

## Book Reviews

### Hygiene as Ideal and Practice

*Med tvål, vatten och flit. Hälsofrämjande renlighet som ideal och praktik ca 1870–1930.* Johanna Annola, Annelie Drakman & Marie Ulväng (eds.). Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2021. 284 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-88661-97-5.

■ In this new volume of essays, historians, ethnologists and philosophers from four Nordic countries come together to answer the following questions: *How were cleanliness and health connected in the Nordic countries between 1870 and 1930? What were the ideals? What practices were performed? By whom and with what purpose?*

In 2020 when the Covid pandemic hit us, we found ourselves battling an invisible enemy, and governments all over the world began the work of installing a new ideal of cleanliness in their populations. Cultural habits and everyday truisms had to change drastically in a very short time. The handshake and the hug were a thing of the past. The ubiquitous threat could not be seen, felt or tasted, but it questioned our everyday lives and habits.

Yet even though we needed to be reminded of the importance of handwashing, it is evident and need not to be said that washing hands and cleanliness protects us from infections and diseases. This practice, however, is founded in a historical process that began around the 1870s. The aim of this volume is to exemplify how this process unfolded on a practical level during the period 1870–1930 in the Nordic countries. What were the prescribed ideals and how were they implemented? Who cleaned? With which tools and why? The book explores how ideas become truisms in this period – not just through spectacular breakthroughs in science, but in everyday practices in the general population. It offers refreshing and at times delightfully quirky examples and new perspectives on how cleanliness and health became interconnected, not only at a governmental disciplining level, but also in the everyday lives and practices

of the general population. It does so with a wealth of example studies in ten chapters divided into three different levels of society: 1) the state and municipality level; 2) NGOs; 3) private homes and persons.

Chapters 1–3 focus on the cleansing of the body. In chapter 1 Karolina Wiell, associate professor at Karlstad University, examines the emergence of public baths and bathing in schools, and how they changed the general practices concerning cleanliness. Annelie Drakman, researcher at the University of Stockholm and author of chapter 2, explores the process from smoke to water as the primary cleaning substance amongst provincial physicians in the late 1800s. In chapter 3, Johanna Annola, researcher at the University of Tammerfors, delves into the different perceptions of dirt and cleanliness at a Finnish poorhouse. She shows how ideals of cleanliness were used as a distinction and a weapon in the class struggle against the staff.

Chapters 4–6 focus on households, homes and families. Marie Ulväng, external lecturer at the University of Stockholm, shows how farmers' wives become homemakers in the period 1850–1910, when cleaning and decorating becomes part of their new workload alongside increased economic resources and cultural ambitions towards bourgeois goods and habits. Ingun Grimstad Klepp, professor at Forbruksforskningsinstituttet SIFO in Oslo, explores perceptions of cleanliness in Norway through the cultural history and cultural perceptions of the kitchen cloth and its uses. In chapter 6 Josefin Englund, associate professor at Gymnastik- och idrottshögskolan in Stockholm, sheds light on men's and women's ideals of cleanliness when searching for a partner in the newspaper personals. She shows how especially the female writers portray themselves as domestic in the 1930s, but focus more on bodily properties in the 1940s.

The last four chapters consider organizations, associations and meetings between different groups in society. In chapter 7 Minna Harjula, researcher at the university of Tammerfors, examines the relation between the individual and the society in the early 1900s seen through the

Finnish national health organization. Why did they fail to create a united umbrella organisation? She shows that different actors had different ideas as to whether the main responsibility should rest with the individual or the state.

Inger Lyngdrup Nørgård, researcher at the city archives of Randers, explores how local organizations worked (differently) to improve hygiene and health in a Danish community during the first half of the twentieth century. In chapter 9, Karin Carlsson from the University of Stockholm writes about the ideal kitchen in Sweden in the 1920s–1930s, comparing the normal kitchen at the time with the ideals for the future kitchen. How was this wonder of a new modern kitchen communicated and to whom?

In the last chapter of the volume, Hanna Lindberg (researcher at the University of Tammerfors), Eija Stark (researcher at the Finnish Literature Society) and Ann-Catrin Östman (lecturer at Åbo Akademi) show how Finnish market-places changed during the early 1900s because of new perceptions of dirt and cleanliness. The authors demonstrate how these new ideals classified this line of work as a female profession and how cleanliness was equated with femininity.

With this approach the authors seek to make a Nordic-based contribution to the research field. It is a contribution with new perspectives and unexpected new study material highlighting under-explored places and groups. As the examples show, the main focus is on the practice-oriented approach and the tensions between ideal and practice. They argue that historically change is a consequence of the negotiations between these different levels.

*Line Jandoria Jørgensen, Copenhagen*

### **Collecting Scrap Cars**

*Anders Björklund, Skrotbilar – om hängivna samlare och deras fordon. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2021. 155 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-8906-351-8.*

■ Anders Björklund's book about collectors of scrap cars and their vehicles has been a joy to read,

for many different reasons. The book conveys a very good sense of this environment and the people he has interviewed. The text brings the material to life, nicely expressing both the joy of collecting and the satisfaction of researching and writing about culture – a joy that is sadly rare today in the increasingly instrumental academic world with its fixation on production, but which fortunately still lives on in the subject of ethnology.

The book is divided into fourteen short chapters in which the focus alternates between the scrap cars and the collectors. We meet the Mechanic, the Fixer, the Specialist, the Antiquarian, the Historian, and the Enthusiast, who are all different personality types with the scrap cars as a common factor. Throughout the book, pictures and quotations are interspersed with the author's reflections, and the different approaches cross-fertilize each other and contribute to a deeper understanding that the book as a whole conveys of the phenomenon of collecting scrap cars.

This study may seem modest to an untrained eye. The knowledge conveyed here is easily accessible but it is not in any way trivial. It is rather like a sampler of the diversity of ethnology. There are folkloristic elements in the stories told about the cars and the people who collect them, and scrap car collecting as a cultural phenomenon is investigated by placing it in its social context. Moreover, the author undertakes a praiseworthy analysis of the form of the artefacts, along with their function and symbolic meanings. This is a study of a social movement, which also considers aspects of popular culture in the studied phenomenon. All in all, the author provides a thick description of scrap car collecting. Björklund certainly makes good use of his ethnological glasses and his analytical gaze to unlock this culture and reveal its hidden meanings. The study is not purely empirical; it is well grounded in relevant previous research and makes use of interesting theories, resulting in more profound knowledge and further perspectives. My final verdict is that this is an ethnological study of the best kind, a well-written book that brings the people to life, vividly describing the culture that has developed around

the cars and the collecting, and highlighting the knowledge that the study has generated.

Björklund presents the results of his study in the classical ethnological manner, which makes it unique in today's academic world, where the article format predominates and where we researchers are expected to publish our findings in international scholarly journals whose standardized format, together with the fixation on bibliometric data and the increasingly widespread obsession with performance, risks killing or at least impoverishing academic culture. Björklund's book is a text in which one can immerse oneself, and it describes an environment and people that arouse wonder, largely thanks to the author's skill in conducting curiosity-driven and knowledge-seeking research on culture. While it is satisfying to read the book, it is also painfully clear, since Björklund's presentation of his work differs so much from how scholars are expected to present results today, how much academic culture has been impoverished and standardized in recent years. Some ethnologist, perhaps Björklund himself, would really need to investigate the university world and the culture that has emerged there.

*Eddy Nehls, Lerum*

### **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. ISBN 978-82-3040-318-1.

*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. ISBN 978-82-3040-319-8.

■ 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 oblivion 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 dissemina-

tion 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 prac-

tice 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.

*Karin Hallgren, Växjö*

### **Robots and Future Working Life**

*AI, robotar och föreställningar om morgondagens arbetsliv.* Daniel Bodén & Michael Godhe (eds.). Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2020. 287 pp. ISBN 978-91-88909-52-7.

■ Advances in technology brought the world close to a radical change that required not only a social and economic transformation, but also a mental one. Trade unions, politicians, and employees have generally nourished a firm belief that technological development would lead to economic growth, prosperity, and cultural progress.

Social changes are perceived as being very subtle, fragmentary, and slow. Development is the

result of people's active choices and concrete actions. The edited volume reviewed here seeks to regard and understand automation as an ongoing and protracted historical process. The aim is to investigate automation with the help of researchers from different branches of the human sciences and to contribute historical and cultural perspectives on a matter that is otherwise dominated by technological, scientific, and economic theses.

The authors offer different approaches to the issue of automation and, by extension, the development of AI in order to allow new interpretations and to show that things that are taken for granted as true, timeless, and fated are actually products of chance and capable of being changed. What it might mean to live in an automated future is considered from four perspectives. Firstly, automation and robotization can be studied from a scientific and technological perspective; secondly, there is the way technological advances are represented in the press, television, and popular science. The third perspective is that the dividing line between fact and fiction is blurred in popular culture, while the fourth considers people's everyday understanding and interpretation of the existence of "intelligent" machines.

The opening essay on "The Trade Union Movement and the Automation of Industry" is by Maths Isacson. Automated systems and robots in the workplace have given rise to many investigations that predict future job losses, but not everyone is convinced. What has happened is a restructuring of jobs.

The introduction of the microprocessor brought changes for employees, as Isacson illustrates with several examples. A fraught question in the engineering industry concerned who would do the programming of numerically controlled machine tools: white-collar staff or machine operators? In the printing industry there was conflict between printers and journalists at the transition to photo-composition. Optimism waned in the 1970s. The development of technology was expected to lead to the impoverishment of many jobs, as creativity and problem solving disappeared and jobs became monotonous, with health problems as a result.

The decline in industrial jobs since the 1980s is partly a chimera because many tasks in industry are now carried out by service companies. Digitalization leads to the loss of some jobs and the creation of new ones. Despite positive opportunities on the labour market, the author warns that the new technology could lead to the development of an A team and a B team among the workforce. The author also warns that the development and sale of robots has stagnated and productivity is falling, which could lead to more surveillance and exclusion based on ethnicity, age, and gender.

"Robots of Teamwork? An Ethnographic Account of Automation in Working Life" is the title of a chapter by Daniel Bodén. It concerns how the Coop supermarket chain decided in 2008 to acquire 32 self-driving trucks for the work of picking goods in a central warehouse, the aim being to increase productivity and speed up the throughput of goods. It was estimated that 500 warehouse workers could be laid off. For Coop, the introduction of self-driving trucks was a prestige initiative, but the new technology failed. It was based on calculations that were too simple to be applied to the ever-changing and somewhat chaotic reality of order picking. The trucks were used for a few years and then replaced with a streamlining of the workforce, and since then warehouse work has become more demanding. The author, who has worked in the warehouse, says that in the old days it was possible to have a breather and swap a few words with workmates. His conclusion is that technological development is not an evolutionary and linear process. The way automation affects work must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

In "If Joseph Schumpeter Has Any Say: The Economic Dimensions of Automation" Mats Lindqvist proceeds from the belief that AI and automation are creating a new class society. The gap between the high-paid and the low-paid is widening as classic paths of promotion for the middle class are disappearing. The author's understanding is rooted in the theories of the economist Joseph Schumpeter about creative destruction. Schumpeter saw the importance of the en-

trepreneur in the process of growth; in his view, stability equals stagnation and is devastating for capitalism. Lindqvist writes that the final step in the development of the conveyor belt is robots and AI. The robot does not have the limitations of a human being. We are witnessing increasing demolition and renewal in our neoliberal society so that companies can enjoy bigger and quicker profits. The author questions whether the quality of the job always improves. The question is justified, but I would add the question of whether certain products, such as electronics, can be manufactured without robots.

The chapter on “Learning to Live with Robots: On the Normalization of Robots and AI in Twenty-First-Century Media” is by Michael Godhe. He discusses the normalization process that can be seen in media reporting on robots and AI, which gives the impression that the development is fated by destiny. The risk of portraying it as mundane normality is that it obscures the societal challenges. Other important issues are sidelined, such as the development of surveillance systems that are also part of AI. Technological development has been accompanied by hopes that it would reform the world, unite people, revitalize democracy, eradicate poverty, and simplify our everyday tasks. Robots and AI must be brought down to an everyday level and the most utopian visions or horrifying scenarios must be called into question so that the true impact of this technology can be seen more clearly.

Anna Dahlgren writes about “A Device for Modern Art: The Visuality of Mechanization and the Mechanization of Art in Sweden 1920–1930”. The article is about how mechanization as a phenomenon was received and discussed in the visual arts during the first decades of the twentieth century. The author seeks to nuance our understanding of the harsh criticism that met the abstract modernist art styles of cubism, futurism, and suprematism in Sweden. In art, what was copyable was considered preferable to the unique, inspired by factory-made products. Just as workers are interchangeable, it was believed that modern art could be achieved by people with limited professional

efforts. Critics questioned whether this should be considered art because it was an expression of machine culture.

“I Am Not a Robot: The Aesthetics of Soul Work Online” is the title of an essay by Karin Hansson. Developers of AI want to access our consumption patterns. In this text the author looks at techniques for guiding our souls and extracting humanity online, methods that are used for control, transcription, and machine learning. The author ends by discussing how we can use technology to understand ourselves better and as an aid to identifying prejudices and structures that make a difference. The social media giants want to control and use the data we generate. Software robots work systematically for them, programmed to behave like human beings and gain friends and followers on social media.

Human visitors and robots can be distinguished by analysing user patterns, such as mouse movements. Interpreting texts is a sensory and cognitive human ability. Advertising companies hire people to bypass robot filters. The author takes a rather negative view of the situation when she writes that technology has made us digital serfs, without property, capital, or control, but with access to a wide range of Internet-based services. Through constant online entertainment, we try to distance ourselves from our boring and powerless lives. Personally, I think people find compensation in other things, such as experiences of nature and other leisure activities.

The chapter “Life, But Not As We Know It: On Artificial Intelligence and the Popular Imagination” is by Luke Goode from New Zealand. He highlights the power of narratives that we tell each other about AI and its role in the future. Films and series have been used to illustrate a future with highly developed AI. The films encourage us to think about what makes us humans, with themes such as power, inequality, and social stratification.

*Novum* is a term used by science fiction researchers to denote an intelligent machine that automatically comes to “life”. People feel fascination, optimism, and anxiety about how quickly

technology is evolving. The term “technological singularity” is a hypothesis based on the idea of exponential and dramatically accelerating technological progress. It is a metaphor deriving from astrophysics, where it refers to the centre of a black hole where the laws that govern time and space do not apply. Advocates of the idea argue that we are approaching a tipping point in 2045, when superintelligence will make its entrance. They say that people’s abilities can be developed if we are prepared to be united with technology. The problem with AI is that it is presented in a narrow technological way that does not consider questions such as ownership, control, fairness, and public or legal oversight of the technology. The author draws attention to the importance of folklore in that the singularity is a myth for the digital age. Myths help us to deal with the complexity and mystery of the world, but they conceal as much as they reveal. To justify a public interest, stories must fire the imagination.

The general public feel that there is a lack of transparency in the new technologies, hidden behind corporate secrecy and technical complexity. The field of AI and robotics is easily portrayed as a kind of spectacle where development is inevitable. This does not give any opportunity for lay people to participate actively in shaping the future of AI and robotics.

“A Conversation about AI and Science Fiction” is a text written by Jerry Määttä together with Daniel Bodén and Michael Godhe. The science fiction genre is an arena where people can discuss and bridge the gap between research and the public and help engage people in issues related to technology, science, and contemporary society and the future. One risk is that people will not discuss the right issues and that the science fiction genre will produce misleading images.

It is commercial publishers and film companies that produce, publish, and distribute science fiction. There are certain stories that are expected to be appreciated by the audience. Much of what appears in media coverage of AI, climate change, terrorism, drones, algorithms, surveillance, etc. is just science fiction clichés. There are also cultural

differences. Japanese robots are cuter than their American counterparts, which are more like the Terminator.

In “Automatic People and Automated Professions: Real Humans and the Labour of Time (to Come)” Johan Hallqvist considers how a number of reports have sounded the alarm about threatened professions. Robots are already being used in factories, but now other parts of the labour market are being robotized, and the definition of what it means to be human is being challenged, since work is regarded as crucial for people’s lives, identities, and survival. The human-like hubots in the Swedish television series *Real Humans* raise the question of where the dividing line runs between humans and hubots. The author seeks to analyse *Real Humans* as an arena where possible future relationships between humans and robots are tested. His main question is how human-like technology portrays and challenges ideas about work. The action is on two levels: a political one with a focus on the struggle between opponents and advocates of hubots; a second level where humans and hubots meet and integrate. The author writes that one can replace hubots with immigrants. The loss of humanity is portrayed in *Real Humans* through hubots that undertake caring tasks. A hubot becomes a combination of maid and home help. Hubotization also comprises unpaid housework.

The articles range from more theoretical to more concrete analyses, giving different angles on AI, robots, and tomorrow’s working life. These texts are important and interesting because they encourage us to take a stand and discuss how we want robots and AI to be used and what kind of future we want to live in. The authors argue that development is not as self-evident as it is generally portrayed. They show that automation does not always succeed as well as its initiators had hoped. They also warn us that the development of robotics and AI can create problems for people and society. Myths are interesting as examples of contemporary folklore (although many stories continue a long tradition). Having conducted some 90 in-depth interviews to hear narratives about tech-

nology, I can confirm that people use television series and science fiction to exemplify what they think the technological future might be like, but in the same breath they say that it will probably not turn out like that at all. The informants also say that the development is driven by technologists who want to develop and test the possibilities. The role of individual technologists from a humanistic perspective is something I miss in the book. They appear in the texts, but only in passing.

