

Book Reviews

Folk Belief as an Animated World

Folktro. En besjälad värld. Kurt Almqvist & Lotta Gröning (eds.). Bokförlaget Stolpe, Stockholm 2022. 230 pp. Ill.

The issue of enchantment seems to arouse interest in Swedish investigations of belief. Not so long ago, Fredrik Skott published his detailed and popular book about everyday superstition, and now another book about vernacular religion, published by Bokförlaget Stolpe in Stockholm has appeared. The editors are Kurt Almqvist and Lotta Gröning, who have collected thirteen articles about folk belief or, perhaps better in English, vernacular religion.

The concept of folk religion, in Swedish *folktro*, is complicated and difficult to capture. Students of religion have seen many efforts to define it, but since religion is not an unambiguous phenomenon its “derivative” cannot possibly be clear-cut. This may be the explanation why the editors avoid dictating how each of the contributors should grasp and handle their scholarly material. One reader might give up trying to understand why a specific kind of religious belief is “folk”, but another might not. It is better to concentrate on the subtitle of the book, which expresses the idea of folk belief or vernacular religion as an expression of thoughts about an animated (*besjälad*) world. Soon, I hope, we will see the time when the difference between religion and folk belief, folk religion, and other categorizing and evaluative contrasting concepts will be erased from scholarly terminology. Whatever the believing human regards

as a trustworthy contact with supranormal powers, the scholar studying religion should regard it as an expression of religion. From the “objective” scholarly perspective, there cannot possibly be anything right or wrong in the belief of individuals. In research, taking a standpoint about correct or incorrect belief involves uttering a qualitative opinion, which does not suit scholars. Today, religious studies frequently concentrate on the believing human, not on the interpretation of texts.

The second main issue in this book concerns the soul. This is connected to the nowadays so beloved theme of enchanting, disenchanting, and re-enchanting. Weber’s idea that the world is regarded and understood in a completely scientific, materialistic, and objective way, because of the positivistic ways of conducting science in the aftermath of the Enlightenment, has proved to be wrong. Seldom have we seen such a rise in the search for something to believe in as today, be it thoughts from New Age, influences from Eastern religions or from mysticism, and ideas of an animated macrocosm. Certainly, the modern Western world has been re-enchanted, as some of the articles prove clearly.

This well illustrated book is a mixture of more or less scholarly articles and quite a lot of pictures. It is divided into five groups: “The disenchantment of the world”, “Folk belief in ancient India and Egypt”, “Folk belief during Antiquity”, “Folk belief in the Nordic countries”, and “Folk belief yesterday and today”.

In the first section, Kristina Ekero Eriksson introduces us to a summarized

narrative about what the Swedish religious centre might have looked like in ancient Uppsala during the Viking Age. An essential article by Joel Halldorf discusses how important it is for the student of religion to reckon with entities that do not really fit into the realm of science in the classical notion of that word. In religious studies it is not possible to weigh, count, or measure very much, but still the experience of harmony, peace, or beauty is central in human life and, above all, an aspect of religious life worthy of an investigator's efforts. Then, in the second and third sections, we are presented with an overview of the ancient Greek, Roman, Norse, and Egyptian pantheons, written by Jerker and Karin Blomquist, Gabriella Beer, Lars Lönnroth, and Andreas Winkler respectively. Indian folk belief likewise finds a place in this book in Per-Johan Norelius's effort to demonstrate the position of the human self, the soul, and *brahman* in relationship to the macrocosm during the time of the Veda texts. "Folk" seems to mean all those people who are not religious experts of some kind, whereas in Britt-Mari Näsström's article about the cult of Mithras, concerning the time around the beginning of our era, "folk" is clearly defined as a masculine religion for soldiers and merchants.

The fourth section concerns the nineteenth-century Swedish folk belief. Lars Lönnroth and Tora Wall show us how nature outside the fences of a farm was once seen as a dangerous place. This is in contrast to the perspective today, when nature has no negative characteristics at all. For quite a long time, supernatural beings were regarded as guardians of their special topographic places, such as the forest, the water, the farm, or the mines. Humans were expected to behave in a proper way in order not to be punished by the guardians. Tommy Kuusela also shows that animals belonged to Nordic folk belief, many of them being different from natural animals as regards to their skills and appearances. Their position in folk

belief has to do with their abnormality: A wolf with three legs, and the fourth stretched out like a tail, and found to contain a human being if shot, cannot possibly be a normal creature. Quite a lot of the articles refer to feasts and celebrations in which customs with religious undertones play an important part. Lena Kättström Höök writes about Easter and Christmas, among other feasts.

The fifth section of this book brings the reader to contemporary thinking about nature. The Enlightenment and the scientific revolution have changed the conditions in which the modern and post-modern human beings relate to nature. Once nature was dangerous, it was "another world" from which humans had to stay away unless it was necessary to visit it for some reason. Camilla Asplund Inge-mark reminds us that, today, it is a place of recreation and joy. However, it is still dangerous, but not because of its own qualities. Instead, man is the reason for nature's dangerous potentials. Man has not behaved properly and, consequently, nature is said to take the lead. According to David Thurffjell, the scholarly concept of animism in the twentieth century was appropriate for describing a primitive feature. Today, however, animism is increasingly employed in efforts to understand why scientific ways of thinking do not dominate contemporary ideas about nature. When analysed with the help of cognitive psychology, it becomes possible to prove that the secularized European has been able for a long time to keep company with non-real, non-materialistic figures such as God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit and that this model of communication also works with non-human figures such as, for instance, trees.

Actor-Network Theory could be a good starting point for analysing the relationship between man and the environment, but this theory is only mentioned in one of the articles, as far as I can see. What is also not mentioned in the book is that not only the natural world has become animated, but aliens, androids, and machines are likewise

regarded as reacting like humans. Many families give a name to their robot lawnmower or vacuum cleaner. People speak to their coffee machine as if it can understand what they say. That then extends to the question “Who are you? Do you have a soul? Are you a human? Who, then, am I?”

This book is a good introduction to the knowledge about religions around the world and over thousands of years. The illustrations are beautiful and inspiring. To my mind, the most rewarding reads are the articles about the religious behaviour of humans since the industrial revolution, and texts containing parallels and contrasts between ways of thinking in a rural society and today.

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Aspects of Oral Storytelling

Det berättas ...! Muntligt berättande som självförståelse, estradkonst och kulturarv. Alf Arvidsson & Katarzyna Wolanik Boström. Umeå universitet, Umeå 2022. Etnologiska skrifter 71. 127 pp.

I am sitting upstairs in a café in central Jakobstad trying to gather my thoughts about this book, where the blurb on the back cover begins with “People tell stories everywhere!” The book is about everyday storytelling in a time when experience-based narration is gaining attention in many different ways, as something one can have special competence in, as something one can also learn and become better at, and which is sometimes practised by specialized storytellers in more or less staged contexts. I read about storytelling described as something fundamentally human, something used to communicate, reflect, and make the world comprehensible to oneself and others. The book has four chapters, the first of which is an orientation or “Lägesbeskrivning”, providing a detailed research background to

the topic. This is followed by two more empirical chapters: one about storytelling on stage in Västerbotten, one about people who teach life-story telling. The concluding chapter of the book should be read as an essay on storytelling as cultural heritage in cultural policy, with the stated intention of also providing a basis for further ethnological research on the subject. Of these four chapters, Alf Arvidsson is the author of three. Katarzyna Wolanik Boström is responsible for the chapter “Promoting, Evoking, and Shaping Life-Story Telling” which strikes me as a thematic rendition of interviews with people who teach storytelling. In the introduction we learn that the two researchers have been involved in the project *Oral Storytelling as Cultural Heritage and a Force in Society*.

In the introductory overview, which fills about a third of the total page count, Arvidsson undertakes the task of summarizing research on storytelling, and more specifically, the storytelling movement. The field is a particularly large one, since different scholarly disciplines have taken an interest in storytelling, the scholarly ambition in the published works varies, and the endocentric perspective is sometimes combined with the exocentric perspective in individuals who are both skilled storytellers and eminent researchers. The questions explored obviously vary according to these parameters, which further complicates any attempt at a general survey. Arvidsson skilfully places the emergence of the Swedish storytelling movement in a historical and international context, discussing genres, performances, and actors involved in this – all this is manna for a Finland-Swedish folklorist. It is instructive and interesting to follow this exposé of how a movement has emerged. The survey goes on to discuss storytelling as a part of public discourses in society: the presentation of history at the local level, autobiographical writing as storytelling, narrative ecosystems, the role of schools and teachers, and storytelling in relation to cultural heritage.

Arvidsson highlights important things, but I feel that much gets lost in the mass, and that a book like this is not really able to achieve the visibility that the subject deserves. I myself would have liked to have read a whole book about what is covered just in this survey.

As I flip through the book to remind myself of what I have read before, I listen rather casually to what is going on at the table next to mine. Many ethnologists and folklorists who have engaged in narrative research will have experienced moments when they have eavesdropped on conversations conducted in public places but not intended for anyone other than the interlocutors; whether it be loud phone calls or several speakers present in the same place, you sometimes get clear insight into people's everyday lives. At the table next to me there are five young women who seem to know each other well. They are chatting over a cup of coffee and the conversation could be entitled "A Day at Work". One of the women is particularly dominant in the conversation. She works at a filling station that serves food and sells groceries, and at least some of the other women have done similar work. The dominant woman is adept at storytelling, and I get to hear her experiences, feelings, and fears in a working day. She talks about the great responsibility that the cashier girls have, dealing with direct customer contact and simultaneously keeping an eye on the screen showing what the surveillance cameras see. She tells her friends (and me) with dismay about the quantities of sweets and other small things that disappear into customers' bags and pockets with no payment. She tells of a time when a woman had difficulty with her debit card when trying to pay for a large amount of goods, but the situation was saved by another customer who paid for her. She talks about how unpleasant it can feel and how frightened she has sometimes been when the evening shift is over and she has to switch on the alarm. Once the lock on one of the men's toilets was red

but no one came out even though she waited a long time and knocked on the door – what if there was a dead man in the toilet?! Her stories are received sympathetically by her friends, who back her up with little laughs and nods of agreement, and examples of their own stressful days with minimal breaks and a never-ending flow of customers to smile at. Every single day.

The cashier from the filling station in Jakobstad could have served as an example of *authenticity* in the storytelling situation and in the storyteller, which Arvidsson analyses in the section "An Everyday Stage Art". In many parts of today's storytelling movement in Västerbotten, from which Arvidsson takes his examples, the stories told over a cup of coffee can be a basic trope for the unpretentious storytelling with physical proximity between the narrator and the audience, and as such, the relaxed coffee drinking serves as a model for how a storytelling event should be presented. Several contexts actually go under the designation "storytelling café", often with coffee drinking as an activity for the audience during the performance. As Arvidsson so aptly puts it, the re-creation or staging of this everyday situation becomes "an imagined antithesis of a fragmented, mass-mediated, age-segregated, impersonal, alienated present-day normality". In other words, assembling around coffee cups has become a new variant of the trope of gathering by the fireside, as so often encountered in contexts where people tell fairy tales or talk about supernatural beings. The storytelling café is not alien to me because I use a similar concept to collect material for books on local history – this cannot be done without a cup of coffee. And a cup of coffee even adorns the cover of a book about memorable people and events in Esse in Pedersöre municipality. In other words, I have an emic understanding of a branch of the contemporary storytelling movement, and this is my first contact with a text about an activity in which I am a co-actor. In that role I

derive the greatest benefit from what Arvidsson writes in his introductory survey of how the storytelling movement has emerged in Sweden. If, on the other hand, I wanted condensed and impactful course material that explains intangible cultural heritage in relation to folklore, I would definitely recommend a careful reading of the concluding essay.

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Norwegian Studies of Broadside Ballads

Skillingvisene i Norge 1550–1950. Studier i en forsømt kulturarv. Siv Gøril Brandtzæg & Karin Strand (eds.). Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo 2021. 672 pp.

Arven fra skillingvisene. Fra en sal på hospitalet til en sofa fra IKEA. Siv Gøril Brandtzæg & Bjarne Markussen (eds.). Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo 2021. 454 pp.

These two edited volumes are the result of a research project on Norwegian broadside ballads. The project has been led by Siv Gøril Brandtzæg and Karin Strand, who also edited the first book together. Twenty-five articles by seventeen different scholars present various aspects of the history of broadside ballads in Norway. The researchers come from different fields, such as literature, linguistics, musicology, history of ideas, and library studies. This is thus a broad interdisciplinary study presented in two volumes. The two books are intended to complement each other, with a historical perspective in the first volume and a description of the use of broadside ballads in the twentieth century and down to our own time in the second. In the introduction to the first volume, Brandtzæg describes her mission as an action to save an important genre from obliv-

ion and extinction, and to demonstrate the diversity of the broadside ballads. Despite the large amount of preserved material, with more than a thousand different broadside ballads in Norwegian archives, this material has still gained little attention in research. In practical terms, Brandtzæg also emphasizes the importance of digitization in making the comprehensive material available.

An interesting problem for research on broadside ballads is the fundamental question of how a broadside ballad should be defined. The simplest and most common definition, “printed rhymed verses intended to be sung” is not as exhaustive as one might first think, and the definition of broadside ballad is therefore discussed at length in the introduction to the first volume. Here it is emphasized that *skillingstrykk* is the printed medium itself, the broadside or broadsheet, while *skillingvis* is the ballad or song printed on it. But one difficulty with this definition is that it does not take into account that the broadside ballad exists in both a written and an oral tradition. The volume therefore argues that the topics of the songs must also be taken into account in the definition, and above all the connection of the songs to contemporary events and news is emphasized as important for what is perceived as a broadside ballad. It is this broad definition of broadside ballad that is the foundation for the entire research project.

The first volume, “Broadside Ballads in Norway 1550–1950”, is divided into two parts. The first consists of articles that primarily deal with the texts of the ballads and the second is devoted to the context of the ballads. The eight articles dealing with the ballad texts together present a wide selection and provide interesting examples of the breadth of the material. In each of the articles, a couple of ballads are selected for close reading, with a particular focus on the content of the text. There is a study of “Ridder Brynning”, a narrative comprising about 105 verses. It was spread from

about 1700 until 1900 in many places all over the Nordic countries. An overall question for the study is why this ballad achieved such popularity. Another ballad, from 1865, where a man sings about how his three children have died within a relatively short period of time, serves as an example of a song about death and mourning, in an article based on studies of about seventy songs of grief. All the selected ballads are about close relationships, often with a faith in salvation. A popular motif in broadside ballads from the nineteenth century is shipwrecks. One of the ballads subjected to a close reading is the story of a shipwreck in 1842, related in 31 verses. This was a major event at the time, and the ballad both informed about what had happened and expressed thoughts about mankind's struggle against superior powers. One chapter is devoted to broadside ballads about natural disasters. Singing about such events was a way of processing the emotions they aroused, and the ballads were widely spread thanks to their important dual function of warning against sin and providing comfort in grief. Similarly, stories about comets and other celestial phenomena could appear in broadside ballads from the late sixteenth century to the 1770s. Interest in dramatic events is also expressed in nineteenth-century ballads about criminals, where the offender is allowed to express his perception of himself. Purely linguistic matters are also discussed, as in the article based on an early twentieth-century navy ballad. The study focuses on three different broadsides, primarily examining the variation between Danish-Norwegian on the one hand and Swedish on the other. Finally, an article focuses on portrayals of "the Other" in broadside ballads. Here it is mainly texts about "Turks" and "Jews" from the end of the eighteenth century onwards that are of concern, as well as examples of how whiteness as an ideal is also depicted in a large number of ballad texts.

The second part of the first volume deals with the context of the ballads.

The publisher and printer Peter T. Malling of Christiania (Oslo) is the subject of one article. His activities from the 1840s onwards are discussed in detail, as regards economic aspects, licences, and sales methods. A specific broadside from 1697, which deals with dramatic events in Hamburg and which was spread in Stockholm, is the focus of one article. Knowledge of broadside ballads from earlier times is limited, not least when it comes to the actual production and sale of the sheets. For this selected broadside ballad, however, some legal documents are preserved, which tell us both who bought the broadside and who produced it. One article discusses a number of examples of how ballad sellers were portrayed in literature from the early eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. Another article considers pictures in early broadside ballads, that is, from the end of the eighteenth century. A number of general questions are raised, such as the problem of interpretation when many images were reused for different broadside ballads. Natural disasters and "monsters" have at times been popular motifs in the broadside ballads, and a number of examples of this are shown in the chapter and discussed in terms of contemporary religious and political aspects. The collector's perspective is treated in one article, based on a special collection from the nineteenth century with over 750 broadside ballads. Finally, an article discusses the work of today's libraries to preserve the collections of broadside ballads and make them easily available.

The second volume, "The Heritage of the Broadside Ballads", gives a number of examples of how the old ballads were used in the twentieth century and performed again in new media, for example on revue stages and in recorded versions. There is a discussion about the possibility of using the term *skillingsviser* despite the fact that the selected songs were not all disseminated via printed sheets, which is otherwise regarded as an important criterion for broadside

ballads, but via stage performances and phonograms. The editors believe that criteria other than the medium of dissemination are also relevant to the definition of broadside ballads in the twentieth century. It is highlighted here that the common denominator of the material is that it enjoyed a wide spread among the less well-off in society, because the price was low. In addition, aesthetic aspects must also be included in the criteria for a broadside ballad. This possibly becomes even more important in the twentieth century, when earlier functions, such as songs in work situations or ballads as the only news outlet, disappeared. A distinction is also made with respect to the "folk ballad", in that broadside ballads often have an individual author, whereas folk ballads are said to have been collectively composed. Broadside ballads are also primarily written products, while the repertoire of folk ballads has for the most part been orally transmitted. Finally, the texts of the broadside ballads are clearly related to contemporary events. Taken together, all these aspects make it possible to demarcate a repertoire of broadside ballads, even though they do not occur in print in the same way as the broadside ballads of previous centuries.

Three parts are devoted to different aspects of broadside ballads during the twentieth century. In the first part, the focus is on the broadside ballad as a "tradition bearer". One chapter has a detailed and interesting account of Alf Prøysen's great importance for the collecting and archiving of ballads, for a knowledge of the context and the dissemination of this repertoire. This particularly highlights the social origin of the ballads among the less well-off, as well as the importance of the story and the drama in the ballads, as expressed in Prøysen's definition of the genre as *almuens opera*, "the opera of the common people".

