# Ethnologia Scandinavica

A JOURNAL FOR NORDIC ETHNOLOGY 2007

# Ethnologia Scandinavica

A JOURNAL FOR NORDIC ETHNOLOGY
ISSN 0348-9698 Volume 37

**Editorial office:** Folklivsarkivet, Finngatan 8, SE-223 62 Lund, Sweden
www.etn.lu.se/ethscand/index.htm
**Editor:** *Birgitta Svensson,* Stockholm
E-mail: birgitta.svensson@etnologi.su.se
**Assistant editor:** *Margareta Tellenbach,* Bjärred
E-mail: margareta.tellenbach@etn.lu.se
**Editorial board:** *Tine Damsholt,* Copenhagen
*Jonas Frykman,* Lund
*Anna-Maria Åström,* Åbo
*Nils Gilje,* Bergen

THE ROYAL GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS ACADEMY FOR SWEDISH FOLK CULTURE



---

Cover illustration: The picture was taken in the autumn of 2005 at Château Lynch-Bages by Pauillac just before the wine harvest. The photographers were Anders Munk and Jon Høyrup.

---

Ethnologia Scandinavica is printed with the support of the Nordic Publications Committee for Humanist Periodicals and the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture. The journal publishes original papers in English and German based on all branches of material and social culture, and in reviews, biographical notes and reports reflects ethnological contributions and activities in the Scandinavian countries. One volume of Ethnologia Scandinavica comprises 200 pages, published in one issue yearly. Subscription price for volume 2007 is SEK 275:–. Postage is included. Orders should be sent to Grahns Tryckeri AB, Box 4117, SE-227 22 Lund, Sweden. (Phone: +46 46 31 19 80, Fax: +46 46 30 44 00, E-mail: info@grahnstryck.com.) When ordering please state clearly: Volume or year required, full name and address of the subscriber in printed letters.

*Bank:*
Handelsbanken Clearingnr: 6501 Konto: 601784812
Plusgiro: 26 33 66-7
Bankgiro: 5952-2573

*International Bank Account Number (IBAN):*
SE7946000000000601784812

*SWIFT:* HANDSESS

# Contents

## Papers


3 Editorial. By *Birgitta Svensson*

5 Translating Terroir. Sociomaterial Potentials in Ethnography and Wine-growing. By *Jon Frederik Høyrup and Anders Kristian Munk*

21 "You Are Nobody While You Are Wating". Asylum Seekers' Experiences of Nothingness. By *Rebecka Lennartsson*

35 Deadly Identities? Homosexuality, Adolescence and Parasuicide. By *Tone Hellesund*

47 Transplantation with Kidneys from Marginal Donors. Risk Patients' Informed Consent to Different Treatment Alternatives. By *Markus Idvall and Susanne Lundin*

63 Sick Children. How Medial and Personal Experiences are Woven Together. By *Malin Ideland*

72 Complex Communities. Homeless Greenlanders in Copenhagen. By *Signe Boeskov and Nanna Folke Olsen*

89 The Student Boiler Suit and Long John Drinking. Dressing and Undressing on the Journey towards Authenticity. By *Bo Lönnqvist*

99 "The Land and the Sky will Persist". The Finnish Farmer's Relationship to Nature in Constituting. Continuity in the EU Transition Stage. By *Leena Hangasmaa*


## Biographical Notes


115 Reimund Kvideland 1935–2006. By *Bente Gullveig Alver*

116 Phebe Fjellström 1924–2007. By *Nils-Arvid Bringéus*

117 Ilmar Talve 1919–2007. By *Pekka Leimu*


## Reviews

### New Dissertations


118 Parenthood, Place, Identity. – Hilde Danielsen, Med barn i byen. Foreldreskap, plass og identitet. Rev. by *Anette Löfström*

120 An Extinct Traditon of Joiks. – Ola Graff, "Om kjæresten min vil jeg joike". Undersøkelser over en utdødd sjøsamisk joiketradisjon. Rev. by *Alf Arvidsson*

121 Music for Pensioners. – Sverker Hyltén-Cavallius, Minnets spelrum. Om musik och pensionärskap. Rev. by *Niels Kayser Nielsen*

122 Museums and Environmental Education. – Kirsi Hänninen, Visiosta toimintaan: museoiden ympäristökasvatus sosiokulttuurisena jatkumona, säätelymekanismina ja innovatiivisena viestintänä. Rev. by *Solveig Sjöberg-Pietarinen*

124 Today's Gene News. – Malin Ideland, Dagens gennyheter. Hur massmedier berättar om genetik och genteknik. Rev. by *Tove Ingebjørg Fjell*

127 A Folkloristic Study of Child Identity. – Bjørg Kjær, Børn og barndom på fritidshjem. Et folkloristisk studie af fortolkning og forhandling om barnlig identitet. Rev. by *Hilde Danielsen*

128 The Spearhead of Gender Equality. – Marie Nordberg, Jämställdhetens spjutspets? Manliga arbetstagare i kvinnoyrken, jämställdhet, maskulinitet, femininitet och heteronormativitet. Rev. by *Maria Johansson*

130 Ambivalent Experiences and Ambiguous Stories. – Susanne Nylund Skog, Ambivalenta upplevelser och mångtydiga berättelser. En etnologisk studie av barnfödande. Rev. by *Gry Heggli*

131 Manifesting a Duchy. – Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, Hertuger. At synes og at være i Augustenborg, 1700–1850. Rev. by *Bo Lönnqvist*

133 Swedish House Painters. – Eva Silvén, Bekänna Färg. Modernitet, maskulinitet, professionalitet. Rev. by *Fredrik Langeland*

134 Living with a Finnish Background in Sweden. – Marja Ågren, Är du finsk, eller…? En etnologisk studie om att växa upp och leva med finsk bakgrund i Sverige. Rev. by *Rauni Janser*


### Book Reviews


136 Festivity as a Mirror of the Times. – "Slipp tradisjonene fri – de er våre!" Fest og felleskap i endring. Bente Gullveig Alver & Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred (eds.). Rev. by *Birgitta Svensson*