*Göran Sjögård, Lund*

### **The History of the Future?**

*Henrik Brissman, Framtidens historia. Natur & Kultur, Stockholm 2021. 259 pp. ISBN 978-91-27-16620-2.*

■ What does it mean to write the history of the future? In his book with this title, Henrik Brissman describes what he calls the encounter with tomorrow that has preoccupied people's minds from the very oldest times until the present day. If one thinks about the future, one tends to think of gadgets and inventions, he writes. But these are just an extension of an ideology or a mental climate; ultimately it is a matter of people's beliefs, visions, desires, fears.

What Brissman undertakes in his book is simply a journey in time, from some of the oldest extant thoughts about the future to the very latest ideas. The structure of the book, as one can quickly conclude, is reminiscent of a series of lectures about different eras, different periods in human history, which are named and delimited in keeping with a chronological mode of thought. These lectures can be characterized as descriptive rather than analytical, aiming to provide a kind of basic orientation on this topic, with the different future horizons that have appeared all through human history.

This means that we are given a timeline in the presentation that may appear teleological, an explanation of how human thinking about the future has taken place and evolved from a primitive phase to an increasingly sophisticated one. The

first proper chapter of the book is entitled "The Religious and Philosophical Future", dealing with a period almost from "the beginning of the human era", when astrology, the art of interpreting signs and movements in the firmament, was important for human thought and action, and then examining some of the early creation myths and philosophies, and on to prophets and oracles in relatively early human societies such as ancient Israel and Greece. The next important station on the road is Plato's ideal state, after which the story moves to the Roman Empire and what was formerly called the Middle Ages, with the Black Death in the thirteenth century as an important chronological landmark.

The future history of humanity is thus envisaged as having evolved in phases that partly overlap but also form a clear sequence, a continuous story from yesterday to tomorrow, from what once was to what is to come. And what is to come, what we perceive as the future, can be of very different kinds. Brissman's account is based above all on a rather traditional periodization in which the key to the history of the future is found in the gap where the religious and philosophical (speculative, metaphysical) future encounters what is to come. The chapter headings are telling: "The Scientific Future 1600–1850", "The Organized Future 1800–1920", "The Promising Future 1850–1950", "The Terrifying Future 1900–", "The Calculable Future 1945–", and "The Ecological Future 1965–".

As can be seen, these period divisions are rather fixed and established as explanations for how human history and self-awareness have evolved over millennia and centuries. It is a paean to the growth of knowledge, complexity, and the scientific method, and at the same time it implies an inexorable logical course towards more and more writing, to a mass of knowledge that in its final phase seems to lead to a kind of warning about our seeking and gathering of knowledge, including the forms of organization to which the development of humanity has led during the past, say, five centuries, thus, a belief in ever-increasing knowledge, an expanded social organization, and

a greater understanding that everything is connected, that the fate of mankind is linked to that of the earth.

In pace with the increasing mass of knowledge and complexity of human societies described here by Brissman, the question of the future becomes a salient point, leading him to the conclusion that one must increasingly begin to conceive that there is not just one future but several possible futures or scenarios competing for space and attention. The warning consists in the fact that today's scientific-technological-economic-political stage involves considerable risks, complexities, and possibly insoluble paradoxes.

When he ends his book, or at the moment he has intended to do so, a situation arises, tellingly, a crisis in which we find ourselves at the time of writing, a future that has become a reality that came as a surprise to most people: the pandemic. This means that he is forced to write an epilogue to the epilogue he has already written, about how pessimism and optimism about the future constantly alternate in human consciousness, as they really should in order to achieve some kind of balance in our future-gazing.

For Brissman, the different ways of looking at the future become a kind of key that can be used to open what actually ends up appearing to be the core, the most important project in his book, more than the future itself or an analytically oriented discussion of the concept of the future. It is the question of which structures of thought apply at different stages of human history. The Archimedean lever in the presentation, as I said, is the swing from the religiously and philosophically delineated future (one could also say the mythical or metaphysically coloured future) to a knowledge-based, rational, or even rationalistic conception of the future. But various watersheds and side-tracks occur, as he notes with considerable interest. They arise in the wake of the extreme rationalism that Enlightenment thinking risks leading to (think of the French Revolution and its reset of history) reactions whereby a more irrational mentality – for example, in the form of romanticism, including the literary tradition of the

Gothic novel – creates a powerful counter-current to what is described in the book as a kind of surging intellectual, epistemic mass of thought. This surging mass of knowledge and technology is above all a Western story, but it carries in it the seeds of the increasingly globalized form of existence we find ourselves in today, where the combination of science, technology, and capitalism has led to structures that appear almost invincible or unshakeable. This is in contrast to other future-related issues that may concern everything from democracy and identity to fantasy and science fiction, which stand out as a kind of counter-image to the (ostensible) superiority of the rational mode of thought.

Henrik Brissman shows in his book, and this is perhaps one of its greatest merits, how much Anglo-American thinkers have focused on future issues, possibly with a peak sometime in the middle of the last century; their thinking has been distinctly pragmatic, often even technocratic, a kind of social engineering with the intention of leading to greater economic, political, and social well-being, for the benefit of humanity, reducing various health problems and bringing well-being, even happiness, although paradoxically, the latter is increasingly questioned the longer the development towards a high-tech knowledge society has proceeded. That is not to say that the alternative history that Alasdair MacIntyre plays with in his book *After Virtue* is not a real threat today, namely, the idea that we might suddenly lose all the knowledge that humanity has accumulated through history. Such a loss of memory would, of course, be fatal, tragic. We can only speculate as to how far an anti-knowledge project, if we may call it that, can be achieved by the populist and authoritarian wave in today's societies. But the former US President Donald Trump with his political agenda is undeniably a cautionary example demonstrating that there are such obvious risks today.

When we now find ourselves, as Brissman asserts, in a situation where so much seems to be at stake, perhaps even the survival of human civilization and the planet, he seems to think that it is through a careful evaluation of knowledge and

imagination, and through a balancing act between optimism and pessimism about the future, that we have a chance of long-term survival in the age of approaching environmental disaster. It may also be noted that, as in this review, the author places himself, albeit indirectly as part of a “we”, in his text and increasingly so the closer we get to the actual present in the future history he describes. It is all of us living now, but also those who will come after us in the future, who always have to write about this future history.

When he writes about thinkers such as Karl Marx, Karl Popper, Mikhail Bakunin, Yevgeny Zamyatin and many more, Brissman does his best to avoid taking an ideological stand in his discussions about the different periods in the book. But perhaps his interest in the American discussion of future scenarios nevertheless shows a greater affinity with liberal than with socialist thought. One form that seems to interest him very much is what one might call the anarchist or roots-based current known here as community, i.e., alternative societies, almost always on a small scale, arising as a result of crises, movements, new starts, especially the American examples that were, as he says, possible only in a more open world than that which existed at the same time in Europe. These communities, where religious and social ideas often coexist, point to alternative models of the future where some of the structures of the surrounding society – such as family, the monetary economy, and largeness of scale – have been questioned by people with a focus on social experimentation. Consequently, it is also about experiments with questions of what is central to human experience and our perception of the world and our place in it. The idea of the Israeli kibbutz is one of the models he describes, with an obviously positive interest in the phenomenon in question.

*Framtidens historia* is a clear, readable introduction to further thinking about the future, futures, alternative futures. It could possibly be argued that the author fails to grapple seriously with the very complex of ideas about yesterday, today, and the future, but perhaps that could be the matter for a different book.

Somewhat surprisingly, the discussion in the book of AI, artificial intelligence, is extremely brief. The same applies to the issue of future fuels in a world with increasingly scarce resources. Some names I miss in the otherwise detailed account are Dante (*The Divine Comedy*), Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*), Rousseau (*Émile, or On Education*) and more recent narratives with thoughts about alternative futures, including dystopias like Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, Herbert Marcuse’s *An Essay on Liberation*, and Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange*, or even Martin Hägglund’s *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom*. One can also think of the imaginative stories by Borges and Calvino and Frank Herbert’s great sci-fi series of novels *Dune*, now a Hollywood blockbuster by the French Canadian director Denis Villeneuve, who previously created cinematic future fantasies such as *Arrival* and *Blade Runner 2049*.

Sven-Erik Klinkmann, *Vasa*

### Fashion’s Photographic Market

*Fashioned in the North. Nordic Histories, Agents, and Images of Fashion Photography*. Anna Dahlgren (ed.). Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2020. 204 pp. ISBN 978-91-8866-193-7.

■ It was 1977. I was 16 years old, and after a trip to Italy I had a summer job for a few weeks in a nursing home. There was a photographer working there too. He said it was just a temporary job. He said I should get out into the world. He could help me with that.

A few weeks later it was time for a photo shoot. I greeted him with newly washed hair and no face make-up. I sported a short fringe as proof of which side I was on. But the white second-hand lacy slip was freshly ironed and I didn’t hesitate to brush my fringe backwards when the camera flashed. He smeared Vaseline on the lens and promised to give me copies of all the pictures. Some would be sent to Jane Hellen and some would be sent to Kerstin Heintz, who was constantly hunting for new models.

When I look at the soft-focus photographs many decades later, I am struck by the magical ability of the Vaseline to create an aura of classic timelessness around a young girl's open face. The gentle transitions between warm light and dark shadows place the subject, the girl who is me, in a dreamlike room with no windows. In the light from the camera, the subject tries out different poses along with the hairbrush and the slip.

A desire to be part of fashion's photographic market was nothing to flaunt openly during the radical 1970s in Lund. Fashion was considered superficial and commercial. The fashion market was something to reject, to distance yourself from. My recollections of the photographer and my later meeting with Kerstin Heintz are multifaceted and almost shameful. To have agreed to do not one but several test shoots was embarrassing in some contexts. But it all came to an abrupt end after a visit to Kerstin Heintz when, after a few hours of shooting and a run through photo albums of all the girls she had "discovered", she observed that I was "good raw material" with a natural look.

"Feel free to come back when you've lost five kilos!" she said, sticking the newly taken instamatic pictures into one of her albums.

"And I would never think of doing that," I would say defiantly to anyone who wanted to listen when I told the story later. But at least I had been for a test shoot, forever immortalized in one of Kerstin Heintz's photo albums.

My personal experience of fashion's photographic market takes on a much deeper meaning in the light of this volume, *Fashioned in the North: Nordic Histories, Agents, and Images of Fashion Photography*, well edited by Anna Dahlgren, professor of art history at Stockholm University. The book challenges previous research on fashion photography and asks new questions about how, by whom, and in what way the photographic history of fashion has been presented. Here we meet a more or less unknown landscape of fashion history, with fascinating stories about fashion images, photographers, and publications. One might wonder why it has taken so long for this history to be written, but since fashion studies is a newly awakened field of

research, it is perhaps more relevant to be impressed by the degree of maturity that characterizes the book as a whole and the majority of the contributions.

When *Vogue Scandinavia* listed the top ten books about Scandinavian style, this volume was number one, and Isabella Rose Davey described it as "hugely insightful". A consistently expressed perspective as regards both the reception of the book and its content is that so much was previously unexplored and underexposed. This is also discussed in the book. An important ambition for the authors is to challenge traditional fashion research – although it is somewhat unclear exactly what traditional perspectives are referred to here – and to approach fashion photography through new empirical examples, new methods, and new perspectives. The eight chapters in the book are written by researchers from all the Nordic countries, with an aspiration to highlight formerly unknown actors and images. How can we understand fashion photography as materiality, as a phenomenon, and as a practice? How can we interpret and analyse a fashion picture?

The book also provides detailed reports on the status of the Nordic countries in terms of education in fashion studies and the museum connections of fashion photography in 2020. This detailed survey gives good insight into an area that has only recently achieved some of the scholarly legitimacy that fashion as a phenomenon has long lacked, but it also risks rapidly becoming outdated with the development of the subject. Fashion studies is a history in constant change, but it also seems to carry a narrative that is nourished by positioning and shortcomings. When the map of Nordic fashion studies is to be drawn, it simultaneously becomes a topographical story about differences in altitude, underexposure, and different degrees of illumination when it comes to fashion research. At the same time, this topography reveals the palpable absence of systematic collections and documentation. Here the book serves an important function for future choices of direction in the field of research and education in fashion studies. Unfortunately, however, the interest in fashion photography as a research object is not reflected in any great interest in the editorial work with the almost fifty images

included in the volume. The pictures are very well chosen, but with the exception of the cover photo, they do not get anything like the space one might expect in a book about fashion photography.

Fashion images find themselves in an interesting way in a kind of nervous in-between space in the fashion market. The different practices of fashion often require the interaction of culture and business. The link between fashion as a social system, as cultural practice, and as a symbolic product therefore generates important components in fashion's photographic market, where the constant interplay between different logics, between culture and economics, demonstrates the urgent challenge to study the organization of fashion and the working life in the business. Semiotics and image analysis have not infrequently guided artistic and culture-theoretical interpretations of representative fashion images. But the fleeting practices of fashion photography have rarely been documented in terms of more systematic or historical ambitions. For fashion photography, it often seems that the focus has been on the garment or product, not on the model. The fashion image has been a perishable commodity, used (at best) and then forgotten. As a commercial image, the fashion photograph has rarely had any photographic value. Working as a fashion photographer was for many a temporary livelihood, a job to do while waiting for something else. The upgrading of the work began cautiously in the 1970s, but it was not until some time into the 1990s that Swedish fashion photography took its place in the salons of fine culture at Moderna Museet's exhibition "Catwalk: Six Swedish Fashion Photographers Show Their Photographs" in Stockholm in 1993.

The book approaches fashion photography as a transnational phenomenon, as a material object, and as a historical object with its roots in a specific media and archive system. The different texts make for a cohesive whole, nicely linked to each other and to common themes and conceptual discussions. The book also contains several lesser-known or completely unknown examples of fashion images, photographers, and references that, according to the authors, have not previously

gained any attention in fashion research. The authors discuss, as already mentioned, the possible reasons for this "underexposure", and they have a clear aspiration to update the field of fashion studies through new empirical examples based on the history of ideas and socio-materiality.

Ideas about a specific Nordic fashion are joined together in different ways in the specific aesthetics of fashion photography and the staging of a kind of Arctic landscape. The notion of the Arctic is particularly visible in the pictures by the photographer John Cowan from 1964, "The Girl Who Went Out in the Cold", published in the American *Vogue* the same year. Here the Icelandic art historian Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir shows how ice, cold, water, and light are linked together into a narrative about a timeless place in the marginal lands of the Cold War.

The ability of fashion to materialize a place or a zeitgeist is said to be one of the fundamental techniques of fashion. Fashion organizes our attention in a way that Georg Simmel long ago called a "self-dynamic", which can be both obvious and surprising. The ability of fashion to channel the currents of the age is often held up as part of the argument for the cultural and social importance of fashion. Fashion is not just fashion – fashion is more than fashion. Fashion as a catalyst means that it also has the ability to influence and change. Perhaps it is time to revive the sociologist Herbert Blumer's definition of fashion as a social event, with the emphasis on the ability of fashion to channel the zeitgeist. This volume shows how fashion and fashion photography in different contexts organize our way of perceiving and defining the world around us. But fashion images are also, in an interesting way, located in a kind of permissive no-man's-land. The photographic market of fashion is a network of actors and objects that are bound together in different ways in a forward-looking field of force characterized by the opposing logics of artistic and commercial ambitions.

One of my favourite chapters is the ethnologist and museologist Anne-Sofie Hjemdahl's fantastic story about the museum director Tor B. Kielland and his wife Edle Due Kielland at the Museum

of Decorative Art and Design in Oslo. Here, in the mid-1950s, the couple produced a number of fashion photographs with themselves as models. Hjemdahl shows how the complex relationship between private, public, and museum documentation activates contemporary notions of fashion, photography, and aesthetics. Basic questions are also asked here about the different practices of fashion as business, design, and a forum for scholarship.

Since several of the contributions to the book apply different historical perspectives to fashion photography, it is important to also look forward and into our own time. What does the fashion picture look like today? Who is the fashion photographer and what or who is the focus in the images? The concept of “selfie museum” has recently spread internationally, and at the new Instagram-friendly selfie museum *Youseum* in Solna, visitors can photograph themselves staged in different settings. How can we understand a phenomenon like this?

Finally, my reading of *Fashioned in the North* has enriched me with new knowledge about an overlooked phenomenon in fashion research. The texts have also made me curious about long-forgotten personal experiences. Who was Kerstin Heintz and how can I know more about her life and her choices? Often mentioned as a legendary fashion woman, she appears to have gone under the radar since she made her name as a manager of young and promising models. In recent times, however, Kerstin Heintz has been acclaimed for her style-setting fashion drawings in the Swedish press over many years. Her book from 1952, *Jag vill bli modetecknare* (I Want to Be a Fashion Illustrator), will soon arrive in my mailbox and my next research project has already begun.

*Cecilia Fredriksson, Lund*

### **Exhibiting Death at Sea**

*Simon Ekström, Sjödränkt. Spektakulär materialitet från havet. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2021. 271 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-7061-348-7.*

■ Simon Ekström is Professor of Ethnology with a double connection to Stockholm 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).

Apart 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 re-

mains" 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 show-cases, 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 exhibition 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* exhibition, 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.

*Daniel Sävborg, Tartu*

### **Animals: Touching Encounters and Cultural Pain Points**

*Djur. Berörande möten och kulturella smärtpunkter.* Simon Ekström & Lars Kaijser (eds.). Makadam, Göteborg/Stockholm 2018. 270 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-7061-260-2.