Special categories such as *rallarviser* (navvy songs) and *tattarviser* (tinker songs) are covered in one article each. A

long article is devoted to *Sinclarvisan*, with its roots in the eighteenth century and in widespread use until our time. The author discusses how the ballad has been linked to different political contexts through the ages.

Part two, "The Transformations of the Broadside Ballad", contains close readings of a cabaret song from the 1920s, as well as a number of songs released on disc in the 1970s. Both articles highlight the great popularity and spread of the songs, which has resulted in a great many variants and performances. This part also discusses practical aspects of performances today. The third part studies contemporary political songs and their connection to the broadside tradition, with a couple of examples from Norwegian media, as well as from Anglo-American tradition with examples from Bob Dylan's repertoire.

In recent years the scholarly study of broadside ballads has increased in Sweden, for instance with studies by Eva Danielson, Hanna Enefalk, Märta Ramsten, and Karin Strand. It is interesting and valuable that such an extensive research effort as the one reviewed here has now been carried out using material from Norwegian archives. The broad approach, which has been fundamental to the project, clearly shows the wealth of the studied material. The study declares that this is the first major research project on Norwegian broadside ballads, which perhaps also explains why a descriptive perspective predominates in both volumes. The articles are well-written and informative throughout.

The first part of the first volume, which deals with the texts of the broadside ballads, reveals a large number of texts expressing views about morals, values, and political opinions. The focus in the study on the texts of the ballads is reasonable, since they are narrative songs, where the events in the text have to be presented and conveyed to the listeners. The project's claims about the broadside ballads as comments on

contemporary events and conditions are well substantiated. The close contact with the material resulting from the close reading is important, but it also means that each article is a stand-alone study, and although it is good that the articles can be read independently of each other, it makes it difficult for the reader to form an idea of what is shared and what is distinctive in the different types of ballads considered. The extensive presentation of the project (the two books together comprise just over 1,100 pages) is detailed and thorough. Let us hope that this project will serve as a basis for future studies also focusing more on structural, overarching perspectives, for instance elaborating on the ideas about the social affiliation of broadside ballads or their importance for the dissemination of knowledge in society.

The second part, with its focus on the context of the ballads, gives interesting examples from a more general perspective, although the dividing line between the first and the second parts is not so easy to draw, as is also emphasized in the introduction to the book. There is nevertheless a clear difference in that the articles in the second part look beyond the individual ballads and ask questions about the material other than those concerning the textual content and the popularity of the selected ballads. In particular, the questions about publication and dissemination are of general interest. Here the article about publishing operations in the nineteenth century and the article based on legal documents from the late 1690s are interesting for research on musical life in general and not just relevant for research on broadside ballads.

The starting point for the project as a whole is the Norwegian archival material that has so far seen little research. The focus on Norwegian matters is therefore a given. Some articles relate briefly to international research in the field, but this does not happen generally throughout the volumes. Linking up with international studies and relevant

research in the field would have been desirable, for example in an introductory or concluding article.

The second volume deviates from the earlier definition of broadside ballads by arguing that ballads not disseminated via print can also be broadside ballads. Both aesthetic and thematic criteria are also significant for the definition, as it is argued in the introduction to the volume. A distinction is made between the broadside ballad and the folk ballad with the claim that the latter is a collective creation, unlike the former, which often has a known author. The argument about a collective origin is scarcely valid today, nor are the aesthetic criteria for what should count as a broadside ballad really clarified. On this point the discussion could have been expanded. The practice of using borrowed tunes for the lyrics, which also usually counts as an important criterion for broadside ballads, is only briefly touched upon, but in my opinion it would also have been worth a more detailed discussion.

The articles in the second volume clearly illustrate how the studied ballads belong to the repertoire that Alf Prøysen called "the opera of the common people". The connection between repertoire and performance situations is highlighted from a societal perspective, which is positive. One article also focuses on practical performance, thereby emphasizing the importance of the music. The latter is important not least in view of the significance that the tunes have had for the performance of the lyrics.

All in all, these two volumes report on impressive research work. The articles are consistently well written and grounded in archival material. Although the references to previous research are often brief, there are extensive bibliographies which put the studies in a broader context. The ambition to bring this repertoire out of the archives and into the light is laudable, and it must be said that the authors have succeeded. With their focus on the texts of the ballads, the authors have shown the important uses

of the ballads and their ability to survive through the ages.

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Early Modern Handwritten Newspapers

Handwritten Newspapers. An Alternative Medium during the Early Modern and Modern Periods. Ed. by Heiko Droste, Kirsti Salmi-Niklander. *Studia Fennica Historica* 26. Helsinki Finnish Literary Society, SKS 2019. 223 pp. [DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21435/sfh.26>]

It is a commonplace to state that the late medieval and early modern change of media, i.e. the invention and circulation of print, did not lead to an immediate replacement of the old media with the new one, or the sudden death in the production and dissemination of manuscripts. Quite the opposite, the simultaneity of the handwritten and the printed media, one of the results of Gutenberg's innovation, continued to exist for many centuries. This is neatly illustrated in the present book, the result of a workshop held in Uppsala in 2015. As its title indicates, the volume curated by Heiko Droste and Kirsti Salmi-Niklander focuses on the specific genre of handwritten newspapers in the early modern as well as in the modern periods. The book analyses this kind of manuscripts with regard to the concept of their being an alternative to early printed newspapers, an immensely widespread and prolific new genre in sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. The ten articles cover quite a wide range of themes and methodological approaches and geographical regions, from Europe to the United States and the Caribbean, and chronological periods, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. In their highly informative introduction "Handwritten Newspapers: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

on a Social Practice" (pp. 7–26), the editors propose cushioning the heterogeneity by pointing out both the importance of pragmatic aspects in the specific social and cultural practice of writing journals by hand and the necessity of contextualizing the material. In the list of research questions they suggest treating issues such as definitions and descriptions of sources, early modern and modern public spheres and markets for news, economic aspects, the political participation of the lower classes, but also recent and future research fields figure prominently. It is remarkable to note that especially Finnish and German scholars are at the forefront of research in this field.

In the first section three articles are assembled around the topic of "Print, publicness, and the state". "How Public Was the News in Early Modern Times?" (pp. 29–44), by the co-editor Heiko Droste, starts off with a programmatic discussion of the characteristics of early modern news as a public phenomenon. One of his observations is that "the handwritten newspaper as exclusive medium had the potential to be used as a non-public medium as well [...] However, the medium's social function remained at its core" (p. 41). Michał Salamonik in "New Times Bring New Practices: Girolamo Pinocci and the *Merkuriusz Polski*" (pp. 45–59) presents a case study of the first (short-lived) printed newspaper in Poland in 1661 and its handwritten predecessor; the author is primarily interested in the interplay and the transition from manuscript to printed newspapers. Fredrik Thomasson, "*Gustavia Free Press? Handwritten and Printed Newspapers in the Swedish Colony Saint Barthélemy*" (pp. 60–77), analyses an instance of political censorship on the Swedish-owned Caribbean island of St Barthélemy in the early 1830s, which scrutinizes the role of two unofficial handwritten newspapers and the official printed newspaper, all of them written in English.

Section II deals with "Material aspects and intermediality" of the topic. Mark

Alan Mattes' contribution "The Intermedial Politics of Handwritten Newspapers in the 19th-Century U.S." (pp. 81–97) discusses the "importance of print's aesthetic dimensions" (p. 94) and focuses on the interaction of handwritten newspapers with other media of communication as intermedial literacy. The corpus of Mary Isbell's "Diplomatic Editions of a Handwritten Shipboard Newspaper" (pp. 98–114) is the handwritten weekly shipboard newspaper, *The Young Idea*, edited by a clerk aboard a ship of the Royal British Navy in the 1850s, an intriguing alternative to professional print media and as such another specific part of the 19th-century media landscape. Klimis Mastoridis in "On the Graphic Language of the Handwritten Greek *Ephemeris*" (pp. 115–127) provides an overview of the handwritten newspapers in Greece, whose history started in the 1820s, the background being the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire, and continued up to the twentieth century; a special focus is laid on the development of the function of the graphic layout.

The third and final section directs our attention to "Social practices and in-group communication". Christian Berrenberg's and co-editor Kirsti Salmi-Niklander's joint paper concerns "Handwritten Newspapers and Community Identity in Finnish and Norwegian Student Societies and Popular Movements" (pp. 131–146). It presents handwritten newspapers as "a hybrid medium of print, manuscripts and oral communication" (p. 131) and uses the concept of "social authorship" as coined by Margaret Ezell. Their material consists of university students' and young workers' manuscript newspapers written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which they understand as "a significant [...] part of the media history of the long 19th century" (p. 143). Also Hrafnkell Lárússon's "Handwritten Journals in 19th- and Early 20th-Century Iceland" (pp. 147–169) concentrates on the same period and contextualizes the material within the socio-cultural frame-

work of a society that was still largely influenced by manuscript transmission in which handwritten texts played an important role. Risto Turunen, in his close reading of a handwritten union newspaper, the organ of the cotton workers at a Tampere firm, "From the Object to the Subject of History: Writing Factory Workers in Finland in the Early 20th Century" (pp. 170–192), analyses the link between the growth of handwritten newspapers and the political awakening of the working people that ultimately led to the abolition of the paternalistic ideology. Emese Ilyefalvi's contribution, "Further Contexts of a Writing Practice: Alternative Protestant Newspaper Culture in Transylvania in the First Third of the 20th Century" (pp. 193–213), deals with another set of handwritten newspapers and gives detailed insights into, e.g., the production of a Calvinist minister who between 1932 and 1935 wrote newsletters to his Hungarian-speaking congregation and duplicated them manually by hectograph in approximately 100 copies!

A "List of Contributors", an "Abstract", an "Index of Names", and a "Thematic Index" conclude this publication which lays the ground for further studies in an emerging field with strong interdisciplinary potential. *Handwritten Newspapers* is another interesting, substantial, and handsome contribution to the Finnish Literature Society's *Studia Fennica Historica* series.

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Exhibiting Death at Sea

Simon Ekström: Sjödränkt. Spektakulär materialitet från havet. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2021. 271 pp. Ill.

Simon Ekström is Professor of Ethnology with a double connection to Stock-

holm University and Swedish National Maritime and Transport Museums. This connection to both an academic institution and a group of museums is central for the origin and the character of his book *Sjödränkt: Spektakulär materialitet från havet* ("Drowned at Sea: Spectacular Materiality from the Ocean"). The aim of the book is to examine how a couple of museums approach and relate to the presence of death in their collections and exhibitions, more precisely death by sea. It discusses death as a cultural heritage and the musealization of disasters at sea, as well as the more general theme of exhibitions as media forms with their own history. The book thus focusses on *deathscapes*, the different kinds of staging of the presence of death – sometimes, death is demonstratively placed in the foreground, sometimes, it is discreetly moved away from the scene it has been offered (pp. 16–17, 21). The motto of the book, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's words that "Exhibitions are fundamentally theatrical", is illustrative of its focus.

In his selection, Ekström mainly focusses on Swedish cases – the only exception is the *Titanic*. The target group is defined as students, scholars, museum staff at maritime museums, as well as everyone interested in the topic (p. 10). It is clear that he intends to write both for an academic audience and for people working with exhibitions at museums.

The first case study of the book (chapter 2) discusses the sinking of the steamer *Per Brahe* in 1918, when twenty-four people died, and its salvage in 1922. At several points it works as a type-case, since many themes which recur in the later chapters are introduced here. One such theme is the ethical discussion of exhibiting a ship which in practice had been the place of death and the grave for many people. Ekström quotes contemporary voices from the newspapers after the salvage, when the exhibition of the wreck was often condemned as profiting from people's death, and where the exhibition was

described as a disgusting public entertainment (pp. 43–45). Another topic also recurring in the following chapters is the use of specific objects to represent the disaster in the exhibition. In the case of *Per Brahe*, one of the few objects which is now in a museum is a sewing machine from the ship. It is charged with meaning, not least since the judicial investigation after the disaster showed that the steamer had been overloaded, and a large number of sewing machines was especially mentioned in this connection; parts of these sewing machines were also sold as souvenirs after the salvage, something specifically mentioned by the critical newspapers in 1922. The sewing machine in the museum is thus connected both directly with the cause of the disaster and with the contemporary ethical debate (pp. 58–59; also 42–43).

A part of the chapter concerns the collective memory of the *Per Brahe* shipwreck. Among the victims of the disaster were the young artist John Bauer and his family. This fact formed a subordinate part of the contemporary reports of the disaster. In his lifetime, Bauer was certainly a popular artist, but he had not gained the position he later achieved as one of the most famous Swedish artists. Ekström convincingly shows that one reason the *Per Brahe* disaster survived in the collective memory is that it is so closely connected with Bauer's death, which in our time has become the famous fact of the disaster, and that the fame of Bauer has also increased because of the tragic death of the young artist and his family (pp. 51–57, 60).

At the end of the chapter Ekström notes one important difference between the exhibition of the *Per Brahe* in 1922 and museum exhibitions of today: a remarkably short time had passed since the disaster (p. 62). This aspect of temporal distance is followed up in several of the following chapters.

The exhibitions at the Vasa Museum have a special status in this context, since they belong to the most popular museum in Sweden, whose exhibitions

reach more people than any others. The background is well-known: the large warship *Vasa* sank in Stockholm in 1628 and was salvaged in 1961. Ekström's focus in chapter 3 is on the museum's treatment of the actual remains of the dead sailors, which are exhibited in the museum. The aim of the chapter is to discuss "what kind of meeting between the visitor, history and the remains" is arranged by the museum (p. 65). The exhibition of the skeletons from the ship is staged in a way different from the rest of the museum. It is found on a separate floor, with dimmed lighting; the skeletons are placed in coffin-like showcases, without any written text. On the opposite wall, the dead are presented by (invented) names and with information about them; some of the faces of the dead have also been sculptured in a way that makes them look alive. The atmosphere created by this staging is characterized by dignity and respect.

The rest of the chapter problematizes this exhibition of skeletons. Ekström notes that the authenticity of the real bones makes them more attractive than, for instance, photographs or copies of them. However, he also notes that human remains constitute a very special type of museum material. He places this particular case in the context of the current ethical discussion about human remains at anatomic and ethnographic museums (p. 75–76, 85–87). He notes that the view of what is ethically acceptable regarding native Swedish bones has changed over time. When the ship was salvaged in the 1960s, the skeletons were actually buried in a real grave, but later they were taken up and made part of the museum's exhibition. The former taboo of exhibiting "Christian bones" had lost its power during this period (76–77). The museum had, however, long internal discussions regarding the ethical problems. The solution was to exhibit the skeletons in the special atmosphere presented above, together with texts which clarified the scientific information they provide. This would make clear that the museum did

not want to use the dead for an entertaining spectacle (p. 78). Ekström notes that the combination of skeletons and realistic reconstructions of individual faces minimizes the emotional distance to the dead, but also activates the ethical problems that were so central in the debate about the collections of the ethnographic museums (pp. 86–87).

In 1945 the Swedish submarine *Ulven* sank after a collision with a mine. Twenty-three people died. Later the same year the entire boat was salvaged with all the dead bodies. This disaster is the subject of chapter 4 of the book. The special theme of the chapter is the fact that the *Ulven* disaster resulted in exhibitions at two different museums, one in Stockholm (2002) and another in Karlskrona (2014). Ekström tries to identify the distinctive characteristics of these two exhibitions in comparison to each other. The exhibition in Karlskrona does indeed include objects from the wreck itself – such as the flag and the metal wolf symbolizing the boat – which directly represent this particular boat itself and at the same time the Swedish navy. But the exhibition also showed a different type of objects: some personal belongings of one of the boat's engineers, Gustav Roslund, such as his wallet and his driver's licence. The – earlier – exhibition in Stockholm showed primarily objects with a direct connection with the boat and the disaster – such as a lifebuoy with the name *Ulven* etc. – all clear metonyms for the boat and the disaster. Personal objects are lacking. Ekström argues that this is a fundamental difference between the two types of objects: objects belonging to a crew member mark the individual, while the objects belonging to the boat represent the Swedish navy, military forces, and nation (p. 105). In Karlskrona, both types of objects are exhibited, and the visitor can choose to identify with one or the other; in Stockholm, only the latter option is possible. Ekström argues that the difference represents a change over time: the earlier (2002) Stockholm exhi-

bition promotes ideas about the nation and its military forces, while the later (2014) Karlskrona exhibition moves towards a framing of the individual, the family, and the loss (pp. 109–110).

The chapter on the *Titanic* discusses an international exhibition, arranged by a Spanish event enterprise, which came to Gothenburg in 2019. In the opening part, Ekström provides a number of reflections concerning the always relevant issue of authenticity. He notes that “Titanic” usually refers to the disaster rather than the ship, with the consequence for an exhibition that it seems to matter if an object from the ship is from before or after the disaster: the ship that was built in Belfast is not exactly the same as the one which sank a few months later in the North Atlantic (pp. 116–117). Many of the objects in this particular exhibition are quite trivial in themselves, such as a blanket and a pair of a child’s boots, but since they were used during the shipwreck, they carry a strong authenticity. This type of objects provides the exhibition with a personal dimension of the same kind as Gustav Roslund’s wallet in the *Ulven* exhibition (pp. 121–123). Ekström also identifies a clear message of the exhibition: it was human hubris, a modern version of the Tower of Babel, that caused the disaster.