137 Contributions to the Study of Revivals. – Revival and Communication. Studies in the History of Scandinavian Revivals 1700–2000. Arne Bugge Amundsen (ed.) Rev. by *Nils G. Holm*

138 Nordic Scholars Studying Ritual as Field and Process. – Ritualer. Kulturhistoriske studier. Arne Bugge Amundsen, Bjarne Hodne & Ane Ohrvik (eds.). – Genre and Ritual. The Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals. Eyolf Østrem, Mette Birkedal Bruun, Nils Holger Petersen & Jens Fleischer (eds.). Rev. by *Sven-Erik Klinkmann*

144 Placing Out Children in Norway. – Astri Andresen, Hender små. Bortsetting av barn i Norge 1900–1950. Rev. by *Ingrid Söderlind*

148 Limits of Cultural Heritage. – Kulturarvens gränser. Komparativa perspektiv. Peter Aronsson, Bjarne Hodne, Birgitta Skarin Frykman & John Odemark (eds.). Rev. by *Lene Otto*

149 Carl Wilhelm von Sydow as a Folklorist. – Nils-Arvid Bringéus, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow som folklorist. Rev. by *Ulrika Wolf-Knuts*

151 Memoirs of Industrial Communities. – Bruksliv. Från Warkaus till Högfors 1919–1968. Minnen av C. J. Cedercreutz. Rev. by *Göran Hedlund*

151 Narratives of Illnes. – Georg Drakos, Berättelsen

i sjukdomens värld. Att leva med hiv/aids som anhörig i Sverige och Grekland. Rev. by *Lene Otto*

152 Textiles as Cultural History. – Agnes Geijer, Ur textilkonstens historia. Rev. by *Maria Ekqvist*

153 Young in the Fifties. – Kerstin Gunnemark, Ung på 50-talet. Om förälskelser, mode och boende i en brytningstid. Rev. by *Lykke L. Pedersen*

155 You Are What You're Named? – Charlotte Hagström, Man är vad man heter. Namn och identitet. Rev. by *Liv Nybø*

159 Making Christmas Again. – Nu gör vi jul igen. Charlotte Hagström, Marlene Hugoson & Annika Nordström (eds.). Rev. by *Anne Bergman*

160 Manor Houses and Labourers' Cottages. – Mats Hellspong, Karin Lindvall, Nicole Pergament, Angela Rundquist, Herrgårdsromantik och statarelände. En studie av ideologi, kulturarv och historieanvändning. Rev. by *Kerstin Sundberg*

164 Slaves to Their Passions. – Peter Henningsen, I sansernas vold. Bondekultur og kultursammenstød i enevældens Danmark. Rev. by *Kerstin Sundberg*

166 Festive Meals and Everyday Food. – Festmåltid och vardagsmat. Föredrag vid ett symposium till Anders Salomonssons minne 3–4 juni 2005. Mats Hellspong (ed.). Rev. by *Niels Kayser Nielsen*

167 New Museum Studies in Denmark. – Ny dansk museologi. Bruno Ingemann & Ane Hejlskov Larsen (eds.). Rev. by *Kerstin Smeds*

169 The Social History of Dirty Linen. – Ingun Grimstad Klepp, Skittentøyets kulturhistorie. Hvorfor kvinner vasker klær. Rev. by *Yrsa Lindqvist*

171 Experienced Grief. – Britta Lundgren, Oväntad död – förväntad sorg. En etnologisk studie av sörjandets processer. Rev. by *Anders Gustavsson*

172 Off the Edge. – Off the Edge. Experiments in Cultural Analysis. Orvar Löfgren and Richard Wilk (eds.). Rev. by *Ullrich Kockel*

173 Music and People. – Musik och människor. Folkmusik från Kristinestadsnejden. Marianne Maans (ed.). Rev. by *Mats Nilsson*

174 The Hunger for Harmony. – Lena Martinsson, Jakten på konsensus. Intersektionalitet och marknadsekonomisk vardag. Rev. by *Tone Hellesund*

176 Ethnological Questionnaires and Interviews. – Kunnskapssamtaler. Anna Moestue & Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred (eds.). Rev. by *Göran Sjögård*

177 Danish Workers Before and After the Cold War. – Niels Jul Nielsen, Mellem storpolitik og værkstedsgulv. Den danske arbejder – før, under og efter Den kolde krig. Rev. by *Sven B. Ek*

178 The Calendar in Pre-Christian Scandinavia. – Andreas Nordberg, Jul, disting och förkyrklig tideräkning. Kalendrar och kalendariska riter i det förkristna Norden. Rev. by *Nils G. Holm*

179 Cross-Border Neighbours. – Naboliv: Värmland-Hedmark. Arkiven berättar – Arkivene forteller. Peter Olausson (ed.). Rev. by *Göran Sjögård*

180 A History of Exhibitions. – Lennart Palmqvist, Utställningsrum. Rev. by *Camilla Mordhorst*

181 The Production of Memory. – Memories and Visions. Studies in Folk Culture IV. Owe Ronström & Ulf Palmenfelt (eds.). Rev. by *Ullrich Kockel*

182 The Mad Human. – Det forrykte menneske. Den psykisk syge i historien. Edith Mandrup Rønn & Inger Hartby (eds.). Rev. by *Lars-Eric Jönsson*

184 Museums and Difficult Matters. –Svåra saker. Ting och berättelser som upprör och berör. Eva Silvén & Anders Björklund (eds.). Rev. by *Camilla Mordhorst*

185 Norwegian Wood Carving. – Dag Sveen, Fra folkekunst til nasjonalt kunsthåndverk. Norsk treskjæring 1847–1879. Rev. by *Hans Medelius*

187 Three Homelands. – Ilmar Talve, Kolme kotimaata. Rev. by *Leena Louhivuori*

191 The Will to Change the World. – Maria Zachariasson, Viljan att förändra världen. Politiskt engagemang hos unga i den globala rättviserörelsen. Rev. by *Niels Kayser Nielsen*

192 New Thinking and Reflections. – Nytänkande och eftertankar. Kön, kulturella föreställningar och livsvillkor. Maria Zachariasson & Birgitta Meurling (eds.). Rev. by *Lena Marander-Eklund*

194 On Encountering Death. – Inför döden. Lynn Åkesson (ed.). Rev. by *Anders Gustavsson*

# Editorial

By Birgitta Svensson

The aim of *Ethnologia Scandinavica* is to show the current position of Nordic ethnological research. This year's articles point in many different directions, but they share a focus on processes of marginalization and what they mean for the identification of people and commodities.