■ In recent years, human-animal relationships have received a lot of scholarly attention. This

edited volume gives examples of such relationships from one particular perspective: a focus on touching and painful human meetings with animals. The general idea is that not only are we surrounded by animals – wild and tame, farm animals and pets, live and on television or in children’s books, but they are present even when we are not conscious about it. They are everywhere; in the cold counter in the supermarket and on the dining table at home. We imagine futures with or without them (and their meat). We think, feel, and experience with animals. Domesticated animals have not only formed our physical landscapes but our mental ones too, as it were. Animals are, as was stated many years ago, not only good to eat but good to think with; we categorize, describe, and put into order with animals. We touch and are touched by animals.

The pun upon “touching encounters” in the subtitle, pointing (in English as well as Swedish and Danish) to the double meaning of concrete mee(a)tings with the animals (caressing, killing etc.) and the emotions evoked by animals, run through the chapters of the book in a clear and productive way. *Djur*, focusing in particular on non-domestic animals, deals with how humans meet (other) animals in particularly touching relations, where animals evoke strong but often also difficult or painful and ambivalent feelings.

The book opens with a well-written and informative introduction to the theme and to Human-Animal Studies and Critical Animal Studies, thereby inscribing itself in the field of posthumanist studies. The introduction serves as an easy-to-read introduction to the field as well to the general idea of the book, and the perspectives introduced permeate the whole collection, stressing the intimate entanglement of humans and animals, nature and culture.

In eight chapters, this theme is explored from different angles, each of them investigating diverse assemblages of humans, animals, and materiality. In the first chapter (by Elin Lundquist) we meet the dedicated volunteers opposing an extensive local hunt for small birds in Malta, letting informants put into words the affective logics

that motivate them. Mattias Frihammar, in his article, deals with a remarkable private collection of (dead) animals and artefacts, forming a mixture of nature and culture, at first glance presenting itself as a sort of pre-modern curiosity cabinet. On closer examination, however, the collection negates any division of nature and culture, establishing instead another division: the Swedish countryside as opposed to urbanity.

Along the same lines, Lars Kaijser discusses the presence of sharks in a series of public aquaria, the point being that they are produced as, on the one hand, threatened by human exploitation of resources at sea, and on the other – leaning on images from the entertainment industry – as threatening murder machines. Species-protecting entertainment or science-based tourism, as it were. In another museum context, Sverker Hyltén-Cavallius deals with partly human-constructed or reconstructed animals, and Susanne Nylund Skog takes up birdwatching again. She focuses on the ticking off of species that creates a special form of collector, and analyses the birdwatcher’s narratives that clearly show the importance of touching meetings with birds.

A very specific theme is taken up by Simon Ekström, who writes about lobsters in cartoons that often change roles with humans in carnivalesque forms. Using interviews and other materials, Helena Hörmfeldt discusses the fear provoked in humans by different species of animals – in mediated and standardized forms, and finally, Michell Zethson argues that although in modernity the transformation of animals to meat has been based on the absence of the animal in the meat, there seems to be a new tendency – a “neo-carnivorism” – in which the animal comes to the forefront. Zethson especially focuses on a combined hunting and eating event arranged by a Swedish restaurant, which is unfolded interestingly and productively with the approaches of “meat theorists” like Derrida and Vialles, but ends somewhat unfocused and with the addition of yet other perspectives, detours, and repetitions to the analysis.

In that sense, the chapter is typical of several of the chapters in that they produce successful

and thought-provoking analyses but tend to add additional analytical perspectives in the process, with a tendency to become unfocused and repetitive. However, the book as a whole has a clear focus: how animals evoke involvement, love, fascination, and fear, but do so in mediated and conventional ways. The contributions are well written and make for good reading, and the book can be recommended to readers interested in human-animal relations. A selection of the chapters could fit in nicely into a syllabus.

The well-known, not to say world-famous, giraffe Marius, an excess animal that was dissected and cut up in front of an audience in Copenhagen Zoo in 2014, enters the introduction as well as the conclusion of the book, to illustrate the ambiguity of human-animal relationships, and it is only fair that he should embellish the cover in an origami-like portrait. The design of the book is topped with similar small animal illustrations in the header of each chapter. Nice!

*Signe Mellegaard, Copenhagen*

### **Viewpoints on the Use of Alcohol**

*Anders Gustavsson, Improper Use, Moderation or Total Abstinence of Alcohol. Use of and Opinion on Alcohol Especially in the Western Swedish Countryside and Coastal Regions during the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries. Strömstad Academy. Nordic Institute of Advanced Studies 2021. 79 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-89331-05-1.*

■ For quite a long time Anders Gustavsson has dealt with the use of alcohol from diverse points of view. This book can be described as a summary of his earlier studies with the addition of a more detailed investigation of memorial drinking. Given this structure, the texts cannot avoid repetitions concerning the cultural background to drinking alcohol in different situations.

To begin with, Gustavsson states firmly that there are a great many studies about how people in Sweden drink, but he also underlines that his aim is not to write about legislative matters but, as an ethnologist, to see how people regard and

handle alcohol in practice. Yet he cannot avoid telling about the society in which he works, which means that there is some information about the administration of alcohol in the relevant parts of the country. He starts with an autobiographical perspective, describing some memories from his own family and their use of alcohol through several generations. This perspective does not return in the study but is supplemented with several other approaches and types of material, mainly archival records. There is a general view of Sweden as a whole, but mostly the research concerns the south-western parts of the country. Some international sidelights broaden the perspective.

Gustavsson's main aim is to explore the relationship between moderate drinking, complete abstinence, and excessive consumption of spirits. He formulates several questions about the contacts between the groups of users, the conflicts between them caused by their views on alcohol, the roles played by honour, decency, and shame, gender differences, and the understanding of limited, acceptable drinking, among other themes. Readers learn about the attitudes of clergymen and physicians, and about the divergent opinions on aquavit, wine, beer, and liqueur.

It goes without saying that too much drinking may be disastrous for those involved, this. More interestingly, we see a form of moderate drinking, when guests were offered a dram, no matter whether they were invited or just popped in. It was an obligation to offer them alcohol, but if it was known that the guest would not be content with a moderate number of drinks, the host would empty the bottle in advance so that only a small amount of liquid was left in it to be consumed.

The temperance movements in south-western Sweden are the subject of a special chapter in the book. They were influential in many ways, not only that they prohibited their members from drinking, but they also caused them to live in a way that made the non-members lead their lives on the members' terms and conditions. A shopkeeper who belonged to a temperance movement could thus refuse to sell alcohol at all, which certainly was inconvenient to many people in the

community. Due to this severe attitude to alcohol, people drank clandestinely.

A long chapter is devoted to about memorial drinking, and here Gustavsson takes his readers through history from Greece and Rome through the Middle Ages until the present day. He describes the custom and tries to find out why it was quite common to take a toast – without mentioning the word *skål* which refers to “cheers”, drinking, and sinning – when saying farewell to a friend, neighbour, or family member. Gustavsson suggests that reasons for the drink were solidarity and remembrance.

Considering that the book is only 79 pages including many illustrations and references, it is quite comprehensive. I recommend it to those who want a quick summary of drinking habits in Sweden, especially among rural people in the countryside around Gothenburg.

*Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, Åbo (Turku)*

### **Ambulatory Schoolteachers and Literacy in Norway**

*Gry Heggli, Omgangsskolelæreren i allmueskolen. Leseopplæring mellom tekster og talemål. Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo 2021. 195 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-82-3040-286-3.*

■ There are many possible ways to read this book on “The Ambulatory Schoolteacher in the Common School”. The author Gry Heggli is a researcher in education at the University of Bergen and has a special interest in literacy practices in research and education. In this book her research on reading, writing, and also speech practices concerns the period 1800–1860, when special legislation for rural schools was established in Norway. The first law came as early as 1739, but it was during the period 1800–1860, especially the 1830s, that the occupation of schoolteacher with professional training took shape.

The book shows that Norway was in a turbulent period of transition when the union of Denmark-Norway was dissolved in 1814. Children’s access to school was an important element, first of all in

maintaining the union with Denmark and later in the establishment of a Norwegian national identity. Above all, the school was very closely connected to the church, as part of its main mission. School was thus almost exclusively an institution for teaching Christian doctrine and religious education.

Language became an important factor in this time of transition. Here Heggli highlights the difference between Norwegian, the dialects spoken in rural areas which encompassed a wide range of variants, and Danish, the language that was formalized and used in translations of the Bible and other Christian texts, such as Luther’s Catechism. The author also gives a brief account of the switch from Gothic to Latin letters during this period. Norway at this time was a country with major differences – economic, cultural, and social. The school reforms implemented in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were established relatively quickly in the towns but did not have an impact in the countryside until several decades later, which Heggli describes as a period marked by lack of synchronicity.

However, to understand reading, writing, and speech practices in this time of transition is not Heggli’s primary goal; her interest is directed towards the teachers who made the school reforms possible in rural areas all over Norway, namely, the ambulatory schoolteachers (*omgangsskolelærer*). The ambulatory schoolteacher is initially presented in the book as a rather miserable and slightly ridiculous figure that many biographers and local writers have made fun of in their accounts. Based on a rich array of source material, which is divided into three categories, Heggli seeks to understand this malicious image, but also to question it. The first category consists of a number of autobiographies and biographies where the authors talk about their own and other people’s experiences of being ambulatory school teachers. The second category comprises descriptions that were recorded afterwards and which can be found in folklore literature, books by local writers, and local school history. The third category is archival material in the form of reports, minutes, and correspondence from the time.

All in all, the material enables Heggli to portray the ambulatory school teachers from different angles: their own personal experiences, from the perspective of the church and the clergy, and from the viewpoint of the rural population, for example former pupils and parents. Heggli combines these perspectives throughout the book, often clearly highlighting the point of these shifting perspectives. One point is to problematize the somewhat condescending ridicule that seems to dominate, which she does by putting the teachers in a clear context characterized by conflicting ideals and practices.

The text of the book is based to a large extent on excerpts from the sources. It is the dynamics between these quotations, that is, how they are put in relation to each other, that propels Heggli's exploration of the teachers, the emergence of the common school (*allmueskole*, a "poor school" for the peasantry), the time of change in which this took place, and the possibilities for learning to read. This is a good way to do justice to the rich material, but it places great demands on the reader, who has to switch between Heggli's meta-narrative and a large number of narratives and anecdotes presented in different styles and languages from different times.

Heggli attaches great importance to a thorough description of the people who took it upon themselves to work as ambulatory schoolteachers in rural areas, and also why. It was often boys and men from families in the peasantry itself, which meant that they were close to the pupils, but at the same time distant from the employer: the priest and the bishop. This resulted in a somewhat ambiguous position in a hierarchical and patriarchally structured society. Furthermore, Heggli describes in detail the teachers' precarious working conditions: the poor salaries, the journeys on foot over large distances, often in harsh climate and rough terrain, the poor training, and the substandard teaching conditions in the peasants' homes. One chapter is devoted entirely to the teachers' knowledge and another to different reading practices.

As I wrote at the beginning, the book can be read in many ways depending on one's interests.

I read the book as a story about an ambivalent position and profession in the making, where the ambulatory teachers find themselves in different intermediate positions. On the one hand, it is about their own role positioned between the rural people and the church, and between religion, with its interpretive priority, and the practices and chores of everyday life. Above all, I read this as a very interesting story about a kind of para-professionals operating in a politically charged multilingual context. The ambulatory teachers manoeuvred and mediated between the religious written language which was also Danish, often incomprehensible to the peasantry, and the practical vernacular of everyday life, consisting of variants of Norwegian. They bore a heavy responsibility for the literacy that the lawmakers hoped it would be possible to spread among the rural population. Based on this, I would have liked to see Heggli give more prominence to her analysis of the literacy project and also to the theories and the few previous studies that she refers to at the end of the book. These can be invoked to underline the importance of understanding the school reforms and the standardization of teaching language and reading as a part of European colonialism, with all that it entails.

*Kristina Gustafsson, Växjö*

### **With Camera and Suitcase**

*Med kamera och koffert. Resefotografier före mass-turismen.* Sanna Jylhä & Marika Rosenström (eds.). SLS Varia nr 7. SLS, Helsingfors/Appell förlag, Stockholm 2021. 178 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-985486-9-3.

■ It feels rather like going on a journey to make one's way through this beautiful book, which is based on photographs taken by early travellers abroad. No fewer than 160 photographs by amateur photographers, preserved in the archives of SLS, the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, make up the backbone of the book, which also contains a whole range of other pictorial material such as postcards and diary entries. The two edi-

tors of the book are archivists at SLS. To enable an understanding of the photographs in their context, the editors have made sure to surround them with other material. In this way, written texts give a clear voice to the travellers.

The book begins with a chapter by Laura Hollsten and Maria Åsvik about developments in travel since the seventeenth century. Special landmarks here came in the middle of the nineteenth century when the first tour operators were established in Finland, and in the 1920s when a number of international air connections were established. The authors note, however, that for a long time the pleasure of travel was confined to those who had plenty of money and leisure. They also highlight the importance of classical travelogues and the guidebooks that later became available. After the turn of the twentieth century, travellers began to take an interest in unknown peoples, countries, and cultures as the subject of anthropology emerged. At the same time, more efficient transports were developed and people were able to explore the world more independently and take pictures of their own. Mass tourism did not begin until the 1970s, and since the book concerns travel before that time, it ends with the 1960s. In an interesting analytical chapter, Hollsten and Åsvik show how colonialism created a kind of infrastructure for travel to other continents. Colonial goods such as coffee, tea, and cocoa led travellers to the countries where these were produced, and with the camera at the ready they took pictures of their visits. A concluding discussion in this chapter notes how, although the camera can be perceived as creating objective images, the photographs are in fact never objective. The technical development of the camera itself and the importance of its easy portability are also covered in this chapter.

The part played by the two editors in the book is presented rather too modestly. They are not mere editors but also authors of interesting texts and responsible for a rich body of pictorial material. Each of their chapters begins with a long text, for example, presenting aristocracy on the Riviera, plantation owners on tours or people on

trips to the remote Samarkand. The reader also learns how artists in tropical helmets voyaged to Japan and China, as well as how lumberjacks lived in Canada, what life was like aboard sailing ships to Australia, and how a textile expert commissioned by the United Nations portrayed Iran under the Shah. Each of these introductory presentations also names the individuals behind the photographs and texts and how their material ended up in the SLS archives.

For a long time travel was a privilege of the upper strata of society, and this was also the case in Finland. High society, for example, gathered on the Riviera for the beach life there, and we meet the Finnish travellers in hotel gardens and in the streets. An image from around 1900 showing Valborg Wallensköld cycling is particularly interesting in that it is accompanied by Valborg's description of her bike Bessie, on which she becomes "a different person".

On the way to Samarkand there are pictures from the Nyberg family archive, for instance depicting the Nobel company factories in Baku and some stately Turkmens. Quotations from the travellers' diaries make the images come alive and give a deeper understanding of the life that is portrayed.

Artists at this time usually travelled to Paris or Rome, but here we meet instead the artist Harald Gallén on a trip in Japan and China. The pictures, however, were taken by the ship's doctor with whom he was travelling. Gallén's long, detailed diary entries record the many sounds he experienced, as well as the colours that could not be rendered in the black and white photographs. As a reader, one can almost dream oneself away with him to Imperial China, as he sits on the large marble ship in the Summer Palace in Peking.

A nice little collection of photographs tells about life as a lumberjack as experienced by the son of a small farmer from Ostrobothnia in British Columbia in the 1930s. On a postcard from 1935 we read about his journey home on the Swedish American Line's MS *Gripsholm*.

A dark story is told by a young intern about her stay in the Third Reich in 1938 and 1939. On the

one hand, there are beautiful photographs from her social life in restaurants and dance venues in Hamburg. On the other hand, we also see pictures of Hitler's visit to Hamburg and how swastikas decorated buildings and shopfronts.

There is also room in the book for doctors' medical diaries and accompanying photographs. A paediatrician describes India as a land of contrasts. Here one can see everything from wretched poverty to extravagant parades and beautiful mansions. We have now reached the 1950s and the photographs are in colour.

The author Göran Schildt's Egyptian voyage in the 1950s naturally finds a place in a book like this. He has also described in one of his books how he sailed to Egypt. Here it is mainly people who can be seen in the photographs, but also his boat *Daphne*.

Journalists taking photographs have been common, and here we meet Margareta Norrmén (who wrote under the name Marcella) from the Helsinki newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* on a trip in 1958, when she produced a lengthy travelogue. She captured everyday life along with architecture and beautiful promenades in Nice, Madrid, and Lisbon.

Typically, the journey through this book ends with a group trip to Italy in 1967, depicted through photographs and diary entries by the nurse and secretary Werna Ulfve.

This well-crafted book with outstandingly well-reproduced photographs invites one to return many times.

*Birgitta Svensson, Lund*

### **Mournable Lives**

*Kim Silow Kallenberg*, Sörjbara liv. Universus Academic Press, Malmö 2021. 226 pp. ISBN 978-91-87439-70-4.

■ 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.

*Tove Ingebjörg Fjell, University of Bergen*

### Analysing Father's Tomfooleries

*Barbro Klein, I tosaforornas värld. Gustav berättar. Carlssons Bokförlag, Stockholm 2021. 463 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-89062-95-2.*

■ 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!"

*Sofie Strandén-Backa, Åbo (Turku)*

### History as a Tourist Attraction

*Wiebke Kolbe*, *Geschichtstourismus. Theorie – Praxis – Berufsfelder*. Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, Tübingen 2021. 180 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-3-8252-5645-6.

■ The historian Wiebke Kolbe has been professor of history at Lund University since 2012. One of her major research interests is the history of tourism. She has edited a volume on the topic, *Turismhistoria i Norden* (2018) and she chairs the Nordic Network for the History of Tourism, which started in 2015.

