

Panel Call for the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts 2020: Expanding the Archive

In 2019, the fanfiction site *Archive of Our Own* (AO3) won a Hugo award. This repository of nearly 5 million original works, representing over 30 thousand fandoms, stands out in the world of Science Fiction and Fantasy awards not only because of the sheer number of authors it represents, but also because it is the first Hugo win for unpublished fanfiction and many of the authors are young women. This victory draws attention to what is “archived” and, by extension, what is valued. AO3’s Hugo win is not the year’s only example of the expanding canon of Speculative Fiction. The documentary film *Horror Noire: A History of Black Horror*, produced by Tananarive Due, directed by Xavier Burgin, and based on Dr. Robin R. Means Coleman’s book *Horror Noire: Blacks in American Horror Films from the 1890s to Present* (2011), begins with the assertion that “black history is black horror” and tracks how the genre can engage with questions of race and power. Similarly, Dr. Ebony Thomas’s *The Dark Fantastic* considers Black female characters Bonnie Bennett (CW’s *The Vampire Diaries*), Rue (*The Hunger Games*), Gwen (*Merlin*), and Angelina Johnson (*Harry Potter*), and explores how these characters mirror racist violence in the real world. Each of these examples makes a case for expanding the idea of the canon (and what we value enough to archive) to include different types of characters and voices.

In terms of physical archives, a recent open letter on the [Reading While White](#) blog called out the lack of context and white-washing of the University of Minnesota’s Children’s Literature Research Collection’s exhibit and corresponding book *The ABC of It: Why Children’s Books Matter*, demonstrating that even professional archives are not neutral—especially once their materials are extracted and exhibited for public consumption. In the wake of this controversy, curators of archives, whether in libraries, classrooms, or their own scholarly work, must address how the materials presented and their surrounding context represent choices that speak to the curator’s values and priorities.

When archives hold the power to exclude and include, to value and affirm both people and genre, then how do we as scholars decide what belongs and how do we think through the consequences of those choices for ourselves, our students, and our field? We encourage submissions that answer these questions and otherwise critically examine the speculative fiction archive, broadly defined.

Submissions may consider but are not limited to the following topics in relation to archives:

- Accessibility
- Materialism
- The worth/value estimation of collecting
- Teaching courses in the archives

- Archival pedagogy- constructing the archives for our courses/ asking students to construct their own archives
- Controversies and canon
- Digital collections
- Internet as archive
- Fan spaces
- Race and representation
- Award winners as archive

Please submit a 300-500 word abstract and preliminary bibliography to Emily Midkiff (midki003@umn.edu) or Sara Austin (austins4@miamioh.edu) by Oct 11, 2019. Abstracts will also be considered for a special issue of the Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts, for which we will be issuing a CFP in November.