In the first article the marginalization concerns the identification of commodities and places. Using place-names like Bourgogne and Bordeaux, Jon Frederik Høyrup and Anders Kristian Munk describe what happens to French wines when the market becomes dominated by wines from Chile, Argentina, or Australia. In this New World there are lower wages, fewer rules, and better weather. What do the French do to avoid their wine being marginalized? They have started a system based on the notion of *terroir:* a consistent typicality in tradition, geology, climate, cultivation, plantation, vegetation, and technical abilities within a given area. They market the wine for its place, with its distinctive authenticity and quality. If the local French identity is to sell on a global market, it takes hyphens: the more hyphens, the more nets-working and hence a more stable brand, the authors note. And what applies to the interpretation, translation, and marketing of French wines also applies to ethnological writing. Texts are perceived by the recipient on his terms. What the author can do is strive to *write-with-hyphens*, to show that descriptions of an object are always dependent on its surroundings and contexts. The article is thus also a basis for an ethnological discussion of the link between ethnological descriptions, what the authors call ethnography, and the ability to represent something in text. One of their points is that Bruno Latour's concept of non-modernity and his sociomaterial approach can bring new perspectives to ethnology. Our world and worth exist through perpetual creation of new constructions and connections.

Constant searching for connections and shaping new and revised identities and affiliations is also a feature of the people whose lives Rebecka Lennartsson describes in terms of nothingness. Being an asylum seeker means that your experiences become stories from the margins of society. Life is above all about waiting, passing "empty time". The lack of work and other occupations gives asylum seekers a sense of stagnation and exclusion. When in transit between what once was and what you want to become, it is hard to build durable identities. Asylum seekers try to start a new life. An answer often heard in Lennartsson's interviews with asylum seekers is that they want to be recognized and treated as human beings. Quite simply, they want "an ordinary life".

The same desire is also shown by the homosexuals whose marginalized identity position is described by Tone Hellesund. She has interviewed lesbian and gay adolescents in Norway who have attempted suicide and who connect this to problems regarding their homosexuality. Truth and essence seem to play a major part in their self-understanding, and this creates distress and pain. From a queer perspective, Hellesund argues that one can interpret their experiences both as shame and as subjection to heteronormativity. Being identified as homosexual, however, also means being reduced to being categorized in terms of one's sexuality and thus being denied the many complex identities that people have. Hellesund interprets the youthful resistance to the homosexual identity as a struggle against this marginalization, in defence of the self. The tension between deadly identities and identities for life remains an unsolved problem in her text, but she has exposed the problem that fosters unhappiness, fear, and despair, presenting several strategies for avoiding the marginalized position,

for example, by combating any form of identity normalization.

New research areas become ethnological when societal development requires it. Health, disease, and collaboration with the life sciences is a growing research field for ethnologists. Markus Idvall and Susanne Lundin discuss what the concept of informed consent has come to mean for patients waiting to receive a kidney from a deceased donor. They are offered two different waiting lists, for organs varying greatly in quality: kidneys from "satisfactory donors" and from "marginal donors". The article investigates in cultural terms the oppositions that came to light when the Department of Kidney Medicine and Transplantation at the University Hospital in Malmö introduced a new procedure for informed consent. Idvall and Lundin discuss what is happening in a society whose culture creates more and more strategies for handling risk. The focus is on the information that kidney patients received about transplants of kidneys from marginal donors. Interestingly, the study shows that the conflict and the criticism was not about people being offered inferior or risky organs; it is a conflict about values which leads to global issues of risk management.

Malin Ideland also describes a kind of conflict of values between laymen and experts and how it became integrated in people's handling of risks. Her article is about whether the MMR vaccine can lead to autism, the subject of a media debate a few years ago which made some parents unwilling to vaccinate their children. She shows how medial and personal experiences are woven together in people's risk calculations by comparing the media picture of how dangerous it can be to use the vaccine with the fact that people have a personal need to explain why they have an autistic child. She also points out that we should think about why more than 95% of parents nevertheless vaccinate their children.

The fact that Greenlanders as a highly marginalized group are part of the cityscape in big Danish towns is the subject of Signe Boeskov and Nanna Folke Olsen's article on complex communities. They examine how ethnic identification affects the everyday life of homeless Greenlanders and how it is maintained both by the group itself and by the social system. Different strategies shape the framework in which they can act in Danish society.

Bo Lönnquist tells of a strange custom in Jyväskylä that started among students in the 1970s. The point of the custom is that alcohol replaces knowledge in a rite that resembles the normal examination process at universities. Unity and group identity are manifested through boiler suits. Lönnquist regards both the student boiler suit and the long john drinking as a protest against a status-led, consumerist society.

Are farmers becoming a marginalized occupational group? Leena Hangasmaa discusses in her article how Finnish farmers are trying to adapt to a post-productive agriculture to get the necessary EU subsidies. They are in the same dilemma as the French wine growers when it comes to asserting the significance of origin, quality, and the value of locality.

The many different directions in ethnological research are also expressed in doctoral dissertations, which become more diverse for every year. Reviews of dissertations thus give good insight into what Nordic ethnology is interested in. The other book reviews likewise show the vitality of the ethnological arena.

# Translating Terroir

## Sociomaterial Potentials in Ethnography and Wine-growing

By Jon Frederik Høyrup & Anders Kristian Munk

Drawing on fieldwork carried out in the French wine trade, we try here to explore the ways registration and representation could be imagined within a sociomaterial ethnography. We deliberately use the word ethnography, since what is at stake here is our ability to describe. We will be mixing up situations from the fieldwork with our own reflections and metaphors, in order to establish a connection between practices among our informants and our ethnographic selves. These practices concern the ability to make things work elsewhere: representation. Being newly graduated ethnologists, we grew up with the Writing Culture seminars as standard luggage – long since accepted and canonized. We learned to deal with post-modernity and the debate on representation through texts like Vincent Crapanzano's Hermes' Dilemma (Crapanzano 1986), and we carried the consciousness of representational difficulties with us, when we had to consider how sociomateriality, and what Bruno Latour has called non-modernity (Latour 1999), could bring new perspectives to the things we do as ethnographers.