This book reviewed here is not about the history of tourism. Instead, it focuses on the aspect of tourism and the tourist industry that concerns visits to historic memorials such as buildings and sites associated with famous historical people and events. The closest equivalent to the German word *Geschichtstourismus* is the term *heritage tourism*. Until the First World War, tourism was a prerogative of the well-off. It was not until the interwar period that mass tourism began to develop.

Kolbe's study focuses in particular on Germany and its historical attractions. The author divides heritage tourism into three areas: visits to cities, visits to regions, and dark tourism.

First the author considers tourist visits to cities (pp. 15–49). Historic buildings are important, but also special events and famous historical persons. It is especially significant if a city is inscribed on Unesco's World Heritage List. Several cities call themselves "Luther cities", primarily to Wittenberg, Eisleben, and Mansfeld, but also Coburg and Worms. When it comes to historic

buildings, the town hall in Münster, where the Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648, has pride of place. Historical museums and exhibitions are also important destinations. This is particularly true of the European Hansemuseum in Lübeck, which opened in 2015. Among open-air museums, the museum village of Cloppenburg, founded in 1934, is well known. Many cities provide guided tours of important historical sights. Some cities are the venue for famous annual celebrations, the Oktoberfest in Munich being a prominent example. *Kieler Woche* in June is also well known. History makes itself felt particularly when cities hold medieval markets in the style of Medieval Week on Gotland. In 2009 there were more than 900 such markets in Germany. Medieval food is an important feature on these occasions, served in special medieval restaurants. In northern Germany, as in Stockholm, there are also Viking Age restaurants, even though there are no known accounts of meals or recipe books from the Viking Age.

The next chapter deals with heritage tourism in regions outside the cities (pp. 49–65). Castles are important tourist attractions, which often arrange events such as medieval-style tournaments. There are also historic hiking trails for tourists, such as the 400-kilometre *Route Industriekultur* in the Ruhr area.

A third chapter, the largest (pp. 65–135), is devoted to a special category of tourism known as dark tourism, a term coined in England in 1996, geared to places with a dark history of death. These include battlefields, war graves, concentration camps, disaster sites, and so on.

Many of these places have to do with the Nazi era, such as Jewish cemeteries and concentration camps, particularly Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, which was added to the World Heritage List in 1979 and has over two million visitors annually. In Germany there are memorial sites at Buchenwald, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen. Not least among Jews in Israel, there has recently been an expansion in visits to places with a former Jewish population. This has become a form of pilgrimage. An example is the city of Worms, which

had one of the oldest Jewish communities in Germany before the old synagogue was destroyed on the pogrom night of 9 November 1938. A new synagogue was opened in 1961. Since the 1980s, several German cities such as Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich have invited persecuted Jewish families to visit the places where their dead relatives once lived. For several years, survivors of death camps also participated in these trips and were able to act as witnesses to the Holocaust for the other people on the trip.

Underground bunkers from the Second World War have also become interesting places to visit. They were built by forced labourers and concentration camp prisoners. The huge Valentin bunker in Bremen was built to house the manufacture of submarines in sections. It opened as *Denkort Bunker Valentin* in 2015. The act of turning bunkers into museums began in Germany only after the fall of the Wall in 1989. The first of these, Bunkermuseum Emden, an air-raid shelter, was opened in 1995. Tourists are shown around the underground passages.

Several places in the former German Democratic Republic are also visited as dark tourism since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. *Museum Haus am Checkpoint Charlie* documents the history of the wall and the many attempts to escape over it. GDR prisons for political prisoners have also become historical memorials for tourists.

A special category of dark tourism in the post-war era concerns memorial sites of terrorist attacks such as that against the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. Memorial Plaza was opened in 2011 and now has about 6.8 million visitors annually. The names of the 2,983 victims of the attack are engraved on a bronze plaque.

Another special category of dark tourism in recent times comprises the sites of nuclear accidents. The most recent example commemorates the Fukushima disaster in Japan in March 2011. For the last few years there have been organized trips there for foreign tourists. Following the meltdown at the Chernobyl nuclear power station

in Ukraine in April 1986, strict exclusion zones were established that made tourism impossible until the early 2000s. Chernobyl Tours were started in 2008, mainly for foreign tourists.

Because there has been no war on Swedish soil for over two hundred years, since 1814, it is understandable that Sweden does not have the same conditions for dark tourism as Germany and other countries that were involved in the two world wars. Memorial sites from these two wars occupy the major part of Kolbe's survey.

Kolbe's book succeeds in its ambition to inform and instruct. It also mentions future fields of research for students in the field of tourism. The language is clear and explicit, making it easy to follow the author's reasoning. There could have been more pictures of historic tourist attractions, preferably in colour. The book concludes with an extensive international bibliography and a detailed index of topics and places.

The author has produced a comprehensive survey that will be helpful in future research on the history of tourism. The long sections on dark tourism are particularly innovative. As a historian, the author has used written sources throughout, whereas an ethnologist would have conducted field surveys with interviews and observations among tourists to gain information about their intentions and experiences.

*Anders Gustavsson, University of Oslo/Henån*

### **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 pres-

entation 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 customs 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 become 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.

*Bo Lönnqvist, Helsingfors*

### **Cultural Heritage Management in Wartime**

*Mattias Legnér, Värden att värna. Kulturminnesvård som statsintresse i Norden vid tiden för andra världskriget. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2021. 452 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-7061-368-5.*

■ On 25 February 2022, the day after Russian forces entered Ukraine, Sveriges Radio reported that staff at the National Museum in the capital Kiev were going to “take the objects, put them in special crates, and carry them down to the basement”. As I was in the process of reading this book, “Values to Protect: Cultural Heritage Management as a State Interest in the Nordic Countries at the Time of the Second World War” by Mattias Legnér, professor of conservation at Uppsala University, the news sounded alarmingly similar to the content of the book. In several respects the Swedish museums acted in the same way then as the Ukrainians are doing now – they took the objects, packed them in crates, and carried them down to the basement. In his study Legnér is interested in how and why cultural heritage came to be perceived as a matter of national interest, the idea that the state has a responsibility to preserve and protect material remains, in connection with the Second World War. What was singled out as especially deserving pro-

tection as war threatened, the process by which particular objects were identified, and the thinking and motives that lay behind this, are questions that, according to Legnér, have only received limited attention in previous research.

The study is based on a broad range of archival material, with the Antiquarian Topographic Archive and the National Heritage Board's archive as the main sources. Of the eight personal files examined, that of Jonny Roosval dominates, and Roosval is the person who recurs most often in the analysis, closely followed by other well-known names in this context such as Sigurd Curman, Andreas Lindblom, Carl Axel Nordman, and a few others. Since Legnér's investigation thus relies heavily on the official heritage authorities' own archives, this reader would have liked to see a reflexive discussion about how the cultural heritage policy of the period, which has resulted in these archives, dictated the conditions for and influenced the cultural heritage analyses that can be performed today.

The book is nicely designed and richly illustrated with well-chosen images. The 452 pages are divided into 15 chapters. A traditional introduction presenting the problems, basic concepts, the state of research, the sources, and so on, is followed by the chapter “Preparations for Aerial Warfare”, which describes the background by outlining the development of the principles of international law and the increasing destructive power of military technology; it was above all the ability of bombers to reach far behind enemy lines that was perceived as a new type of threat to cultural property. The chapter also describes how the Stockholm Museums' Aerial Protection Committee was formed in 1939 with the task of coordinating and leading the work in the capital, as a direct response to the bomb threat. The next chapter, “The Activation of Monument Protection in the Autumn of 1939”, discusses the development of cultural heritage management in Sweden, and the central role that the art historian Jonny Roosval was given, or perhaps rather took upon himself, in the work of protection. The identification of the most valuable objects to be preserved in the

museums is investigated under the heading “The Elite Collections – Defining a National Treasure”, while “Gotland – a Vulnerable Island” describes the great interest that was devoted primarily to the churches on the island by the National Heritage Board and by Roosval himself. The ecclesiastical theme recurs in the chapter “Protective Measures in Ecclesiastical Environments”, where it is very clear how Roosval’s own ecclesiastical interest highlighted the importance of protecting medieval churches. A great deal of space is also devoted to the debate about the statue of Saint George and the Dragon in Storkyrkan in Stockholm. The situation in Finland and the interest that Swedish archivists and museum people showed in this is the topic of chapter 7, “Finland’s Cause 1939–40”. The latter theme is explored in more depth in chapter 9, “Dreams of a Greater Finland 1941–44”. Between these chapters focusing on Finland comes what this reader thinks is the strongest chapter in the book, “The Use of History in Times of Crisis”, which clearly shows how the past was mobilized under the threat of war, in the name of the nation and of Swedishness, based on different ideological and academic stances. The chapter also gives a nuanced description of the ambivalent attitude towards Germany that characterized the art-historical academic environment during the war. The chapter “Urban Buildings and Manor Houses” follows Roosval’s interest in these kinds of settings. In the chapter “Occupied Norway” we see that the Nazis’ positive attitude to what was perceived as Norwegian cultural heritage both complicated and contributed to the shaping of cultural heritage management. The situation was partly different in neighbouring Denmark, which is discussed in the chapter “Cultural Heritage Management in Occupied Denmark”, where Legnér argues that the museums resisted Nazification through civil resistance. The book concludes with the three chapters “Private Collections and the Aerial War”, “Experiences Drawn from the War”, and “Concluding Discussion”.

One merit of the book is that it offers a thorough and detailed account of how a group of people involved in cultural heritage management act-

ed during the period in question, and what the corresponding situation was like in Norway, Finland, and Denmark. The language is polished and the source material is well presented and summarized. The descriptions of the events are meticulous and detailed. The strength of the book lies primarily in the fact that new source material is presented and analysed, and I understand that Legnér’s goal is to provide a thorough survey rather than to discuss method or theory. There is relatively little in the way of direct references to or dialogue with other research, but when it occurs – for example, with Alf W. Johansson or Regina Bendix and Valdimar Hafstein – it helps to deepen our understanding of the material.

Legnér convincingly shows how the emerging cultural heritage management was shaped by a few dominant men, whose room for manoeuvre and influence were strengthened by the threat of war. I also find it interesting that Legnér notes that (in Sweden) it was in reality the protective measures themselves that often entailed risks and actual damage to the objects – dismantling and moving the objects involved some wear and tear, and often the climatic conditions were substandard in the shelters and other places to which the objects were evacuated. There are really fascinating discussions showing how different notions of what was Swedish were invoked in support of different preservation and protection strategies. Contacts across Nordic national borders also deserve their place in the survey, as a constructive contribution to the historiography of cultural heritage management.

The presentation stays close to the sources and often the author acts as an interpreter for the various actors, which gives colour and a sense of presence to the text. A marginal objection is that this stylistic device sometimes makes it difficult for this reader to determine what is the source’s attitude or opinion, and what is Legnér’s own position. A more general objection is that the author’s account sometimes becomes so detailed that it obscures the bigger patterns. In some cases one gets the impression that it is the material, rather than the questions, that guided the investigation.

For example, is it important that we should be told the name of the only employee at Skansen trained to drive a lorry, just because it is included in the sources? More analytical preparatory work and a more pedagogical and filtered presentation of the material would probably have brought out the point of the different examples more clearly.

There are some repetitions in the text. Perhaps the repetitive element can be blamed on what is described. The cultural heritage people acted under the threat of war on the basis of a couple of simple set principles: it was essential to identify an elite collection, to find a safe place for it in the museum building or evacuate it to distant places or nearby shelters. Built environments deserving protection had to be documented by surveying and photography and/or barricaded with sandbags or other protective material. All this had to be done to a tight schedule and with scant financial resources. How these principles were translated into action is described in a range of examples, which in the long run becomes somewhat repetitive.

In other cases sentences can recur almost word for word. On page 34, for example, we read: "It turned out not to be sufficient to establish a convention. The monuments also needed to be actively protected and respected if the convention was to have any effect", while on page 65 it says: "It was thus not sufficient to establish a convention – monuments needed to be actively protected and respected if the convention was to have any effect." In this and several similar cases, the text would have benefited from more attention on the part of the editor, which might also have made the now voluminous text a little more manageable.

In the academic debate there is a dividing line between considering cultural heritage management as an institution that, through its structures, ideas, and actors, so to speak, produces cultural heritage, and a perspective that views the cultural heritage (preferably in the singular) as more or less given and the importance of cultural heritage management is investigated and assessed according to its ability to protect this heritage. It is difficult to clearly place the present book in either of

these camps. Despite references to representatives of the former outlook, such as Regina Bendix and Valdimar Hafstein, I regard some of Legnér's interpretations as belonging to the latter. As an ethnologist, I would have liked Legnér to dwell even more clearly on the performative aspect of the actions of those involved, i.e. that the actors produced certain objects and phenomena as cultural heritage through their observation, evaluation, and use. It would also be interesting if the author had considered what was *not* selected as elite cultural heritage.

The outcome of an analysis depends heavily on the concepts that are applied. Those presented in the introduction are "monument", "cultural property", and "cultural heritage". "Monument" was the term used at the time to describe buildings and archives and libraries, while "cultural property" has been borrowed from the later convention terminology employed by UNESCO to describe material expressions – "objects, documents, and books" – representing a group of people. "Cultural heritage" is used as a broader concept also including traditions and customs. The source of the above criticism is possibly a result of the fact that it is this conceptual apparatus, sticking close to the practice, that has shaped the study. By basing the study on the terms used by cultural heritage people themselves, the perspective becomes to some extent that of these individuals and not of the critically reflective cultural analyst.

An important point in the book is that it shows with the aid of concrete examples how the threat of war accentuated what has been described by Laurajane Smith as an authorized heritage discourse, i.e. a mindset (and the healing practices that accompany it) that primarily identifies Western, material, privileged, and white masculine values as cultural heritage. In Legnér's analysis, the nationalistic aspect of this is very clear. On the other hand, aspects of power such as race, class, and perhaps above all gender are considered to a limited extent, which is a pity. In the few examples where a gender aspect is mentioned at all, it is about women, and the interpretations are unfortunately rather flat. Without insisting that all

research should be based on well-developed gender theory, one could have wished for a slightly more updated and nuanced approach by a professor of conservation.

To return to the news reports on 4 March 2022, the main story in the culture news programme “Kulturnytt” on P1, Sveriges Radio, with a clear reference to the war in Ukraine, is that Sweden is not well prepared to protect cultural heritage in the event of war: only one in four museums has drawn up a disaster plan. History is often cited as a source of knowledge about how contemporary challenges can be faced. In the concluding chapter Legnér notes that “propaganda, looting, vandalism, and terror” were a greater threat to the objects and buildings that were identified as worthy of protection than aerial warfare, and that it is probably the same today.

Despite the criticisms I have put forward, Legnér has undoubtedly written an ambitious, relevant, and up-to-date book that will certainly deserve a place on reading lists for courses in cultural heritage management all over Sweden for a long time to come.

*Mattias Frihammar, Stockholm*

### **Fifty Shades of Class**

*Britta Lundgren, Hildur Kalman, Ann Öhman & Annelie Bränström-Öhman, Möjligheter och mellanrum. Berättelser om genus och akademiska livslopp. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2020. 277 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-7061-327-2.*

■ Is it a collection of autobiographies? Is it a case study collection? Is it a research anthology? After reading Lundgren, Kalman, Öhman and Bränström-Öhman’s book I am tempted to say “yes” to all these questions. The title can be translated as *Opportunities and in-between spaces: Stories about gender and academic life courses*. It consists of five parts. First, the introduction sets the stage. Here, the authors present themselves as professors at Umeå University different academic backgrounds, with a common interest in gender studies. After collaborating on the project

*Challenging Gender*, the four of them continued to meet up to discuss their own experiences as women academics from northern Sweden.

The rest of the book consists of four essays, one from each of the four writers, all of them ending with a corresponding bibliography.

Britta Lundgren, like the other three, uses personal experiences to highlight and explore changes in society. Lundgren begins her journey with old skis on very young feet, imagining herself as a child, thus illustrating how we always tell stories about the past through lenses of today. Through an auto-ethnographical approach, her own experience becomes raw material for the study of a career trajectory. She situates her theoretical position to use herself as source and research material, carefully making sure it is useful for and grounded in the research project. Through this, she implies a certain criticism of the cultural analysis approach, indicating that drawing big lines can be supplemented by individual experience.

Hildur Kalman employs the notion of the alternative curriculum vitae in her approach. What has led her to the place she is now, which is not usually listed in a CV? This notion, combined with her reading activities, sets the stage for her account of life. She has gone where her interests have taken her, while also seeking wages, “att ha ett arbete [to have a job]”, as she writes, ever so pragmatically (p. 92). Like Lundgren, Kalman was born in the 1950s and describes growing up, reflecting on her memories through academic tools. Her Icelandic connection is important to her, and tales of her long-gone relatives indicate how the stories we share shape our experiences in the present. She seems to take it for granted that her Icelandic background is known by the reader. However, I would have liked to see it spelt out more clearly early in the text.

Like Lundgren, Ann Öhman begins with a tale told in the third person. But she begins with the ceremony where she became a professor in 2013. Images of class are evident, when she draws on her parents’ pride combined with awkwardness in the situation of the ceremony. Her perspective is explicitly, like the others, that gender and class

provide lenses through which her personal account is described and analysed, but also the changing phases of life give insight and understanding. In one example her working-class parents helped the young Öhman and her boyfriend redecorate their new apartment in a style not to her parents own liking. Looking back, Öhman concludes this section of her story with her mother's embroidered picture of red farmhouses and sheep. It still hangs on Öhman's wall as she writes.

