing Editor for the *Journal of Science Fiction*.

Over the past few months I have taken on the responsibilities of my predecessor, Dr. Heather McHale, a dedicated scholar who joined the *Journal's* editorial team at the publication's inception back in 2015, and who diligently served as managing editor after the retirement of Monica Louzon, the *Journal's* founding editor, in 2018. During Heather's time at the helm, the *Journal* expanded its reach and readership by producing its first special issue, a critical exploration of Afrofuturism released immediately preceding the movie premiere of *Black Panther* (2018). The successful publication of the special issue inaugurated the *Journal's* more explicit exploration of minority literatures, identity politics, and intersectional approaches to the field's most pressing concerns. We're sorry to lose Heather's talent and leadership, but also wish her the greatest success on her long-standing book project, a critical study of the companions in *Doctor Who*, and the rest of her present and future endeavors.

We continue to be supported by the *Journal's* more seasoned editors, Barbara Jasny Ph.D., Melanie Marotta Ph.D., and Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Ph.D, as well as our newest team members, Anthony Dwayne Boynton and Benet Pera, Ph.D.

So, who am I? Academically, I hold a B.A. in English from Yale University as well as an M.A. in English from Southern New Hampshire University. I am currently working towards the completion of my Ph.D. in English at Southern Methodist University, where I study 20th-and-21st century American Literature, African American Literature, and feminism, and their intersections with the form and content of science and speculative fictions. My research interests include Afrofuturism, science fiction criticism, disability studies and phenomenology, womanism, young adult science fiction, and panopticism. Professionally, I have a background in public relations, event planning, and executive support, in addition to my role as an instructor of composition at SMU. Personally, I'm a *Harry Potter* enthusiast, and more broadly, a lover of all things science fiction. When I'm not working or spending time with my family, I'm just as likely to be found binge-

watching SF television or anime as I am to be found debating the relevance of deconstruction theory to the formation of identity, or the epistemological challenges of institutional disciplinary regimes. I look forward to bringing these skills and interests to bear on the direction of the *Journal*, and during my tenure as managing editor, I hope that my own varied investments and experiences will help to encourage the submission of diverse, interdisciplinary scholarship.

This issue of the *Journal of Science Fiction* (V3N1) tackles a variety of topics, but leans most heavily towards inquiries into posthumanity and hybridity. Jalondra Davis revisits the politics of passing and questions the dangers of Afrotopian purity discourses in "Utopia and the Gendered Past in Pauline Hopkins' *Of One Blood; Or, The Hidden Self*." Christopher Lovins looks at the interplay of empathy and memory in maintaining the organic/artificial life divide in "A Ghost in the Replicant? Questions of Humanity and Technological Integration in *Blade Runner* and *Ghost in the Shell*." Finally, Alejandro Lozano explores the metaphysics of cyberspace and the phenomenology of gaming in "Playing Cyberculture: The Case of *System Shock 2*." Together, these essays address the transgression of social, ontological, and physical borders across science fiction narratives in literature, film, and video games.

While the theme of this year's approaching Escape Velocity Conference, taking place in National Harbor Maryland on May 24th-26th, 2019, addresses the broad mantle of "technology," this issue's interest in hybridity foreshadows the subject of various panels on the literature track.

As we move ever towards the future of technology, our media becomes an invaluable source of cultural and ethical knowledge. It is precisely the sort of interdisciplinary work featured here that we hope will pave the way for more enlightened discourses on public and personal life and identity. Only by exploring the nexuses of genre and medium can we begin to access science fiction's most disruptive and transformative potential.

— Aisha Matthews Walker  
 Managing Editor, MOSF Journal of Science Fiction