

# Dialogical peer-review and non-profit open-access journal publishing: welcome to Fennia

"I remember a bad day last year: It just about took my breath away, it sickened me when I heard the expression for the first time, barely understanding it, the expression crime of hospitality [delit d'hospitalité]. In fact, I am not sure that I heard it, because I wonder how anyone could ever have pronounced it [...] no, I did not hear it, and I can barely repeat it; I read it voicelessly in an official text. It concerned a law permitting the prosecution, and even the imprisonment, of those who take in and help foreigners whose status is held to be illegal. This "crime of hospitality" (I still wonder who dared to put these words together) is punishable by imprisonment. What becomes of a country, one must wonder, what becomes of a culture, what becomes of a language when it admits of a "crime of hospitality," when hospitality can become, in the eyes of the law and its representatives, a criminal offense?" (Derrida 2001, 133)

Welcome to *Fennia*. In this issue of the journal, we offer a critical discussion of welcome and the suppression of welcome in relation to the refugee 'crisis' (Gill 2018; and associated commentaries Bagelman 2018; Norum 2018; Vainikka & Vainikka 2018; Vuolteenaho & Lytinen 2018; Sparke forthcoming). As such, here in this editorial, we would like to think about the idea of welcome a bit further. How in a neoliberal age for many European nations the act of welcoming, of mutual aid, of solidarity could potentially be a radical action, in itself?

Academic journals can be unwelcoming places with paywalls now commonplace, making research accessible only to a privileged minority. So here, we would like to begin by stating some of the things that we are trying to do to make academia and journal publishing more welcoming and accessible for all. We do this through the prism of *Fennia*, as a space for radical critique, for rigorous research, for performative interventions, and as a space wherein which geographical dialogues can take place on contemporary and politicized issues.

In the past year and a half, over the pages of three issues, as editors of *Fennia*, we have attempted to expand the journal beyond the standard double-blind peer-reviewed scientific research article format that is often considered the 'gold standard' of academic endeavor. We are not however, considering a removal of outstanding and rigorous double-blind peer-reviewed research articles from this journal, rather we would like to encourage an openness and in a sense a 'welcoming' approach by adding some subtle and radical alternatives. As described in the editorial by Metzger & Kallio (2018; see also Kallio & Hyvärinen 2017 and Kallio & Riding 2017), these include dialogical attempts to create a more equal and convivial environment when publishing academic outputs in scientific journals.

The associated attempts made by us as editors of the journal, are firstly, the creation of a double-open dialogical peer-review practice employed where appropriate, secondly, a yearly *Fennia* lecture and associated commentaries, thirdly, a new *Reviews and Essays* section (previously *Review Articles*) which provides the opportunity to create peer-reviewed (either open or blind) essays which differ in form and style from the standard research article, and fourthly, an opportunity for *Fennia* authors to publish popularized versions of their research articles via [Versus](#).

We make these attempts due to certain negative experiences when publishing in academic journals, and they emerge from discussions in person and in print with editors of other radical non-profit fully open-access journals, such as *ACME* (Springer *et al.* 2017) and *Human Geography* (Finn *et al.* 2017). We decided to tread this alternative path in part because of the concerns that we have, regarding the current state of academic publishing and the neoliberalization of knowledge production. More often than not nowadays, the process of submitting an article is highly dehumanized, as it takes place via (nearly) faceless manuscript submission systems. The presence of big publishing houses looms large over the necessary process of the dissemination of academic research, often through the publication of an article. The unhealthy demands placed upon, especially early career researchers, and those who are not considered to be native English speakers (Fregonese 2017), can mean the act of submitting an article to a journal is alienating and demoralizing.

This unease we experience when not knowing where exactly and whom exactly we are sending our work to, and whom this research is subsequently owned by – what for-profit 'big five' academic

publishing corporation the journal represents the interests of – occurs before we even reach the gatepost of peer-review. When we do reach this peer-review point, what occurs can be contradictory, elusive, and difficult to overcome or understand. As academics, we all have stories of an anonymous 'Reviewer 2', whose comments are presented in a form and in a way, which can give over a sense of nit-picking negative critique. A list of comments can appear merely as obstacles, an attempt to derail the submitted article, rather than a proper and fair peer-review, which acknowledges the concomitant relationship between reviewer and author.