The *Estonia* disaster in 1994 is still a trauma in Sweden (as well as in Estonia, it may be added). Many people have strong personal relations to it. Chapter 6 focuses on the special challenges for Sjöhistoriska Museet in Stockholm when they opened an exhibition on the *Estonia* only eleven years after the disaster. Ekström reflects on the importance of the short time between disaster and exhibition and contrasts it at this point to the *Vasa* and *Ulven* exhibitions (pp. 140–141). With the help of a number of internal documents from the planning of the exhibition, Ekström follows and analyses the precautions taken by the museum to avoid potential criticism. There was free entrance to the exhibition and no *Estonia* souvenirs were sold

in the shop (p. 140). By such decisions, the exhibitions could avoid the accusations of making profit and public entertainment of human disaster, as occurred frequently in the *Per Brahe* case. The short time since the disaster also gave the exhibition a therapeutic effect. In his analysis, Ekström pays special attention to the “White Room” for contemplation, which formed an important part of the exhibition. Ekström reflects on the “different versions of death” presented by the exhibition, the particular death of people in the stormy sea during the *Estonia* shipwreck and the existential death, concerning everybody, which were combined by the creation of the White Room (pp. 147–149). The chapter also connects with the previous discussion of authentic objects from the disaster: the bow visor from the *Estonia* has a uniqueness that authentic objects from the other ships in the book lack, since the damage (and loss) of this particular object was the direct cause of the shipwreck (pp. 160–162). Another interesting reflection is that the *Estonia* exhibition chose to focus on the survivors, rather than the dead, which is in contrast to the focus in the *Titanic* exhibition, and again Ekström connects this with the short time that had passed between disaster and exhibition.

In 1952 a Swedish DC 3 was shot down by the Soviet air force. In 2003, its wreckage was found at the bottom of the Baltic Sea, and the following year it was salvaged. The chapter in the book on this case discusses an exhibition in 2010. The exhibition focussed on the political context: leading politicians lied or misled the Swedish people regarding the military mission of the DC 3 and Swedish security policy in general. Ekström is, as usual, primarily interested in the fact that the wreckage shown at the exhibition was also a grave for several humans for many years. Just as in the *Ulven* exhibition in Karlskrona, this exhibition showed some personal belongings of the dead. But Ekström notes a difference: in the *Ulven* exhibi-

tion, this served to enhance the personal, individual aspect, while the DC 3 exhibition rather focusses on the dead crew as a collective (p. 174). The chapter concludes with reflection on the use of life jackets as symbols of disasters.

The last chapter, “Dark Matter”, provides synthesizing reflections on some of the topics discussed in the book: the problems connected with the fact that museums contain human remains, the relationship between experience and knowledge, and the importance of the material objects for the human death which the museums aim to communicate (pp. 189–215).

Now some comments on the book as a whole. It is clear that the different chapters all differ partly in their focus and main questions. The distinctive character of each case has governed both the analysis and the structure of them. However, there are recurring themes in all the individual studies: the ethical aspects of exhibitions connected with human death, including the importance of the degree of distance in time, the staging of the “deathscape”, and the handling of the potential accusation of making entertainment and profit out of human death; the choice of objects to show, including the focus on individual belongings or objects directly connected with the disaster; the importance of authenticity; the choice of focus or the message of the exhibition.

The analyses of the different exhibitions might be described as reflecting discussions rather than scholarly inquiry: they are neither rooted in strict theoretical models – although theoretical concepts are sometimes used – nor in clearly defined criteria or categories. It is more an essay than an academic study, despite the theoretical introduction and the extensive footnote references. But this is only an advantage. While theoretical models in much recent scholarship are short-lived fads which often lead the scholar to press the material into frames where it does not work, Ekström’s relatively impressionistic observations and

reflections are probably more sustainable over time. They increase our understanding of both the collective memory of specific traumatic events and our understanding of what museums aim at and succeed with in connection with the delicate phenomenon of *deathscape*. The theoretical concepts which in fact are mentioned are all used in the concrete analyses, supporting the argument. They shed light on the material – in far too many cases in recent academic works the opposite is the case, and the material is just a means for the scholar to show his knowledge of the most fashionable theory. Here, Ekström instead provides a good example of how theory in academic studies should work. My general conclusion is that Ekström’s book is a valuable work which deserves a large audience among academic scholars as well as everybody working with museum exhibitions.

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Life with the Radio

Elin Franzén: Radio. Vardagsliv tillsammans med ett massmedium. Institutionen för etnologi, religionshistoria och genusvetenskap, Stockholm 2021. (Mediehistoriskt arkiv 51.) 310 pp. Ill. Diss.

“It’s a totally lonely world, I don’t share this world with *anyone*,” says Lars, one of the radio listeners interviewed by Elin Franzén during her work on this dissertation, the title of which means “Radio: Everyday Life Together with a Mass Medium”. The worlds that Lars and the other listeners shape are at once solitary and shared by millions. The same programme can have many listeners, but listeners do not listen to the same combination of programmes. Each has a unique radio world, and the author’s ambition has been to gain insight into this. It is

people's experiences of radio that are at the centre of the dissertation, whose purpose is to "examine encounters between the individual and the mass medium in order to understand how radio takes shape as a perceived phenomenon" (p. 10). It is thus not *what* people listen to but *how* listening shapes their relationship with the radio medium that is in focus for Franzén. However, the concept of radio is not uniform; it can accommodate different formats. One is traditional linear radio, live radio and the like, that is to say, radio in the form of broadcasts at fixed times. Here, listening must be adapted to a schedule set by others. The other is the podcast format, which means that the listener chooses when and how to listen. Here it is the listener who is in control and decides when a programme should start and finish, with the ability to pause, skip, and listen again. The two formats make listening different. This creates different relationships to radio as a mass medium. The people who participate in Franzén's research in different ways include those who only listen to one of the formats and those who listen to a mixture of the two.

The introductory chapter, as custom prescribes, presents the purpose, theory, method, and material. The theoretical starting point for the dissertation is phenomenology. Franzén stresses that both in the work of formulating her perspectives and questions and during the analysis phase, the idea of intentionality was central because it drew her attention to the components that shape people's relationships with the medium. She writes: "The phenomenon of radio includes, on the one hand, the medium with its objective, constitutive properties and, on the other hand, how these characteristics are experienced in the contexts of specific individuals" (p. 14). Radio is certainly all about sound, which can be considered something intangible. But listening cannot take place without some kind of apparatus, which means that radio also involves material things. The listener relates to objects and technology and the

listening is done in a physical place. In addition, there is also a temporal aspect: the structures of the medium, such as technical formats and broadcast times, affect the experience of time. Space and time are central concepts that are problematized with the help of scholars such as Tim Cresswell, Michel de Certeau, and Yi-Fu Tuan.

The material for the dissertation consists of responses to two open-ended questionnaires and interviews with radio listeners. The first of the questionnaires was distributed by Nordiska Museet in 1967, while the second was sent between 2017 and 2019 to the networks of permanent informants linked to the Institute for Language and Folklore in Gothenburg and Nordiska Museet. It was also published in the form of appeals on the institutions' websites and Facebook pages. The interviews, which were conducted with a total of 17 people, were based on three themes: listening situations, radio content, and memories. In advance of the interviews, the participants had been asked to keep a diary of their listening, which made it possible during the interview to talk about concrete radio situations.

After the introduction comes chapter 2, "Orientation in the History of Radio", which begins with the observation that "The kind of phenomenon that radio is varies depending on when the question is asked" (p. 69). Here we follow the development of the radio medium from the crystal receivers of the 1920s to today's smartphones with apps allowing different types of listening. The technology has of course changed very much during these hundred years, but this applies at least as much to the range of programmes, the forms of financing, and the place of listening. The older questionnaire material is used here to shed light on the earliest period, while the empirical material for the next three chapters mainly consists of the interviews and answers to the new questionnaire. Each of these chapters is based on a specific theme: 3) "Apparatus", 4) "Content", and 5) "Time".

In the first of these, the focus is on materiality. The informants describe radio sets that they have used at different times in their lives and the kind of listening that they associate with them. The oldest informants remember a “box,” the stationary electron tube receiver in their childhood home. Others remember the shape and colour of the first transistor radio that they owned, and the change it meant to have a portable radio. Memories of the summer holiday serial are associated with the physical apparatus and hearing the title song of the Beatles LP *Sgt. Pepper* for the first time, and with the tent on the lawn where the transistor was placed. It is very different from today, when many people have the radio in their phones and often do not even own a separate radio set. Radio technology has undergone a “quotidianization”, as is evident from the narratives.

The next chapter is about content. This is examined from two aspects: the content of radio as a range of programmes on offer, and the content as an object of listening. The range and the sound are considered as different forms in which the medium appears and are examined from the same perspective as the technical apparatus in the previous chapter. Based on interviews and questionnaire responses, the author analyses preferences, habits, and memories linked to particular features or programmes. Being able to do other things while listening, along with the ability to conjure up one’s own pictures, is something that many highlight as unique and positive characteristics of the radio medium.

After apparatus and content, in the following chapter the focus shifts to time. Different listening formats and their meanings for the experience of being in the present moment, everyday routines and radio as a phenomenon throughout life constitute temporal dimensions. This is investigated with the help of interviews and questionnaire responses, as well as radio diaries. Listening to a live broadcast means that one’s own time is

synchronized with that of others, which is different from listening afterwards through a podcast. If the latter means freedom of choice, the former can contribute to a sense of community. One informant describes how she sometimes wants to listen live, “to know that right now there are millions of other people listening to the same thing” (p. 228). How, when, and what you listen to is different for different people, but it also differs between weekdays and weekends, mornings and evenings. The dissertation then concludes with a sixth chapter in which the study and its results are summarized and highlighted.

Elin Franzén has written an interesting and exciting dissertation. The study is ably conducted, the book is well structured, and the language is clear. The division into three chapters focusing, in turn, on apparatus, content, and time is excellent. This clarifies how radio is a medium that can be both understood and used in different ways and from different perspectives. The combination of interviews and questionnaires works well. However, I question the selection of the literature on which the discussion of questionnaires is based. This relies entirely on the edited volume *Frågelist och berättarglädje: Om frågelistor som forskningsmetod och folklig genre*, published in 2003. There is much more literature than this, and more recent works, from Sweden and the other Nordic countries, that could have been profitably used to problematize the method and the material. The composition of interviewees, or rather how this is handled, can also be questioned. Among the seventeen people interviewed, there is one who grew up in Switzerland but was studying in Sweden at the time of the interview. Having your radio background in another country and having relatively short experience of using radio in Sweden ought surely to be of some significance in this context. Yet this is not touched upon at all in the analysis. That is a shame, because it could have added further perspective and

greater depth. Despite these objections, Elin Franzén's dissertation has many good qualities. Through her emphasis on radio use as an everyday practice, and with her sharp ethnological gaze, she brings new and important perspectives to research in both the interdisciplinary field of radio studies and media research.

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Folklore as Social Critique

Maria Hansson: Osynliga band. Folketro som medel för social kritik i Victoria Benedictssons, Anne Charlotte Lefflers och Selma Lagerlöfs författarskap. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2021. 285 pp. Ill. Diss.

Maria Hansson is a lecturer in Swedish and researcher in literature in the Faculty of Nordic Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. This is her doctoral dissertation about three women in the modern literary breakthrough – Victoria Benedictsson, Anne Charlotte Leffler, and Selma Lagerlöf, all of them active in Sweden in the 1880s – and how they used supernatural elements in their works at a time that celebrated social realism. Maria Hansson asks how we should understand this. The writers of the modern breakthrough sought to build a future and more liberated society and condemned conservatism in whatever form. In parallel with this, women's issues were also being increasingly highlighted. The questions discussed concerned marriage and the possibility of divorce, equality between the sexes, morality, eroticism, and the problematic relationship between man and woman. These matters were debated in literature by both female and male writers in Scandinavia, but it is among the women writers that folklore motifs found a very special use. The supernatural elements acted as a mask behind which the

women could articulate their social criticism and challenge the oppressive social structures under which they lived. They demanded education, reform of marriage, an end to double standards in sex, and economic independence. However, female authors could not discuss these issues openly, and if they did they were questioned. Their works were disparagingly called "literature of indignation." Hansson's purpose is to show that the women could employ folkloristic motifs as indirect criticism of prevailing norms, without provoking the male-dominated society. Folklore is interpreted here as a weapon in the struggle for new ideas of an equal society. By this means, the author finds, literature contributed to female emancipation while becoming a strategy for seemingly conforming to the norms of society while conveying a female utopian vision.

Maria Hansson proceeds from a selection of texts by the three authors in which they let folklore illustrate some female issue. In the selected works we encounter supernatural (male) beings such as the *näck*, the *lindworm*, the *ghost*, the *devil*, the *man of the sea*, and the *troll*. Hansson provides a detailed survey of how folk beliefs and the storytelling tradition were used in literature and art throughout the nineteenth century. The many collections of traditional oral fairy tales published in that century were a major source of inspiration for writers and artists. The supernatural beings that the authors incorporate in their texts were therefore well known to contemporaries, making it possible to charge them with new meaning.

The author derives her knowledge of "the supernatural cultural heritage" from modern folkloristic research. Several well-known folklorists have contributed texts about different beings in folklore, their function and significance, such as Louise Hagberg (belief in ghosts), Herman Tillhagen (aquatic beings), Ebbe Schön (forest beings), Camilla Asplund Ingemark (trolls), to name just a few. Furthermore, the author

refers to the French work on trolls by Virginie Amilien from 1996, focusing on symbolism and the roots of folklore in older Norse beliefs about death, and to John Lindow's *Trolls: An Unnatural History* (2014), a cultural history of trolls. Scandinavian folktale research is not explicitly discussed, but it is clear that Hansson has drawn inspiration primarily from the psychoanalytic research tradition. Maria Hansson makes no distinction between different genres of folk poetry and uses the terms folk belief, folk tale, legend, myth, and folk song almost synonymously, which ought to make a traditionally schooled folklorist shudder. In my opinion, however, it turns out that the perspective applied by Hansson has no need for a folkloristic discussion or differentiation of genres. The female authors use the supernatural to present their critical view of society symbolically and allegorically, not, as in folkloristic research, in relation to aspects of belief and truth. In Hansson's analysis of the role of folklore in the texts, it is mainly the "functions" of folk belief – erotic, admonitory, and social – that are discussed in the folkloristic research to which she refers.

Maria Hansson's analysis is fascinating and creative, but not always easy to follow. There are many digressions, which repeatedly break up the overall structure of the dissertation, where the individual supernatural beings are the basis for the analysis of the concealed messages. Hansson undertakes a close reading of the texts in relation to the authors' social, cultural, and historical contexts and their own life and experience, the women's issues of the time, and the placing of the supernatural elements in the plot (the epic context). The analysis is performed at several levels in the works, which complicates matters for readers who are not familiar with the content of the texts or with literary research. The author does outline in relative detail the plot of each work and her train of thought, which in some cases facilitates an understanding, but in other

cases it actually complicates things through the wealth of detail.

The *lindworm* is portrayed by Victoria Benedictsson in her novel *Pengar* ("Money", 1885). In her analysis Hansson proceeds from two different versions of the folktale, one taken from Svend Grundtvig's Danish collection *Gamle danske minder i folkemunde* (1854), the other from *Norske folkeeventyr* (1844), Norwegian folktales collected by P. C. Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe. In the novel, the lindworm contributes two elements, the motif of metamorphosis along with phallic symbolism. The lindworm appears in the middle of the novel when the main character Selma is told that she must marry an older man. Referring to Bruno Bettelheim's psychological studies of fairy tales, in which the tales are a response to children's anxiety, Benedictsson uses the lindworm as an allegory to explain and comes to terms with the protagonist's sexual anxiety. With the help of the tale of the lindworm, Selma can give vent to her anxiety as well as the disgust provoked by the wedding night and the man she is to marry. Hansson reads phallic symbolism into the description of the sleeping husband the morning after, when he is perceived as a monster with scaly skin and can be compared to a monstrous penis. Selma symbolically expresses her sexual aversion to a repulsive husband and uses the fairy tale to understand and accept the reality that, until the wedding night, had been alien to her. Hansson's conclusion is that Benedictsson uses the tale of the lindworm to present a veiled critique of child marriage and the lack of sex education for women.

The *näck* or water sprite also appears in *Pengar*; but in the form of a painting of the sprite that Selma looks at, which prompts her to reflect on being forced to marry and thus lose her independence. The *näck* is portrayed above all in Anne Charlotte Leffler's *En sommarsaga* ("A Summer's Tale", 1886). He manifests himself in both works when marriage issues are raised and, accord-

ing to Hansson, he has an admonitory function. In her interpretation of the two texts, she draws on the research of the historian Mikael Häll, who believes that folk beings are used as a way of positioning oneself against a certain social order. In Leffler's story, the näck appears throughout the first part, before the main character, Ulla, chooses love at the expense of her professional career. Ulla falls in love with a handsome elementary school teacher, Ralf, whom she compares to the näck, influenced by several romantic Swedish poems. She perceives Ralf as a personification of nature and as an erotic being. Through the näck, Leffler criticizes the puritanical society and its conventions, using the näck to warn readers about what happens after one affirms sexuality, that is to say, accepting marriage and sacrificing one's own interests. The function of the näck is thus to warn of the various dangers of marriage – being forced to abstain from a professional career as in Leffler's case or drawing attention to discriminatory legislation as in Benedictsson's case. The erotic function ascribed to the näck, as an alluring creature dangerous to women, is toned down by the authors in these texts and he is de-eroticized and transformed instead into a warning against marriage.

A *ghost* appears in Selma Lagerlöf's short story "Spökhanden" ("The Ghost Hand", 1898). The ghost appears in the story when the orphaned heroine writes "my beloved" to a man she does not love, in order to escape from her controlling guardians. The ghost, or rather the ghost hand, is used to criticize marriage as the only way for young women of the higher bourgeoisie to support themselves. Hansson analyses the story parallel to an earlier short story by Lagerlöf, "Riddardottern och havsmannen" ("The Knight's Daughter and the Man of the Sea", 1892) with the same message – condemning the fact that marriage is the only livelihood for a woman. The story about the knight's daughter Kristin Thott and the *havsmän* or man of the

sea is set in fourteenth-century Sweden. The man of the sea is a strange, almost supernatural figure who is described as half water sprite, half human and is not strictly a being from folklore, but he is given a symbolic role in the plot. Before the wedding that she is forced into, the knight's daughter sees him as an attractive and enchanting man of the sea, but he transforms after marriage into a sea monster, a symbol of alluring eroticism. His fish-like body suggests a phallus, in Hansson's interpretation, a symbol of eroticism but also of patriarchal society. In both Lagerlöf's short stories, the men threaten and force the women to marry them by intimidating them. It was the husband's task in turn-of-the-century Sweden to keep a woman in the place assigned to her by her husband.

