

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* (in cooperation with Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki) is primarily devoted to the re-presentation of discursive exchange between its contributors, and between contributors and a larger public—a project which is an integral part of editorial policy. Thus we are honoured to begin with the annual Westermarck Memorial Lecture which was delivered by Professor Marilyn Strathern in Helsinki, 9th December 2009—an event which all who attended found memorable. Her lecture, entitled *Comparing Concerns: Some issues in organ and other donations*, explores the problem of information overload in contemporary society via the example of organ and tissue donation and the debates to which current practices give rise. Throughout the paper, Strathern follows her hunch that anthropology's comparative method offers a path through “the fraught and infinitely expandable nexus of public concerns” to some kind of reasonable account that meanwhile conserves the complexity of the issues involved—not only in this specific field but in areas of public (and anthropological) concern more generally.

This is followed by an article written by Anu Lounela (Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki)—*Sovereignty and Violence: Contested forest landscapes in Central Java*—which is drawn from her recently completed doctoral research into land rights in the district of Wonosobo, Central Java, which she situates within the framework of state formation and sovereignty. While an analytical distinction between modern and traditional forms of power in Java is explored during the course of her discussion, ultimately Lounela argues against their polarisation, suggesting that conflation occurs in local struggles for sovereignty, creating hybrid forms of power.

Lounela publicly defended her dissertation at the University of Helsinki on 26th September 2009, and was privileged to be facing as opponent Professor Anna Tsing of the University of California, Santa Cruz. Appended to the article, therefore, are the comments Professor Tsing made about Lounela's doctoral research and dissertation as a whole on that occasion. Here Tsing notes that two kinds of scholarship are relevant to Lounela's focus: firstly, the thesis suggested by political scientists and anthropologists to the effect that contours of power in Java, and Indonesia more broadly, are not universally fixed but, rather, created within cultural systems of meaning; and secondly, the questions raised by political ecologists concerning the perspectives of rural populations who live with the resources which states and corporations want to use. Tsing goes on say that Lounela has creatively addressed some inherent contradictions between these two approaches by incorporating two further concepts into her analysis: plural law and dispute settlement.

The second article in this issue is authored by another ‘young’ scholar at the University of Helsinki (Development Studies)—Henri Onodera—with the title, *The Kifaya Generation: Politics of change among youth in Egypt*. Basing his discussion on data drawn from his recent fieldwork in Cairo, Onodera examines the emergence of youth-based action groups in Egypt since the beginning of the 21st century, arguing that their grievances are connected

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with the wider predicaments and uncertainties that Egyptian youth face in their everyday lives.

Finally, it has been a real pleasure to work with four extraordinary scholars on the expanded 'Forum' section of this issue. In September 2009, John Liep, who received his *magister* degree (equivalent to a British Master of Letters, Finnish *lisensiaatti*) in anthropology in Denmark four decades ago, defended his doctoral production at Aarhus University in Copenhagen. Liep and his controversial monograph, entitled *A Papuan Plutocracy: Ranked Exchange on Rossel Island* (2009: Aarhus University Press), faced a powerful trinity of opponents: Joel Robbins (University of California, San Diego), Chris Gregory (Australian National University, University of Manchester) and Ton Otto (University of Aarhus). The issues raised by the book and critically explored in the subsequent debate are of a wide-ranging and substantial nature, and the resultant Forum is an exciting one.

Finally we would like to remind subscribers and readers that the annual Finnish Anthropology Conference (conducted in English/Finnish/Swedish) is being held in Helsinki, 11–12th May; proposals for sessions will be considered until 30th February, for individual presentations until 30th March. The event promises to be entertaining both scholastically and socially, and a selection of papers will be published in a future issue of *Suomen Antropologi*.

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