We propose that peer-review can also be viewed as a form of mutual aid – as Simon Springer and the editorial team of *ACME* (Springer *et al.* 2017) argued in the previous issue of *Fennia* – undertaken in order to help create a full, rigorous, and distinctive research article through constructive critique, even when the article is not yet fully envisaged and may be rejected or a resubmission requested. Perhaps, in order to encourage the reviewer to undertake the free labor of peer-review, the double-open review process that we are trialing is a way forward. We all, in the current academic climate, undertake free labor which is seemingly feeding a neoliberal status quo. Thus, we encourage an alternative wherein which this free academic labor is acknowledged, through a dialogical practice that offers the reviewers the opportunity to discuss their perspectives openly, and further, to publish commentaries on the articles in the journal. To give over a sense of how this welcoming approach is facilitated by us as editors and in return by the authors themselves, we would now like to introduce you to the pieces which make up this extensive and varied issue of *Fennia*.

The first issue of *Fennia* in 2018 includes four original research articles. Three articles that went through double-blind reviewing begin the issue, and interestingly for the reader, employ markedly different methodological approaches. The article *Mapping the distributive environmental justice of urban waters* by Arto Viinikka, Riikka Paloniemi and Timo Assmuth discusses the distribution of urban space and ecosystem services in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, Finland, from the perspective of distributive environmental justice. By means of a GIS-based spatial clustering analysis, and drawing from spatial statistics, Viinikka, Paloniemi and Assmuth (2018) map the potential patterns of socio-economic and demographic characteristics of urban waters, finding opportunities wanting for particular population groups, including children, foreign language groups, and people with low socio-economic status.

Based on an autoethnographic study, Maartje Roelofsen's article *Performing "home" in the sharing economies of tourism: the Airbnb experience in Sofia, Bulgaria* explores subjective understandings of home in relation to 'co-performances' of home, in the context of peer-to-peer accommodation platforms. Via a thorough empirical analysis, based on a study in Sofia, Bulgaria, Roelofsen (2018) makes explicit the inherently contested nature of home that appears in the everyday experiences and practices of this sharing economy. The article goes on to raise questions of how the home is conceived, presented, performed and put into circulation by the various actors involved in the Airbnb business, including importantly, related value production.

Ari Aukusti Lehtinen in an article called *Degrowth in city planning focuses on recent urban development policies and practices taking place in Joensuu, Finland*, and its counter-forces mobilized most importantly by *Kohtuusliike*. *Kohtuusliike* is a critical environmental movement that has promoted cultural, political and economic changes in North Karelia for about ten years, as part of the international degrowth movement. Emphasizing overconsumption along with climate and environmental issues as major sources of the economic challenges that the city is facing, Lehtinen (2018) makes a theoretically informed and empirically grounded argument for agonistic co-planning. An agonistic co-planning, which could be helpful in opening up the present planning culture in Joensuu and other cities where it currently proceeds through hidden contracts, tactical manoeuvres and systematic non-communication with(out) citizens.

Lehtinen's article sits well alongside the fourth research article by William Walton called *Deregulated free-for-all planning, new settlements and the spectre of abandoned building sites in Scotland's crisis-hit oil economy* – undergone double-open reviewing – which also focuses on questions of planning and democracy. Its empirical focus is Scotland, specifically in the Aberdeenshire region, where Walton (2018) traces the development of planning policies and practices from the 1970s to the present. Rigorous policy analysis leads Walton to a conclusion regarding the current situation, where communities have largely lost trust in the planning system, as people are systematically silenced in a

local planning system that serves economic purposes only, made possible by the neoliberalization of housing land provision. He contends that the removal of the right to hearings into major development proposals is symptomatic of a post-political condition, which seeks to promote neoliberal values by squeezing out dissenting voices.

Walton's article is an example of the 'welcoming' double-open review practice in *Fennia*. The peer reviewers for his article, Andy Inch and Vesa Kanninen, were invited to engage in an open discussion throughout the review process and, finally, to publish their comments on this geographically situated piece in the *Reflections* section of the journal.

Inch (2018), in a response entitled *The timely return of the repressed*, explores how a timely invitation to take part in this process prompted thoughts about his ongoing involvement in the politics of planning in Scotland. From his perspective, Walton's analysis is not *just* an example of post-political planning, but is significant for the work of groups like the non-profit organization *Planning Democracy*, which campaigns for a fair and inclusive planning system in Scotland, challenging the contemporary conjuncture. Kanninen's (2018) commentary seeks to offer, not an alternative, but a complementary analysis of the post-political condition, dwelling in the empirically and theoretically grounded interpretation of planning practice that Walton's work identifies. Traversing with Mouffe and Laclau through landscapes drawn by Ranciere and Žižek, he skillfully illustrates that to walk the intellectual path of post-politics is by no means a meager undertaking.