The *devil* is represented by the works owner Sintram and his devil's pact with the pensioners in Selma Lagerlöf's *Gösta Berlings saga* (1891). Through this pact Lagerlöf seeks to demonstrate the legislation that discriminated against women. The life of the young women in the novel – Anna, Marianne, and Elisabeth – is constrained by the law. The novel thus alludes to women's social issues.

The *troll*, finally, in his capacity as the Mountain King, occurs in Victoria Benedictsson's prose story *Den bergtagna* ("Lured into the Mountain", 1888); as a source, Hansson refers to the ballad "Den bergtagna" in *Sveriges medeltida ballader* (vol. 1, version Ba). The heroine of the story identifies with the maiden in the ballad, as a critique of free love. The action takes place among a group of Nordic artists in Paris in the late nineteenth century. At the centre is a sculptor, Alland, and two women: Erna, who has previously been his mistress, and Louise, who loves him passionately. The sculptor is courting Louise to get her to agree to his terms: free love without demands or rights. He manipulates her in the same way that the troll in the ballad manipulates the maiden who eventually drinks poison as the troll tries to take her back by force. Louise likewise commits

suicide. Free love was not an option for a woman, as it was for a man; instead it left her more vulnerable. Therefore, she chooses to take her own life.

Maria Hansson's analysis is, as I said, fascinating – and rather impenetrable in places – but it is also credible in the light of the reality in which the three authors lived and which they struggled to change, each in her own way. Hansson provides an exhaustive and insightful description of the historical, social, and cultural context in which Benedictsson, Leffler, and Lagerlöf worked and how their own lives were affected. The way they chose to present their social criticism – through traditional folk beings – must be seen as ingenious. Hansson concludes in the final chapter, “Female Emancipation through Folk Belief?”, that the greatest Swedish women writers enlisted “living folklore in the service of progressive ideals and women's issues”.

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**Catching Border Pop-ups
in Historic and Contemporary
Everyday Life in Åland**

Ida Hughes Tidlund: Autonomous Åland. A Hundred Years of Borderwork in the Baltic Sea. Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies, Stockholm University 2021. 219 pp. Ill. Diss.

In her doctoral dissertation in ethnology, Ida Hughes Tidlund approaches borders as a phenomenon that requires and causes actions. Her work is based on material concerning Åland, which has a status in-between a region and a state. This betwixt status challenges clear definitions in many ways, borders being dispersed here and there, ordering the daily life of Ålanders. The aim of the thesis is to explore the related borderwork and the various ways borders have affected

historic and contemporary everyday life on both micro and macro levels. Borders are approached both as object of actions, constituted by activity, and as a source of actions, shaping what one does and how.

Throughout the book, Hughes Tidlund sheds light on different aspects of the historical process leading up to the present situation in Åland. In the aftermath of the First World War and a tense conflict between Finland and Sweden, the League of Nations decided in 1921 that the group of islands in the Baltic Sea, known as Åland, would constitute an autonomous and demilitarized province within Finland. Åland was granted autonomy, with a so-called Guarantee Law to ensure that the rights of minority were maintained. The language, culture and traditions of the island population were to be protected and preserved and land was to remain in the hands of legally domiciled islanders. The Autonomy Act, which has been thoroughly revised twice, had three keystones: regional autonomy with a provincial government and considerable home-rule; the demilitarization and neutralization of the province's; and Finnish sovereignty that overrules autonomy in some cases. There is also a regional citizenship called the “right of domicile”, regulating the purchase of land, voting and standing in local elections, and pursuing trade.

The solution suggested by the League of Nations was not exactly what the Ålanders themselves were hoping for: their delegation had been campaigning to join Sweden, a nation they felt they had more ties to. However, as an outcome of their position as a protected minority and local efforts, Åland has been described as most Swedish-speaking region in the world. The Åland example is known globally as a precedent for settlements of territorial disputes and conflict resolution. However, it should be noted that Åland is not unique only because of its special status, but also because of its maritime landscape. Defining and main-

taining borders on a maritime surface is demanding, since the sea challenges delimitation and makes borders more negotiable.

In her study Hughes Tidlund asks what a border does, instead of what it is. She studies borders both as making things happen and as objects in the making, in the need for maintenance, making use of Sartre's concept of *practico-inert*. Stasis (*inert*) is seen as constituted by actions (*practico*). Border has often been practised to such a degree that it seems stable, but it still requires continuing maintenance, namely borderwork.

As Hughes Tidlund states, her study is based on three pillars: Åland as a society, phenomenology as an approach, and borders as research objects. The phenomenological perspective here indicates that the focus is on the relation between structures and individuals, bringing out the very vagueness of borders. The study concentrates on situations when a border suddenly materializes, when it is somehow activated. When a border pops up, it demands action, the nature of which depends on what one wants to achieve. The focus in the study is on small incidents of everyday life, and the individual agency as part of "hodological navigation". The borders popping up in daily life are not understood as strict linear entities, but rather as margins, which leave room also for manoeuvres.

To capture border pop-ups in whatever shape they appear, Hughes Tidlund applies the method of close reading. The material used has been chosen following the understanding of border as sanctioned by authority and handled by individuals. To understand the institutional borderwork, the author has explored the demarcation documents, legislation and maps. Individual accounts, on the other hand, are studied through archived ethnological interviews (recorded between 1952 and 2015) and interviews and participant observation conducted by the author herself. The material used is quite diverse, enabling the author to shed light

on the different angles of the borderwork taking place in Åland, but occasionally also requiring extra effort from the reader to comprehend all the different aspects of borderwork analysed.

The dissertation consists of a prologue and seven chapters. In the introductory chapter, Hughes Tidlund introduces Åland as a field of research and the starting points of the study. This is followed by five empirical chapters and a concluding chapter, "After a Hundred Years of Borderwork". The empirical chapters analyse both borderwork done by authorities, intending to bring clarity, and individual border navigations.

Chapter 2, "Negotiating Laws of Autonomy", explores Åland's betwixt nature with regard to law. After outlining the legal framework of the Autonomy Act and its revisions, the chapter turns to practical situations and tensions related to the legal betwixtness in people's everyday life. Betwixtness gives room to manoeuvre and negotiate, but legal ambiguities and situationality can be also wearing for local authorities and residents. The interviews show that, for example, the customs border popped up repeatedly as a paramount aspect of everyday life causing confusion. The case of the customs border exemplifies how borders require observation, but not necessarily adherence. Law violations such as small-scale smuggling are part of everyday life and a theme often encountered in both historical and contemporary materials. This is a sign of a pragmatic attitude towards borders, which was valued also in the little rocky island of Märket, divided between three jurisdictional areas: Finnish, Ålandic and Swedish. In addition to law, the maritime landscape is also ruled by the weather, and a set of laws presented by nature must also be observed; they cannot be changed by humans.

In chapter 3, "Settling the Maritime Borders", the author uses archival documents and field notes to explore the process of making the limits of Åland's territory clear. As the League of Nations

was to decide where the future state borders of Finland and Sweden would be, it strove to find an easily defended natural border line. Once defined, however, borders also need updates and maintenance. Through the case of Märket and sea borders, the author explores the challenges nature poses to borderwork. Maritime borders are understood to disturb common definitions of borders, since sea as a surface that is always on the move tends to resist categorization and require careful maintenance, in order not to come adrift.

Chapter 4, “Navigating Waters and Borders”, continues the discussion of maritime borders, from the perspective of individuals manoeuvring the territory. In this chapter, borders appear rather stationary, as an object people need to observe. Applying the concept of hodological navigation, the author shows the ways people assess the conditions necessary to consider in relation to one’s intention to move. Both archived and contemporary interviews confirm the importance of experience as a navigational tool, be it personal or others’ experience acquired through stories.

The fifth chapter, titled “In the Hands of the Islanders”, concentrates on the borderwork falling under the power of autonomy: the process of defining the local, Ålandic specificity that was to be maintained. Based on published sources and archived interviews, the chapter demonstrates how Ålanders were involved in creating a community and sense of belonging. This borderwork included the creation of detailed maps and school curricula, implementing the idea of Åland as distinctly different in its own right. The chapter also discusses the ways local leaders acted as “myth-makers”, giving Ålanders a shared past. Efforts to collect and document people’s memories and life stories had the same aim: to define traditions that were part of local specificity. However, it becomes evident that occasionally the past as remembered did not mirror the rather romantic idea interviewers had about it.

Through these different cases, the author shows how the specificity of Åland was achieved through a polarized relation with Finland: Ålanders rarely oppose themselves to Sweden.

The last empirical chapter, “Our Land, Our Way”, pays attention to the protection of culture by legislation and the ways in which minority protection regime falls into people’s laps. Based on interviews, law texts and newspaper articles, the chapter provides examples of border consciousness slipping into everyday situations. The interviewees describe how almost anything can activate an underlying friction and result in remarks about the disturbing presence of Finnishness in Åland. A local specificity is pivotal to Åland’s existence and appears to be less open to pragmatic approaches, especially in contemporary material.

The chapter elaborates the theme of relative distances touched earlier in the book, making use of the concept of elastic remoteness to describe Åland’s relation to Finland. Following the anthropologist Edwin Ardener, remoteness is here understood to be conceptual rather than a matter of geographical distance. The interviews indicate that there is a knowledge gap on both sides: Finns and Ålanders do not know each other very well, which increases border consciousness and anxiety. The chapter analyses not only the position of Ålanders as a first minority in relation to Finland, but also that of Finnish-speaking Finns as a so-called second order minority in Åland. How to find a good balance of rights between these different minorities?

Similarly to researchers studying transnational fields, Hughes Tidlund has been compelled to navigate different laws regarding research ethics. She conducted the research in Finland being based in a Swedish university, and there was thus a need to apply two different ethical frameworks. In addition, Åland as a field of research shaped the process and the questions she could explore.

According to her, one needs to understand that peaceful is not equal to conflict-free, and living in Åland can require navigation not only of borders, but also of tensions and emotions. Indeed, borders are sites of indignation and irritation, also forming a line between legal and illegal activity. In her text, Hughes Tidlund has decided to omit or obscure details about the participants' age, gender, profession, home town and family situation in order to guarantee their anonymity. Participants were also not given pseudonyms, because combined quotes could more easily reveal identities. Hughes Tidlund explains that, in a tight-knit community like Åland, this strategy seemed necessary to enable anonymization: "The short distances between people required a longer distance between the field and the text." The study thus attempts to keep an intentional distance to the research participants, both living and deceased, and writing in English also contributed to this. Translation can be seen to detach stories and experiences from the source to some extent.

Another related theme, which left more questions unanswered, was Hughes Tidlund's relation to Åland. This is what all the participants in the field also inquired about: how was she related to Åland, "whose side" was she on. One of the research participants pointed out that one is always a part of one's family in Åland, with the implication that there is a need to think about the reputation of one's family for generations ahead. This view took the author by surprise, running contrary to seeing herself as an individual, responsible only for her own choices and actions. Hughes Tidlund admits to being intrigued about the familiarity of Åland, its similarity to Sweden, being at the same time dissimilar in ways that really made a difference. She states that she has applied a one-sided view of the border relation that has two sides, concentrating on Åland, Finland being nearby throughout the study. What I missed somewhat was a discussion of Åland's relation and ties

to Sweden and Swedishness, but maybe this is the topic of yet another study. All in all, the thesis surely has succeeded in the aim of taking a close look at what has been taken for granted or said in the margins of stories, making the familiarity of borders strange again.

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A Norwegian Pioneer

Ernst Håkon Jahr: Nybrottsmannen Andreas Faye. Med bibliografi og ikonografi ved Jan Faye Braadland. Novus forlag, Oslo 2021. 1021 pp. Ill.

The legend collector Andreas Faye (1802–1869) published the first book of Norwegian folklore in 1833. It was entitled *Norske Sagn* and it was a pioneering work. However, his retelling of these "Norwegian Legends" was mercilessly criticized by P. A. Munch, as a result of which Faye has been discredited in academic circles almost up to the present day. In recent years, however, many have called for the rehabilitation of Faye and his efforts, pleading that he should be granted the recognition he rightfully deserves. Ernst Håkon Jahr's recently published biography of this pioneer, *Nybrottsmannen Andreas Faye*, is by far the weightiest and most comprehensive work in this connection. It is a magnificent and monumental volume of some 800 pages, and in addition the book includes a thorough bibliography and iconography of just under 200 pages, compiled by Jan Faye Braadland. Faye's large and all-embracing activity, including both his academic work and his social commitment, has never before been treated in its entirety. The book also brings out several unknown aspects of Faye's life and work.

It is somewhat original that Jahr has two introductions to the book. In the first he describes Faye's meeting with Goethe

in Weimar in 1831, while the second considers the writing process of Faye's first book, *Norges Historie* ("The History of Norway"), published the same year, the reception of the book, and his appointment as member of the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters. Jahr uses this second introduction as a stepping stone to the biography as a whole. Here he asks questions about Faye's background, education, and the circumstances that enabled him to become a pioneer.

The first chapter of the book deals with Faye's childhood and schooling. Here Jahr gives an account of Andreas Faye's birth, family background, schooling, and upbringing in Drammen, putting this into a historical-social context. The Faye family belonged to the city's commercial and business elite, and thus the city's top social stratum. This, of course, was significant for the education Andreas received and the social circle in which he moved. At the age of eight he was sent to a private school to be taught by the fabled rector of the parish of Røyken, Christian Holst. It was here his interest in history was aroused, and this was where he also heard fairy tales and legends. He later attended *borger-skole* and *latinskole*. At the latter school Andreas became friends with the brothers Nicolai and Jørgen Aall, sons of the theologian, businessman, ironworks owner, and politician Jacob Aall of Nes in Holt near Tvedestrand. This friendship would be crucial for the future course of Andreas's life.

In the next chapter Jahr describes in detail Faye's encounter with the University of Kristiania and his educational path to a degree in theology. In addition to the professors of theology, Faye came into contact with the history professor Cornelius Enevold Steenbloch. Faye also attended his lectures in history, and developed a close relationship when Steenbloch acted as his tutor throughout his studies. Steenbloch would be an important inspiration for Faye's interest in history. During his student years Faye undertook several walking tours in the

region around Oslo and acquired a comprehensive knowledge of nature, culture, and history. Shortly after completing his university studies, he travelled to Copenhagen where he met and established contact with a network of key scholars, such as Peter Erasmus Müller and Adam Oehlenschläger. It was Jacob Aall who opened the doors for Faye to this academic community in Copenhagen.

After graduating in theology in 1828, Faye left Oslo to take up a teaching position at Arendal Middle School. The third chapter of the book is about Faye's teaching and life in Arendal. It was during his time here that Faye finished the textbook *Norges Historie til Brug ved Ungdommens Underviisning* ("A History of Norway for Use in the Teaching of Young People"). It is obvious that Faye wanted to expand his knowledge and improve his teaching qualifications. The fourth chapter of the book deals with Faye's educational journey in southern Europe in 1831. His first prolonged stop on the tour was in Copenhagen, where he contacted the professional network he had previously established. During this stay in Copenhagen, P. E. Müller strongly urged Faye to publish his own collection of Norwegian legends. On his continued journey southwards, Faye met Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Ludwig Tieck.

The fifth chapter of the book covers Faye's involvement in the local community after he returned from the long trip abroad. Here Jahr describes Faye's role in the establishment of a printing press, newspaper, library, and museum in Arendal. It is clear that Faye, inspired by his tour, was a central figure in this. Furthermore, Faye took up the position of rector in Holt and thus also gained a central function in the local community.

While the structure of the first five chapters is predominantly chronological, the structure of the subsequent chapters becomes more thematic-chronological. In chapter six the author concentrates on the theme of Faye as a historian and on the histories he wrote. Jahr claims in that chapter that Faye was the

foremost national historian in the early 1830s. The chapter discusses how he came to write the textbook *Norges Historie* from 1831 and publish the second edition of *Udtog af Norges Riges Historie* from 1834. Jahr additionally compares the content of these two editions. Jahr points out that the historical events that Faye selected for the textbook have been repeated in later history textbooks. In this way, Jahr gives Faye the credit for the national narratives from our earliest history.

In the seventh chapter Jahr provides a very detailed account of Faye's work on the collection of legends, *Norske Sagn*, from 1833, its publication and reception. In this chapter, Jahr writes about Faye's sources of inspiration and contributors. He goes on to cite P. A. Munch's harsh assessment of the book, a review that Jahr characterizes as academically weak. Jahr devotes a great deal of space to refuting Munch's critique, and summarizes the entire debate about the principles for rendering folklore that arose in its wake. In Jahr's opinion, the reason Munch wrote such a negative critique is that he wanted to position himself for an appointment at the university by discrediting Faye, whom he perceived as a strong competitor. Jahr further specifies that Munch based his critical argumentation on the views of Albert Ludwig Grimm. According to Jahr, this has later been mistakenly understood as a reference to the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. In this same chapter Jahr also goes into more detail about Faye's relationship with P. Chr. Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe. Whereas Faye comes across as an amiable and helpful man, Jørgen Moe's behaviour is seen in a somewhat unflattering light. The chapter ends with Faye's efforts for the preservation of the material cultural heritage, in the form of his collaboration with J. C. Dahl to preserve the stave churches and to found the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments.

The development of a separate Norwegian written language was central to

the work of creating a distinct Norwegian identity. This was another project that Faye was engaged in, noting down a number of dialect words. In the eighth chapter of the book, Jahr examines this in more detail, comparing Faye's style and language in *Norske Sagn* from 1833 and the second edition of *Norske Folke-Sagn* from 1844. Jahr argues that the changes to Faye's language in the two collections of legends anticipated the language reforms of 1862, 1907, and 1917. Furthermore, Jahr asserts that Ivar Aasen received input from Faye regarding his language project; there is no unambiguous evidence for this, but it appears to be a reasonable conclusion. As for Faye's contribution to the development of the written Norwegian language, it may be that Jahr gives Faye slightly too much credit.

The following chapter deals with Faye's work as a clergyman in Holt and Faye as a family man and his personal family tragedies. Despite great strain, he continued his work tirelessly and with great dedication. In the two following chapters, Jahr deals with Faye's social engagement and his work in organizations and politics. We learn about Faye's efforts to reduce alcohol abuse, to strengthen agriculture, to build hospitals, and to establish an agricultural college. In other words, as a theologian Andreas Faye was concerned not exclusively with the spiritual status of his flock, but also with their material conditions. In this respect he is reminiscent of Hans Nielsen Hauge. As a politician and member of parliament, Faye was involved in the repeal in 1842 of the ordinance governing religious assembly, and he was one of those who voted to have the Jewish clause in the Constitution amended the same year, although a majority voted against this.

