

The Corona Cocoon

Frog

Yesterday, after hours of hopping on and off of public transportation amid various errands, I stopped by my office, thankful that my key still works while the university premises are otherwise closed owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. As I entered the abandoned courtyard, I took off my mask and virtually swooned with a breath of rich, damp, green fresh air. It is mindboggling that our world could change so abruptly this spring. International mobility is still largely suspended, safe distancing has replaced personal space and self-quarantine has become part of daily life. Institutions closed their doors and those of us who are lucky have continued work at home, while others have been left unemployed. As the physical world closed down around us, virtual worlds opened with unprecedented speed in order to compensate. The prevention of so much in our established ways of life has been a push into new technologies, bringing about an explosion of emergent practices that are gradually taking shape and perhaps also taking hold. The world of human society has transformed, placed under self-imposed constraints like a caterpillar entering a cocoon.

From the perspective of folklore, this is a fascinating time. New types of performance, customs and meaning-making are developing all around us and being negotiated in countless networks simultaneously. What will happen when we break from the Corona cocoon remains an open question: there is a dream of a return to the way things were, yet our world is moving through a metamorphosis that makes some type of change inevitable.

In tandem with the world entering a period of transformation, FF Communications and FF Network have been gestating in a cocoon of their own. Somewhat more than a year ago, the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters abruptly decided to change their publication profile and discontinue relationships with all existing series. After countless meetings and discussions, the Folklore Fellows have organized a new collaboration with the Kalevala Society as the publisher of FF Communications and FF Network beginning from January 2021. The Kalevala Society is an esteemed learned society with a century of close ties with the Folklore Fellows. Whereas so much of the future is unsure in other areas of life, we predict with confidence that FFC will continue without interruption to its processes, publications or distribution. The Kalevala Society will keep our publications within the Finnish Federation of Learned Societies (TSV) rather than moving to a for-profit publisher. This will allow FFC to remain affordable for purchase and allow us to continue plans for an open-access counterpart to print publication on TSV's new platform which assures long-term sustainability.

Change is inevitable after a long period in a cocoon, but change is not bad and may propel us into the future. For FFC, this not only includes looking forward to an open-access platform; discussions have started for new electronic resources for the Folklore Fellows and folklore research more generally, which we hope to soon set in motion and to rise from our cocoon like a butterfly.