In our new *Reviews and Essays* section we offer one review and one essay. The literature review (double-blind peer-reviewed) *Dissonance: scientific paradigms underpinning the study of sound in geography* by Daniel Paiva, introduces sonic geographies, providing a tentative history of sound in geography through its different conceptions. The acoustic journey traverses from quantifiable noise to experiences and performances of soundscapes and landscapes, to affect and expanded listening. Paiva (2018) posits that the conceptual vocabulary is partly unclear and requests that the relations between the concepts used are addressed in further detail to build a common language to sonic geographies.

The essay by Nick Gill (2018) is based on the 2017 *Fennia* lecture in Turku and is entitled *The suppression of welcome*. It is a call for geographers to think seriously about 'welcome', and what it means as a spatial, political, and at the same time intimately human construct. Gill's essay asks us to critically consider what we mean when we say we are welcoming, and to consider what welcome is. In relation to the recent refugee 'crisis', Gill's essay suggests one way to think about how 'refugee welcome' has taken place in Europe, drawing attention to tensions between governmental and grassroots responses to emerging situations.

Gill's (2018) essay asks the commentators a series of questions which probe what welcoming is, especially when employed in civic discourse by multiple actors as a term associated with the arrival of refugees, and uses a range of metaphors drawn from sometimes seemingly distinct and distant worlds, including luxury tourism: "How can genuine, spontaneous welcome be preserved under the pressure of statist and nationalistic logics and demands? Or how can we hold onto welcome as something meaningful when it seems to be under attack from not only right wing nationalists and factions that draw spurious connections between refugees and security threats, but also the very architecture of bureaucracy?"

In her commentary Jen Bagelman (2018), one of Gill's reviewers, provides a welcoming letter addressed to him personally, in a shift away from the grand notions of scholarly critique often received and felt in standard double-blind peer-review. The tone of the piece allows Bagelman to discuss the politics of welcome in relation to practices of asylum and academic modes of inquiry, specifically asking the question, *Who hosts a politics of welcome?* Matthew Sparke (forthcoming) adds to this conversation, wondering whether it is also necessary to look at how reactionary right wing responses represent a radically different but parallel assemblage of local emotional investment with transnational ties, networks, representational schemas, and a counter-point assemblage with deadly rejectionist results. This effective (and highly affective) mixing of the hyper-national with the transnational seems especially potent and damaging in the EU context.

The three further responses to *The suppression of welcome*, coming from the conference audience, probe what welcome is, how the concept is mobilised or emotionally enacted, often referencing as Gill

suggests in his own piece, the tourism industry. Roger Norum (2018) provides a travelogue of 'welcome' in a variety of regions, presenting a Romantic Grand Tour of Europe in a darker tone, framed by the context of contemporary global mobility. He evocatively represents a history of welcome and its discontents, arguing that various aspects of the recent so-called European migration crisis enable us to further question long-fixed categories through which mobile actors are often classified. While, in a different yet complimentary tone, Jani Vuolteenaho and Eveliina Lyytinen (2018) expand the notion of welcome from three interrelated perspectives, borrowing from Lefebvre's conceptual triad of social space. Analysing welcome via emotional geographies, they argue that many actors convey more ambiguous and contextually varying attitudes to (un)welcoming immigrants, and suggest that Gill's conceptualization could be further expanded to the practiced and societally recompensing aspects of everyday spatiality and welcoming. The final piece comes from Vilhelmiina Vainikka and Joni Vainikka (2018). Again and importantly, this reflection seeks to question a universality of welcome, and analyses how we come to our conclusions as scholars when generalizing welcome across lived space. For example, they ask, "how is this mass response itself defined and delimited and, second, how does a general welcome condition everyday encounters with the (entitled) stranger?"

To end this attempt at outlining our 'welcoming' approach since becoming the editors of *Fennia*, we would like to state that despite the pressures made to bear upon alternative academic journal publishing in a neoliberal age, we are particularly proud of this issue of *Fennia*. Not only because there are great texts included in it, but also because it involves an array of voluntary work which people have carried out without prejudice towards our developing review processes and the associated development of new areas of the journal itself. The authors have written their articles in relation to multidimensional discussions raised during review processes, be they double-blind or -open, and reviewers have carefully engaged with the texts to provide respectful yet critical feedback that has helped us, as editors, in our work. We sincerely hope that each openly accessible piece of work is broadly circulated and widely read in the academic community and beyond, for they truly deserve to be!

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