Another important field in which Faye worked was the teacher seminary in Holt, and this is the subject of the thirteenth chapter. He was given the task of organizing and directing the teacher training college. Jahr describes Faye as an edu-

cational pioneer. The following chapter gives an account of Faye as a church politician and his participation in Scandinavian synods in the years around 1860.

Faye moved away from Holt and started his ministry in Sande in 1861. The last years of his life in Sande were a productive period in terms of writing historical works, including the books *Norge i 1814* and *Christianssands Stifts Bispe- og Stiftshistorie*. This chapter on the years in Sande is followed by the concluding chapter where Jahr summarizes the main lines and holds up Faye as a pioneer.

Jahr has given us a voluminous and comprehensive biography, one that shows the versatility of Andreas Faye – his professional and scholarly activities, his work as both a theologian and an educator, and his involvement in social issues. A clear strength of the biography is that Jahr puts Faye's life and work into a larger historical context. The book is closely written and packed with information and details; it is thorough and exhaustive, and it therefore also works very well as a biographic reference work. Sometimes, however, the presentation sticks close to the sources, merely citing the empirical evidence. As a biography the book would probably have benefited if the source material had been more successfully sifted, allowing the analytical perspective to stand out more clearly.

The level of detail in the book can sometimes provide interesting supplementary information, but at times it becomes excessive when all the minutiae interrupt the presentation and feel like digressions. This happens, for example, at places in the book where new contacts and acquaintances of Faye are introduced. The copious details can weigh down the presentation and are surely superfluous in several cases. Moreover, all the particulars sometimes have the result that the main point is not always clearly stated. The use of notes to provide the supplementary information would probably have improved the rigour of the presentation.

A biography is always intended to convey a person's special contribution in one or more fields, and the author of a biography will necessarily develop a close relationship with the person portrayed. This may mean that the author is not always objective in his or her assessments, with the risk of overestimating the importance of the subject. Overall, I would argue that Jahr manages the balance relatively well, but there are some assessments that can be discussed. Jahr claims that the collection *Norske Sagn* is close to a doctoral dissertation. Although Faye paints the historical/cultural-historical background to the legends and supplies comparative information from other European countries, Jahr makes rather too bold a claim. *Norske Sagn* is primarily a collection of traditions. Similarly, it is also debatable whether Faye was the foremost national historian of his time. In the university environment there were the history professors Rudolf Keyser and the previously mentioned P. A. Munch. The latter spent many years writing the eight-volume opus *Det norske Folks Historie*. Whether P. Chr. Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe were pupils or disciples of Faye must surely also be questioned.

For several of the quotations in the text, Jahr refers to a secondary source. It would have been preferable to use the primary sources in these cases since they are not difficult to access. Material on Faye can be found in several central Norwegian public archives. Jahr does not mention this until the very end. Perhaps he could have stated that there is also source material related to Faye in the National Library's manuscript collection. As it is, the biography is highly exhaustive, with an expanded and annotated bibliography and iconography, but perhaps there could also have been a list of archival material associated with Faye in the various archives. This would have been of great assistance to scholars in future research on Faye.

Jahr's biography of Faye will serve as a lasting standard reference work,

indispensable for all future researchers. It grants Andreas Faye the honour he rightfully deserves. Although I have some minor criticisms, they do not overshadow the fact that Jahr has given us a very valuable and interesting work.

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Prisoners of tradition

Dagrún Ósk Jónsdóttir: Fangar hefðarinnar: konur og kvenleiki í íslenskum þjóðsögum. Trapped within Tradition Women: Femininity and Gendered Power Relations in Icelandic Folk Legends. Faculty of Sociology, Anthropology and Folkloristics (School of Social Sciences). The University of Iceland, Reykjavík 2022. 249 pp. Diss.

Dagrún Ósk Jónsdóttir presents an important addition to our understanding of the role of legend in negotiating aspects of cultural ideology (norms, beliefs, values) in the context of the rapidly changing, largely rural Icelandic society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of particular importance is the careful attention she pays to gender and gendered performance, providing an important and necessary perspective on two often overlooked aspects of legend tradition: (i) the construction of and representation of gendered interactions within stories and (ii) the role of women in the storytelling tradition of Iceland.

Although the dissertation consists of eight chapters, the main body of the work, like many Icelandic dissertations, is based on a series of previously published articles. The five brief lead-in chapters, however, provide important context as well as an overarching framework that allows one to read these articles in concert with one another. The result is a far-more nuanced exploration of the representation of women in legend than one would get from reading

each of the articles separately. Indeed, it is the integration of the articles with this historical, theoretical and methodological framework that brings to the fore their interdependence.

After an introductory chapter, Dagrún moves on to “The Nature of Legends.” In this chapter, she offers a strong, careful and thorough grounding of legend research. She situates her discussions of genre in a broader, historically-informed, theoretical context providing a thorough overview of the field of legend study and the collection of folklore, particularly in Iceland. She also offers a clear motivation for the study of legend as part of a socio-ethnographic exploration of the dynamic change associated with the role of women in Icelandic society, particularly as aspects of the predominantly rural society experienced significant change.

In a section entitled “Legends and Women”, Dagrún situates her study in the context of the performance turn in folkloristics (1970–1980s) and the importance this turn had for folklorists in considering gendered aspects of performance. The section presents a clear theoretical line, situating the current study in the context of more recent work such as that of Júlíana Þóra Magnúsdóttir, Helga Kress, Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, Jeana Jørgensen, Ruth Bottigheimer, and Maria Tatar.

A final section, entitled “Gender”, provides an excellent summary of a broad range of gender studies, particularly inflected for the purposes of this study. This is no mean feat, and readers will find here a useful distillation of extremely broad and complex theory into a working model for the study of gender and legend.

The rest of the book rests on the four previously published articles noted above. The first is an intriguing study of women who are presented as behaving as men in Icelandic legend. The finding that this positionality is praiseworthy for women who only do so temporarily but a matter of approbation for women who

do so more persistently is fascinating, and provides some intriguing insight into gendered behavior not only in the Icelandic legend tradition, but also on some of the evaluations of women in the Icelandic family saga. Dagrún's conclusion of the narrow path that limited women's behavior is well-supported by her research, and is one that might be tested in other Nordic tradition groups. It would also be interesting to see if this conclusion also holds true for contemporary Icelandic informal expressive culture.

The second article offers an important examination of violence directed against women in the study corpus. Although, as Dagrún notes, gender-based violence is not highly represented, it might be that this relative absence makes those episodes of such violence that one does encounter worth critical attention. Dagrún does just that in this chapter. Her conclusion of the role these stories likely played in the normalization of violence against women is sobering.

A third article explores women who reject motherhood, either by remaining childless or exposing their infants. She situates her discussion well in the context of such classic works as Pentikäinen's *Nordic Dead Child Tradition*, updating this discussion of *útburðir* (exposure) with the very large Icelandic legend corpus. It does make one wonder the extent to which *útburðir* continue to be a trope in contemporary legend telling and popular media such as film. That women who refuse/reject motherhood in Iceland are treated more sympathetically than their Nordic counterparts is likely a productive avenue for future research.

In the final article, Dagrún considers the threat of the supernatural female, the potential strategies for dealing with such a threat, and the results of those actions. The distinction she makes between troll women and the overly sexualized female, and the hidden woman, and the insufficiently masculine man (redolent of accusations of "unmanliness" discussed by, among others, Preben

M. Sørensen) is intriguing. It is well worth exploring whether this is consistent across the Nordic region or perhaps more accentuated in Iceland.

In her concluding chapter, Dagrún notes that, "those women who contest the dominating hegemonic ideas concerning femininity in Iceland regularly tend to be presented as threats to the social order" (201). Her application of intersectionality to the understanding of the myriad representations of women in legends provides nuanced readings that are not solely along this binary axis. Her final appeal to continue to (re)consider the archive from new, critical perspectives is one worth heeding.

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Mournable Lives

Kim Silow Kallenberg: Sörjbara liv. Universus Academic Press, Malmö 2021. 226 pp.

The ethnologist Kim Silow Kallenberg's book concerns the "mournability" of human lives – that is, whether the dead, while alive, had value. A "mournable" person, in contrast to a "non-mournable", is someone who was worth loving, who is worth grieving over and thus whose death causes legitimate grief.

Who is mournable and who is not, concerns power, and questions raised on this matter have not been raised many times before within ethnology as far as I know. The project is inspired by, amongst others, Judith Butler and Sara Ahmed.

Kallenberg presents two lives that for some could be considered non-mournable. They are Marcus and Noel, who grew up with the author. Both faced challenges with drug abuse and mental health and both died young.

The research material consists of field notes and reflections that the author had on the two men's lives and deaths, such

as: "... both of them also had so many good sides. That it is easy to imagine an alternative future. Which was possible, but is not anymore" (p. 79). The author has also used interviews, especially with the young men's mothers, but also with friends and other relatives. The interviews were conducted over four years, from 2016 to 2020. Readers are presented with long, transcribed extracts from the research material.

Of particular interest is the author's choice of an autoethnographic approach, where her thoughts and fears claim considerable place. This choice is made because the author approaches the topic from the position of being a childhood friend of Marcus and Noel. Without this experience, a research project on mournable and non-mournable lives would probably have been planned and completed in a very different way. She emphasizes that autoethnography must be seen as a continuation of the many academic debates from the 1980s onwards: about the researcher as a creator of the material, a consciousness of one's own influence and self-reflection as necessary elements of a research process.

An autoethnographic approach may be viewed as theorized self-reflexivity, de-emphasizing the binary nature of the researcher and the object of research, and between the subjective and the objective: recognizing and acknowledging subjective experiences and emotions, and using them, rather than hiding them in analyses (p. 194). The autoethnographic method emphasizes living the story, embodying the narrative, rather than telling it (*ibid.*).

Sörjbara liv is a well-written book, but an unusual academic text. I found reading it quite demanding, not only because of the content, but also due to the autoethnographic method. I only managed to piece together *Sörjbara liv* as an academic text after reading the last 20 pages, where I was presented with the project's research context, academic goals, research questions, and reflections on methodology and research

ethical challenges. Personally, I would have preferred to have this framework presented first. This would have given a clearer context to the author's detailed narratives about, and portrayals of Marcus and Noel, and the sometimes introverted thoughts the author communicates.

This criticism aside, *Sörjbara liv* discusses a topic not often found in our field of research and the author experiments with the methodology. For these two reasons, I believe *Sörjbara liv* will have a large audience.

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Finno-Karelian Communicative Incantations

Tuukka Karlsson: "Come Here, You Are Needed": Registers in Viena Karelian Communicative Incantations. Faculty of Arts, University of Helsinki 2022. 155 pp. Abstracts in Finnish and English. Diss.

The command or plea "Come here, you are needed" references instances of direct address incorporated into incantations (*loitsut*), collected from Viena (Archangelsk) Karelian informants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and preserved in the folklore archives of the Finnish Literature Society (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura). The thousands of collected incantations eventually became published along with other recordings of trochaic tetrameter folksong in the twentieth century in the 34-volume anthology *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (SKVR) [Ancient Poems of the Finnish Nation]. They are today available as a searchable digitized corpus (skvr.fi). In an "article dissertation" based on three previously published articles, Karlsson seeks to characterize the formal features of Viena Karelian incantations containing direct address,

termed “communicative” incantations, since they contain lines that address, command, or seek to persuade the beings they invoke. In contrast, “non-communicative” incantations, i.e., those containing narratives or descriptions of beings or phenomena without instances of direct address fall mostly outside of the dissertation’s analysis.

The dissertation’s first article “Register Features in Kalevala-metric Incantations” first appeared in the journal *Language & Communication* (2021). In it, Karlsson looks at 46 recordings of the incantation known as *Tulen synty* (the birth, or origin, of fire), collected between 1829 and 1915 and ranging in length from 22 to 216 lines. In addition to recounting the mythic origin of the first fire, the incantation may include addresses to beings such as the Virgin Mary (Neitsyt Maria), an icy maiden (hyinen tyttö jäänen neiti) and/or a honeybee (mehiläinen), imploring or commanding their assistance in providing objects or actions needed for healing. Other entities, such as fire (tuli) are also addressed, with the performer commanding them to leave or take their unwanted effects away. Karlsson tabulates instances of verbs in the imperative or optative, with or without additional intensifying or mollifying particles *-pa/pä* and *-s*. He notes the addition of attributes or address forms that characterize addressees in positive, negative, or ambivalent terms. Sometimes incantations contain “justifications,” explanations of why the commanded or requested action needs to take place. Karlsson finds that these occur somewhat more frequently when the addressee is described as a supportive being likely to assist in the healing (e.g., the Virgin Mary, the honeybee). But justifications may also occur in addresses directed at adversarial entities, like fire. To the extent possible using archival materials, Karlsson addresses the murky issue of whether certain elements of lines (for example, the inclusion of the enclitic particle *-pa/pä*) may arise as simple responses to metrical needs or may carry

deeper rhetorical meaning.

The dissertation’s second article “Discursive Registers in Finno-Karelian Communicative Incantations” appeared in the journal *Signs and Society* (2021). It takes up the notion of justification identified in the previous article and seeks to further characterize its occurrence and possible rhetorical functions within the corpus of Viena Karelian communicative incantations. Karlsson finds that the formal features of justifications vary according to whether the being addressed is portrayed as supportive or adversarial. Karlsson limits his focus to some one thousand communicative incantations collected from informants in the parishes of Jyskjärvi, Kieretti, Kiestinki, Kontokki, and Uhtua, but excluding the parish of Vuokkiniemi, where incantations abounded. He further limits this corpus to some 515 incantations by excluding incantations which recount narrative events alone (i.e., noncommunicative incantations). The resulting corpus consists exclusively of incantations which contain instances of direct address. They range in length from four to 212 lines. Karlsson notes that incantations can name their addressee vocatively, note their past, present, or typical actions, and command, cajole, or entreat them to take certain actions needed for the healing. Added justifications occur in some 152 incantations, and appear roughly twice as often in conjunction with direct address toward beings considered supportive of the desire healing, such as the Virgin Mary, than in addresses directed at either adversaries or beings of an ambivalent nature. When justifications are directed toward positive entities, they often seek to underscore the positive purpose of the desired action or moderate the force of the directive. Ukko kultanen kuningas (Ukko/old man/God golden king), for example, is called upon to build a fence to guard against noian nuolet (the witch’s arrows, i.e., disease). When directed toward negative entities, justifications tend

to note benefits which the adversarial being will gain by following the directive: in returning to the otherworld from which it came, for example, the being will be reunited with its awaiting mother or return home to an ample feast. When directed toward ambivalent entities, the justifications suggest benefits that will accrue to both the addressee and the performer: in choosing to heed the command to leave, for example, the bear, along with the performer, will achieve a desired state of peace.

The dissertation's third article "The Connection of Viena Karelian Ritual Specialists to Communicative and Origin Incantations" was accepted for publication in the journal *Folklore* at the time of the publication of the dissertation (2022). It again looks at Viena Karelian incantations, but now in connection with a long-held hypothesis that communicative incantations were typically performed by ritual specialists (tietäjät, "knowers"), engaged in healing or luck-related rituals, while noncommunicative incantations were the province of a wider set of performers. Noncommunicative incantations, folklorists have long posited, derive their efficacy from the words or knowledge contained in the incantation, and were thus believed to take effect regardless of performer, provided the incantation be recited in a complete and accurate manner. Communicative incantations, in contrast, were seen to depend on the powers of the ritual specialist performing them as part of a negotiation with potentially supportive or hostile external beings, i.e., the objects of the incantations' instances of direct address. Such dialogue was initiated by ritual specialists known as tietäjät or patvaskat in order to accomplish goals like healing, providing magical protection, causing harm, performing divination, or officiating at key life-cycle events like weddings (the latter the province of patvaskat in particular).

Karlsson seeks to test this long-standing assumption by analyzing the formal features of communicative and

healing-related origin incantations performed by Viena Karelian informants identified as tietäjät as compared with those performed by informants who did not play such roles in their communities. For identification of probable tietäjät in the corpus, Karlsson relies on Einar Niemi's 1921 tabulation of informant identity and ethnographic details contained in the fourth published volume of SKVR, a compendium which lists the names and locations of all Viena Karelian informants whose songs were collected over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as any observations past fieldworkers made regarding their ritual activities.

Niemi's index notes some 545 distinct informants for the area of Viena Karelia, 315 of whom furnished renditions of incantations. Some 78 of the total 545 informants were identified as tietäjät to one degree or another: some were described as openly and emphatically recognized practitioners, while others were simply rumored to engage in some magical activities, possibly only within their own households. Of these 78 identified individuals, twelve furnished no incantations of any kind to fieldworkers, possibly out of concerns for weakening their efficacy or exposing themselves to censure. Some 58 of the remaining informants (74%) furnished communicative incantations, while origin incantations (like *Tulen syntty*) were furnished by 39 (50%). Of the 467 informants not identified as tietäjät, 315 (58%) furnished incantations, with 183 (58%) of these providing communicative incantations and 42 (13%) providing origin incantations. Thus, communicative incantations were only somewhat more common among recognized tietäjät than among other informants (74% compared with 58%). In contrast, the performance of an origin incantation seems to have been markedly more common among tietäjät than among non-tietäjät (50% vs. 13%). Karlsson notes the abundant ambiguities of the data: not all persons who possessed the skills of a tietäjä may

have been recognized as such in Niemi's index, and informants who did possess pieces of occult knowledge may have been hesitant or unwilling to share them with fieldworkers. Nineteenth-century fieldworkers did not in general engage in extensive interviewing or contextualization when collecting but rather focused on producing plentiful transcriptions of performed materials, sometimes with only the barest notations of singer and locale, making judgments regarding the ritual activities of performers difficult to definitively ascertain.

