From the President

Gerry Canavan

After a year without a conference, I couldn’t be more excited for SFRA 2021—though of course I wish the event could be in person. We are hoping to build a flexible virtual format that will produce the lively encounters we are used to without asking too much from our presenters or audiences and without producing Zoom fatigue; we are learning from what other organizations have already done and from what IAFA is planning to do, but if you have ideas that could help us make this unusual conference format a success, or just want to help, please don’t hesitate to get involved!

On behalf of both the planning committee and the entire executive committee, I want to express again our collective regret for the way the lack of diversity on the original conference keynote let this community down, and our dedication to making repair. Without belaboring the point or adding any caveats, special pleadings, or explanations: We screwed up, and we are sorry. And the conference will be better and stronger because people had the courage to let us know and hold us accountable to the commitments we have made. The full, expanded keynote lineup will be released soon (and may even beat this President’s Note to press), as will additional details of some of the antiracist pedagogy workshops we plan to hold at the event. My home department held a version of these workshops with the Black Student Council at Marquette last summer and the dialogue was truly transformative for our program; I hope this can be the start of similarly productive and generative conversations for SFRA. Thanks again to those who reached out and called on us to live out the mission of the organization; we know that wasn’t easy, and we’re sorry it was necessary.

As always, let me know about events and CFPs I can promote on social media; best way to reach me is an @ or direct message to @sfranews or an email to gerrycanavan@gmail.com. See you in July!