### 20.05.2006, Copenhagen: Schematics of a Background

Go to any supermarket and you will see Chilean, Argentinean and Australian bottles crowding the shelves. The days when France was the king of quality in the wine business are over, and customers worldwide are considering New World alternatives to the French classics. In a specialized wine store north of Copenhagen (upper class suburbia), the situation isn't comparable with the supermarket bulk sale, but even here the French decline from power has been felt for years. Placenames like *Bourgogne* or *Bordeaux* are no longer synonymous with *good*, *quality* or *tasty*, they might as well mean *too expensive*, *arrogant*, *sour* or *old-fashioned*. Even worse for the vast majority of the roughly 400 protected designations of origin that no one has ever heard of. Being a typical *Côtes de Castillon* or *Saint-Chinian Berlou* doesn't mean anything outside France, the owner, Lars, tells us. We're at the end of our fieldwork. Following the bottles from French producers has finally brought us back to Denmark. This is the end of the line: Consumption. So why did we undertake this chase in the first place?

Recently the French wine business has experienced its most severe crisis for decades. New world countries profit from lower salary costs, fewer rules, and maybe even better weather. In many ways it's easier to produce wine in Chile than in Bordeaux. The French survival strategy has been to produce fewer bottles, but of a higher standard, emphasizing that quality is secured within the frames of the AOC system with its notion of *terroir*: a consistent typicality in tradition, geology, climate, cultivation, plantation, vegetation and technical abilities present within a given area. Thus, according to the French, the notion of quality rests upon very firm and strict rules not imitable by competitors abroad. However, to the French producers the question remains: How to convince consumers, who don't share the terroir context that brought up the wine, that whatever characteristics make the wine typical are also qualities that should be valued? The paradox seems to be the simultaneous need to maintain the claim for a genuine and authentic local essence (in order not to fall prey to global competition on price alone) while acknowledging that typicality as a quality does not travel un-translated without altering the sociomaterial constructions around it (in order to make it understandable on a different gastronomic canvas).

To us, the interesting question was: How

to translate geographic origin into a quality to be valued elsewhere? This article is about the challenges involved in treating such a transformative kind of thing ethnologically. We are, yours truly, the two authors. However, several other actors, human as well as non-human, appear in this article. Wine-makers, mountains, documents, philosophers, salesmen, paragraphs, numbers, plants, metaphors, types of soil, to mention a few a part from the words you're reading. They all tell the story of a fieldwork venture carried out in French regions of Bordeaux and Languedoc as well as in Paris and Copenhagen during the autumn of 2005 and the beginning of 2006. We set out to unravel the doings and connections that make specific French localities (terroirs) become qualitative ingredients in AOC-classified wine (*appellation d'origine contrôlée*).

Some things seemed clear to us to begin with: No matter how successfully a place like Bordeaux can be enacted on its own French bedrock, that won't automatically make it work on the shelves in a Danish wine store. It will need new practitioners and new relationships. We emphasized the importance of allowing all these many relations to unfold, not only the social ones, but the material ones as well. The question now was what to make of all these relations. When we first picked up the phone to begin making our way across "the field", we became aware of movements. People made references to other people in other locations. There was a lot of travelling going on, making connections. Bottles, buyers, documents, tourists, ethnologists, laboratory samples, you name it. We needed to learn more about how such a field made connections, or rather: how a field could be constructed from such connections. Two basic conditions seemed beyond discussion here:

1. *Wine is a heterogeneous object, quality is a heterogeneous concept*:[1] The object depends on its context, it is multiple. A bottle of wine is not only produced, but also controlled, marketed and consumed within the frames of a certain practicality – people do things, they work, and they get their hands dirty with grape juice and ink from the rules that are printed to keep track of the production. Throats and noses are flooded with aromas, meals and settings are devoured in deliberate combinations. The quality of wine must surely be considered as being practised differently by different actors and the wine itself to be fluid in more than one obvious sense.
2. *Bottles of wine are things on the move*: As goods in a global system of trade, with markets connecting producers and consumers across vast distances, bottles move around the world dotting and stretching the practices involved in their quality all over.

Now this all seemed very nets-working, very fluid, very multiple, very nice, we thought. If you missed the link to ANT and praxiography before, here it is: We were very inspired by the potential this kind of thinking has within descriptive disciplines like ethnographic fieldwork, where it seems to loosen up such difficult conceptions as *field* (where, who and what is it?) or *work* (what is the purpose and goal of the ethnographer moving around in it?). But we needed to register, think and write about this whole messy business. Loosening up is good, in theory, but how do we actually do it? How do we construct a fieldwork strategy that will allow us to keep focus on a non-focusable heterogeneous multiplicity on the move? This is what we'll try to explore here. We brought Deleuzian concepts like the *fold*[2] and the *rhizome*[3] with us and our Actor-Network aspirations to the field. In addition we adopted George Marcus's *follow the thing* approach to what he calls *multi-sited fieldwork*.[4] We were literally hanging on in the wake of bottles from French producers,

chasing down relationships as we came across them. The movement of these bottles between sites became the spinal cord of our imagined field. Now it's certainly basic ethnographic wisdom (Crapanzano 1986; Clifford 1986) that nothing travels silently and untranslated along such trails of movement. What we argue here is that, since we are dealing with ANT, this much debated re-presentation must be an ontological quest: not a modern or post-modern problem of transport between sites, but an expansion of connections. Potentially the workings of reality can be conceived of differently, at the same time that's about all this much debated "theory" will do for us. So how far will ontology take us?