These considerations notwithstanding, the clear correlation of origin incantations with the tietäjä role in the corpus of Viena Karelian incantations examined in Karlsson's study appears beyond doubt and can provide, as Karlsson notes, a useful foundation for further research. In a tradition in which incantation and prayer strongly overlapped, and in which nonhuman interlocutors could include God and the Virgin Mary, it would be surprising *not* to find direct address in the incantations of both tietäjät and those who lacked such skills or recognition. Yet the apparent strong association of origin incantations with tietäjät adds credence to the longstanding assumption of folklorists that such narratives of mythic origins may have been regarded as magically efficacious in and of themselves. Understanding the origins of another being, be it fire, a disease, the bear, or some other entity afforded opportunities for controlling or negotiating with it in the many ways Viena Karelian incantations illustrate. Karlsson's study demonstrates the opportunities for quantitative analysis afforded by processes of digitization that initially aimed primarily at preservation rather than analysis of recorded materials. It also illustrates the value of using such analysis to test the assumptions and hypotheses of past folklorists in ways that would have been difficult prior to the development of digital corpora.

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Stories about the Corona Pandemic in Norway

Virus. Historier fra koronapandemien. Audun Kjus & Cathrine Hasselberg (eds.). Spartacus Forlag AS/Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo 2022. 304 pp. Ill.

When the corona pandemic hit Norway in March 2020, the Norwegian government introduced severe restrictions that would greatly affect the whole population in their everyday lives and on special occasions. The switch to a completely new social life was abrupt. Right from the beginning, ethnological researchers and archives in Norway and the other Nordic countries began to take an interest in collecting data on how people's lives were affected and how they perceived the completely new situation. The Norwegian journal *Tidsskrift for kulturforskning* 2021:1 published a theme issue entitled "Corona Culture", with contributions from several different Nordic researchers. For Norway, Tove Fjell of Bergen wrote about counter-narratives in relation to the corona restrictions. She based the study on information in newspapers and social media. Critical opinions among Norwegians concerned the requirement to wear face masks and also the offer of vaccination. The freedom of the individual, according to the critics, was ignored by the authorities.

I myself have investigated how the corona pandemic affected the social life of people living on either side of the Norwegian-Swedish border. Border people were particularly affected when the Norwegian government closed the border on 17 March 2020. It was not completely opened again until 12 February 2022. Before then it was very difficult to get across, as controls were very strict for almost two years. On the Swedish side this had a negative impact on the previously extensive Norwegian border trade and Norwegian tourism in Sweden, and it affected Swedes commuting to work in Norway (see my contribution to this volume of *Arv*).

The book reviewed here is a publication of source material based on narratives that were collected starting in March 2020. The editors are Audun Kjus, who works at the archive *Norsk etnologisk gransking* at the Norwegian Folk Museum in Oslo, and Cathrine Hasselberg, who works at *Memoar*, an organization for oral history in Norway. *Norsk etnologisk gransking* collects material through written appeals, with the informants themselves writing their own recollections and experiences. The material is available digitally at minner.no. Hasselberg has conducted online interviews where the informants talk about their experiences. The volume is published as number 177 in the *Norsk Folkeminnelag* publication series.

The book reproduces a selection of narratives from both *Norsk etnologisk gransking* and Hasselberg's online interviews. The narrators come from different parts of Norway, both town and country. They represent different age categories, from schoolchildren up to seniors, and different social categories. Healthcare personnel have also been interviewed. The narrators are listed by name and the date when the narratives were collected, spanning the time from March 2020 to Christmas 2021. All the respondents have consented to have their accounts published in printed form. The narratives differ in length. The shortest ones cover less than one page. The online interviews are consistently longer than the written responses. Very few linguistic corrections have been made for publication. The editors have tried to present the original narratives as close to life as possible.

The book has a great deal of pictorial material illustrating the consequences of the restrictions. The photo editor is Aurora Hannisdal. Keep-fit activities had to be performed outdoors, even in winter, and the same applied to church services, Lucia celebrations, and visits to the cinema. People had to keep a wide distance in parades on 17 May, Norway's national holiday. Sports events

had to be held without spectators. Contacts with family and friends took place digitally or behind plexiglass. Used face masks filled waste bins and littered the ground around them. Containers of hand sanitizer were placed everywhere. On ferries, trains, and in restaurants, there had to be ample space between seats. The number of customers allowed inside shops at the same time was limited. Information about this was posted in notices. There were sheets of plexiglass in front of cash registers. A round stone found on a path on 2 April 2020 bore the inscription "Everything will be fine!"

The editors have had the aim of presenting source material and therefore have not undertaken any scholarly analysis of the narratives. There is nevertheless some sorting under various subheadings. These concern family life, working life with home offices, as well as furloughs and unemployment, school with distance learning, but also increased drug use. Seasons are also featured, such as celebrations of Christmas, New Year, Easter, and 17 May, and topics such as infection, illness, vaccination, etc. There was no question of any Christmas concerts or Christmas buffets before Christmas. Some city dwellers moved out to a cottage in the countryside to be less exposed to infection. Something that recurs in many narratives is either trust in or criticism of the government's restrictions. Gratitude for the possibility of vaccination is expressed several times. There are also people who deliberately opted out of being vaccinated, with reference to possible side effects but also to the fact that vaccination rates were so incredibly low in African countries. There was also a fair amount of humour on social media during the lockdown.

The merit of this book is that it publishes a large body of source material collected during the corona pandemic. These are not retrospective stories like those that I have studied on the subject of cholera pandemics in the nineteenth century. The collected corona material

can be of great benefit for future cultural studies analysing what happened and people's experiences of the two-year pandemic with particularly rigorous restrictions in Norway, at least in comparison to Sweden.

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Analysing Father's Tomfooleries

Barbro Klein: I tosaforornas värld. Gustav berättar. Carlssons Bokförlag, Stockholm 2021. 463 pp. Ill.

Recently, for the first time in my life, I attended an Orthodox funeral. The service was celebrated in the premises of the Baptist congregation, as the deceased belonged to both congregations. "In eternal remembrance" is the phrase uttered to the soul of the dead person and to the bereaved relatives. Why this talk about death in a review of a book about oral storytelling? It is because the author of the book, Professor Barbro Klein, was taken by death before she had completed her book about her father Gustav's storytelling. She had worked on it for forty years – the many recordings with Gustav, his wife and sister were made between 1977 and 1984, almost until her father's death in 1985. Although the most intense writing period began in 2014, the recordings and the analyses and interpretations of them had been going on for a long time parallel to other research commitments.

Barbro Klein passed away in January 2018 after a brief illness, active to the very last. Several of her friends, former students and later colleagues, were well aware of her major project on her father's storytelling and had been following the work over the years. The manuscript of the book was almost finished when Georg Drakos and Marie-Christine Skuncke, assisted by

Jonas Engman and Lotten Gustafsson Reinius, assumed the task of publishing the book posthumously – in itself a huge undertaking that became an act of love for a dear friend and appreciated colleague. Through death, one is affected by life, and in this case many people can now learn about Gustav's life in rural Småland and the people whose memory he kept alive through his often comic and sometimes burlesque stories about them. At the same time, we learn about Barbro Klein's life, especially her life as a folklorist through what she writes about her father. Through his *tosaforor* – roughly "tomfooleries", unpretentious tales about high and low – her own family history is replayed.

As Marie-Christine Skuncke notes in the nicely summed up epilogue, many people will have a sense of recognition as they read this book. And this recognition can function at many levels: stories about people in the countryside, valiant attempts to keep track of all the individuals in the stories one hears, a second-generation existence with a sense of shame about parents whose Otherness suddenly shines through the veneer, one's own upward mobility and the fear of appearing self-important in front of relatives. But also how, as a researcher, one grapples with deep-seated questions about *why* someone tells stories the way they do, and a sense of discomfort about what you understand when you put your ear to someone's heart and really listen.

When I was asked to review Barbro Klein's posthumously published book, I could not imagine that life and death would affect me through it. Nor did I know how to review a book written by the person who laid the foundation for performance studies in Swedish ethnology, thus contributing to the renewal of folkloristics. And initially, I actually tried to repress my knowledge of the existence of the carefully transcribed and rendered conversations, which I find alienating even though the intent is the opposite. I flipped through the book, saw the transcriptions, and put the book

to one side. Then I picked it up again, read the preface and the epilogue, and Barbro Klein's own introduction – and I was hooked. In the introduction we are given a survey of performance research, and the author's experiences of swimming against the stream as her talk of transcription as an analytical act initially fell on deaf ears. As I read on, it became clear to me that any ethical stance one takes is also an analytical act at the same fundamental level. In my hand I thus had a brief overview of the growth of interview studies in ethnology and an explanation of the importance of carefully reflecting on one's own choices and one's own presence in research. This is something that should permeate one's entire research and be seen in the works one publishes. After this, I read the book at one stretch, and saw how the author exposes her own anguish over family stories and family silences – this was not an emotionless performance analysis. It felt like a thoroughly honest account of the fieldwork and the subsequent process of analysis. Throughout the book, we follow the seasoned ethnographer's accurate gaze while at the same time we follow the emotional reactions of Barbro the daughter as she listens repeatedly to the cassettes she recorded. Every time she listens, she delves deeper into the family secrets, deeper into her understanding of her father – an understanding that should not be confused with acceptance, as she herself also stresses and discusses. And at the same time, her understanding of herself is deepened through her ethnographic work.

One has often been advised to learn how to skim through books, to quickly sift out nuggets that can then be used – not very many of the books that are included in reference lists have been read from cover to cover. But this is a book that needs to be read from beginning to end because the author is able to transform emotional anguish, warm-heartedness and tomfooleries into pure wisdom. In my hand I hold a future classic, which, like Mozart's Requiem,

was completed by others. To anyone about to read Barbro Klein's book *I tosaforornas värld*, I can say, in the words of the Orthodox priest before he reads the sacred texts: "Wisdom – stand in awe!"

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Folktales from Bohuslän

Sagor från Bohuslän. Uppteckningar i urval och med kommentar av Bengt af Klintberg. (Svenska sagor och sägner 13.) Uppsala 2022. Ill. 170 pp.

Since 1937, the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture has published fairy tales and legends recorded in different provinces in Sweden. Most of the publication took place during the 1940s and 1950s. After that it was not until 2011 that the folklorist Bengt af Klintberg published an edition of fairy tales from Södermanland.

This thirteenth volume in the series *Svenska sagor och sägner* appeared in 2022. Here Bengt af Klintberg has published a selection of 117 folktales, together with detailed comments, chosen from the rich treasury of tales collected during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the western Swedish province of Bohuslän. There are wonder tales, animal tales, jocular tales, and tales resembling nursery rhymes. The dialect texts have been discreetly normalized into standard language. Some important dialectal words are retained, along with a translation. In the detailed commentary there is information about whether the tales have been printed before. For texts representing the types in Hans-Jörg Uther's *The Types of International Folktales*, type numbers are given. At the end of the book there is a list of all the storytellers.

Storytelling survived some time into the twentieth century in Bohuslän, longer than in other provinces of Swe-

den. Given that Bohuslän is a coastal landscape, a recurrent feature of the folktales has been the sea and the sailor's life. The earliest collection in the late 1800s was carried out by students of Scandinavian languages at Gothenburg University College. They recorded dialects using the phonetic dialect alphabet (*Landsmålsalfabetet*) created in Uppsala in 1879 by Johan August Lundell. Two assiduous collectors were Rudolf Lundquist and Arthur Jonsson. They worked during the summers of 1897–1901 on the island of Orust in central Bohuslän and 1900–1901 in the Bullaren district in northern Bohuslän. In the *Dialect, Place Name and Folklore Archive* in Gothenburg, I found, among other things, material recorded in 1899 by Rudolf Lundquist from my great-grandfather, the farmer Johan Pettersson on the farm of Kärra on Orust.

The folklore collector David Arill continued collecting throughout the 1910s and 1920s. He was one of the initiators of *Västsvenska folkminnesföreningen* (VFF, the West Swedish Folklore Association) in 1919. The year 1926 saw the foundation of *Institutet för folkminnesforskning vid Göteborgs högskola* (IFGH, the Institute for Folklore Research at Gothenburg University College). Working there was Waldemar Liungman, who, with the help of appeals in Swedish newspapers, undertook a nationwide collection of folktales in the 1920s. Bohuslän is richly represented in the material, which reinforces the image that storytelling lived on especially long in the province. The oldest storyteller was born in 1818 and the youngest in 1890. The number of male and female storytellers is approximately equal. The men tend to have mostly told their stories to an adult audience while the women apparently told some stories to children and adolescents. One question that has been difficult for the editor to answer is the extent to which storytellers read tales printed in broadsheet format in the nineteenth century.

Some storytellers are particularly prominent in this volume. The foremost

of them is the fisherman and shop assistant August Jakobsson (1844–1930) of Tanum in northern Bohuslän. He is represented with thirteen tales in the book. David Arill visited him in 1919 and 1920 and wrote of his storytelling style: “He tells stories without gestures, with exceedingly few facial expressions other than a pious smile. He plays with his eyes: the smile and the gaze fill out the tale” (p. 16). His central role as a storyteller is illustrated by the fact that his photograph adorns the front cover of the book. A prominent female storyteller was Anna Långström (1820–1905) of the Bullaren district. She put her personal stamp on classical fairy tales and is represented with seven tales in the book.

Most of the storytellers were elderly when their tales were recorded. One exception was Anna Gustavsson of Forshälla parish, who was only thirty-seven when she answered Waldemar Liungman's appeal for folktales in 1924. She told stories that she remembered from her childhood, as told by her parents and siblings. Nine of her tales are featured in the book.

Several storytellers lived on Orust, which is also my home island. One of them was the farmer August Jönsson (1825–1899) of Morlanda, who has thirteen tales in the book. He told stories with humour and exaggerated details in dialect. Another prominent storyteller was the farmer and municipal official Samuel Jakobsson (1879–1954) of Tegneby, who has seven tales in the book. I remember him as a school councillor when he came to inspect the teacher's tuition and the pupils when we were in the second grade in 1948. It was a big day for the teacher when she announced that Samuel Jakobsson the inspector would be coming to visit. His repertoire consists mainly of jocular stories that he learned as a child from his uncle Petter Olsson. The stories were recorded in dialect during the 1920s.

This book is an important contribution to future research on folktales. It

is particularly valuable that the editor Bengt af Klintberg gives such a thorough account of each storyteller and places each individual fairy tale in relation to previous publications and research on folktales.

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Predators and Humans in Historical-Ethnological Light

Teppo Korhonen: Karhuverkosta susipantaan. Karhun ja suden pyynti keskiajalta 2000-luvulle. Summary: From bear net to wolf collar. The hunting of the bear and the wolf from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the 21st century. Kansatieteellinen Arkisto 62. Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistys, Helsinki 2020, 392 pp.

For some fifty years now, Teppo Korhonen, associate professor of ethnology, senior lecturer in Helsinki, has covered many different sectors of Finnish folk culture as a museum researcher, teacher, and author. He combines a careful presentation of historical sources, records in folklore archives, and objects in museums with cultural-analytical aspects of the role of traditions in social change. He has a great many interesting things to say. The focus is on everyday culture and customs from a functional point of view, but he also considers ideas with a magical and religious background. The historical-comparative method also provides perspectives on present-day culture through the study of various rural themes, such as landscape and ecology, economics, technology and tools, building practices and housing, hunting and trapping culture, but also rituals such as greeting ceremonies. Above all, Korhonen can provide an analysis of the traditions underlying conflicts and decision-making processes where folk cus-

toms meet societal practices in a legal and ethical context.

One such topic is the hunting of the large predators in Finland: bear and wolf, lynx, fox, and wolverine. The hunting of these animals is still highly topical today. This is especially true of wolf hunting, which has become a highly politicized and emotional issue, where economics and nature conservation are opposed to each other. The time covered ranges from the Middle Ages to the present, and Korhonen also looks beyond Finland to the rest of Scandinavia and Europe.

In this new book on bear and wolf hunting, Korhonen has structured and analysed a body of material that has been collected over a long time. To some extent that sets its stamp on the book. The study begins as a classic historical ethnography, a rather comprehensive description of the origin and biological context of hunting, the age and spread of hunting methods. It develops into an analysis of the human-animal relationship in contemporary material and mental contexts. Bear and wolf are described here in parallel.

Five themes are highlighted: the character of traditional hunting, the motives for hunting, individual hunting, collective hunting, and the conditions for coexistence between big game animals and humans. The parallel Nordic perspective enriches the text.

There is no shortage of data from earlier times, Korhonen has combed parish histories, statistics, reports, newspapers, oral traditions and folklore, taking in the period from about 1500 to the late nineteenth century. Fictional texts in particular, from fairy tales to novels, could offer material for a separate analysis of how truth, horror, and fantasy are combined. In folk belief, human characteristics are often attributed to animals, as naming practices testify. Hunting stories are a classic literary genre.

The predators are pests that have been a constant nuisance both for rural people and for the local and state power. Known examples of the issue can be

found as far back as the royal hunting rights, as in King Kristoffer's national law of 1442, in other legal documents such as court records, in Olaus Magnus's *Historia* from 1555 and Johannes Schefferus's *Lapponia* from 1678. For the first Finnish ethnographic researchers, with names such as Theodor Schvindt and U. T. Sirelius, hunting was a natural topic. This research led to the definition of active and passive trapping methods, and generated representative museum collections.

The book contains a wealth of details that can make the reading laborious, but it is possible to discern specific lines in the development. The important role of implements and the continuous improvement of techniques, hunting as a male achievement, and the struggle between animals and humans are recurring themes. Korhonen describes nine different hunting methods, from stabbing and slashing weapons to firearms and traps, to poisoning and surrounding.

Another cultural field opened by the book is hunting as a manifestation of power. The social significance and organization of hunting reveals an extensive pattern of state regulations challenged by inherited folk customs and habits. On the question of compensation for losses and bounty payments, the state and local authorities are confronted with the individual hunter and the hunting team as a collective. Hunting as a hierarchical order and folk customs as practice in wild nature are examples of the two different ways in which power is portrayed: the institutionalized legal system and the symbolism of male achievement. Women have not participated in hunting in the Nordic countries; their task has been to take care of the quarry and prepare the food. On the other hand, teenage children of both sexes have played an important role in herding domesticated animals, a task that has heightened the image of dangerous predators.

