

# Navigating the Otherworldly Challenges of Speculative Fiction

Joel Armstrong | CCWC 2021

What is speculative fiction?

Speculative history

What speculative does

Escape

Perspective

Ethics

Speculative challenges

World building

Reflection

Good versus evil

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World Building

Who are my characters? What are their character arcs?

What world building is necessary to tell their stories? What world building is incidental?

Where/when can I introduce these elements into their stories?

Reflection

What story elements are speculative? Which are familiar? How are these placed side by side?

How do the unfamiliar elements affect me (author)? Affect my characters? Affect my readers?

What cultural issues am I responding to? How can I channel this conflict through my characters?

Good Versus Evil

Does my story have an explicit or implicit message? How does this play out in the narrative?

Is my villain an epic antagonist? How can I humanize him/her? Is my villain an “immoral entity”? How can I put a face to this evil force?

What are the layers of evil in my narrative? When and how do my “good characters” contribute to the evil in the story?