



EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Suomen Antropologi* begins with the paper presented to the Finnish Anthropology Society in February this year by visiting lecturer Professor Charles Macdonald: *Order Against Harmony: Are humans always social?* Professor Macdonald is a French anthropologist—senior research fellow at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and affiliated with the University of Aix-Marseille II—who has done considerable fieldwork among the Raglai in Vietnam and the Palawan in the Philippines. He has published on a broad range of subjects including mythology, religion and ritual, kinship and social structure, and while in Helsinki he also addressed an interdisciplinary symposium titled *Culture, Suicide and the Human Condition* convened by the Helsinki Collegium of Advanced Studies. In the lecture which he was kind enough to allow us to publish here, Professor MacDonald explores one of the fundamental questions for the ethnographer; the very nature of social organization which leads the researcher to assume the presence of a ‘group’, a ‘corporate reality’ or, indeed, a social entity of any kind. It is a highly provocative paper, which raised considerable discussion at the time and has been of enduring interest in the ensuing months. Opinions among those who heard, or have since read, the presentation are divided, with the views of one camp being expressed in the rejoinder to Professor MacDonald by Kenneth Sillander, published directly after the lecture itself.

In the last issue of *Suomen Antropologi*, Heike Drotbohm wrote of Haitian religious spaces in Montreal; in this issue Markel Thylefors, Institute for Global Studies at the University of Gothenburg, continues the theme in his article: *Official Vodou and Vodou Churches in Haiti: The Vodou conquest of the public sphere*. This comprises a discussion of formalizing agendas within the practice of Vodou in Haiti—the aspirations for Vodou churches and ‘official’ liturgy—and the various public discourses pertaining to the trends.

The second article, by University of Helsinki Professor of Anthropology, Karen Armstrong, is a lucid description, contextualisation and analysis of American involvement in Samoa, titled *American Exceptionalism in American Samoa*. It is the preliminary result of a sabbatical year of research which Professor Armstrong spent in Samoa and the U.S. in 2006–2007, thereby representing the work of an ethnographer finding the exotic and the familiar juxtaposed in unsettling ways. A similar description could be applied to the third article by Perpetual Crentsil, an anthropologist at the University of Helsinki, who is also working on home ground in her research of the impact of HIV on the kinship system of the Akan. In her article: *An Inherent Burden: Kinship, migration and HIV/AIDS among the Akan of Ghana*, she details and discusses underlying role of kinship in the connection between rural-urban migration and HIV infections in sub-Saharan African societies, concluding that it is a role both under-researched and too salient to ignore.

The two research reports which conclude this issue are both written by scholars at the University of Helsinki: Minna Ruckenstein, an anthropologist, and Sanna Kivimäki, a postgraduate student in the Department of Archaeology. Via a sparkling dialogue with Anne Allison’s publication, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*



(2006), Minna Ruckenstein discusses her innovative work in Finnish kindergartens where she is researching the active roles children play in their use of popular commodities purveyed in the global toy markets. Following this, Sanna Kivimäki provides a general introduction to studies of the social organization of Neolithic settlement in Finland, noting that the interest in this aspect of Neolithic research in general represents a relatively recent trend away from the focus on economic analysis and material culture.

One of the important roles filled by *Suomen Antropologi* is in its provision of a forum wherein Finnish researchers can let a broader public know of the diversity of fields and subjects that engage social scientists in Finland. We warmly welcome research reports from every scholastic level and remind postgraduate students that it is never too early to begin publishing.

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