In a broader perspective, the struggle for territory stands out as the central

theme. Here the animals become a danger to man. Throughout the book there are examples of boundaries between the physical and the mental territory. This also reveals profound mechanisms in the relationship between nature and culture. In ancient times, predators were able to displace entire settlements. In agrarian society, however, the beasts of prey were primarily a danger to cattle, as a map of the amount of cattle killed in 1878 shows (p. 42). In pre-industrial times, people viewed the predators as an inevitable part of the forces of nature that simply had to be accepted. The bear has been regarded as an equal of mankind, and thus viewed more positively than the wolf. Yet the bounty paid for killing bear was larger than that for wolf. It was especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century that people began to see the wolf as a danger to man, an attitude that has created wolf hysteria in modern times. One reason is the articles in the early newspapers about attacks by wolves and accounts of wolves abducting children, narratives in which the wolf takes on almost mythical forms.

In the concluding chapter Korhonen looks at how attitudes towards predators in the twentieth century affected legislation and the discussion of coexistence with nature. The large regional differences in Finland have made the relationship between hunting and nature conservation more problematic. The first hunting ordinance was issued in 1898. A new hunting act came into force in 1934, when biological environmental issues were already being raised. Bear hunting was banned in 1962 and bear became a protected species in 1981. Wolf became a partially protected species in 1974. A new hunting act was passed in 1993 and adapted to EU directives in 1995. Today's issues concern the conservation and regulation of animal populations, hunters' interests, and tourism as a source of livelihood in rural areas. The number of hunters in Finland is about 300,000, or 6% of the population, and about 18,000 of them are under

18. Hunting is still a test of masculinity. Boundaries show the gap between urban and rural; the fear of the bear is greatest in the densely inhabited south-western Finland, smallest in eastern and northern Finland. The place of predators in the material and mental culture has not disappeared, and shifts in the semantic field offer new challenges for ethnological research. The knowledge conveyed by Teppo Korhonen's book provides a stable foundation.

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**“Compulsory Swedish”
and Online Hate**

Karin Sandell: Parasiter och ”bättre folk”. Affekt, performans och performativitet i näthat mot det svenska i Finland. Åbo Akademi, Åbo 2022. 198 pp. Diss.

Finland Swedes, the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, have often been the subject of criticism from the Finnish-speaking Finns. The rhetoric of hatred against Swedishness in Finland is based on intolerance. Recently, an increasing share of the hate speech against the Swedish-speaking people has moved to the Internet. Hate speech has also become increasingly common with today's digitalization. Hatred is encountered in social media and discussion forums, but also in the comments section of online newspapers – and unfortunately still in face-to-face interaction. Online hatred in particular is a growing phenomenon that is, for good reason, even feared as a threat to democracy as a whole.

It is important to do research on phenomena such as online hate, which has a fundamental effect on our everyday life and social debate. In general, hate speech and especially online hate is a subject of increasing study. There is already quite a lot of research in social psychology,

concentrating on the people who produce or receive online hate. Many of these studies are quantitative and they use large amounts of survey data; there are also comparative studies of different European countries. Through interdisciplinary studies combining social sciences and humanities with computational research, it is possible to analyse online hate with greater nuance and also focus on different types of online hate and on how the hate functions.

In this book Karin Sandell takes a new and welcome approach to online hate. Sandell's dissertation is the first study that specifically looks at hate speech directed at linguistic minorities, and especially the Swedish speakers in Finland. It is also – as far as I know – the first study in folkloristics to deal with online hate. “Parasites and ‘Better People’: Affect in Online Hate of Swedishness in Finland” examines online hate rhetoric and its affective features. The dissertation analyses how online hate directed at Finland Swedes is expressed in public discussion forums such as the Internet.

Sandell has chosen a limited Internet forum, Suomi24, to analyse online hate speech against the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. The research material was compiled from this discussion forum during the years 2015–2017 and consists of approximately 350 comments; in addition, articles and other texts from various media have been used, but less systematically. The material is not large, but it is appropriate as regards quality and quantity and it is well demarcated. Through a close reading of the articles published on the Suomi24 online forum, the author provides observations and interpretations about online hatred directed against the Finland Swedes and their typical features. At the same time, the research is also a contribution to the study of hate speech in general.

Sandell has chosen to use the term *näthat*, meaning “net hate, online hate”, rather than *hatretorik*, literally “hate

rhetoric". The term *näthat* has been used for less than ten years. It is not an academic term and it is not defined in law – just like the concept of *hatretorik*, which has no specific definition in Finnish law, and which is a controversial and thought-provoking concept. Hate speech occurs in places other than the Internet, but the Internet cannot be separated from "life outside the net". The Internet is a tangible part of our life, whether we like it or not. It is therefore justified to study "online hate", which also covers other forms of communication than just speech: much online communication is not exclusively verbal; visuality also has an important role, for example, in videos, memes, and emojis.

Sandell employs the concepts of *genre* and *performance*, which are widely used in the discipline of folkloristics. A crucial purpose of this dissertation is to investigate online hate as a genre. The study has a strong theoretical base in folkloristics, but it is also of general importance. The discussion of genre, which is at the heart of folkloristics, is an excellent complement to the interdisciplinary research on hate speech.

The dissertation examines expressions of hate speech and its effects. Since it is more of a folkloristic analysis of texts in a particular genre than the effects of online hate, the latter goal is less prominent in the study, since the effects of hate comments have not been studied empirically (e.g., through interviews). Sandell nevertheless considers the consequences of online hate when discussing performativity.

Focusing on the discursive level, on performance and performativity, is a happy choice in this empirical investigation. Through these concepts, Sandell looks at emotionally charged material online. She analyses how online hatred of Swedish-speakers is expressed (performance) and the consequences it has (performativity). The author's training as a folklorist is also reflected in the way she handles emic and etic perspectives as well as the forms and processes of

the online hate genre. Online hate as a folkloristic genre is also discussed using the concept of intertextuality and "the intertextual gap". Online hate as a genre is examined in a convincing manner. Overall, the folkloristic perspective on hate speech is welcome, and this dissertation offers genuinely new knowledge for interdisciplinary studies of online hate and hate speech in general.

Online hate is explored with the focus on affect. Specifically, Sandell studies affect and emotion with the help of Sara Ahmed's and Margaret Wetherell's theories, which means concentrating on what the affect *does* rather than what it *is*. It is essential to consider emotions as cultural rather than reflecting the psychological state of the individual. For Ahmed, affect is something close to the concept of feeling or emotion. Ahmed makes no distinction (nor does Sandell) between affect and emotion and does not believe that affect is primary or something manifested rather than culturally mediated emotions. Wetherell, on the other hand, emphasizes affective practices – and online hate is one such affective practice.

The theoretical starting points are presented expertly throughout and the concepts are defined and examined in a relevant and lucid manner. Sandell further describes her position as a researcher in a commendable way, but she also declares that, as a Swedish-speaking journalist and web content producer, she is able to view her research topic from the inside. This positioning strengthens rather than weakens the researcher's credibility, especially when she describes her ability to distance herself using her theoretical premises and analytical tools.

The dissertation is methodologically ground-breaking. Based on the affect theory, she develops her own "affective tools", the four components of which are metaphors, words for emotions, emotive expressions, and orthographic methods. This method works well in the analysis of hate material on the net, and it is a methodical innovation that will surely be applicable to other research as well.

Another theoretical concept that Sandell applies as an analytical tool is intersectionality. In particular, she uses four intersectional positions – class, gender, language, and ethnicity – in the analysis. Language, of course, intersects all the other positions – and the other positions also intersect each other. Sandell treats sexuality as part of gender, which may not be very precise, and from a gender-studies perspective it is even somewhat questionable. It would have been preferable if sexual orientation had been treated as a fifth category. Nevertheless, the methods used are well justified and appropriate for the purpose, and the inventive way they are used is consistent and insightful.

The research results are presented clearly and logically. The analysis is vividly written, with descriptive headings and rich language. Reading Sandell's interpretations arouses one's interest even though the topic is dreadful! The analysis is filled with important and interesting observations about online hatred, based on delusions that are expressed in metaphors, emotion words, emotive expressions, and orthographic practices. On the other hand: the performativity of online hatred includes the reproduction of history (reference is made here to the dispute between the Fennomans and the Svecomans), dehumanization (Swedish speakers are called parasites), heteronormative and conservative values (Swedish speakers are said to be homosexuals, and the talk about homosexuals is derogatory).

The chosen theoretical-methodological perspective – affect, performance and performativity – along with the examination of intersectional categories – gender, language, class, and ethnicity – works well in the analysis of online hate. The dissertation is innovative especially in terms of methodology, as Sandell develops and applies in practice her affective tool and thereby arrives at new knowledge. An important result is the observation that Swedish speakers in Finland are performatively constructed

as “the others” and portrayed as an “inner enemy” in online hate speech.

Apart from a brief summary of the results, there is no general discussion to expand on the results of the analysis. The question of power, of power hierarchies and their relation to different groups of people who are marginalized, is of great importance in intersectional perspectives, but there is little consideration of that in the dissertation. The relationship between the majority and the minority, or “we” and “the others” is not analysed in any great depth. Since this is a dissertation in folkloristics, it is perhaps understandable that instead of looking at how the power hierarchies are produced, it focuses on online hatred as text and as genre. Yet even in this respect, it would have been interesting to consider, even briefly, the relationship between language and power in connection with hate speech.

A reflection on the broader social performative effects of hate speech is also lacking. The general importance of the dissertation would have been strengthened by a discussion of the social context; then the significance of the dissertation would have grown from a presentation of precise research findings to a broader social debate. Although Sandell presents her fine observations and examples of the performativity of online hate, one can still ask: So what? What does it mean to write about history in relation to hate speech? Has online hatred had any consequences for attitudes towards the Finland-Swedes? Can anything be done about the hate? Should anything be done? I would have liked to read the researcher's own bold interpretations.

Although the dissertation shows a certain lack of courage, I hope that it will interest social scientists. Online hatred directed against Swedish speakers in Finland has many links to right-wing populism and extreme right ideology. A central feature of both is the question of belonging: who can belong to Finland, who is a real Finnish citizen? The division into ‘us’ (Finnish-speak-

ing or “real” Finns) and “the others” (Swedish-speaking) is repeated in the same way as nostalgia: the longing for an (imagined) time that was not ruined by feminists, homosexuals, and other unsuitable people. Yet Sandell does not discuss right-wing populism apart from a brief mention at the beginning of the dissertation.

The dissertation as a whole is logically structured, the language is neat, and the style is vibrant and enjoyable. The interpretations in the study are consistent throughout. The researcher demonstrates an ability to think critically and creatively, and the dissertation exhibits original and independent scholarly research. Among its merits, the study updates the notion of what can be studied in folkloristics, showing that it is important to study the Internet. The second observation is the contribution of the dissertation to the study of hate speech. This is considerable – not least because it offers a new and useful method of analysis. And the third is that this research is also highly relevant for society, as always but especially right now, when “compulsory Swedish”, the obligation for Finnish speakers to study Swedish in school, has once again been a topic of heated debate with the coming parliamentary elections in Finland.

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Stories of Danish Song

Kirsten Sass Bak under medvirken af Lene Halskov Hansen: Ballader, skæmt og skillingstryk. Fortællinger om dansk sanghistorie frem til 1900. Videncenter for sang, Herning 2022. 298 pp. Ill., music examples.

How far back in history have people sung? The most likely answer is: as long as humans have existed. Singing is a fundamental human activity; so close to

speech, to breathing, emotions, and the existential need to share experiences and stories. Singing has also been a given element in a wide range of social situations and ceremonies through the centuries; at the cradle, by the grave, in work with animals and handicrafts, at sea, on the way to the battlefield, and at feasts.

The desire to sing *together* is probably a universal phenomenon too. In a Swedish context, the popular singalong television programme *Allsång på Skansen* is an example of the forms that this can take in our mass-media era. However, the Swedes’ taste for singing together can scarcely match the Danes’ love of community singing, *fællessang*. This is particularly evident from the songbook of the folk high schools, *Højskolesangbogen*, which has been published since 1894 in a steady stream of revised editions, most recently in 2020. The repertoire of more than 600 songs is a broad combination of tradition and new additions, with the ambition both to illuminate the country’s singing history and to reflect the present day. Nowadays, the songbook is also published on the web along with articles about the background to each song, in the true spirit of popular enlightenment. As a dynamic canon project, *Højskolesangbogen* is thus still relevant in Danish cultural life. Yet the support for this authorized song treasure, as it may be described, has a possible downside: that singing traditions preceding and transcending the genres of community singing risk falling into oblivion.

Against this background, it is precisely these singing traditions – and singing situations – that the musicologist Kirsten Sass Bak seeks to elucidate from the perspective of the history of song. In this book, she studies the motley diversity that is summed up here in the term *visesang* (derived from the Scandinavian genre term *vise/visa* for which there is no easy English translation): medieval ballads, jocular ballads, and a large group of “younger songs” in *skilling prints* and handwritten song-

books, including the lyrical love song. The common denominator of this flora is that the songs have primarily served as solo songs, that is, typically sung by one singer to a (larger or smaller) group of listeners. There is evidence of this division of roles between the performer and the audience ever since the market singers of the Middle Ages and, as we know, it still dominates in the arenas of popular music.

The studies, or “stories” as they are more modestly called in the subtitle of the book, cover a rather dizzying span of time, stopping at various points to focus on the folk singing traditions that are most prominent in Danish song before 1900. With the support of other scholars’ research and the author’s own, the ambition is to put these worlds of text and melody in context and trace the long lines – a broad approach that is particularly pleasing since it concerns song genres, transmission routes, and media that are usually studied separately.

After a prologue discussing humans as singing and storytelling beings, with flashbacks to the archaic poetry that preceded the more epic-lyrical modes, Sass Bak deals with the different song genres in separate chapters. The longest part, occupying half the book, is devoted to the older epic song with its roots in the Middle Ages: the ballad. The medieval ballad in its Danish form is examined here in breadth and depth. On the one hand, the author describes the characteristic features of the ballad as both literature and music – the music, as she points out, has received too little attention in text-dominated research – and on the other hand, she sheds light on the transmission processes of the ballads and the settings where they occurred. An interesting section considers of the history of ballad collecting in Denmark, with special focus on the leading nineteenth-century collectors and publishers. These include Rasmus Nyerup, Evald Tang Kristensen, and Andreas Peter Berggren, who have all in different ways set their stamp on the image

of the folk ballad. In some case studies of a selection of ballad types, the reader also learns about the inner universe of the ballads, including the formulaic language, the textual motifs, and the underlying mental world with its roots in a feudal, patriarchal society. In this chapter the folklorist Lene Halskov Hansen also contributes two texts that provide important complementary perspectives on the historiography of the ballads: one concerns the changing views on the origin of the ballads in research, while the other clarifies the extent to which the ballads were actually accompanied by dance in Denmark.

In the second part of the study, the author tackles the jocular songs that have been a vital element of folk song, and like the other ballads have been part of a culture that crossed class barriers. However, the jocular songs were almost exclusively passed on orally. That they were never, in principle, included in printed editions of folk songs in the nineteenth century was probably out of consideration for (bourgeois) morality: carnivalesque features predominate in these songs; the grotesque, sexuality, and the tension between human drives and social conventions. The first step towards the recognition of these jocular Danish ballads as cultural heritage was taken with Tang Kristensen’s *Et hundrede gamle danske skjæmteviser efter nutidssang* (1901, 2nd edition with an appendix of tunes 1903). Together with examples of the genre in other Scandinavian countries, the jocular ballads would later be rehabilitated – in the catalogue *The Types of the Scandinavian Medieval Ballads* (1978) they constitute a category of their own – but such outward- and forward-looking views are not considered in this study.

The third chapter in the book is devoted to a large number of categories that are assembled under the heading “Younger Songs”. The smallest common denominator for these songs is that they are not ballads, although it is not always possible to draw a sharp boundary. Like

the ballads, they functioned as solo songs rather than for community singing, and like the ballads, they were very popular with the common singing people. Many songs have lived in both oral and written tradition from the sixteenth century until the present day – the earliest attested examples are in manuscripts belonging to the nobility – and therefore they often exist in several variants. This broad category comprises songs of both epic and lyrical nature, both spiritual and secular. For nineteenth-century collectors as well as for recent scholars, they have long been in the shadow of the ballads, and much therefore remains to be investigated.

Sass Bak approaches this wide repertoire based on case studies in different print media: printed songbooks, skilling prints, and handwritten songbooks. One of the largest categories is the traditional lyrical love song, a genre so broad that it can be hard to grasp, but it is well described here by the author. These are love songs that originated in rural society and were extremely widespread throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The songs are lyrical in the sense that they lack any external action; the subject is instead (unrequited) love, with facets such as longing, falseness, and betrayal. Only a few songs of this kind have survived into modern times, but these have gained all the greater classic status, a prime example being *Det var en lørdag aften*. Interestingly, despite the fact that these are anonymous songs with a long life in the tradition, they are probably not purely traditional, either being based on a literary model or having undergone literary treatment so that they could be published in songbooks. The fact that the genre is fundamentally written explains the regular metrics that fit tunes of a “newer” kind than those that can be linked to the traditional epic folk ballads. Another fascinating example of the “younger songs” is the horror ballad, a poetic genre that arose in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century and

spread to Scandinavia in skilling prints, or *flyveblad* as these broadsides are also called in Danish.

As for skilling prints as a medium, Sass Bak devotes an entire chapter to them, presenting some important collections in Denmark, with an overview of prominent subject categories and melodic worlds as they have been published over time. She also discusses the role of the prints as a commodity. There is a detailed account of Julius Strandberg (1834–1903), the producer who enjoyed sole domination in the publication of *viser* in Denmark during the last decades of the nineteenth century. As an example of the news orientation of songs in the 1800s, Sass Bak undertakes a case study of songs published in connection with the Schleswig War (1848–50). In the collections of Aarhus City Library she finds 225 songs printed in those years which relate in various ways to the ongoing hostilities. These refer to no less than 125 different tunes from many cultural spheres, including hymns, patriotic songs, traditional songs, and songs from the theatre. The case study provides insights both into how songs in skilling prints can reflect their own time and into the multifaceted semantic networks contained in the tune references of the nineteenth century. This chapter as a whole is also a welcome contribution to Scandinavian research on skilling prints, which in recent years has been dominated by Norwegian and Swedish studies.

