The committee to select our Support a New Scholar Award for 2023-2024, including past winner Guangzhao Lyu, former SFRA President Keren Omry, and myself, was delighted by the quality of submissions received for the Track A (graduate student) category by the November 1, 2022, deadline.

Compared to earlier in the award’s history, we believe that recent efforts we’ve made to internationalize and diversify the Science Fiction Research Association are showing in the remarkable quality, range, and multifaceted nature of the applicants. Immaterial labor in our field is also transforming, as the academic job market grows more competitive and casualized… thus generating new breeds of scholars marked by versatility, heightened inter-disciplinarity, and multiple skill sets ranging from creative (print-literary) writing to translation to digital and interactive arts.

Thus we chose to award not one, but three, new scholars this time around—and the SFRA Executive Committee agreed. While the whole cohort of applicants were extremely exciting, we found the following selectees especially impressive.

First, we were floored by the application of University of Warwick Ph.D. student Nora Castle, whose leadership in the urgent, pandemic-era-salient field of food futures, whose strong publication record as author/co-author and editor/co-editor of several upcoming food-and-environmental-humanities collections, which are evolving this growing discourse forward, and whose recent service to the SFRA, as well as sustained participation in networks of interesting new SFF scholars, showcased Castle as what we’d consider a promising "traditional," albeit clearly interdisciplinary and visionary, scholar.

Second, representing the increasingly popular, multiple-career pathway--especially among BIPOC, female, non-Western, and/or LGBTQIA+ researchers--we were amazed by the substantial global-SF contributions of University of California, Riverside, Ph.D. student Yilun Fan, who in addition to presenting at many scholarly meetings and producing numerous academic articles and essays on Chinese and comparative (i.e., Latinx and Chinese) speculative fiction, also has published several of her own award-winning creative works and her English-to-Chinese translations of leading SFF scholars' articles so as to bring Western genre theory (such as Mark Bould’s analysis of Afrofuturism) to global reading audiences.
Finally, as a futuristic signal of where SF studies may be heading in terms of its application to
digital-media platforms and Suvinian theory-in-practice, we were moved by the innovative hybrid
scholarship-blended-with-creative work of Georgia Institute of Technology Ph.D. student Terra
Mae Gasque, whose digital gaming research and design/coding practice explores the intersection
of queerness, cognition, and player failure. Gasque has written for SFRA Review and attended
our annual meeting, as well as published in SF scholarly collections; her dissertation develops,
discusses, and creates a virtual-reality game aimed at rethinking the very foundations of digital
ludic design through embedding queer failure into its ethical inquiries.

The selectees represent the next generation of SF thinkers who embrace--to adapt a phrase
from one applicant--SF as a mode. They’ve moved us away from mid-twentieth-century escapist
notions of the genre as a U.S. pulp-literary hobby and towards global, multidimensional, active SF
expression through practice and production.

Congratulations, Nora, Yilun, and Terra!

Ida Yoshinaga, VP