



Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research

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And So It Began – Celebrating the Five Years of *Fafnir*

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The cornerstone for Finfar – The Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research was installed in a meeting after the Finfar seminar at Helsinki Finncon 2013. I participated at the seminar and Finncon, as I had done the previous 10 years. There, also, the idea for *Fafnir*, our own journal, was for the first time spelled out: we should have our own research journal focusing on fantasy, sci-fi and all the wide spectrum of speculative fiction. And as Liisa Rantalaiho in her historical account for Finfar writes, “[W]hy not make it a Nordic one at the same time, we have the contacts already!” (Rantalaiho 60).

At the journal’s launch at the restaurant Kahdet Kasvot, I happened to sit side by side with Päivi Väättänen and Hanna-Riikka Roine. Maybe that was the reason why we three were declared the first Editors-in-Chief for our –then unnamed– journal. Of course we did not object to such an honorary position. Anyway, we knew each other from Finfar seminars and unofficial meetings. Before that, I had been an Editor-in-Chief for *Avain – Finnish Review for Literary Studies* in 2012, edited a scholarly article collection, and worked previously as a freelance journalist. Because of that experience I was the one who originally formulated our year table and editorial policies, as well as policies for our peer-review process, in cooperation with the other editors and Merja Polvinen, Chair of our Advisory Board.

In September 2013, Finfar-society’s Chairperson Irma Hirsjärvi had sent me, Merja Polvinen, and Liisa Rantalaiho a draft for our journal’s guidelines and future goals. We have followed these precepts ever since. *Fafnir* got its great name at a meeting of the Finfar board at December 17th, 2013. There was a public naming contest where people could propose name for our journal. Altogether eight names were nominated. So *Fafnir* could as well now be “Outo”, “Väentupa”, or “The Invisible Child”. From those names the Advisory Board voted their favorite and suggested that the journal should be named Fafnir, which is of course an anagram of Finfar, but also a dragon (and a shape-changing dwarf-prince) in Norse mythology. A powerful name for powerful journal!

The beginning of our journal also benefited greatly from a grant of almost €5,000 from the Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists (Tiedetoimittajain liitto ry). That grant made it possible to hire our original sub-editor Juri Timonen and form our website and archives. So thank you very much, FASEJ!

After it all went official, my cooperation as an Editor-in-Chief with Päivi Väättänen and Hanna-Riikka Roine proved to be very fruitful. Our first journal came out on 18 March, 2014, only three days later than I had calculated. What a great achievement on scholarly publishing! It was quite a peculiar thing that our first issue included articles from all three of our editors. Of course those articles went through double-blind peer-review, as all our articles do. Hopefully that was an indication that our Editors-in-Chief knew their craft and research topics.

Päivi Väättänen co-edited eight issues of *Fafnir* with me and Hanna-Riikka (from Issue 1/2014 to Issue 4/2015). There was a lot of editing work, many published articles and eight great editorials, almost all of them starting with a relevant quote – a bit of a characteristic feature from me. Päivi, a philologist, was perhaps the most pedantic reader of us three, so her stepping out from the editorial post forced other editors to dive more carefully into the world of MLA.

Hanna-Riikka Roine co-edited three more issues of *Fafnir* with me alongside our next Editor-in-Chief, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen, who was named Päivi's successor at the meeting in December 2015. Hanna-Riikka ended her term as an Editor-in-Chief after Issue 3/2016. After that we started to search for another editor who could fill her language skills and precision as an editor. Aino-Kaisa proved to be extremely meticulous and efficient in her work. We truly have been fortunate in *Fafnir* that there have been so many professional scholars and skillful sub-editors who are all willing to contribute to scientific publishing even without monetary compensation. This shows how important we find our scholarly field to be.

Fafnir's Issue 4/2016 was a themed issue on graphic novels, comics, and animations. Because of that, we had a comics scholar, Katja Kontturi, as a visiting Editor-in-Chief. At the same time, we searched for a new full-time Editor-in-Chief and found him in Norway. When Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay started at *Fafnir*, our journal officially became the “Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research”. Of course there had been members from other Nordic countries on our Advisory Board, but this was an important step for our journal for many reasons. Bodhi brought us knowledge on international dimensions of science fiction outside Europe; he's also the first native English speaker on our editorial team. Later this international dimension spread even wider, when I stepped out as an editor after our Issue 3-4/2017 and Laura E. Goodin became *Fafnir*'s newest Editor-in-Chief. At the same time, *Fafnir* established the position of Reviews Editor, and one of my fellow Tolkien-scholars, Dennis Wilson Wise, took charge of that position. So now *Fafnir* truly is an international scholarly journal!

These have been a remarkable five years for *Fafnir*, our society, and also myself. I hope you all enjoy the journal, a bit of an adopted child of mine. I also congratulate *Fafnir* on its five years of existence and hope for a prolific future!

References

Rantalaaho, Liisa. “FINFAR – A gift from Fandom to Academia.” *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2014, pp. 58–60.

Biographical information: Dr. Jyrki Korpua was one of the three first Editors-in-Chief of *Fafnir* and from 2014 to 2017 the Chairperson for Finfar – The Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research. He is currently a university lecturer in literature at the University of Oulu, Finland, and a member of the Advisory Board of *Fafnir*. Korpua's research interests include, among others, fantasy, Tolkien's fiction, dystopian and utopian fiction, Bible studies, graphic novels and the *Kalevala*.