Another type of source material that is examined is the handwritten songbooks, i.e. private collections of song lyrics. Writing down and collecting songs in this way is a practice with its roots in the aristocracy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which spread to broader classes during the nineteenth century. Sass Bak exemplifies the material with a collection in Dansk Folkemindesamling consisting of 150 songbooks (of which only 13 of which were in female hands), written between 1778 and 1915. As for the repertoire,

these are traditional or semi-literary songs, the dominant genres being love songs and soldier's and sailor's songs. Unlike the repertoire of skilling prints, which increasingly concerned the news – songs about current affairs and sensations – during the nineteenth century, the handwritten songbooks during the same period deal with more timeless and universal human themes. This difference in content between a (produced) range of commercial offerings and (personal) writing raises interesting questions about mediation, popularity, and sensibility that deserve further investigation.

After covering the various traditions of *visesang*, Sass Bak finally turns to a song world that in itself illustrates the tug-of-war between solo singing and congregational singing: the folk choral tradition known in Denmark as *Kingosang* (after Thomas Kingo's hymnbook from 1699). As in other Protestant countries, a tension arose in Denmark after the Reformation between two musical norms: the church's endeavour for unison hymn singing in the mother tongue and the common people's own singing style with its individual variations. Despite great efforts – in which the church organ played an important role – to make congregational singing unison, the folk practice of the *Kingosang* lived on in many rural parishes well into the nineteenth century. This shows how long the traditional musical understanding of *visesang* survived among the singing people. A marked period of transition for singing came in the mid-nineteenth century when the new community singing emerged both in bourgeois circles and among craftsmen and students, in associations and schools. Just as the organ was crucial in making church singing uniform, it was above all the piano that would make community singing unison. That development, however, belongs in the song history of the twentieth century, after this study ends.

In summary, Kirsten Sass Bak gives a solid orientation in the prominent folk genres in the history of Danish song

and the forms in which they were disseminated. A particular strength is that she treats the *viser* as *songs*, taking into account both the lyrics and the tunes, and their different transmission conditions. The many music examples and illustrations also bring the presentation to life. The way the material is brought together makes the book accessible to a wider readership, not just specialists, and at the same time there is a great deal that will be of interest to researchers with different orientations.

As a scholarly text, however, the book has its flaws. References to current research are generally sparse, but most conspicuous is the absence of studies from outside Denmark of these pan-Scandinavian traditions. The last decade's research on Norwegian and Swedish ballads, skilling prints, and folk melodies, which could have added perspective to the stories about the history of Danish song, seems to have escaped Sass Bak's notice.

Another weakness concerns the editing of the book. It is one matter that the different chapters can be perceived as stand-alone texts, and function as such – often, for example, there is no comment on the change from one topic to the next – but there are also autonomous texts *within* the different chapters. This is most palpable when it comes to Halskov Hansen's pithy contributions under her own name, which seem to hover by themselves in the middle of a presentation of ballads. Another peculiarity is the "mini-excursuses" about certain songs that are highlighted in schoolbook manner, on toned pages, detached from of the main text instead of being integrated in the account. What the reader misses most, however, is a summarizing discussion to bring together the many threads of the study and distil the conclusions.

That being said, Sass Bak's stories of Danish song history fill a void in the literature on folk singing. The method of alternating between an overall view and a focus on individual case studies is a good way to fulfil the ambition to show

both the contexts and the long lines in the historical genres of *visesang*, and at the same time it provides thought-provoking perspectives on today's singing cultures.

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Affects on Tapes

Viliina Silvonen: Apeus arkistoäänitteellä. Äänellä ikeminen performansina ja affektiivisena käytäntönä Aunuksen Karjalassa / Affectivity and emotion in the archival tapes: Lamenting as performance and affective practice in Olonets Karelia. Faculty of Arts, University of Helsinki 2022. 159 pp., appendix, three articles. Diss.

In January 2022, the folklorist and ethnomusicologist Viliina Silvonen defended her thesis as part of the doctoral programme in history and cultural heritage at the University of Helsinki. The dissertation treats the emotions of laments and the affectivity of lamenting in the context of the Olonets Karelian tradition. Silvonen's thesis elevates the research on Karelian laments to a new level, demonstrating how empathetic close listening and contextualization of historical archival audio recordings may reveal information contained in the laments and convey their performative power and affectivity to today's audiences. The dissertation is an essential contribution to lament research in general and to the disciplines of folkloristics and ethnomusicology in particular, but also adds to the broader interdisciplinary study of emotion and affectivity. Viliina Silvonen's doctoral thesis consists of three articles and an extensive introductory chapter. Two of the articles have been published in prestigious academic article collections in English and the third, in Finnish, was issued in a specialized high-level folklore journal. The

dissertation is an innovative piece of original research, elegantly demonstrating the author's excellent command of the subject matter as well as an awareness of the current debates and methodologies in contemporary folkloristics and related disciplines.

The first part of the title of Silvonen's thesis, "Affectivity and Emotion in the Archival Tapes", informs us that the study specifically pertains to archival recordings and the affects and emotions that they may trigger. (In Finnish, Silvonen has used the emic term *apeus* to denote affectivity and emotion, but the word may also stand for sorrow, depressed or bad mood, angst, sadness, worry, bitterness, yearning, etc.) The second part of title, "Lamenting as Performance and Affective Practice in Olonets Karelia", leads us temporally and spatially further from the recordings that can still be listened to in the archives – namely, to Olonets Karelia and the lament singers in the area. This very involvement in historical recordings, in the way they have reached us, and the archaic lamenting tradition, in its performative and affective practices, is one of the main appeals and contributions of this study. Among the most intriguing questions that the thesis seeks to answer is how well, or in what way, a historical audio recording could convey or represent a past performance.

The author approaches lamenting as a ritual oral tradition, a performance and affective practice. The fact that the studied material had been recorded by someone else, perhaps for an entirely different purpose (textual or linguistic research, etc.), makes the study of performance and its affectivity challenging. The lament corpus reveals that archival metadata on the performers of the laments is often incomplete; for example, only an initial may have been provided instead of the singer's name, not to mention the lack of any additional information about the singer's life. Folklorists today are dependent on the choices of researchers and collectors

before them. Once the pause button of a recorder was pressed, there was no trace left of the conversation that followed. Historically, folklorists have been interested in the text, rather than the performance and the emotions experienced by the performer or the listener. Silvonen argues that archival material is always an inadequate reflection of the actual performance. It is worth reflecting upon what to do with these vast historical text or audio recording corpora collected in the archives, as the study of the performance and emotions seems far more relevant these days or when a researcher wishes to revisit the material to seek answers to the questions that are not based on text. It is possible, however, as Silvonen also suggests in her thesis, that an empathic close reading (listening) of the texts (recordings) and surrounding these with as rich a context as possible may take a researcher further than the text-based archives seem to allow. At the same time, Silvonen views her sources critically, and examines how and why have laments made their way to the archives and in which performance situations the recordings have been made. To her credit, the author does not attempt to exoticize or mythologize the material too much, as has occasionally been the case in the study of laments connected with rituals and religion.

The terminology used in the thesis is not specific to folkloristics, but is largely interdisciplinary and borrowed, which means that Silvonen has had to adapt and critically revise the meaning and appropriateness of the terms. Indeed, the very extensive sections of the umbrella chapter set out to define the terms and introduce their history, but also reflect on how one term or another is appropriate for the study at hand and what they are supposed to mean. In her thesis, Silvonen, among other things, employs the concept “empathic listening”. Empathy is an essential quality for a folklorist; however, the anthropologist Amy Shuman has also warned about the hazards of empathy. An imbalanced situation

where a researcher in a position of power comments on the subject of research and claims to have been empathic towards him or her is very dangerous.

Viliina Silvonen has collected a corpus of more than 460 recorded lament performances for her doctoral thesis. This is complemented by transcripts of lament texts and recordings of interviews accompanying the performances, researchers’ field notes, etc. Thus, the thesis covers an enormous thick corpus. Finnish folklorists are accustomed to using huge archives and this is an asset and an opportunity, but also, as it were, an obligation. At the same time, the applied research method is clearly qualitative rather than quantitative. Obviously, the thesis could be based on laments from a single village, or those sung within a single family, or even by a single lamenter. As much as I am impressed by the thorough archival investigation and condensed corpus, I cannot help but throw out a provocative question – in the light of this method and tools, what has been gained by using a corpus this large that a deliberately more limited material would not have provided?

It is very commendable and politically and academically entirely correct that Viliina Silvonen has focused on the analysis of laments collected from a specific region in Karelia (Aunus, or Olonets). Comparative studies are certainly important but it feels peculiar and unjustified when oral tradition from linguistically and culturally different regions (e.g., Finland, Ingria, Izhoria, Karelia, etc.) is viewed in conflation without hesitation. Since so much folklore has been collected from different areas of Karelia throughout history, as is evidenced by Silvonen’s thesis, there is no reason to fear that the sources remain insufficient. Researchers could rather benefit from limiting their source material, for example, the selection of laments studied by Silvonen has been made based on their performance and the recording method (recorded and vocal lamenting), but also on the accessibility of archives (Finnish

archives vs. Petroskoi archives). When discussing the folklore of Karelian areas, it is perhaps worth keeping in mind the terms research fatigue and over-researched community, i.e. a critical view of the sources from these aspects would be useful.

The first article of the thesis, “Formulaic Expression in Olonets Karelian Laments: Textual and Musical Structures of the Composition of Non-metrical Oral Poetry”, conventionally observes the traditions of folkloristics and ethnomusicology in its range of topics and style of approach. This article explores the formulae found in text and music, and the extent to which they influence each other. As such, the paper discusses the underlying structures that begin to produce affect in the listeners in an emotional performance. While the article may seem traditional and conservative in its choice of topics, the author, in several passages, enters a critical dialogue with the previous studies on laments. Silvonen’s huge corpus, for example, demonstrates that the assertion made in earlier Baltic-Finnic lament research that each lamenter uses a personal idiosyncratic melody to sing all of her laments does not hold true: “The material I analysed does not directly confirm this, as melodies can vary even within the repertoire of a single lamenter.” One of the reasons for that is definitely the fact that Viliina Silvonen has been far more detail-oriented and thorough than previous scholars, and is probably able to detect variation in smaller details than her predecessors. Silvonen also demonstrates that the relationship between text and music is considerably more complex than previous research has shown.

The author appropriately engages in dialogue with scholars in the past, but doesn’t shy away from expressing criticism and making changes based on the lament material that she is studying (for example, abandoning the established categorization of laments). Relying on the extensive lament corpus, Viliina Silvonen has revised several of the claims

made by previous researchers and confirmed the validity or applicability of these to her material. At first glance, the riskiest part of the thesis is the classification of the embodiment of emotions based on their appearance into intentionally produced signs or emblems and those that are based on bodily, sensory experiences (in the second and particularly third article). The author even admits that this is often a fine line (at least as far as listening to recorded material is concerned) and one can easily transform into another. In many lament traditions, it has been a common practice to lament on behalf of someone else (e.g., also in Karelian bridal laments), so that emulating an emotion and the feeling emanating from affects are both traditional ways of performing a lamenting ritual. The author concludes that *apeus* is not transmitted from the lament that mimics emotion on to the listener who is unfamiliar with the lament culture, which is a rather unexpected and surprising outcome. The third paper “*Apeus välittyvänä, kuunneltuna ja koettuna: Affektiiviset kehät ja itkuvirsien tunteiden ilmeneminen arkistoäänitteillä*” is an engagingly written and informative study with exceptional results and a bold experimental component.

Silvonen emphasizes that she studies lament as a combination of text, music and emotions. The dissertation’s specific focus on *apeus* is emphatic and considerate of the emic perspective. Since *apeus* has been so important for the lamenters and the ritual quality and impact of a lament performance has been assessed based on whether the lamenter and other participants have experienced *apeus* or not, focusing on it is inherently vital to understanding laments. Aili Nenola, an eminent scholar of Finnic lament, has regarded lament as an explicitly women’s genre and has explored in great detail what this gender polarization means for the genre. While Viliina Silvonen does mention in her thesis on a number of occasions that laments were performed by women, she does not reflect

on whether there is any significance to the fact that laments were performed specifically by women. Lamenting has provided women an outlet to express themselves in a way that would have been impossible using ordinary speech and outside a ritual situation. For example, bridal laments allowed the lamenter to voice criticism of her family or future husband, to express despair and sorrow. Does the despair expressed in laments have gender? Is there something specific in the text, the performance or affects evoked by the laments of Olonets Karelia that speaks about these women and their gender. The thesis does not explicitly seek to answer these questions.

Viliina Silvonen is appropriately reflexive and candid about her position as a researcher. As a result, these parts of the thesis that can be categorized as historical ethnography are particularly inspiring and original. Some chapters are more autoethnographic than others and emphasize the researcher's participation as a recipient of lament. The author highlights her own listening experience, which she considers as participation in the performance: even though the only thing that connects the participants, who are so distant in time and space, is a voice on the recording, it can also be viewed as an emotional contact or a meaningful encounter. One of the greatest successes of the thesis, in my view, is the dialogue with the old archival recordings and conveying of the critical and empathic listening experience. Fortunately, it does not get into esotericism or mystify the researcher's experience, but remains suitably critical, thus eliciting new insights about laments that we did not have before.

When dealing with historical audio recordings, especially those of religious laments, the researcher is inevitably confronted with ethical dilemmas. Recording a lament is a complex task. People recording laments have usually been aware that performing, for example, a funeral lament outside of its appropriate context could harm the singer. It is

also known that making a person cry is physically and mentally draining. Still, laments have been collected. Working with historical recordings also means that one must come to terms with the fact that the rules for recording these were different from those today. A performer may not know exactly what is being done with her recorded lament. Also, it was not customary to sign contracts between the parties in the past either. Silvonen, however, is appropriately critical of the recording situations in the past and also reflective enough to explain the choices she has made in her thesis.

Viliina Silvonen's doctoral thesis is a charming attempt to explore affectivity and performance through decontextualized historical recordings. Silvonen has successfully demonstrated in an original way how decontextualized text-based archival collections can provide answers to issues related to emotions and even bodily experiences. The impressively large sample material and in-depth analytical and empathic listening, the exciting contemporary research questions, and the convincing and thoughtfully considered manner of presenting the material make this doctoral dissertation a highly creditable academic contribution to folkloristics and ethnomusicology.

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A Popular Encyclopaedia of Everyday Superstition

Fredrik Skott: Vardagsskrock. Från abrakadabra till önskebrunn. Polaris fakta, Malmö 2021. 318 pp. Ill.

How does the tradition of shaving off your beard after an exam relate to the custom of growing a beard for the play-offs in ice hockey? Both are examples of everyday magical thinking where beard

growth becomes a way of trying to control the outcome of an important event, such as a tournament or an exam. In this encyclopaedic work by Fredrik Skott, “Everyday Superstition: From Abracadabra to Wishing Wells” (2021), one can read more about ideas of this type and their possible origins. There is a separate entry for “beard”, along with articles about “studies” (exam beards) and “sport” (winning) which tie the different folk beliefs together. Here you can find everything from the perhaps more obvious entries such as “horseshoe”, “touch wood”, and “thirteen at table”, to others that may be more unexpected, such as “lamp post”, “wood anemone”, and “nut”. The articles include cross-references (although even more could have been given), which makes it easy for readers to jump from one article to another in order to find out more.

Skott works at the Institute for Language and Folklore in Gothenburg, and it is evident that he has a great knowledge of his source material, especially the rich archival documentation. The text is generally clear and instructive, and the introduction about everyday superstition as a phenomenon presents different ways of looking at quotidian magical rituals. Skott discusses the extent to which people believe in these magical acts and the different forms of rituals that occur in today’s Sweden, also with sidelights on Swedish-speaking Finland and other parts of the world. The concept of *halvtro* or “half-belief” does not strike me as being entirely convincing, even though the term dates back to the 1950s. But what do we gain by calling it half-belief? The aspect of belief is strong in this case, but at the same time it is unclear. Is it important to know whether someone believes in everyday superstition? Is it not more interesting to see how everyday superstition has affected and continues to affect our thoughts and actions without attributing aspects such as belief, half-belief, and non-belief to people. It is commendable, however, that Skott ponders on the

relationship of everyday superstition to other concepts, such as magic and religion, so that the reader can see it in a contextual whole. Otherwise, everyday superstition sometimes tends to be perceived as something individual and different, clearly detached from the rest of everyday life; the many examples in the book clearly demonstrate that this is not the case.

The rest of the book is designed as an encyclopaedia with alphabetical order as the organizing principle. Unfortunately, this means that the individual entries sometimes feel rather too short. The best entries are those where the text is allowed to stretch over more than one page and is not entirely dominated by empirical examples, although these too can be very rewarding. Nothing new emerges; instead we get a glimpse of what it could mean. It can also be difficult for the uninitiated to understand everyday magic in its context. How is it possible to grasp, for example, the very short (one third of a page) account of the term *hocus-pocus* as an act or practice of everyday magic?

The leaps through time are intended to demonstrate continuity and show how traditions can be traced far back in time, but sometimes the distance between the examples is too long in time and the connection feels far-fetched. I have no doubt that there is a connection, or that two similar traditions have common factors, but this is not always presented convincingly.

One of the nice things about Skott’s book is the lavish and beautiful design, the high-quality paper and the fine illustrations, which, despite the total absence of captions or comments, often give the reader a foothold in everyday life. For example, there are several postcards with motifs related to the various beliefs.

Popular scholarship is a difficult genre: it must not get too complicated for the uninformed reader, but there must be a degree of source criticism if it is to be perceived as scientific. Here, unfortunately, something is lacking in Skott’s

presentation. As an active researcher and teacher at university, I would have liked to have seen that the book, since it gives references to sources, could be used as a first step for students in their work, for example. But although each article has its own reference list, it is usually impossible to know which part of the text comes from which source, and sometimes it is even hard to see the relevance of the sources. Sometimes they are more in the form of tips for further reading rather than actual sources.

Skott's book will find a place primarily as an enjoyable encyclopaedia for those who are fascinated by the wealth of everyday superstition that, despite all odds, survives in various forms. The attention that the work has received in the media also shows how interested the general public is in this particular type of everyday phenomenon, and that it pays for us ethnologists and folklorists to popularize both our source material and our analyses of it.

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