### 16.10.2005, Berlou: Running the Risk of Managerialism

It all makes sense in front of Jean-Marie's fireplace. Above the glowing vines, chestnuts are cracking up to reveal their nutty, sweet inside. Wines from the local slate-based terroir are on the table alongside sautéed mushrooms and pickled cherries and olives. We are evaluating a day of sightseeing in the mountainous hills behind Berlou, a small village in the southern French region of Languedoc. This is where Jean-Marie grows his vines, primarily old troll-like Carrignans dotted around steep clearings on the forest-clad slopes. This evening everything works out perfectly, the wine tastes *good*. In Jean-Marie's kitchen the quality of terroir and geographic origin seems hard to contest.

Now Berlou isn't just any little village in the Montagnes Noires, though a quick stroll down the street wouldn't reveal anything outstanding about the place. The typical all-in-one school/village hall/mayor's office, 20 $m^2$ of meticulously flattened gravel for petanque, a baker's van once a day. Nonetheless the name "Berlou" figures in national French legislation. It has its own decrees and articles. There are certain rules and privileges connected to it. The specific thing about Berlou is (besides in official documents circulating between administrations in Paris and Languedoc) to be found in the slate around the village, printed on the labels of the wine-growers, aging in their cellars, ripening on the vines beneath the endless Occitan sun. Some of it has been there for ages: The climate, the geology, even the wine-growers who arrived with the Romans a couple of thousand years ago. But some of it is brand new. This year Berlou received the right to put the name of the village next to the name of the regional appellation, Saint-Chinian, on the bottles. After 12 years of intense lobbying it received its own article in the legislation of the INAO (Institut National des Appellations d'Origine).

Led by the local cooperative, a group of wine-growers decided to ask for acknowledgement of their village as a local supplement to the regional AOC Saint-Chinian, indicating a higher standard of quality. The producers wanted to obtain a verification of the alleged typicality they believed to be a result of a distinct terroir around Berlou. The carrignans seemed to have superb growing conditions on the slate, keeping them warm at night at an altitude of 300 metres. Furthermore, the acidulous soil produced a depth and complexity in taste incomparable to the bottles from neighbouring villages.

The argument of the AOC is this: Man has been cultivating a given locality for generations, thus generating know-how and traditions adapted to the local geological and meteorological conditions. Making sure that these traditions are respected is the best possible way of guaranteeing a wine of high quality and distinct expression. With the vil-

The villages of the AOC Saint-Chinian. Certain rules and decrees apply to these places, as well as certain rights. This landscape plays an active role in defining the quality of the wines produced here.

lage appellations like the AOC Saint-Chinian Berlou, the terroir will be so special that the set of regulations and controls put in place for the regional AOC are considered insufficient. Producing one of these "AOCs within the AOC" will require the grower to follow very complex instructions within strict limitations. The system establishes a hierarchy based on the assumption that more typicality = more quality.

Now you might wonder if things really get better by being more local, but that evening in Jean-Marie's kitchen, we don't. We can't. Regardless of our intention to deconstruct and dissect the workings of terroir-based quality, we have no doubts about its ability to function in front of that fireplace, mixing red Saint-Chinian Berlou with warm chestnuts, wild mushrooms, bread, olive oil and black pepper. As we stroll home the twilight outlines the contour of a Cathar ruin overlooking the valley from the ridge high above. The sun sets while cicadas sing their lullaby in the fragrant rosemary bushes beneath us, and as the story turns cheesy, maybe even fictional, beyond salvation, we will just note this: From these mountains, the AOC hierarchy and its somewhat romantic emphasis on extraordinary local essence seems very natural. It works, or net-works if you like, from this position. No explanation of the philosophy behind the AOC will be half as good as an experience like this. Situated in their local environment the bottles of Jean-Marie are able to draw together actors, establishing the perfect set design for their own successful enactment.

In a way it all becomes horribly functional and organic. Terroir takes the form of an animal or body in need of various organs to become a working whole. Gastronomy, panoramics and paragraphs undertake the task of making a certain typicality manifest to us. And why not? Why is that so terrible? Within the frame of ANT it could definitely be argued that the circulation of reference, which makes possible the appearance of the multiple as a oneness (Latour 1999:71), has certain obvious similarities to the blood flow

connecting the functional organs to secure the higher good of the whole. It's certainly tempting to approach the field by identifying obvious black-boxes, punctualizations or whatever these reductions of heterogeneous, rhizomatic nets into solid entities should be called, tracing the associations that make their becoming possible. However this is not without consequences. Critics, as well as ANT itself, have been pointing this out for some time now: we run the risk of managerialism, reproducing the point of view of the powerful (Star 1991; Veran 2005:143). This kind of descriptions alone will make it extremely difficult to imagine alternatives to orderings like the AOC, they will appear as the only way of sorting things out. As Rose Capdevila and Steven Brown point out: "If all power is networked-power then what is cut away is any space for *differing* with networks" (Brown & Capdevila 2005:38–39).

The organics of structural functionalism and its critics are echoed: How do you handle change when everything is described and analysed in the light of its contribution to the cohesion and continuity of the organism? This similarity is particularly bizarre considering the fierce rejection of Durkheimian tradition by ANT. This kind of sociology is fundamentally confusing what is to be explained (the construction of the social) with the explanation (some sort of social essence – the organism) (Latour 2004:40; 2005). So how do we open up descriptions to the multiple once again? Donna Haraway is famous for her antidote to the powerful perspective: "The subjugated have a decent chance to be on to the god trick and all its dazzling – and, therefore, blinding – illuminations" (Haraway 1988:584). It is however somewhat unsatisfactory to settle for everything but the points of views that matter, meaning the ones that actually grab hold of our world and shape it. Compared to other forms of de-constructivism or interactionism, ANT holds the promise of actually dealing with a very real reality that is positively there (though heterogeneously constructed) in the form of solid hard facts. Restricting oneself to the subjugated's point of view seems somewhat contradictory to this potential. And, as we shall see, identifying the oppressed and the oppressor is not at all straightforward.

