

CONCEPTUALIZING
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While there is considerable contemporary endorsement of multidisciplinary research which can be highly beneficial to all concerned, it is also important to maintain and support discussions and social networks *within* scientific disciplines in order for people with similar educational backgrounds to address the key questions and academic developments in their own terms in their own fields. The Finnish Anthropological Society feels, in addition, that anthropologists need forums and venues in their own homelands, particularly in homelands which are 'small countries' like Finland, where they can speak to an audience of anthropologists. The Society offers two kinds of platforms for doing this.

Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society has been an important and central platform for Finnish anthropological discussion since the Society's first year, a policy which current editorial team is endeavouring to encourage. In addition to the quarterly published journal, the Finnish Anthropological Society has since its early days published monographs, most importantly in the book series TAFAS (*Transactions of the Finnish Anthropological Society*) which has brought top-of-the-range studies of Finnish anthropology to the hands of interested readers both home and abroad. As a follow-up for TAFAS, in 2007 the Finnish Anthropological Society launched a new book series together with the Finnish Literature Society called *Studia Fennica Anthropologica* which offers another channel in which to publish peer-reviewed, anthropological research. May 2008 saw the publication of the series' second volume, entitled *Beyond the Horizon: Essays on Myth, History, Travel and Society* (edited by Clifford Sather and Timo Kaartinen). This is a festschrift for Professor Jukka Siikala which honours his sixtieth birthday in January 2007 and it features top level articles from Professor Siikala's colleagues and students, such as Roy Wagner, Joel Robbins, Peter Metcalf, Timo Kaartinen and Petra Autio, to name a few. By exploring the near, distant, inward and outward horizons towards which societies project their reality, the authors aim at developing a new, productive language for conceptualizing culture as a way of experiencing and engaging the world.

Another type of platform for discussion is at face to face forums such as conferences. In collaboration with Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Helsinki, the Society organized an Anthropology Symposium—*Antropologipäivät*—May 15–17 this spring. The theme of the three-day meeting was contemporary anthropology in Finland. On the one hand we wanted to continue the discussion started by Professor Jukka Siikala at the Society's annual meeting in March where he rather provocatively described the position and possibilities of anthropology in today's academic world. Right now universities are in the process of major structural change and many feel this is not for the better. On the other hand the Anthropological Society felt that it is very important to take a more concrete look at contemporary Finnish anthropology and hence decided to invite anthropologists throughout Finland to Helsinki to present short papers on their current research projects and goals. This 'survey' showed us first and foremost that anthropology in Finland is both

viable and manifold and that there is interesting and important anthropological research being done in numerous Finnish universities.

This year's Anthropology Symposium had a democratic format—there were no key speakers and everyone had the same fifteen minutes to present their work. A total of twenty-two papers were presented on a wide range of topics, ranging from such classic themes as kinship, ritual, and myth, to other more recent explorations in anthropology, from studies of childhood in today's Western societies through transnationalism and diaspora to aspects of doing fieldwork in today's world. The papers were presented in nine thematic sessions and after each session there was general discussion. Along with constructive comments and elaborations on the presentations, a constant topic in the debates comprised reflections on the place of the anthropologist in his/her own society, university, and anthropological community. It is hardly a surprise that no conclusive answers were reached in discussing these questions but it certainly seems that anthropologists are very much aware that doing anthropology in the twenty-first century poses us both new kinds of challenges and possibilities, and that anthropologists need to be active in defining their own role in the communities they work with and in.

Despite very modest promotion the lecture halls were crowded throughout the three-day event and a good number of researchers and students from outside of Helsinki also gathered to take part in the presentations and discussions; people came from the universities of Tampere, Jyväskylä, Joensuu and Oulu. Reaching all anthropologists in Finland is extremely important to the Society since one its core functions is to support and maintain social networks of anthropologists in the whole of Finland, not just those in some part of it, such as the capital. This spring's Anthropology Symposium was a successful step towards a better working network and a community of Finnish anthropologists, and one that will be repeated in the future.

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