Annelie Bränström-Öhman's essay is organized with a prologue, two main parts and a very short epilogue. In the prologue she continues situating the project and the theoretical perspective she writes from, much like the others. In the first of the main parts, she describes her time as a child and young woman in school, using separate paragraphs to describe memories from her childhood, but in first-person narratives instead of third-person as used by Lundgren and Öhman. The materiality of clothing comes through in the description of her mother's sewing. In the second main part, Bränström-Öhman focuses on items of clothing. Some represent class journeys but also gender, for example her father's and grandfather's farmer's and working-class clothes that she used as a student. Later, other items of clothing say something about the life of women academics, such as a pair of black pumps inherited from the previous owner of her office and the French feminist and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's red bathrobe that Beauvoir often wore while writing. Through these items Bränström-Öhman reflects on choices and experiences, on gender and class.

Through individual and collective memory work Lundgren, Kalman, Öhman and Bränström-Öhman have drawn on their own life trajectories combined with research literature and theory to understand academic life for women during their lifetimes, often beginning with their primary school years and their family backgrounds. Gender and the class journey, or rather the nuances class may play, is a common topic in the four chapters. They display their stories with the larger narrative of the class journey close at hand and show how categorizations such as gender and

class provide opportunities and lack of opportunities.

Lundgren and Öhman include short stories with third-person descriptions of selected childhood memories in their essays. It felt a little strange to begin with, and I worried that these passages of the texts would become awkward. However, both have incorporated the different genres – voices, so to speak – well, drawing on the experiences described, both as illustrations of set moments in time (Lundgren skiing as a preschooler, Öhman as a young adult and student) and drawing lines throughout their careers.

Some paragraphs are rather pregnant with meaning, such as Öhman's four sentences about avoiding conflicts in academia without acting cowardly. Between the lines this is clearly meaningful! Further, Lundgren and Kalman explicitly state that they have chosen to write about certain topics and not about others. The life of women academics from the 1970s onwards include me-too situations and locked doors due to gender, class and background. But most of these situations and locked doors are merely hinted at, a conscious choice made by the four women. Personally, I would have liked to hear more about these experiences, but this book is limited in size, and I understand the decision to mention without detailing that their journeys also contain these kinds of episodes. Like their actual pregnancies, they are briefly mentioned, but not very important for the plots in the essays.

If I could have wished for one change, it would have been more information about *when* they did what they did, and in what order. Sometimes I find myself confused. They all have some kind of chronology in their essay within sections, but in the transition to the next section it is not clear when that happened in relation to the section before. I am left wondering and long for dates.

I do not long for dates in Bränström-Öhman's text, though. She spends more time on each section, and under each headline, and meanders through the points she makes. Chronology is not as important here, and when she jumps in time I follow because the connections she makes are not

as dependent on when something happened as in the other essays.

Belonging to another generation of women academics, for me the stories told here are both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. They have taken their own time – to think, to remember, to discuss and reflect in a project driven by their own reflections. They have been able to reflect, to discuss, to write together and to write differently according to their own voices and their own life choices, making a clear case that stories of individuals taken together give a potentially thicker description of the topic in question.

*Line Grønstad, Bergen*

### **A Hundred Years of Nordic Ethnology at Åbo Akademi, Finland**

*Nordisk etnologi 1921–2021. Ett ämne i rörelse.* Fredrik Nilsson & Anna-Maria Åström (eds.). Åbo Akademi Förlag, Åbo 2021. 447 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-951-765-998-7.

■ Finland was proclaimed an independent nation by the Finnish Diet on 6 December 1917. The Finnish-speaking majority and the Swedish-speaking minority (about 13 per cent at the beginning of the twentieth century) were granted equal rights. A Language Act of 1919 made Swedish an official language alongside Finnish. To meet the needs of higher education for Finland's Swedes, Åbo Akademi was founded in 1918 and inaugurated in 1919. Nordic cultural history and folk-life studies became a separate university subject in 1921. The chair was named the Kiseleff professorship after the donor, Feodor Kiseleff (1852–1922), with Gabriel Nikander as the first incumbent. The important ethnologist journal *Budkavlen*, published at Åbo Akademi, celebrates its centennial in 2022.

The volume reviewed here presents and analyses the evolution of the subject over the last hundred years, down to the present day. The designation of the subject was changed to Nordic Ethnology in 1974, which means that the title of the book, *Nordisk etnologi 1921–2021*, is slightly

misleading. When I first heard about the book, I imagined that the authors would elucidate the development of ethnology in the Nordic countries and not just at Åbo Akademi. The title ought to have indicated that the book is about Nordic ethnology as a university discipline at Åbo Akademi.

The volume is edited by Fredrik Nilsson, professor of Nordic ethnology since 2019, and Anna-Maria Åström, who was professor 2000–2015. These two editors have written four essays each and two essays together. In addition, there are contributions from a further thirteen authors who have been associated with the subject of ethnology at this university, as teachers and researchers.

During the hundred years of its existence, the subject has had five full professors, namely, Gabriel Nikander 1921–1952, Helmer Tegengren 1953–1971, Nils Storå 1972–1999, Anna-Maria Åström 2000–2015, and Fredrik Nilsson 2019–.

Fredrik Nilsson has written a long article about the pioneer Gabriel Nikander (pp. 293–323), whom he calls a socially oriented ethnologist. After Finland gained its independence, it was natural to assert national aspects in a subject like ethnology. Nikander himself was politically active, working to safeguard the position of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. At the same time, he tried to keep scholarship and politics separate in his research. He combined ethnographic field expeditions with historical studies. The everyday life of the peasantry was at the centre of his studies, but he would also explore manorial culture. He found it important to collect extensive empirical evidence and practise source criticism. Nikander was at once a positivist and a diffusionist. In his view, culture was shaped by economic conditions, not by hereditary predispositions or any supposed national character. Nikander was ambivalent about racial biology, which gained some inroads into ethnology in the 1920s and 1930s.

Helmer Tegengren's research as professor of ethnology is analysed in an essay that Fredrik Nilsson and Anna-Maria Åström have written together (pp. 35–50). Whereas Nikander had worked closely with the Archives of the Swedish Literature Society (SLS) in Helsinki, from 1937

the Archive of Folk Culture, Tegengren started his own archive in 1953 under the name of the Department of Cultural History at Åbo Akademi University (Kulturhistoriska institutionen vid Åbo Akademi, KIVÅ). The archive built up a large network of local informants in Swedish-speaking districts. Today it is called *Kulturvetenskapliga arkivet Cultura*. Tegengren was a diffusionist like Nikander, and took part in the work on an atlas of folk culture that was being done in Sweden. In addition, he introduced studies of early Sami culture.

The third professor, Nils Storå, has written a chapter on the growth of ethnology at Åbo Akademi until he himself became a professor in 1972 (pp. 51–74). He divides the development of the subject into five main spheres: antiquarian ethnology, linguistic ethnology, regional ethnology, cultural-historical ethnology, and anthropological ethnology.

Storå continued Tegengren's research on Sami culture when he wrote about the funeral practices of the Skolt Sami. He also showed great interest in the archipelago and actively participated in the work of the Archipelago Institute at Åbo Akademi, founded in 1977, which publishes the journal *Skärgård*. There was also active cooperation with the Maritime Museum, founded at Åbo Akademi in 1936 (since 1999 a university institute), during Nils Storå's time as professor (pp. 235–256). Fieldwork was carried out in collaboration. I myself participated in this fieldwork in 1980 and 1983, when the topic was cultural encounters between summer guests and the permanent residents of the archipelago. In 2003, Storå published a book about fishing and its culture in Åland.

The fourth professor, Anna-Maria Åström, has written three chapters on research interests and teaching during her time at Åbo Akademi, 2000–2015 (pp. 75–110, 111–138, and 401–433). She draws attention to new theoretical approaches in research and the increased focus on urban culture, as well as on cultural heritage, contemporary studies, and to some extent ethnicity. A central publication in these areas was the volume *Stadens hjärta: Tätta ytor och symboliska element i nuti-*

*da nordiska städer* (The Heart of the City: Dense Spaces and Symbolic Elements in Contemporary Nordic Cities), edited by Åström and Jonas Lillqvist in 2012.

One scholar who has studied ethnicity is Anna-Liisa Kuczynski, who has written a chapter about cultural encounters and ethnic identity (pp. 349–360). In 2017 she presented her doctoral dissertation on Polish immigrants and their families in the Åbo area, entitled *Minoritetsgrupper och möten i trängda situationer* (Minority Groups and Cultural Encounters in Tense Situations).

Anna-Maria Åström has written a chapter about the manorial studies that were initiated by Gabriel Nikander and continued by his daughter Ragna Ahlbäck, along with Irja Sahlberg, Bo Lönnqvist, and not least Åström herself (pp. 325–348). Her doctoral dissertation from 1993 is entitled *Sockenboarne: Herrgårdskultur i Savolax 1790–1850* (The Parishioners: Manorial Culture in Savolax 1790–1850). The focus was on the social environment of the manors, particularly highlighting the living conditions of the labourers (*statare*).

Since 1926, the subject of ethnology at Åbo Akademi University has had folkloristics as a very close neighbour. Fredrik Nilsson devotes a chapter (pp. 173–193) to the intersection of these two disciplines. In a chapter written by Nilsson together with Blanka Henriksson, the authors examine the collaboration that has occurred. They speak of the “twin souls of tradition studies” (pp. 195–214). The journal *Budkavlen*, for which Åbo Akademi has been responsible since 1927, has been shared by both subjects.

Helena Ruotsala, professor of ethnology at the Finnish university in Åbo/Turku, Turun Yliopisto, raises the question of what it means that there have been two disciplines of ethnology in the same city since 1958 (pp. 257–267). Ilmar Talve, who was educated in Sweden, became the first professor of Finnish and comparative ethnology in 1962 and occupied the chair until 1986. He focused on a form of social ethnology oriented to the present day. Urban ethnology, along with cultural heritage and border studies, as well as cultural analysis,

have recently been important ethnological topics at both the Finnish university and Åbo Akademi.

In the final chapter, Fredrik Nilsson proceeds from the subtitle of the book, “A Subject in Motion” (pp. 435–444). He shows that there has been long-term continuity during the past hundred years, but also change. Against this background, I think that the subtitle is somewhat misleading and should instead have been “Continuity and Change in a Subject”. The word “motion” does not include continuity.

To sum up, I would say that this thick yet highly readable volume gives very good insight into how a university subject develops over a long period of time while still retaining some of its original roots. I am reminded of my own fieldwork in Swedish-speaking coastal areas of Finland with Nils Storå, Bo Lönnqvist, and Anna-Maria Åström. I also became acquainted with the scholarly work of Anna-Maria Åström and Fredrik Nilsson when I was external expert for the appointment of professor of Nordic ethnology at Åbo Akademi in both 1998 and 2018.

One thing that I lack in the book is information about the international contacts with German-speaking ethnology that have been significant, not least for Anna-Maria Åström but also for Ulrika Wolf-Knuts in the Department of Folkloristics. I have met them at several of the biennial German ethnological congresses. Åström, like myself, has written several reports from these congresses.

It is pleasing that the history of ethnology in the Nordic countries now has an important contribution through this volume.

*Anders Gustavsson, University of Oslo/Henån*

### **Interior Decoration Culture in Hälsingland**

*Hälsinglands inredningskultur.* Ingalill Nyström, Anneli Palmköld & Johan Knutsson (eds.). Kriterium vol. 23. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2021. 338 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-7061-356-2.

■ This volume of studies on Hälsingland’s interior decoration culture came about as a conse-

quence of the inscription of seven Hälsingland farms on UNESCO’s World Heritage List in 2012. The book is the result of an interdisciplinary research project “Decorated Interiors in Hälsingland Farms: A Holistic Study of a Cultural-Historical World Heritage”, funded by the Swedish Research Council 2014–2017.

The stated aim of the project is to gain new knowledge about paints, dyes, pigments, painting techniques, and the surfaces to which paints were applied, as well as patterned textiles in the Hälsingland farms. The preface states that the common thread in the volume is paints and dyes, and that the aim is to identify objects and implements, to elucidate craft techniques and contexts, and to gain a better understanding of the trade in raw materials and access to painting supplies at the time.

The volume has three main editors: Johan Knutsson, art historian and professor of furniture culture at Linköping University and Nordiska Museet, Ingalill Nyström, associate professor and lecturer in conservation at the Department of Cultural Conservation at Gothenburg University, and from the same place Professor Anneli Palmköld, an ethnologist who has especially studied the textile cultural heritage. In addition, there are contributions by six scientists and conservators as well as two local professionals, Anders Assis from Ljusdalsbygden Museum and Lars Nylander from Hälsingland Museum. Not least of all, many individuals, cultural heritage institutions, and local history museums have contributed information in the field.

The volume is divided into three main sections. In section I, “Introduction”, the three editors present the topic of *Hälsingland farms*, the designation for two-storey farmhouses with lavishly decorated interiors, which were a consequence of the good income to be made from growing flax in the years 1750–1850. The term has been used by tourist associations, ethnologists, and museum people since the beginning of the twentieth century, when distinctive Swedish regions, folk-art provinces and characteristic mentalities, *själsarter*, were important ingredients in the creation of a common national identity.

These particularly ornate farms caught UNESCO's interest. The nomination as a World Heritage site states that the farms "constitute the peak of this cultural expression, are outstanding examples of how independent farmers within a small geographical area combined a highly developed building tradition with a rich folk art tradition in the form of decoratively painted interiors especially for celebrations" (p. 32). The selected farms fit into the taxonomy of the World Heritage Convention, which seems to correspond to the paradigm in early folklife studies that focused on the oldest, most spectacular and aesthetic forms of expression in peasant culture. In the description here of the ten-year-process of becoming a World Heritage site, leading to the nomination in 2012, however, it is pointed out that the Hälsingland farm should not only be seen as a decorated farmhouse, but as a complete square farmyard, an agricultural property. There were otherwise decorated log-built double-houses, *parstugor*, in Hälsingland before 1800 and decorated farmhouses after 1870. Also, the Hälsingland farms do not in fact represent a uniform pictorial culture. This is an interesting dilemma that is probably common when UNESCO nominates particularly interesting examples of folk culture as material and intangible cultural heritage. Remarkably, one effect of UNESCO's nomination of the Hälsingland farms was that this particular focus was used in identity politics and served to benefit regional and local development!

In subsection I.3, the three editors outline humanistic theories of folk interior decoration culture and folk art. Where researchers were previously interested in patterns of diffusion, cultural boundaries, and cultural fixation, the focus in this volume is on network relationships between craftsmen and what the history of consumption tells about trade relations with new possibilities for paints and materials. Compared to previous almost deterministic classifications of interior decoration, the project emphasizes that what humans create is unpredictable and that the influence of materials, techniques, and functions must be balanced against the significance of "free will". It is

stated that both the producers' and the consumers' attitudes and values are relevant to the book, indeed indispensable where folk art is concerned, the art of people *in* the countryside *for* people in the countryside, implying that provenance and context are almost non-existent. Other methods in the history of style, concerning stylistic combinations and anachronisms, must then be used when the information has to be sought in the object itself. "By proceeding from a craft perspective, we have focused in the project on the actual doing and what happened when the interior decoration culture was created and shaped. [...] Because we ourselves have personal experience of practising handicraft, we have been able to change perspectives between researching in, through, and about craft." This is called *connoisseurship analysis* or *tactile seeing* (pp. 42f, 70f).

In Section II, "Aesthetic Expressions in Painting and Textiles", the three editors identify different schools and the different known craftsmen, whether trained in the guild or not. The methods of cultural history and art history are employed within the different genres in both churches and farms. This concerns wall and ceiling decorations with figurative painting, but also painted furniture and patterned textiles. Professionals from Hälsingland's museums then present known and unknown painters on the basis of the stylistic features of the different parishes (fig. 6, p. 268). There is particular focus on links between craftsmen, also in other parts of Sweden, especially Dalarna, and it is suggested that the distinctive "Dalarna painting" actually originated in Hälsingland (pp. 118f). We hear about Gustav Reuter and his wife Brita Johansdotter Klingström from the Dellen area, who formed a school where Erik *Snickarmålarn* Ersson was the most famous. His works in 1750 are nicely listed in Table 1 (p. 90). There is a fascinating elucidation of "traditions" such as *Ädelmåleri* as well as works by *Blåmålar*en, who may in reality have been Måx Jonas Andersson and his wife Karin Matsdotter from Dalarna.

Subsection II.7 presents textiles from private and public collections: weaving, lace, and embroi-

dery in the form of cushion covers, hanging sheets, bedspreads sewn or woven from rags, and so on. A characteristic of the large collections, which especially the pioneer of textile handicraft Lilli Zickerman accumulated, was that the interest was focused on how they were actually made, i.e., the various patterns and local techniques; in the case of embroidery the different stitches, such as birch-bark stitch, cross-stitch, tassel stitch, and long stitch, the later known as Järvsö stitch and Delsbo stitch. The section concludes that there was not only an early focus on pattern types as an expression of female skill, but also on the individual woman's ability to create variation through available techniques, materials, and colours (pp. 190f, 216).

Section III, "Material and Technique", presents the possibilities of actually identifying paintings and textiles using advanced scientific methods through ATSR, Art Technological Source Research (p. 221). This section is very important, although it requires considerable prior knowledge to understand. However, good information is provided about materials, such as the properties and uses of different types of wood, and about the acquisition and production of textiles and paper. In addition, subsection 3.3, about the manufacture, distribution, and use of pigments, informs us about the occurrence of inorganic pigments such as earth dyes, mineral dyes, and organic dyes. There is a particularly interesting account of the use of madder to produce Turkish red, and a description of blue pigmentation with woad, and after the seventeenth century also with the exotic indigo. Surprisingly, both woad-indigo and madder-lake were used as paint pigments. Also interesting is the presentation of a range of paint-related goods sold by merchants in Hälsingland in the period 1780–1850, which have been tested in the analyses and dating methods of the research project (table 2, pp. 271f). Analyses of pigments are also cited as some of the main achievements of the research project for the identification of objects. For example, that the pigments of the eighteenth century were primarily earth dyes such as ochre, and vegetable dyes such as indigo, in addition to lampblack and chalk, perhaps also cinnabar, red

lead, white lead, massicot, and Prussian blue. The nineteenth century brought additional pigments: chrome yellow, cinnabar green, Schweinfurter green, and ultramarine blue.