### 29.11.2005, Paris: Things Never End

It's late November. The final countdown to the mayhem of Parisian Christmas shopping is complete. In the crowded food halls of Galleries Lafayette a myriad variety of smell, touch, taste and sound is constantly fighting for the attention of the consumer. Where we are, Vietnamese delicacies are on display alongside a huge pile of ginger. Pick one up, smell its fragrant light yellow flesh through the cut on the side. Pick one up. When you come to think about it, that is in fact an impossible task. The cuts are everywhere. Where does ginger start, and where does it end? Try as hard as you like, finding (a) ginger that has not been separated from some larger indefinite growth will prove a tough task. The question will always pop in there: Where's the rest? It isn't like apples or pears (or societies, or cultures, or human beings); the peal does not hermetically conceal a oneness of seeds and flesh. It isn't an organism. It's rhizomatic. And in that way ginger is symptomatic of both the strengths and the struggles that all the talk about heterogeneity and socio-material multiplicity has brought to our discipline. While it isn't hard to recognize the analytical power of concepts that will prevent anything *sui generis* and allow plasticity, interrelatedness and change to emerge in descriptions, it isn't only hard, but on the verge of scientific suicide (or so it might seem),

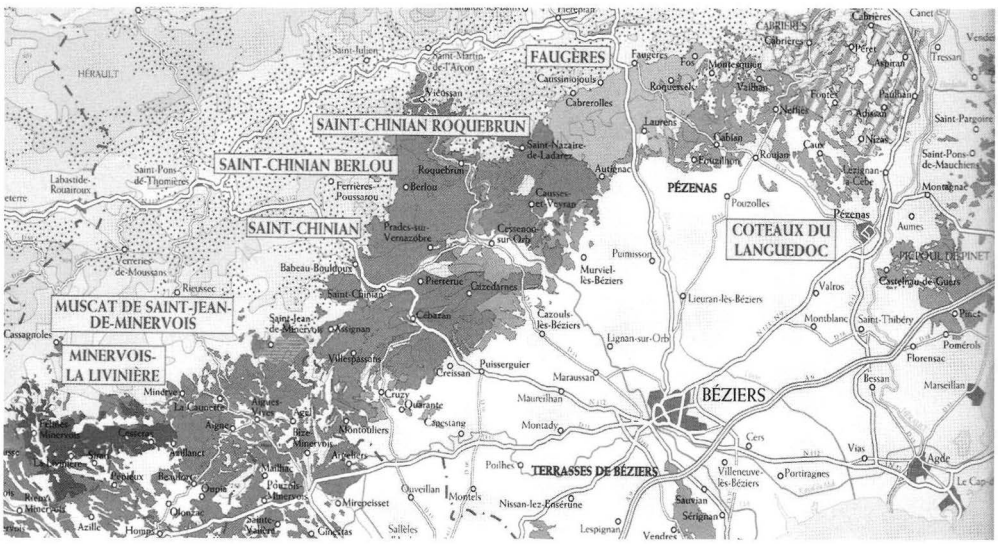
to actually practise these concepts in the field. Ginger needs cutting in order to work, so do fields. Try handling infinite ginger through the logistical chains of the market. Try fitting it to recipes, containers, price tags, pots and pans. Even though we know that rhizomatic means *in*finite, it also has to mean something *de*finite in order to mean something at all. Now try fitting infinite heterogeneity to the processes of fieldwork: Where to go? What to look for? When to stop?

Formulating research questions, making travel arrangements, registering some things while leaving out others, let alone doing texts about it, are all processes related to ginger cutting. They supply definition in order to make sense. Faced with such practical necessities, doing fieldwork to unravel the multiple objects or the heterogeneous networks (or however we choose to imagine the never-ending things we look for), seems paradoxical. If we believe in the multiple, the best way to keep it is to leave it. The problem is, though, that rhizomatics don't do well above ground, and if they are left to themselves that is where they will extend. So, as gardeners we trim the trees that spring from the rhizomatics. "Il faut cultiver notre jardin," Candide proclaims at the end of his turmoil (Voltaire 1997:216). Only by cultivating their garden Candide, *the Naïve*, and his companions can stay optimists in Voltaire's version. Cultivating organizes a garden and makes a tree seem as one, a well defined and delimited *one*. Ethnographic interference can only mean cultivating our garden – cutting the object clear of enough multiness to make it susceptible to explanations, interpretations, even mere descriptions. Or can it?

### 19.10.2005, No Man's Land: Move!

On the plains between Berlou and the coastline the wind carries away the words of François and Vincent, winemakers in a non-AOC area. A 40-minute ride in car from the villages of Saint-Chinian has brought us out in the middle of no man's land: No terroir, no typicality, no official recognition. The hills and slopes are straightened out, the mushrooms and the slate are gone, the vines are lined up in big, flat rectangular fields with artificial irrigation. Look up Languedoc in any wine atlas and you will notice the difference: Along the ridge of the Montagnes Noires colourful appellations are dotted around highlighted place-names, out on the coastal plain it's one big white nothing. The place is ideal for low-quality production in large quantities. That is, if you ask the INAO. If you look at the pricelist however, the bottles of François and Vincent are all but low-quality: 12 a piece. "They call me the devil," says François with a sarcastic glint in his eyes, referring to his colleagues and the system in general. He categorically refuses to let folklore or tradition have a say in the way he goes around producing his wine. This is business, not a museum. "Would you dress up like Vikings, wearing horns and beards, to sell your products? Should I ride a mule, carrying my wine in amphoras, because so did the Romans? No way!" François and Vincent have been studying the winemakers in New Zealand and Australia. New technologies and grape varieties are constantly subject to experiments in order to find new ways of adding complexity and depth to the wine. This work is done by François, Vincent and their technologies, not by the terroir (which is by the way the name of their dog).

Now we might have expected to find the subjugated out here in no man's land, but it turns out that the very same landscape are subject to very different orderings. François and Vincent might be considered heretics by the French, but, unlike the AOC producers in




No man's land: The cartographic expression of the AOC hierarchy clearly separates out high-quality terroirs on the hill slopes to the west and north from anonymous costal plains around Beziers to the east. Making geography speak with such clarity requires a lot of cutting away and sorting out. Though solidly part of nature, the landscape lends itself to a variety of becomings. This map must be done.

the hills, they have no problem selling their wine on foreign markets. To them traditions, typicalities and terroirs are all straitjackets that prevent growers from adapting their production to the ever-changing taste of international consumers. Instead of letting the locality determine the outcome, they look to appropriate technologies for meeting current demands on the market. It enables them to sell at high prices, and thus their relationship with distant consumers makes possible a quite different concept of quality. Though only 40 minutes away, Berlou and Saint-Chinian seems far more distant places than Scandinavia or New Zealand. The AOC hierarchy simply doesn't work here. Even though we're in the very same landscape sorted out by the system, talking about a subjugated point of view from this position simply doesn't make sense.

