

Not back to normal

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“While we have been doing our best to work in a manner that is as supportive as possible of authors, reviewers, staff, and ourselves in these times, it all feels a lot like failure.” (Natalie Oswin, 2022, p. 390)

Our state of mind, as we publish the second part of the special issue edited by Cyria Emelianoff and Gerald Aiken, is largely the same as that expressed by Natalie Oswin in her May 2022 editorial in *Society and Space*: a sense of failure, and of exhaustion, which we mentioned in our previous editorial.

The failure is neither personal nor collective, but systemic in a generalized context of casualisation of academic work, attacks on public services, combined with injunctions to keep working and remain in competition—while we empirically observe that only solidarity and care for others allow for survival. As Oswin so aptly writes, seeing all around us “so much evidence of exhaustion and burnout and material insecurity amongst colleagues and peers” (2022, p. 391) means we can’t pretend that there is anything like a “return to normal” in the publication of this issue, which was greatly delayed by the accumulation of a thousand constraints in our lives.

We refuse to pretend that we are a dashing editorial team whose productivity is unaffected by anything, while collectively, academics are emerging very much “scathed” (Eltahawy, 2020) from years of pandemic and the collapse of the higher education and research systems, now dualised between jobless precarious staff and overburdened tenured staff, and welcoming ever more numerous, and understandably anxious, students. Policies deployed tend to fragilize universities and reinforce stark inequalities.

We refuse to pretend that the political context that has once again allowed the candidate of a far-right party to be in the second round of the French presidential election, and have 90 representatives in the recently elected National Assembly, does not reflect a frightening deterioration in public debate and a normalisation of social violence that is unacceptable to us. This normalisation of violence can be seen in other

countries such as the United States, where religious fundamentalism is challenging such basic rights as abortion.

Preserving scientific activity as an activity of mutual support, as support for social movements striving for emancipation, as a pocket of oxygen in an increasingly unbreathable atmosphere seems more essential than ever. For the young researchers who had entrusted us with their texts, it was essential that this issue be published. For other issues to appear, it was essential that we take the time to prepare the calls for the next ones, that we integrate new members into our committee, that we give each one the time to find his or her marks, to identify his or her way of contributing to the journal, to take care of himself or herself and his or her loved ones when necessary.

We would like to thank all the people who contributed to the publication of this issue of *JSSJ*: our editor, reviewers, authors, translators, but also the administrative staff of the university and the Maison des sciences de l'homme without whom this issue would not have been possible and whose dedication reminds us how much research relies on collective work that remains too often invisible. This issue of *JSSJ* comprises the second set of articles in the dossier coordinated by Gerald Aiken and Cyria Emelianoff on the (in)justice of community initiatives, several *Varia* and an interview with Julian Agyeman in the Public Space section.

Several other issues are in the works, on "Violence and Production of Space", "Mobilizations and Territories", and another on « Spatial Justice and Health », with a call for papers to be released in the Fall.

References

Eltahawy Mona, "Falling apart like a feminist", *Feminist Giant blog note*, November 19th 2020, (<https://www.feministgiant.com/p/essay-falling-apart-like-a-feminist>, accessed on June 30, 2022).

Oswin Natalie, "The view from here", *Environment and Planning D, Society and Space*, May 21st, 2022, vol. 40, n° 3 (<https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758221103197>).