Subsection III.5 presents the results of the art-technological studies of the decorative painters and the schools in Delsbo, Ljusdal, Forsa, and Järvsö, so that they can be more exactly identified in antiquarian work, for example, at the farm moved from Delsbo to Skansen in Stockholm (p. 303). The different practices are distinguished with the aid of ATSR. This can show, for example, whether the decoration was done by trained painters using advanced colour variations and techniques such as marbling, graining, and gilding, or whether the painters used templates, painted in demarcated colour fields, and used easily available pigments. It is interesting that hitherto unknown painters are brought to light on a par with the better-known names to whom a great many works have been "attributed" over the years.

This book is packed with interesting and up-to-date information, especially for museum people who work with concrete objects for purposes of conservation or mediation. It is good – and rare in today's specialist literature – to be able to read about concrete topics such as materials, shapes, colours, crafts, and stylistic features and, not least of all, to be shown the pitfalls and useful tools in the identification of objects. The book gives a good impression of how complex and resource-intensive it is to pursue *holistic* research on artefacts, and how nuanced it ought to be when other sources are limited. However, the combination of the two methods of analysis, each with its own "language", does have the disadvantage that some repetitions occur, despite good summaries in places amidst the wealth of detail. The in-depth interdisciplinary studies are performed somewhat at the expense of the broader foundation in cultural history and the context of human lives and living conditions in Hälsingland as a background to the special *culture* of interior decoration which the title suggests.

The book is thoroughly illustrated, primarily with photographs of the individual objects and

relevant models that are discussed. In addition, there are photographs of work tasks and close-ups from the conservation workshop.

All in all, this is an important interdisciplinary introduction to nuanced object studies in a limited field, with up-to-date and new methods and viewpoints – and with broader perspectives.

*Mette E. Havsteen-Mikkelsen, Ærøskøbing*

### **Collaboration in Arctic Research**

*Collaborative Research Methods in the Arctic. Experiences from Greenland.* Anne Merrild Hansen and Carina Ren (eds.). Routledge Research in Polar Regions, Routledge, Abingdon 2021. 159 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-0-367-46755-5.

■ With interest in the Arctic and Antarctic growing, this specific but timely book is a worthwhile read even for those whose research interests do not directly concern the polar regions. Why so? Because it challenges conventional ways of doing research, insisting on using collaboration to foreground new voices and to highlight the concerns and practices of local actors. Power is a recurring theme as well. On the book's first page, the book's editors – professor of planning and impact assessment in the Arctic, Anne Merrild Hansen (Aalborg University) and associate professor of tourism and cultural innovation in the Arctic, Carina Ren (Aalborg University) – state:

“Research-driven knowledge is informing decisions worldwide on actions and the prioritization of investments, strategies, attitudes, and approaches to the Arctic. While this interest might be seen as a positive development in learning more about the region, this knowledge is by no means ‘innocent’. Those who define the research topics, methodologies, interpretations, and conclusions hold the power to influence decision-making” (p. 1).

In other words, knowledge, methods, and collaborations are tools of power. Because the polar regions are contested geopolitical territories, an awareness of this fact is all the more important, not least because local actors may not have any-

where else to go if they cannot participate in the negotiations that will determine the future of their regions and living conditions.

The worst offenders, as all the book's contributors agree, are research methods that endorse “hit-and-run” or “fly-in/fly-out” practices in which academics arrive at the unexplored periphery to collect data from the “exotic” field, then return to the ivory tower to process the gathered data, propose hypotheses, deliver lectures for their peers, and ultimately utilize the knowledge gained for the imagined benefit of humanity.

The book seeks to present a range of collaborative alternatives to this widespread methodological practice in the hopes of consigning it to the past. In the Arctic regions of Canada and Alaska, collaborative practices are now widespread following the introduction of the First Nations OCAP policy – ownership, control, access, and possession – around the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These principles enshrine the rights of indigenous people to their data, their stories and their future in the territories to which they belong.

As the book explains, the situation in Greenland is different, because the OCAP policy does not yet apply. Thus, the authors' mission is to bring attention to how new research methods can be implemented in Greenland, using collaboration to make arctic research truly relevant.

The book consists of eleven chapters written by scholars interested in understanding Greenland from various fields of study – medicine, environmental assessment, tourism studies, ethnology, law, business management – all with a common affiliation to Aalborg University and its Centre for Innovation and Research in Culture and Living in the Arctic (CIRCLA).

Aalborg University's role in bringing the book's contributing scholars together is explained by its embrace of problem-based learning and collaborative research that dates to the institution's founding in 1974. Furthermore, the university has long-established ties with the country, strengthened by Aalborg's historic role as the Greenland shipping harbour in Denmark as well as its status as a sister city of Nuuk, the nation's capital.

In the course of the book, the reader is introduced to various experiences of collaborative research methods. Concepts such as critical proximity, life mapping, action research, Arctic auto-ethnography, and co-creation are highlighted, and the authors demonstrate how these can be valuable approaches for generating important knowledge that can be used to inform the decisions that will affect the future of Arctic communities.

The most striking chapter of the book, however, is one entitled “Telling the good story: A conversation with Minik Rosing on research collaboration and research in Greenland”. Rosing is a respected Greenlandic geologist and professor at the University of Copenhagen. His conversation with Anne Merrild Hansen explores topics like the nature of research, the role of the engaged researcher, how research can shape the future, and the importance of indigenous knowledge.

Rosing declares in a very honest way that the primary reason we do research is to satisfy our curiosity. In this way, he argues, research is not first and foremost about power – an idea that was refreshing to read. To Rosing, curiosity is a key part of human nature, and research ought not necessarily to be done to accomplish a specific purpose. But when researchers discover something of importance to others, they should feel obliged to pass it on – to tell the good story. And according to Rosing, the good story requires engagement, interaction, the ability to look and listen with an open mind, and the desire to explore and seek further understanding of the world.

The reason this chapter is so striking may be its simple conversational form, and Rosing’s way of talking about research that makes it clear how it must rely on an ethos of respect, a belief in curiosity, and the innate value of having and sharing knowledge.

*Marie Riegels Melchior, Copenhagen*

### **Settlers of the Swedish Wilderness**

*Eero Sappinen, Värmlannin metsäsuomalaiset. Asutushistoriasta, agraarista kulttuurista ja muutoksesta. Siirtolaisinstituutti, Turku 2019. 354 pp. Ill.*

ISBN 978-952-7167-63-2 (print). ISSN 2343-3485 (online).

■ The Finns who emigrated from Finland (mostly the Savonia area) to the forests of Central Scandinavia during the late 1500s and until the mid-1600s are referred to as Forest Finns. The main livelihood in Savonia was slash-and-burn agriculture, which in the 1500s led to the formation of a large group of poor workers who lacked sufficient income and had a lower social status than regular peasants. As the number of the poor increased, overcrowding started to unravel into different directions and fuelled a mass migration to Sweden. Other factors that have been seen as obvious reasons for migrating include incessant wars, bad harvests, epidemics, and the decreasing number of forests suitable for burn-clearing. The Swedes also practised some burn-clearing, but the vast Swedish forest wilderness still provided better opportunities for the livelihood than Savonia. However, there is no consensus regarding the interpretation that the Forest Finns were induced to migrate by the pro-settlement policies of the Swedish central government (especially Charles IX, 1550–1611). The migration did begin during Charles IX’s rule and continued during the reigns of Gustav II Adolf (King of Sweden 1611–1632) and Queen Christina (1632–1654). According to Eero Sappinen, who has researched the Värmland Forest Finns, the commonly expressed idea that the peasant uprising (1596–1597), the Cudgel War, kicked off the migration is false. Migration already had started about twenty years before the war.

In Sweden, the Savonian settlers spread out from the central and northern parts of the country all the way up to Swedish Lapland. Sappinen’s research focuses on Värmland, which housed the largest population of Forest Finns and where their language and culture were preserved longest. Sappinen recounts that his enthusiasm for studying the Värmland Forest Finns was sparked after he delved into the extensive oral history material compiled and gifted to the University of Turku Department of Ethnology by Ilmar Talve. Most of

the material consists of copies of oral history material collected in the 1930s and stored in Swedish and Norwegian archives. Additionally, Talve himself also collected comprehensive fieldwork material in Värmland in the 1940s and 1950s.

Only rough estimates can be made of the exact number of Forest Finns throughout different times. Sappinen mentions that Finnish historian Veijo Salonheimo concluded that 1,660 Forest Finns migrated from Finland during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and of these, 484 headed to Värmland. Estimates of the number of Forest Finns and their descendants during different centuries range from several thousand up to 40,000. According to Sappinen, only a few thousand of them were present in the early nineteenth century, and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of Finnish-speaking Forest Finns was down to 600–700. Sappinen states that estimating the number of Forest Finns is made problematic by the definition of a Forest Finn; is knowing the Finnish language enough of a criterion or should other specifically Finnish characteristics be used as well?

Carl Axel Gottlund (1796–1875), an innovator of the Finnish language and collector of folk poetry and folklore, is credited as the “discoverer” of the Forest Finns living deep in the woods. He highlighted the poor financial and social standing of the Forest Finns and tried to improve the status of the Finnish language. Finnish linguists and ethnologists took an interest in Forest Finns in the late nineteenth century, attempting to use their culture as a means to determine the age of different cultural phenomena. It was considered that this method could show cultural characteristics of Forest Finns already appearing in Savonia in the seventeenth century. Subsequently, research has been conducted in Finland on the history of Forest Finn settlement and from where in Finland their ancestors started out for Sweden. Surname research has been used as a method to locate Forest Finns’ ancestral regions. Thanks to Gottlund, information on the surnames of many Värmland Forest Finns has been preserved. As he travelled around Värmland, he recorded the Finnish sur-

names of known Finns in parish registers, next to their Swedish names.

According to Sappinen, much has been written about Forest Finns, but the amount of academic research is unfortunately small. He refers to Ilmar Talve, who states that Swedish and Norwegian studies on Forest Finns have concentrated on the differences between them and the native population. Sappinen also wanted to describe the everyday life of Forest Finns, changes in it, and the societal shifts that influenced those changes. My understanding is that Sappinen also wanted to parallel the characteristics of the Forest Finns’ lifestyle and culture with the cultural heritage they brought with them as they emigrated to Sweden. Sappinen’s book is a comprehensive, thorough, and detailed description of the Forest Finns’ cultural features of burn-clearing, animal husbandry, hunting, field cultivation, construction, traditional food culture, magic, and beliefs. Since the book’s contents are diverse and abundant, I will focus on just a few of the cultural characteristics that describe and distinguish the Finnishness of the Värmland Forest Finns.

The most significant prerequisite for the Forest Finn migration was the skill of burn-clearing coniferous forests. The Finns brought this burn-clearing method with them to Sweden. When the Finns arrived in Värmland, significant iron production was already present, providing a major source of income for the government. The Finnish immigrants were first regarded as welcome taxpayers who could populate the wastelands filled with coniferous forests. Attitudes began to change when the ironworks started requiring increasing amounts of charcoal, which created competition with the Finnish burn-clearers. In the seventeenth century, the Swedish government issued several forest ordinances prohibiting burn-clearing in regions of mining and ironworks. The punishments for unauthorized burn-clearing were strict and could lead to evictions, confiscation of crops, or even destruction of crofts. Keeping one’s croft required, among other things, a sufficient amount of connected arable fields and meadowland. This was done to make the Finns settle in one place and earn

their livelihood by tillage and animal husbandry. Slash-and-burn agriculture became more difficult, and its prohibition around the Värmland ironworks fuelled migration to western and northern areas of Värmland as well as later to Norwegian woodlands. Some Värmland Forest Finns emigrated all the way to America already in the 1600s. By the mid-1600s, migration from Savonia to Värmland came to an end completely. On the other hand, ironworks, mines, and the timber industry also employed Finns, some of whom even made a fortune through timber trading. As slash-and-burn agriculture died out, the Finns' main livelihood started coming from animal husbandry.

Slash-and-burn agriculture has been seen as an ethnic hallmark of the Forest Finns, distinguishing them from the Swedes. Likewise, the typical dwelling of the Värmland Forest Finns was the *savutupa* ("smoke cottage", a log cottage with a stone oven for heating and no chimney). These were still common in Värmland in the early 1800s. Having a sauna and bathing in one also distinguished the Forest Finns from the Swedes. The sauna could even serve as accommodation if needed. Moreover, the sauna was used for drying grain and flax, smoking meat, making liquor (moonshining), and sometimes the sauna even served as a grain-threshing cabin. Still in the late nineteenth century, the Forest Finns in western and northern Värmland bathed in the sauna weekly. Conversely, in the eastern and southern parts this habit had all but disappeared. In Sweden, sauna bathing was associated with Finns and looked down upon by most Swedes. External pressure led to people completely abandoning sauna bathing. Later in Värmland, sauna culture started to revive and became a habit that reinforced Finnish identity.

Sappinen states: "As time passed, Finns and Swedes interacting created a distinct Värmland culture consisting of traditional Finnish and newer Swedish elements." The process of changes had the result that there was not really a specific Forest Finn culture anymore in the late nineteenth century. Only some singular characteristics stood out as specific identifiers of Forest Finns. For example, in the early twentieth century there were

roughly 700 Finnish speakers among the Forest Finns, but by the mid-twentieth century, only a few dozen remained. This was partly caused by the Swedish state having a negative view of the Finnish language already in the seventeenth century. Later, policies to Swedify inhabitants as well as compulsory education worked effectively to erase Finnish language skills. Finnish was not allowed in school, and parents were even sometimes reminded not to use the language when talking to their children. On the other hand, there was also resistance against the Swedification policies, and ordinances were not always followed.

Many unpleasant features were associated with the Forest Finns, including drunkenness, immorality, uncleanness, laziness, and poverty, which was seen to be self-inflicted. However, Forest Finns were commonly known as hard-working people. When issues of race and racial hierarchy started gaining ground in Sweden in the nineteenth century, Finns were regarded as being of a clearly weaker race than Swedes. Finns were indolent, ungainly, and conservative, whereas Forest Finns were ugly and blessed with meagre intelligence. In the late 1800s, tensions between Forest Finns and Swedes began to dissipate and attitudes towards the Forest Finns started changing. According to Sappinen, this was caused by the low number of people remaining in Värmland who spoke Finnish and observed Finnish customs and traditions. However, prejudice against and stereotypes about Forest Finns did not completely vanish; they still pop up in a history book published in 1921, where Forest Finns are described as immoral, ignorant, violent drunkards. As is well known, during recent decades respect for Forest Finns has grown and their descendants have gained pride in their history.

In this detailed and diverse study Eero Sappinen sheds light on Forest Finns' cultural background and lifestyle as well as their changes from the seventeenth all the way to the twentieth century, when assimilation to Swedes had taken place. The book is an example of "classical ethnology", where the big picture is built according to the traditional model and an ethnologi-

cal-historical research approach concentrating on material culture is emphasized. The chapter “Taikuudesta ja uskomuksista” (On magic and beliefs) and briefly mentions of intangible culture and oral history in other chapters liven up the text. The final chapter “Kulttuurin muuttuminen ja assimilaatio” (Cultural change and assimilation) is an interesting presentation of the change in Forest Finns’ culture and reasons for it, as well as their assimilation to the Swedish way of life and culture. Sappinen has thoroughly familiarized himself with the topic. There is an abundance of archival and oral history sources, and a 28-page list of source literature. Unfortunately, the work does not have a summary in Swedish or English. All in all, I found reading the book to be a good review of the history of Forest Finns and of the basic premises of their material culture.

*Pirjo Korhokangas, Jyväskylä*

### Perspectives on Fashion

*Modevetenskap. Perspektiv på mode, stil och estetik.* Emma Severinsson & Philip Warkander (eds.). Appell Förlag, Stockholm 2020. 384 pp. Ill. Indices. ISBN 978-91-985485-6-3.

■ A cross-disciplinary field and its Southern Swedish department presents itself. In short, this is what the editors rightly claim the anthology *Modevetenskap* to be.

The study of sartorial artefacts, fashion and its context is by no means strange to European Ethnology, in fact it is one of the oldest and empirical constitutive subjects of the discipline. Yet in the US, to some degree in France and the UK, all countries where European Ethnology is hardly known, a bit in Germany but certainly in Sweden since the centre formed in 2006, later the Department of Fashion Studies in Stockholm, the field of fashion studies has gained new attention in academia. In 2012 the University of Lund followed suit and founded the second Swedish Department of Fashion Studies, which now presents itself and its first decade of work in *Modevetenskap*. Whereas in other countries

such cross-disciplinary efforts usually find their outcome in temporary research centres standing next to the established university disciplines with chairs, educational programmes and obligations towards to society – an example could be the Copenhagen-based and mostly though not exclusively archaeologically oriented CTR, Centre for Textile Research – the Swedish way has been different and, hence, two departments in the fields of fashion studies have been formed. The one in Stockholm affiliated to Art History and Media; the one in Lund to Cultural History and European Ethnology as the leading disciplines. The anthology thus revolves around the question of “the subject’s identity in order to explain how it is formed through a decade of fashion research” (p. 10).