So we should definitely be worried about terroir-based quality working out a little too well that evening with Jean-Marie in Berlou. Things coming together in perfect unity must provoke a reaction from the fieldworker. But not out of pangs of conscience about being dazzled by the beauty and power of success, as Harraway would have us believe. Rather it should be felt like a restlessness, a natural urge to move. Pack your gear, start up the battle-tank and displace to new plateaus from where reality once again becomes multiple and contested. To speak Deleuzian: "It is a war machine: rhizomatic or nomadic writing operates as a mobile war machine that moves at top speed to form lines, making alliances that form a temporary plateau" (Conley 2005:234). Being on the road is the reasonable modus operandi. Changing location is the only way to go about heterogeneous objects and fluid ontologies like landscapes, qualities or localities. So to arms! Move! Fight! Into the war machine! Attack!

### 01.12.2005, Tour Montparnasse: Ants Don't Fear Heights

Paris would be the trophy prize of any army. Our battle-tank takes on the French capital, chasing down the decrees and paragraphs emitting from here. This should be a good chance to fulfil our non-modern vows, and unravel a bit more about how facts become and how they are kept stable. We have received an invitation to a four-day seminar *Saveurs & Savoirs – Ethique ou profit? Le terroir se met à table* at the University of Sorbonne – one of the modern world's many temples of truth. The seminar is in the evenings though, so during daytime we shop for Christmas presents in the streets of Paris. Also, we take some time to watch the multitude of lives passing by: pancakes are sold at the little street stands; traffic is heavy and cars honk their horns constantly; children are crying because they're not getting what they want for Christmas; people are pushing and struggling to get about their business as quickly as possible. It's the turmoil of a big city closing in on the holidays.

Our hotel is situated not too far from a great modernistic icon: Tour Montparnasse. One day we get a sudden urge to leave the streets and see things from above. It's a long ride with the lift, but we finally reach our destination high above ground. This elevated position offers a spectacular panoptical view of Paris. We see the Tour Eiffel, the Bois de Boulogne, and the boulevards beneath. Just as a tree, a skyscraper like Tour Montparnasse can seem intoxicating in a modern landscape. The tower lends us 56 storeys of clarity. The danger of being here, though, is the silence. We seem to miss out on the life that we leave behind in the streets. Certainly, the view is nice, but shouldn't we be more interested in the intimate details, the secrets and the obscure actions, the pancakes and the Christmas presents? At least, this was the point of Michel de Certeau whose critique of modernity was exactly his reluctance to crawl up the skyscrapers and search for the big picture (Certeau 1984:91). Is Tour Montparnasse not exactly that, the big picture, offering only access to modern generalization? Sure, but on the other hand, if we strive for being only in the streets (the post-modern way), we would just confine ourselves to subjectivity. And what is worse: we would still live in the shadows of skyscrapers (Latour 1999:9,284). Reality must be described symmetrically including both the complexity in the streets *and* the facts from Tour Montparnasse. Bruno Latour recognizes that the acronym A.N.T. fits his project perfectly (Latour 2005:9) because an *ant* isn't afraid of heights nor is it afraid to stick its nose in the messiness of the streets. So, let's become ants, too. Blindly but consciously, then, we follow trails and associations, we shift positions: from the complex streets to the factual towers where panoptical views reside.

The point is not to differentiate between facts and secretive pancakes. Both Tour Montparnasse and the streets form part of the heterogeneous reality. More importantly: So does the trip back and forth between them. The world is not accessible in a modern and objective way, neither is it accessible in a subjective and post-modern way. Becoming ants we should understand the world as something entirely different – a non-modern coming together of heterogeneous elements. The Tour Montparnasse springs from rhizomatics. It has its roots, or root-*nets* (rhizome) so to speak, in the streets below. Did you notice the elevator ride? Praxis is what leads to the panoptical view from the 56th floor. Facts and construction are not opposites, then: in a non-modern setting they depend on each other (Latour

1999:274). This is why we should remember to note what associations lead us up the towers of the world.

One such skyscraper position is back at the seminar at Sorbonne. Here we witness the panoptical views being practised by scientists, experts, ethnologists, producers and traders discussing the concept of terroir and possible answers to the difficulties of selling French terroir products including AOC wine. No one amongst them doubts the existence of terroir, although it can be made to imply very different things. It expresses a local identity embedded in tradition. It is good for your health. It attracts the tourists. It can be measured in the subsoil. It should be copyrighted.

What is important here is that which brought us to Sorbonne: the question about *how* terroir becomes a fact, solid and without a crack in the wall. In order to try and answer this, ants like us should never be afraid to travel both upwards and downwards, from the streets below to the top of skyscrapers and back again, constantly describing the praxis that makes it possible to talk about terroir. Therefore we need to go to seminars like this; we need to go to Saint Chinian to learn about hierarchical landscapes of quality; and we need to go sit in front of a fireplace in Berlou chewing on chestnuts and drinking local AOCs. They are all sites of construction and everywhere someone is busy doing *terroir*. We need to grow six legs, like ants, and chase down the doing of terroir, sniffing its trail wherever it may take us, up or down, we shouldn't differentiate.

### 28.10.2005, Paris: Think-with-hyphens!

In Paris, at the *Office for Alcohol on the Basis of Grapes and Apples*, Mr. Riglet introduces us to an experimental setup illustrating the practical function of a becoming. Now, you probably wonder what this experiment could be. Only, it doesn't make much sense for us to *tell* you about it. Instead, before going any further, we want to materialize this experiment at your end. Ready? Okay: the first thing you have to do is to get your hands on a bottle of white wine. Appellations, grapes, terroirs – leave all of that aside for a while. Just go to your local supermarket and buy any old kind of white wine. While you're at it, buy a turnip and a carrot, too. Now, you probably think we're not serious. Well, we are. Stop reading!

