

Editorial

This *Journal of Finnish Studies* theme issue, entitled *Counter-Readings on Finnish Nationhood: Minority Strategies and the Making of the Nation*, guest-edited by Raluca Bianca Roman, Peter Stadius, and Eija Stark, brings to our readers a highly relevant cluster of articles about Finland, as seen from minority perspectives. Finland is often understood as a monolithic and ethnically homogeneous country, with strong Lutheran affiliations. These traits of ethnic and cultural unity were, naturally, underscored when Finland was working toward its independence from Russia during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even though at the time socioeconomic stratification and language issues certainly provided reasons for deep divisions, those working toward Finland's independence chose to put their focus on the unifying characteristics. The social issues, of course, could not be kept under a cover for long, as the 1918 civil war showed.

Investigations of Finland's nation-building process have paid relatively little attention to the ethnic and religious minorities, and today's more diverse Finland has been perceived as a somewhat new phenomenon. Roman, Stadius, and Stark's edited collection shifts the focus from the ethnically white majority of a culturally homogeneous nation, showing convincingly that Finland has been home not only for its "core citizens" (see Roman, Stadius, and Stark's introductory chapter) but also for the Roma (Stark; Roman; Gasche and Holler), Tatars (Elmgren); Sami (Stadius), and Swedish-speaking Finns (Björk-Winberg). The six articles in this collection highlight various aspects of nation-building, through viewpoints of Finland's minorities. Aspects of the lives of Finnish Roma are discussed in three chapters: Stark juxtaposes the Finnish peasant man (the idealized "core citizen") and his antagonists, the Roma. Gasche and Holler address Finland's official policy toward the Roma in the context of the tumultuous decades of the 1930s and the 1940s, and Roman explores Pentecostal Finnish Roma, a "double minority" in Lutheran Finland. Elmgren sheds light on a rarely discussed minority, Finnish Tatars. Even though this minority has often been labeled as a "successful" minority, Elmgren shows the complexity and sometimes conscious strategies used by Tatars in Finland to secure a place in the nation. Focusing on Finnish Scandinavism as a relatively rarely addressed ideology, Björk-Winberg tells its story through Emil von Qvanten, a Finland Swede who lived in exile in Sweden because he, in the Grand Duchy of Finland, chose to be a proponent of this minority ideology. Stadius tackles the challenging topic of Petsamo from the angle of colonialism, discussing both official and individual attitudes toward the Sami and the plans for incorporating this area in the far north in the rest of Finland.

All six articles are based on recent research that reveals underlying majority viewpoints and minority experiences in the budding and newly formed nation. The perspectives are fresh, and the story told of Finland's

nation-building is new, often surprising, and at points even disturbing. We are pleased to present this theme issue to our readers, and we believe that you will find it interesting and illuminating.

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We also want to use this opportunity to inform our subscribers and readers about the upcoming changes for the journal. After over ten years at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, the *Journal of Finnish Studies* will move to a new editorial home: the University of Wisconsin–Madison. From the next volume (*JoFS* 25) forward, Professor Thomas A. DuBois will take charge of the journal as its editor-in-chief, with Dr. Hilary-Joy Virtanen as co-editor.

Professor DuBois is a long-term member of our editorial board, and he is well known in Finnish Studies circles. He is a folklorist, scholar of Sami culture, and author and editor of several books, with topics ranging from Finnish folk poetry and the Kalevala to Nordic religions, Shamanism, and the Sami—to mention just a few areas of his expertise. DuBois' articles have been published in *Scandinavian Studies*, *Journal of American Folklore*, *Oral Tradition*, and, of course, the *JoFS*. He has served as President of the Society for the Advancement for the Scandinavian Study, has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Umeå (Sweden), and was inducted as a foreign member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters (Suomalainen Tiedekatemia). These are merely examples of Thomas DuBois' impressive academic accomplishments. We are very pleased that he has agreed to take over the editing of the journal.

Dr. Hilary-Joy Virtanen, Assistant Professor of Finnish and Nordic Studies at Finlandia University, and assistant editor in our current *JoFS* editorial team, will, starting from volume 25, serve as a co-editor. Dr. Virtanen holds a PhD in Folklore and Scandinavian Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and she is also a familiar name within the Finnish American and Finnish scholarly communities. Dr. Virtanen's scholarly interests include Finnish American cultural practices, music, folk dance, Finland's national romanticism, and early twentieth-century American industrial heritage, and worker culture. The courses that Dr. Virtanen teaches at Finlandia University include Finnish American Culture, Finnish Language, History and Culture of Finland, the Kalevala, and Upper Peninsula Folklore. Her dedication to building bridges between Finland and Finnish America materializes regularly when she leads study trips to Finland for Finlandia University's Paloheimo Fellows. Among Virtanen's publications are several articles published in the *Journal of Finnish Studies*, as well as co-edited theme issues. Virtanen also serves as a Finlandia Foundation National trustee.

Dr. Sheila Embleton from York University will continue as the journal's book review editor.

One of the many rewards of editing the *Journal of Finnish Studies* has been the interaction with a large network of people who share our interest in Finnish Studies. As we (Helena, Scott, and Hanna) step aside from the *JoFS* editorial team, we want to thank everyone for pleasant and productive encounters: the contributors to the journal, peer reviewers, book reviewers, and editorial board members. Especially, we wish to thank our subscribers and readers, both individuals and libraries, who make it possible for the *JoFS* to continue disseminating knowledge about Finland and Finnish America for the English-language audience. While Dr. DuBois assumes the role as the editor-in-chief and while Dr. Virtanen steps into her new role as co-editor, we can assure our readership that the journal will be in extremely competent and caring hands. We wish to thank Drs. DuBois and Virtanen for assuming this responsibility and wish them the very best in continuing to carry out the mission started by Dr. Börje Vähämäki as he launched the *Journal of Finnish Studies* at the University of Toronto in 1997. We also thank Dr. Beth L. Virtanen for her contributions as editor-in-chief during the years 2009 to 2010.

Scott and Helena also thank Sam Houston State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences for past reassigned time from our teaching duties for the tasks of editing the journal, as well as the Department of English for important institutional support. In addition, Helena wishes to extend her thanks to her husband, Professor Robert Adams, who for the past ten years has always been available, behind the scenes, for quick and competent native-speaker language consultation.

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