This affiliation to European Ethnology in Lund is clear in the anthology and it is generally difficult to distinguish it from a volume which might have come out of Ethnology itself with guest researchers from other disciplines. In her chapter, the ethnologist Cecilia Fredriksson states – and this might stand for the whole book – that fashion studies “contain both historical and contemporary perspectives on material and visual culture” and that fashion is likewise a “figure of thought ... an important tool to reflect with and about and to judge different phenomena through” (p. 149). I can only welcome fashion studies of this sort in the bouquet of contemporary cultural (ethnological) studies in Scandinavia! Another token of the affiliation is the publisher’s house, which is no stranger to ethnological volumes.

Hence, for European Ethnology there is much to learn from the different chapters too. Next to the informative introduction, written by the editors, there are fourteen of them, organized into three sections. The first and biggest deals with historical perspectives, ranging from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The next deals with fashion as a market and the third with fashion as an industry and, hence, a workplace. Generally, the chapters are easily read, well organized and, judging by this volume, perhaps its core readers will number students not only of fashion studies and European Ethnology but in the broad-

er realm of Cultural Studies as well as Business and perhaps even Environmental Studies. Apart from one chapter on men's hats, where photographs serve as source material directly analysed in the text, there are no pictures, which seems a pity for this topic, although of course it keeps the price down for the (if I am right) intended student readership. I believe, however, that a broader audience is lost through this choice. To be fair, at the beginning of each chapter, below the heading, there is an artistic hint based on a photo of, for example, a scarf, but I must admit I am not quite sure what purpose these pictures serve.

Another theme directly addressed by the two Swedish departments and the anthology is to make a more humanistic-based approach less informed by the Anglo-American sociological tradition and focused more on Scandinavian, especially Swedish material. The latter is a success; it is a very Swedish volume and there is nothing to object to that choice and frame. For the first interest, though, the editors could easily have included more of French sociology's keen and long-standing interest in fashion, but this is not visible apart from a few places not really constitutive for the volume. Neither is there any awareness of the old sociological and ethnological German tradition of fashion and clothes, costume and textile studies. The same goes for the rest of the Nordic world, which seems only a vague shimmer. In fact, when one has finished with the chapters and (as reviewers do) browses through the bibliography, it overwhelmingly adds up to Sweden plus the Anglo-Saxon world.

Shouldn't we on both sides of the Sound and elsewhere in the Nordic countries do something about that? In fact, I judge the lively and broad milieu of Fashion Studies in Lund/Helsingborg behind this book *Modevetenskap* a good place to start both for students of fashion in Sweden and for broader co-operation between countries, both when it comes to fashion studies in the perception of the anthology and, indeed, in European Ethnology with its long-standing tradition of studying textile and dress, fashion and accessories.

*Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, Copenhagen*

### The Legacy of Ernst Manker

*Eva Silvéén, Friktion*. Ernst Manker, Nordiska museet och det samiska kulturarvet. Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2021. 320 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-88909-90-9.

■ Recently, the scholarly gaze has been increasingly turned from the Indigenous subject to researchers who study the Indigenous, and to the societal processes that have regulated the production of such knowledge in the past and the present. *Friktion*, is one such important scholarly gaze. "Research on research" and the recognition of the deep inter-connectedness between research and society were the focus areas of the research project "Societal Dimensions of Sámi Research" (SoDiSámi) at the Arctic University Museum of Tromsø (2017–2020), which gathered an international and multidisciplinary group of researchers, among them Eva Silvéén. As a researcher within this project, I had the pleasure of getting to know Silvéén's works, and it is through the lenses of the SoDiSami project that I have read the eight chapters that together make up the researcher biography, *Friktion*, about Ernst Manker, ethnographer and curator at Nordiska Museet in Stockholm.

Silvéén holds a PhD in ethnology from Stockholm University. She has worked as a curator at Nordiska Museet and is currently an independent scholar of ethnology and museology. The book springs from the research project "Konstruktionen av ett samiskt kulturarv: Ernst Manker och Nordiska museet" (The Construction of a Sámi Cultural Heritage: Ernst Manker and Nordiska Museet), financed by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (2009–11). In other words, this is a project which has been close to Silvéén's heart for a long period of time and about which she has also published several articles. The book serves to gather Silvéén's findings, but it also opens for new and broader perspectives.

The book is divided into eight chapters starting with an introductory chapter that thematizes the scholarly basis for Silvéén's study; research questions, methodology, ethics, as well as the chosen theoretical and analytical tools. Actor-network theory, whose origin is usually attributed to the sociologists Bruno Latour, Michael Callon, and

John Law, is Silvén's main theoretical-methodological perspective. It is a perspective and tool that Silvén masters to the utmost and that through the book's chapters serves to reveal how both human and non-human phenomena are intertwined and become nodes that build and preserve networks. In other words, it shows how Manker, through his fieldwork, his camera, exhibitions, archives, publications, and Sámi and non-Sámi co-researchers, becomes part of what Silvén refers to as "the mountains' socio-material network" that plays a role in the construction of Sámi history, Sámi cultural heritage as well as identities.

Chapter two presents a biographical survey of Ernst Manker's (1893–1972) life and occupations. In 1939, Ernst Manker was appointed the first curator of Nordiska Museet with special responsibility for the museum's Sámi collections. With the purpose of creating "A central museum of Lapland culture" he began intensive research, documentation, and collection, and in 1947 he opened a new exhibition, "Lapparna" (The Lapps), which remained a permanent exhibition at the museum for thirty years. While Manker is often presented as an academic with a so-called Lappologist orientation, Silvén asks in which ways the societal context and his networks influenced his research methodologically and theoretically.

The three following chapters are devoted to explorations of Manker's main fields of activity; fieldwork and photography, materialities, and exhibitions and performances. The chapters captivatingly show how various media such as the notebook, the camera, the collections, and the exhibitions communicate Sámi cultures in different and sometimes opposing ways. While the exhibition "Lapparna" presents Sámi culture as a reindeer culture with few references to other livelihoods, and where distinct cultural symbols such as the reindeer, the lavvu and the gákti appear as an unchangeable core of Sámi identity, the camera on the other hand reveals what the exhibitions conceal, namely the diversity of Sámi cultures, and that the Sámi were tightly connected to modernity.

Chapter six, "Sammanflätningar" (Intertwinements), and chapter seven, "Skuggspel" (Shadow

Play), open for a political and scholarly contextualization of Manker's works. By focusing on Manker's background, interests, contacts, publications, and the specific political and ideological climates in which they were set, knowledge of the contexts of Sámi research and its dissemination at Nordiska Museet is revealed. In the chapters crucial nuances are highlighted regarding the construction of gender, politics, agency, and asymmetric power relations. The chapters are packed with stories about Manker's Sámi and non-Sámi co-researchers and their associated frictions – cooperation, competition, and conflicts. As a reader I would have loved to dive even deeper into some of the examples that are only touched upon in these chapters, as is the case with the stories about forced relocations as well as research and gender relations.

"Att gestalta det samiska" (Constructing Sáminess) is the title of the book's concluding chapter. The chapter focuses on the changing balance of power between the explorers and the explored, as in recent studies where Sámi experiences enter into a dialogue with the historical archive material. Silvén highlights how scientific and political paradigm shifts contribute to questioning and challenging the legacy of Manker.

Based on detailed knowledge of Manker and his works, through the eight captivating and richly illustrated chapters Silvén highlights the impact of Manker's legacy that, as Silvén thoroughly argues, in a mutually dynamic and productive friction, contributed to an essentialization of Sámi cultures as well as a forward-looking Sámi emancipation.

*Trude Fonneland, Tromsø*

### **Everyday Superstition**

*Fredrik Skott, Vardagsskrock. Från abrakadabra till önskebrunn. Polaris Fakta, Malmö 2021. 319 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-89215-66-5.*

■ Superstition seems to be something that concerns everybody. At least, this is what Fredrik Skott maintains. He has published a book which he calls *Vardagsskrock* (Everyday Superstition) in which he tries to come to grips with the concepts

of religion, magic, and superstition, and goes on to present more than a hundred instances of everyday “magic” rituals. Most westerners know that it is dangerous to walk under a ladder, or that something horrible will happen if we leave our keys on a table or that luck and happiness are connected to four-leaf clovers. Skott would like to be able to answer questions such as “why?”, “how old is this or that tradition?” or “where did this or that idea come from?” We all would like to find answers to such questions. However, Skott is extremely careful when he searches for information and answers. It is one of the best characteristics of the book that Skott is extremely rational. In 1982 Carl-Herman Tillhagen, a colleague of Skott’s, in his book, also called *Vardagsskrock*, published his attempts to unveil the age and other kinds of origin of superstition and ritual but he was much more generous in making use of less exact facts.

Skott’s book starts with a short chapter about what superstition is. His starting point is that in our society there is a discrepancy between the modern underlining of the importance of science, i.e., scientific truth, and the superstition that is found nearly everywhere in popular culture. For quite a time scholars thought that various forms of enchantment were disappearing, but nowadays they have seen that that process never came to be. Today, they rather speak about re-enchantment, which means that thoughts about a supernatural world return, but in a new shape. Scholars even speak about “occulture” to describe the importance of occultism in our highly technical society. Indeed, Skott is right. To my mind, it is worthwhile to ask what went wrong in the channels of communication between universities, schools, and the general population. Even more to the point: what allows strict scientists and scholars to practise everyday superstitions without criticism, as they certainly do? However, this question is not new, for supernatural factors in the shape of established religion were always something to consider, even for the strictest scientists.

Skott goes on to provide a rapid and rather condensed overview over the relationship between magic (to which he obviously connects

superstition) and religion according to the classical students James G. Frazer, Émile Durkheim, and Bronislaw Malinowski. Indeed, today we can maintain that this was a central issue in the history of the study of religion. The answers oscillated between stable statements about the two being one another’s opposites and being two sides of one and the same coin. To find a balance, Skott accepts the concept of “half-belief”, but one should ask whether this notion is of any use. In cases of danger and hardship, it is known that people often start to pray, when otherwise they do not give many thoughts to God. Is this behaviour of impetunate prayer in a pressed situation magical, religious, or superstitious?

In Skott’s view of superstition a central concept is control. According to him, superstition (like religion!) thrives in critical situations and can help to give a person control over insecure conditions in the same way as it adds self-confidence, optimism, and peace, and ensures a better outcome. Here he mentions George Foster’s concept of the limited good, which means that the amount of good things was regarded as being regulated so that if one person received something good somebody else would lose his share. Skott maintains that modern sport is an expression of that idea. He also tries to find other characteristics typical of the way superstition functions. For instance, he mentions passive and active methods to presage or predict what is to come. He considers events that just happen as passive. However, it is worth asking if there is such an issue as a passive method of superstition. If you see two branches on the ground, you can interpret them as a cross which can predict a misfortune. However, if you change your behaviour the method is active, according to Skott. There is a belief that a catastrophe will happen if you tread on the cracks between paving stones. Consequently you cannot walk normally, but you have to pursue superstition and tread very carefully to avoid the cracks. This, certainly, is one way to regard superstition, but in both cases, you need to trigger your activity of thinking and making decisions and act accordingly.

Another function of superstition is communication. Skott maintains that superstition helps us

to communicate and, sometimes, even to compare our feelings to those of the other. If I avoid walking under a ladder, which is regarded as dangerous, I communicate my feeling of unsafety to those around and I can see that they also refuse to walk there, or that they ignore the alleged danger and consequently also disregard traditional experience. Certainly, one sort of communication is laughter. This means that people can observe superstitions and, more or less seriously, laugh at their own behaviour. Entertainment is one important function of superstition.

A third function is educative. When, in my family, a person ate a boiled egg without taking bread at the same time, he or she was said to get a black neck. Partly this was a way to teach a child that eggs were not basic food, as bread was, partly it was a hint that eggs were more expensive than bread and were not meant to fill you, only to add a value to the bread. Superstition was a way to teach the ruling norms.

It is interesting to read how superstitious thinking has changed over time. Many a ritual exists almost in the same form as a hundred years ago but has received a new meaning as society has changed. Skott refers to the interesting, and well known, fact that people often ask for the origin of superstitions and are happier the older the source is. However, he is extremely sensible and avoids all sorts of romantic explanations. Instead, he states that the source material limits the possibility to arrive at exact information. Certainly, there is some material from the eighteenth century, but mostly the records are much younger, from the nineteenth, even the twentieth century. He also avoids pointing out any particular place of origin but mentions that superstitions came to be in the encounter between individuals sometime and somewhere, and because they were flexible they could change according to the needs in specific situations. Nowadays many of them have landed in children's folklore, but a surprisingly large and increasing number of adults also cultivate them.

The second part of the book is a catalogue explaining a good hundred superstitions. Obviously Skott is acquainted with Iørn Piø's corresponding

book *Den lille overtro: Håndbog om hverdagens magi* (The Little Superstition: A Handbook about Everyday Magic) from 1973 and Tillhagen's already mentioned study, but he supplements them with information from other, non-Nordic investigations and from Norse religion. In these explanations he offers a good number of possible ways to understand what people are doing, but rather often he admits that we cannot know for sure how these pieces of folklore have developed. Yet, well aware of how often folklorists find parallels to Nordic cultural phenomena in German folk culture, I really do miss references to the comprehensive encyclopaedia *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Handbook of German Superstition). Moreover, I also miss some kind of discussion about Skott's choice of title for his book. What might Sunday superstition be? I am also a little surprised by Skott's use of the word *skrock* as a common gender word (*en skrock*). According to the normative dictionaries in Swedish *skrock* is a neuter word (*ett skrock, skrocket*).

All in all, when this book was published just before Christmas 2021, it was a success and was reviewed in many newspapers and journals. This was due not only to its nice shape, fine illustrations, and good paper quality, but also as an example of what people want to read and know more about. This is what they expect folklorists to occupy themselves with, whatever research outcomes the scholarly community might want to obtain. Anyway, the book is very informative and balanced and should be widely read by those who lead everyday lives in the western world.

*Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, Åbo (Turku)*

### **The Paris of the North**

*Susanna Strömquist, Nordens Paris. NK:s Franska damskrädderi 1902–1966. Nordiska museet, Stockholm 2021. 239 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-7108-619-8.*

■ Made-to-measure walking costumes, cocktail dresses, and evening gowns as a central component of the well-off Swedish woman's wardrobe

belong to a bygone era. It was moreover an era when hours were spent in the department store *Nordiska Kompagniet* (NK), to acquire the correct apparel for a fashionable lifestyle, what most Swedes coveted as the epitome of the good life. But that world has been brought to life again for a special exhibition at Nordiska Museet, “The Paris of the North”, on show from 17 September 2021 to 18 September 2022, accompanied by the book with the same title. Susanna Strömquist, a fashion journalist working for *Dagens Nyheter* and other periodicals, has delved in the archives of NK and Nordiska Museet, has talked to former employees and relatives of former employees in order to piece together this story of NK’s department of French Women’s Tailoring, with each dress as a piece of the big puzzle. The result is elegant. This is a richly illustrated book using original black-and-white press photos of the fashion salon’s many creations from the beginning of the 1900s to 1966, when the department closed, along with new colour photographs of preserved dresses, which are also displayed in the museum’s exhibition. The exclusivity that surrounded NK’s French fashion salon is further illustrated by the choice of thick gold-edged paper for the book, almost as if it were a bible for those who are passionately interested in fashion and glamour.

The story of NK’s French department is told chronologically. The book is divided into three acts, broken up by smaller entr’actes. The theatrical metaphor has been used to describe the fashion world, and here it signals that this world, like the world of theatre, tells stories by means of spectacular staging.

The story begins in 1902, when two of Stockholm’s leading retailers – Karl Lundberg and Josef Sachs – join forces to establish *Nordiska Kompagniet* (The Nordic Company), initially at Stureplan in the heart of Stockholm. For Sachs, the vision is quite simple: the department store, the company, will function as a “commercial and cultural theatre, a stage for its time” (p. 14). In *Nordiska Kompagniet* the customer will always meet an up-to-date range of goods that is modern and trendy.

In Paris in the late nineteenth century, Sachs had met Madame Suzanne – the milliner Suzanne Pellin – who came to Stockholm and established her own studio, before being hired by NK in 1902 to build the store’s French fashion department, where her own hat designs were sold alongside hats purchased from Paris. At this time hats were an important fashion item. Big hats were in vogue as eye-catchers, topped with flowers or tall feathers or other ornaments. In the French department, Madame Suzanne also began selling Parisian couture – what was referred to as “Paris originals” – made by the ladies’ tailoring department at NK from original designs purchased under license from a selection of fashion houses in Paris.

In 1913 new forces arrived at NK’s French department. Madame Suzanne, who was reportedly homesick, left Stockholm for Paris. Her successor was then working in Paris as a volunteer with the fashion house of Edward Molyneux, where well-known French fashion creators also served their first apprenticeship, among them Pierre Balmain and Christian Dior. Now NK’s French department was to be led by this man, Kurt Jacobsson (1892–1969), who had also worked for Madame Suzanne before going to Paris.

Kurt Jacobsson was made of the right stuff. For the next five decades, until 1965, he was head of NK’s French department, from 1923 joined by the highly creative fashion designer Pelle Lundgren (1896–1974), who had been an apprentice in Paris at the Callot Sœurs fashion house. The two men were able to develop the department and turn it into a modern Mecca for their primarily Swedish clientele. They went to Paris several times a year to find inspiration and buy new models from the exclusive Parisian fashion houses. Back home, the new fashion was presented to the press and regular customers at mannequin parades, which became a widespread phenomenon in several Scandinavian countries in the years around World War I.

