



ABSTRACTS

ANNA-MARIA TAPANINEN

THERE AND BACK AGAIN: FROM FIELDWORK IN A HOUSING ESTATE TO URBAN ETHNOGRAPHY

This article is a methodological essay on ethnographic orientations in a context that is far-removed from the conventional settings of anthropological fieldwork. It is based on fieldwork done intermittently between 1985 and 2001 in Pozzuoli, a town bordering Naples in South Italy. The question of location takes many forms in anthropological research, and here three facets of this issue are discussed. Interpretations are patterned, first, by the presence of the researcher in a particular setting; second, by the ground set by the corpus of (regional) ethnographic traditions; and third, by transforming theoretical ideas and conventions of writing. Knowledge is eventually pieced together as an ethnographic narrative from ordinary and even seemingly insignificant minutiae of everyday life. The thickness of ethnographic descriptions is based on encounters where shared meanings open out through varying communicative, bodily and social orientations. The shifting of to a certain extent unpredictable fragments is the basis for understanding. Ethnography as a text and ethnography as a method are related in many ways before, during and after fieldwork.

AILA VIHOLAINEN

FISHING OF THE MAIDEN VELLAMO – THE WAYS IN WHICH THE MERMAID-MOTIVE IS USED IN GENERATING NATIONAL IMAGERY

This article addresses the discussions on Finnish nation-building. The author analyzes studies made around the folk poem *Vellamon neidon onginta* / *Fishing of the Maiden Vellamo* (a mermaid) and visual representations connected with the material. The author

aims at looking into the ways in which the mermaid-motive is used in generating national imagery or feeding a national imagination. The Vellamo discourse consists of fifty texts published in 1883–2008. The author's professional interest focuses on deconstructing intersections of cultural representations and nationalizing discourses: tracking the formation, reproduction and transmission of national narration. The analysis is carried out by contextualizing the material into multidisciplinary discourses derived both from the study of nationalism and the diverse cultural history of the mermaid. The analysis reveals how Vellamo has been engaged in the formation of national identity for both sexes and by researchers of both sexes. Interpreted as a historical document, the Vellamo-figure has been applied to create the prospective national history and civic religion. It has been employed both as an intellectual and emotional force to increase the national imagery and bonding to it. Mermaid Vellamo as a flexible hybrid creature has enriched the reservoir of national memory. Thus the article can also be read as a case study of the construction of national collective memory.