SFRA Student Paper Award 2019

The Student Paper Award is presented to the outstanding scholarly essay read at the annual conference of the SFRA by a student.

This year’s awardee is Conrad Scott for his paper “Changing Landscapes: Ecocritical Dystopianism in Contemporary Indigenous SF Literature.” Erin Cheslow received an honorable mention for her paper “The Chow that Can Be Spoken Is Not the True Chow: Relationality and Estrangement in the Animal Gaze.”

Committee Statement

Peter Sands (chair), David Higgins, Kylie Korsnack

THE SFRA Student Paper Award Committee is pleased to recognize Conrad Scott’s “Facing the Future, Facing the Past: Colonialism, Indigeneity, and SF” as the winner of the 2020 SFRA Student Paper Award. We would also like to recognize Erin Cheslow’s “The Chow that Can Be Spoken Is Not the True Chow: Relationality and Estrangement in the Animal Gaze” as honorable mention. There were a number of exceptional papers submitted for this year’s award, but these two papers immediately caught the attention of the committee.

Scott’s paper offers readings of Harold Johnson’s *Corvus* (2015) and Louis Erdrich’s *Future Home of the Living God* (2017) through the lens of “ecocritical dystopianism.” The committee found Scott’s readings and especially his articulation of a new form of dystopia to be impressive and persuasive. The committee also wishes to recognize Erin Cheslow for her unexpected and original reading of cognitive estrangement in relation to the animal gaze. The committee found Cheslow’s reading of human and non-human relationships through the Suvinian lens to be a refreshing and creative redeployment of science-fictionality.

Congratulations to both Conrad and Erin on their exceptional work!
Awardee Statement

Conrad Scott

University of Alberta / Canada

GREETING from Treaty 6 and Métis Territory along the North Saskatchewan River in what is now called Edmonton, Alberta, Canada—the place that the Cree people named Beaver Hills House (ᐊᒥᐢᑿᒌᐚᐢᑲᐦᐃᑲᐣ or Amiskwacîwâskahikan). It was such a pleasure to present my paper, “‘Changing Landscapes’: Ecocritical Dystopianism in Contemporary Indigenous SF Literature,” in the welcoming and thoughtful atmosphere of the 2019 SFRA conference on “Facing the Future, Facing the Past: Colonialism, Indigeneity, and SF” in Honolulu.

This timely conference offered valuable perspectives and conversations that continue to resonate strongly in light of ongoing work to advance reconciliation efforts and pursue sovereignty questions in the face of elements like hyper-extractive resource projects and other environmentally-destructive threats to not only traditional ways of life, but also contemporary living for many peoples.

My paper focused on parsing such topics as they appear in recent Indigenous SF fiction, and it is such an incredible honour to have then been awarded the SFRA Student Paper Award and follow in the footsteps of previous winners, such as my friends and colleagues Grant Dempsey (2019) and Josh Pearson (2018).

Congratulations as well to this year’s honorable mention, Erin Cheslow. Thank you very much to the adjudicators for their time and consideration, and also to my fellow Dystopian Ecologies panelists and the panel audience. I very much look forward to being part of the SFRA community for what I hope are many years to come, and to both learn from others and continue to contribute as we explore vital topics like those we shared at SFRA 2019.