Press photos were also introduced in the same period as a new and important marketing tool, which is precisely the reason why it was possible to produce the exhibition and this book about

the Paris of the North. The preserved press photos serve as crucial source material, all of them taken by the photographer Erik Holmén from the beginning of the 1920s until 1966. But the newspaper reports from fashion shows are also central sources for the knowledge that exists today about the fashion production and fashion culture that unfolded around a place like NK's French department.

Towards the end of the 1950s, Palle Wikström was appointed to succeed Kurt Jacobsson and Pelle Lundgren. In 1960 Palle Wikström spent one season working for one of the finest fashion designers in Paris, Cristóbal Balenciaga. That NK just six years later would choose to close the French department and Palle Wikström (1933–2015) would be given the responsibility for *NK Boutique*, selling ready-made fashion garments, was far from obvious at this time. But in 1960 the old world was vanishing and a new one saw the light of day, a world where fashion clothes were now supposed to be mass-produced, simple, and youthful. In this context, there was no longer room for NK's French department and thus for a Nordic fashion Mecca that reflected the fashion houses of Paris. Fashion was in the process of being democratized, and it was in Sweden that a concept developed, Hennes & Mauritz (H&M), which today is considered the epitome of this development. The fact that this also led to accelerating consumption, which poses a threat to the world's climate and environment, is another story that seems irrelevant to this book about the Paris of the North.

In the 64 years that NK's French department existed, it focused on exclusive French fashions. This fashion salon cultivated its customers, who were educated in the exclusive French clothing tradition. Being a piece of Paris appears to have been the salon's stamp of quality, according to the book. The department store lived up to its vision of being an experience, a dream universe, where beauty and good craftsmanship, thoroughness and precision were cultivated as part of a higher consensus. At the same time, it also presented itself as a place with a good atmosphere, where customers

liked to spend time, taking as long as they wanted to try on clothes, having garments altered and new ones made.

The book *Nordens Paris* provides a focused introduction to NK's French fashion universe and the history of style. The place is described as an institution that the reader either already knows, or is willing to be convinced of the importance of knowing. The entr'actes, as a kind of asides in the book, lead the reader further into how a fashion salon like NK's French department is connected to the rest of the Swedish and French fashion system. Here one can read about haute couture, the fine craftsmanship, the workflows between *fou* (draping) and *tailleur* (tailoring) in the sewing studio, about the re-establishment of French couture after World War II and the marketing event *Théâtre de la Mode*, and the like. In this way, the book is extremely informative, delivering testimony to a part of the retail trade that once occupied a large space in the public consciousness, but today has all but disappeared.

The book thus takes its place on the bookshelf next to books about other countries' fashion houses or salons, as an addition to the many publications by fashion researchers who since 2006 have been working at the Centre for Fashion Studies at Stockholm University. If the source material is there, one can only wish, from the point of view of fashion research, that the study will be expanded to provide further insight into the role this fashion department played in the department store as a whole. For it is still unclear after reading the book: Why was a French department established at all in 1902? How did the economy of the department evolve over the years from 1902 to 1966? And finally, what were the arguments for closing the department in 1966? The fashion houses in Paris did not disappear, as we know, but have changed character with the passing of time. In other words, a more critical approach to understanding NK's French department would have been desirable if a fashion researcher were to decide what is to be communicated.

*Marie Riegels Melchior, Copenhagen*

## Animals in the City

*Liv Emma Thorsen*, Dyrenes by: Hover, klover og klør i Kristiania 1859–1925. Forlaget Press, Oslo 2020. 352 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-82-328-0301-9.

■ The urban environment is a fascinating ecosystem where humans and domesticated animals live in intimate interaction. Nowadays it is mostly pets we keep in our immediate vicinity in towns and cities, almost like members of the family, but in the rapidly expanding urban environments of the nineteenth century there were also animals of various kinds that were important for production. Horses were a significant element in the city. Based on the existence of domesticated animals and how they related to humans in nineteenth-century Kristiania, the ethnologist Liv Emma Thorsen returns once more to the topic of animal-human relationships. Nineteenth-century urbanization was entirely dependent on the presence of animals, which were very closely linked to the economic, social, and cultural life of the city.

The rapid growth of Kristiania in the latter half of the nineteenth century meant that people and animals were brought together in a way they had not previously experienced. Statistics show that the capital was teeming with horses, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and hens. The smell of animals and their droppings was pervasive in Kristiania. The animals made noises that are no longer typically heard in Nordic cities. Dogs and pigs roamed freely around the city; cows and small livestock grazed on small patches of grass and roadsides. They produced nitrogen which stimulated the growth of plants and trees. The urban fauna and flora were influenced in many ways by the presence of domesticated animals.

Just as in Stockholm at the same time, the issue of animal welfare arose, contributing to a change in attitudes towards animals. In the early stages of the modern city from the middle of the nineteenth century, horses, pigs, and dogs played a very important role, which has rarely been taken into account by cultural historians studying this development. When animals disappeared from the modern city, they also disappeared from history. The animals in the city were reduced to a curiosity

that is not given the place in our cultural history that the topic deserves.

Although the animals are forgotten by today's historians, they are present in contemporary sources: photographs, stories, memoirs, and literature. Data can be found in both scientific and popular literature, as well as in various statistical surveys. The veterinarians of the time reported on the work they did, and some people towards the end of the nineteenth century were organized in animal welfare associations, whose publications also contain interesting pictures of the period. It is the same kind of data that we have used in studies of pets in Sweden. For researchers interested in cultural history there are rich and useful sources of many kinds if you just search for them.

Thorsen's presentation is divided into parts that differ considerably in size. Part 1, titled "Hooves", devotes several chapters to the importance of the horse in and for the city. The number of horses in Kristiania grew during the nineteenth century. It was primarily horsepower that was required, i.e. the horse as a draught animal, for instance for horse-drawn trams (which went out of use in 1899), for the fire brigade, and for transports of various kinds. Horses undoubtedly had important and versatile uses in the city. The horse population in Kristiania grew from 1,061 individuals in 1855 to 3,001 in 1891. Around 1900 there were no fewer than 3,746 horses. Large breeds of heavy horse were imported, but the domestic Dole (Norwegian *Dølahest*) seems to have been preferred as a work-horse in Kristiania. The Norwegian Fjord Horse also occurred, used especially in winter for pulling carriages and clearing snow.

With the new century, however, horses gradually began to disappear. Motor vehicles and motorized trams were too tough competition for horses. When the horseshoe nail factory in Kristiania, famous for its quality-good nails, was closed in 1926, it was a clear sign that horses no longer served any important function in the city. That same year, the fire brigade stopped using horses. The sanitation authority and the brewery industry also finally phased out the use of horses in the mid-twentieth century. The last hospital

horses were put down in 1961. I may mention that when I came to Uppsala in the early 1970s, the streets and parks department in the city still used horses when sanding streets and pavements in the inner city in winter. “The Dehorsification of Uppsala” was one of Wolter Ehn’s suggested essay topics for his students in ethnology, but I don’t think anyone took the bait, unfortunately.

Part 2 is devoted to the cloven-footed animals. Telemark cattle in the city supplied the population with milk. But cattle also gave meat and they were transported alive by train to the city to be slaughtered. An impressive modern slaughterhouse was established in the early twentieth century, which ensured food safety and control of animals and meat. The book reproduces a large number of pictures that give interesting insights into the butchery business in the city.

The third part is devoted to “Claws”, that is, birds. Wild birdlife, which was rich in the mid-nineteenth century (220 observed species) in and around Kristiania, changed as a result of densification and increased urbanization, which destroyed the birds’ habitats. Hunting and egg plundering contributed to the decline of birds, not only in Kristiania’s surroundings but also outside the city. The zoologist Robert Collett at the city’s Zoological Museum and later professor at the university, became engaged in bird protection. In a book from 1864 we learn not just about the bird fauna in the surroundings of the city but also how they were caught and which species (thrush, woodcock, hazel grouse) were sold at markets. People cooked thrushes by frying them in butter and then pouring cream over them. Birds of prey were pests for people who kept hens and pigeons in Kristiania.

Aviculture did not gain any foothold in Kristiania in the same way as in Copenhagen and Malmö during the nineteenth century. However, the schoolman Oskar Guldberg published a couple of writings, one about caged birds in general and one about canaries, but he was forced to admit that interest in the hobby was low. Guldberg keenly advocated the keeping of songbirds.

Associations were also formed to protect bird life from marauders and egg thieves. In 1910 collaboration was initiated between the schools of

Kristiania and the animal welfare movement to teach schoolchildren to protect birds. This part ends with a chapter on the resistance to the use of imported bird feathers in women’s fashions in the early twentieth century, which makes for interesting reading about a style of urban dress that is little known today.

“What is a city?” the author begins by asking. Is it buildings, monuments, streets, parks, fountains, and sewers? Or is it the life between the houses, the traffic, the lights that come on and go off, the sounds and smells of bodies in motion, sweat, perfume, dirt, and wet fur? The answer is that the city is of all this. Animals have been an essential part of the urban environment, and the relationship between animals and humans has been significant, as Thorsen shows with all desirable clarity in this rich book, which the review above can only hint at. It is a well-written and interesting book, without the tiresome jargon that often characterizes today’s activist-oriented human-animal studies. On the contrary, this is an exemplary study, based on comprehensive and broad empirical evidence that gives us a deeper knowledge of the coexistence of animals and humans in Kristiania in the latter half of the nineteenth century. A large range of illustrations have been included in the book, which gives interesting insights into the keeping of animals, not least the horses in the streetscape. The bibliography is extensive, with numerous titles that I would like to explore further. The only thing I miss is an index. Being more familiar with conditions in Sweden, I note that there are many similarities to Stockholm, and it would be interesting to see comparative studies of other Nordic capitals.

*Ingvar Svanberg, Uppsala*

### When the Tide Turns

*Charlotte Ulmert, När vinden vänder. Adèle Sylvan och Charlotte Rosenkrantz – adelskvinnorna som gick sin egen väg. Ekström & Garay, Lund 2021. 280 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-89308-50-3.*

■ “The last ladies of the manor” Charlotte Ulmert calls the two women and sisters-in-law, of whom

she draws a detailed double portrait, and whose stories she follows from birth to death. In fact, the portraits start even before the two ladies' respective births, with presentations of their lineage and context, and end after their deaths, with a follow-up of the aftermath of the bereaved relatives, the family houses and the legacy. Charlotte Rosenkrantz (1844–1913) and Adèle Sylvan (1845–1923) are portrayed as the last ladies of the manor in two different ways. Firstly, in a very concrete sense. Both ladies suffered the fate of becoming the last generation of wives and mistresses on the families' Scanian manors, before the houses had to leave the families' ownership at the beginning of the twentieth century. Secondly, in a more symbolic sense. According to Ulmert, the ladies Charlotte Rosenkrantz and Adèle Sylvan must also be understood as a generation of women who were brought up with a certain traditional lifestyle and self-understanding in aristocratic elite circles. This way of life was rendered out-of-date by the development of society and by new social and gender ideals – in other words, when the tide turned.

Charlotte Ulmert, who is a researcher in literary studies, but with a degree in ethnology and qualifications in history, reconstructs using varied source material the life course of the two women with connections to the nobility in Scania from the mid-nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. For the two women, for the manors and the old order they represented, and for society in general, this period has often been described as a time of change. However, Ulmert takes her overall interest further, stating that her book also seeks to shed light on gender issues. The period was also the first period of women's liberation where the first steps towards gender equality were taken, but Ulmert wants to shed light on how women in the portrayed environments continued to be subject to formal, practical and socio-cultural constraints. The purpose of the book is thus also to examine how these privileged women met and tackled changes and challenges associated with the new winds that blew in the time.

Charlotte Rosenkrantz and Adèle Sylvan were both born into the elite and upper class of the time

but into two different types of environments. The first was rooted in a traditional Danish manor environment, as she belonged to the Danish branch of the very old noble family of Rosenkrantz. The latter, on the other hand, had grown up in an extremely rich and fast-growing Swedish bourgeois environment. Her father, Tage Sylvan, is portrayed in the book as an entrepreneur and man of the world – a man of the new age. Charlotte and Adèle, however, ended up in the same family, each of them marrying one of the two brothers Börge and Holger Rosenkrantz, who were part of the traditional Scanian estate environment in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and whose lineage had roots that stretched far back in both Danish and Swedish noble circles. The book therefore starts with a presentation of the family and its manors in Scania, including an introductory portrait of the two brothers' mother and grandmother as powerful noblewomen and – in their husbands' absence – competent landowners and managers of the manors Gärnsås and Gyllebo. As old school manor ladies.

Next, Charlotte Rosenkrantz's Danish roots and family are presented, and on page 63 she herself is brought into the picture with her birth in 1844. Her childhood and background are presented as marked by her father, Gottlob Rosenkrantz's strong personality and values, which may best be described as the ideal of the paternalistic nobleman with responsibility for all family members and subordinates under his wings. The feeling of kinship and rank is also, according to Ulmert, reflected in Gottlob Rosenkrantz's desire to see his daughter married into the Swedish branch of the Rosenkrantz family – a desire which was a decisive factor in Charlotte's marriage to Börge at Gyllebo.

Adèle Sylvan also had a powerful father who was to shape her course of life. He is described as one of the richest and most enterprising bourgeois merchants and officials of his time in southern Sweden. In time, he also became a manor owner and sought the company of other landowners in the area. According to Ulmert, Sylvan was strongly preoccupied with being admitted and recognized

in the circles of the old noble elite, in the hope of being included in the social status which continued to attach to it. The upbringing and education that Sylvan's daughters received – including extensive travelling and introduction to Europe's joys at the highest level of luxury – is presented as an expression of his ambition to get them married into the nobility. It was therefore perceived as an extremely lucky match, as the somewhat older bachelor at Örup, Holger Rosenkrantz, chose Adèle Sylvan as his bride. This was also the case for Holger Rosenkrantz, not least because his finances were heavily challenged, and his young wife and her family were well-off.

Charlotte Ulmert's book then follows the two women through the ups and downs of their marriages – and apparently there were mostly downs – through childbirths and the inevitable deaths of both infants and older children and through daily life on the estates. And not least through the financial problems that quickly started to pile up in both families because both Rosenkrantz brothers proved hopeless as landowners and heads of the families. In Ulmert's account, the misery was due in part to the fact that the two brothers maintained a traditional but outdated aristocratic approach to money, estate, and estate employees, and that their insistence on a particular lifestyle became the family's misfortune. A special problem associated with this is that both Charlotte Rosenkrantz and Adèle Sylvan, despite their very different personalities, had in common that they – in Ulmert's assessment – were more talented than their husbands when it came to the finances and management of the family business. But as women, due to both norms and limited rights, they were prevented from acting on their own and were instead subject to the administration of their husbands, fathers and brothers. Both marriages ended in separation and more or less financial disaster.

The two women thus each ended up standing on their own without their husbands. However, their last life chapters were not the same. Despite the changed circumstances – the marriage had ended, and the manor had been sold and replaced with a stately rental home in Lund – Charlotte

Rosenkrantz continued in many ways her previous practice, socially accepted in the environment as a gathering point and female head of the family network. Adèle Sylvan, on the other hand, played an eccentric and self-willed role as landowner and farmer and staged herself beyond the limits of normality as the lady and protector of the medieval castle of Glimmingehus – until this manor also went out of the family's possession. As the life stories and narratives progress, they increasingly take the form of a history of decay. Not just the decay of the ageing women and their families, but also the decay of the noble lifestyle and the end of the golden days of the great estates.

With her book, Charlotte Ulmert tells a chronologically progressing history of individuals and women, but also the story of a social group, the manor house owners, at a time when their previously more or less undoubted role as a status-bearing elite group was up for negotiation. The case study is interesting, and Ulmert also manages in many contexts to expand it to a period description by backing the biographies with contextualization in relation to the historical development of the time and the cultural environments described. Among other things it is interesting to see how the fate and movements of the two women illustrate the social and cultural boundaries of the manor environment and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. The book is well written, well told, communicated in an empathetic style, and as such it perhaps reflects its author's background in literary studies. The level of detail is generally high. It is an advantage because it brings the story to life and provides the experience of getting close to the people described. It is also in some ways a disadvantage, as the level of detail is high in almost all contexts and descriptions, and it can therefore challenge the reader's ability to keep track of the main point. In that regard, it is also worth mentioning that an outline of the many lineages and family members that the reader is asked to keep track of would be a useful tool.

The book is thus fascinating reading but a bit difficult to place within a genre. It is based on a rich array of source material, contemporary pres-

entations, and research literature on the subject. At the same time, it moves to some extent away from the research publication as a genre, perhaps first and foremost through the fact that in large parts of the book there is not a particularly high degree of transparency in relation to the use of source material and analytical considerations. It seems that Ulmert masters a source-combining method well known to ethnology, where the impression of a historical reality is approached from different angles and types of source material. It is an effective and suitable method for the purpose. However, it is again a bit unfortunate that the book is not characterized by more methodical transparency, e.g. either via a transparent note system or via indications in the text of where the information originates. The captivating and personal style

of writing can, without these indications, lead to some uncertainty for the reader in relation to distinguishing between the source-based and the interpretation-based information and conclusions. This is especially true where subjective motives and feelings of the people portrayed are involved. To be fair, there are also sections and passages where Ulmert includes the source material explicitly – when for instance letters are quoted or clearly referenced – and that is, in the opinion of the reviewer, often these passages which appear most convincing, and in which the persons depicted appear most vividly. Perhaps it is even here that Ulmert most convincingly achieves her fine ambition of producing as true a description as possible and of giving a picture of how these women reasoned and acted in a time when the tide turned.

*Signe Boeskov, Randers*