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Here are guidelines for *SFRA Review* fiction reviews, current as of October 2006. Appended to these guidelines is a recent review that serves as a good model, especially for writers new to writing reviews. In addition, past issues of the *Review* are available at www.sfra.org--follow the links to the *SFRA Review* section.

Standard Reviews

The *Review* solicits reviews from SFRA members. Do not submit unsolicited reviews. If you have a fiction book in hand you'd like to review, query the fiction editor (for nonfiction titles, contact the Nonfiction Reviews Editor, Ed McKnight). Most often, we solicit reviews using the SFRA's listserv. Keep your eyes open on the listserv for lists of texts available for review. If you think you'd be a good reviewer for a particular text, send an email stating your interest as well as why you'd be the best choice to review it, and we'll send you the book for review along with a firm deadline (Note the important adjective 'firm' to describe the type of deadline).

- Please head your review with the type of review (fiction or nonfiction)
- Next, include the book's title (a shortened version if necessary).
- Under the book's title put your name as you would like it to appear (no titles, please).
- Below your name place the bibliographic information, including author, title, city of publication, publisher, year, page length, binding, price, and ISBN number.

Example:

Fiction Review
Climb the Wind
Ima Reviewer

Sargent, Pamela. *Climb the Wind*. New York: HarperPrism, 1999. 436 pages, cloth, \$25.00. ISBN 0-06-105029-6.

Content: The *Review's* guidelines for fiction review writers are an extension of the SFRA's mission and a way to address the needs of the *Review's* audience. Reviewers should keep in mind that the Science Fiction Research Association exists to encourage scholarship and further excellence in education, and therefore reviewers should base their evaluations upon those concerns. Thus, while aesthetic questions are important, they are secondary to appraisals of the work's scholarly and academic promise. We seek reviews that provide, in the listed order, the following essential elements:

1. A description of the book. While the review certainly could include a brief synopsis of the plot, it is more important that it provide a description of the book using appropriate,

field-specific terminology. This means identifying what subgenre(s) the work touches on. Is it a time travel story? Alternate history? Space opera? Military SF? All of these? Keep in mind that you are trying to help scholars and academics determine whether the book fits within a given class or research program.

2. Contextualization of the book. In addition to describing the book, the review should locate the book within the context of the works of the author, within any subgenres from which the work borrows, or the SF tradition. The goal of such contextualization should be to explore the relationships between the texts at hand and other works with which it might be compared or contrasted in a scholarly or academic approach. Does it address gender issues in ways reminiscent of *The Left Hand of Darkness*? Is it an homage to Wells's *War of the Worlds*? Does it explore issues that the author has examined in earlier works? However, do not make this contextualization the main focus of your review; we need to know more about the book in your hand, not about other books to which it relates.

3. Assessment of the book's scholarly and academic potential. The review should provide some ideas about the kinds of scholarly or academic approaches that might offer the most fruitful vantage points from which the work can be viewed. Does the book raise interesting issues? Offer intriguing insight?

A typical review written according to these guidelines is about 750-1000 words in length.

Mini-Reviews

In addition to the traditional SFRA Review book reviews as described above, we are also looking for very short, 250 word reviews of about one paragraph. These mini-reviews are an opportunity to review a work you've just acquired and read without having to write at length as described earlier. We also solicit mini-reviews as we do with standard reviews. The mini-review example below pretends David Weber's story "Ms. Midshipwoman Harrington" (from his *Changer of Worlds* anthology) is a novel.

The Ten Sentence Review:

1. Mentions the title (perhaps) and gives a sketch of the overall plot
2. Context of the author's other work, if any, and relation to other works
- 3-4. Slightly more detailed sketch of the plot
5. Apply field-appropriate terminology to the book as a whole
6. Anything of critical interest?
7. Critical interest detail
8. Critical interest detail
9. Critical interest detail, possibly look to future discussion
10. Summary of book's value to scholars and libraries (may be two sentences)

Example Mini-Review (Real Submissions Omit the Numbers):

David Weber, *Ms. Midshipwoman Harrington*

Ima Reviewer

1. In *Ms. Midshipwoman Harrington* Honor Harrington goes on her first interstellar cruise as a “middy” or “snotty,” the lowest form of officer life in her space navy.
2. David Weber’s Honor Harrington series, an extended homage to the Hornblower books, features space combat and covert politicking.
3. Posted aboard the cruiser Warrior Maiden, Honor benefits from the patronage of her instructor at the academy, but faces a challenge in the form of her training officer, who has been aimed at her like a weapon by her political enemies.
4. Honor acquits herself nobly under fire in two key instances, facing down her instructor and tormentor and under fire during combat that leaves her in charge of the bridge at a critical moment.
5. This military space opera brings all the expected toys and joys to the table—the rigors and benefits of discipline, and interstellar civilization that spans hundreds of planets.
6. Honor Harrington is an interesting figure from a feminist studies perspective.
7. Described as having black hair and asian features, she is pictured as being progressively more European in the cover art as the series progresses.
8. In addition, she possesses genetic modifications that make her stronger than a baseline human, and Weber portrays her as having extensive hand-to-hand combat training.
9. Weber’s villains are generally male; a Queen heads Honor’s government: what conclusions can be drawn from this trend?
10. This text exemplifies the pop in popular culture, and as a fun read it may contain interesting insights viewed from that perspective, but it is not by itself a valuable resource libraries should seek to have on their shelves.

(268 words)