Still reading?

Stop it!

Right, we'll assume you have returned with the required goods. Here comes the *theatre de la preuve*: Fill the glass, have some wine. What does it taste like? Is it sweet? How is the structure – light, full body or whatever? How about the acidity? Is it fruity or maybe mineral-like? Note it down. Now, have a bite of the turnip, and then try the wine again. Does the taste change? The acidity? New kinds of fruit compared to before? Then take a bite of the carrot and go through the same schema once more noting the acidity, taste and so on.

Now, comparing your notes from the three tastings you just had, you will probably recognize some discrepancies, right? The point is heterogeneity: The same wine *becomes* in several ways through its extension into space. But the extension is not a possibility, it is a necessity. The taste of the white wine only becomes real when the wine engages with its surroundings. It is not meaningful to talk about intentional qualities in a wine, an essential definition. The white wine you

went to buy at your supermarket carried with it some kind of potential, but you ended up writing down the actual becoming of it only with the aid of the hyphens placed between the elements: white-wine-carrot-supermarket-weird-ethnographic-text-experiment. Relations suddenly don't seem like an analytical obscurity but like a very real concept that either does or doesn't make wine and its taste come about in a certain way. So, congratulations! Consider yourself a practitioner of folding. By creating relations and bringing elements together in collectives, you have made the rhizome expand and shoot out at the same time as folding in those things which were previously separate. Carrot or turnip, that's heterogeneity. Now, it's not to disappoint you, but you couldn't have done this alone. Your folding depends deeply on the company you keep. Think about the turnip and the carrot, not to mention the physical surroundings you're in. You don't get to make up a becoming all on your own. You're surrounded by non-human actors that have a say in this. *You* don't decide what the carrot tastes like and how it is different from the turnip. But don't worry, they don't either. It's not about things taking over control or anything. The point here is that the hyphens are important; they could have been placed in so many other ways. But, to be sure, they are there, binding actors together in a becoming that differs from the one next door, or next minute.

Describing this heterogeneous reality symmetrically produces new becomings infinitely because the possibility for placing hyphens never ends. We could have made you eat a pineapple and a lemon to fold with the white wine. There are no pre-fixed goals. Therefore there is no point referring to the tree, the fact, as something independent. *Nothing comes from nothing.* Everything is rhizome and becomes in-between-hyphens which, in turn, extend the becoming in time and space. Every hyphen is a fold making realities come together in ways which could have been different (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:290). It's the same thing with the quality of AOC. It can't be confined to the label of the bottle; it needs things around it to function. The need of bringing elements together in collectives makes folding a necessity to reality.

### 11.01.2006, Saint Chinian: Making and Cancelling Travel Arrangements

So: Chestnuts-Cathars-carrignan-cicadas-red-Saint-Chinian-Berlou, this is how the object is written. Hyphenated and folded. By moving around it and engaging it from different plateaus it can be described in its multiplicity, but this is as far as ANT will take us. In many ways this might seem a bit nerve-wracking since that is where we would normally start analysing, validating, explaining and writing up our material. The theoretical part of actor-network theory is thus a bit misleading, as often pointed out. Ontological might be a better word, and all our elaborations of the actor-network metaphor with fancy words like the "rhizome" or the "multiple" won't make it anything else. It remains a statement about the way things work. Realizing that "quality" is a networked reduction of a lot more than the content of the bottle, and defining strategies for unravelling it, is thus only beginning to deal with the consequences of ANT's built-in radicality. The serious trouble starts with representation or whatever its rhizomatic counterpart should be called – folding? As it became clear, contemplating ginger, rhizome needs cutting and packaging if it is to be handled. The simultaneity of infinity and definition, multiplicity and oneness, construction and

factuality, absence and presence, network and actor, street and skyscraper, tree and rhizome is a fact of life that must be considered by both the ethnographer in need of a field, the wine-grower in need of a quality and the author in need of a text.

This is where the lack of anything but ontology can become a little scary. And yes, it might be that ANT doesn't supply a lot of epistemological tools for defining objects of study, valid methods or credible forms of explanation, interpretation or representation. But it might just also be that the flatness of the non-modern way of the world, placing the orderings and doings inside and outside academia in the same business of making connections, offers us a possibility to learn even more from our field of study. Wine-professionals and fieldworkers, for instance, have something in common: They try to make local stuff work somewhere else. Containers are sent travelling, bottles containing wine, texts containing culture. In both cases representational trouble piles up almost immediately. "Who told Geertz?" asks Vincent Crapanzano (1986:75) in his famous essay deconstructing Clifford Geertz's study of the Balinese cockfight. Even Geertz, who was so keen on replacing organic, explanatory entities like villages, cultures or fields with a more networky and interpretative approach to culture as a way of making sense, could not escape the inherently "intersubjective foundations of fieldwork" (Clifford 1986:109). The container, the text and its changing company (informants, authors, readers), transforms and disturbs the object, the culture, it is supposed to represent.

The critique definitely doesn't apply any less to pre-Geertzian anthropology more in sync with the organic character of terroir depicted above. As such it becomes very interesting to see how it is sent moving. After all, people in the wine trade have quite an interest and a lot of experience in making these local wholes understandable to consumers elsewhere. In Saint-Chinian we meet with Guillaume, who is a leading figure in new attempts to get a hold on tourists and make them come to Languedoc. In reality it's about selling more wine. As mentioned, exporting the bottles from relatively unknown AOCs can be a tough task. People simply don't get their beauty. Guillaume has met this challenge by initiating *balades vigneronnes,* guided tours, which allows for the wine producer and the tourist to meet and exchange personal experiences in a friendly atmosphere and a beautiful landscape. The attempt to fuse wine and tourism, Guillaume tells us, is close to succeeding. Tourists visiting Languedoc or Saint Chinian tend to come back for more. They can bring home regional wine or food products, but they can't ever obtain the same feeling that they had when they were on holiday in the region. It's Guillaume's job to make them come back to retrieve that feeling. This striving to make the place accessible, to *translate* it by placing the tourist right there with the wine producers, the trees, the river, the colours, the smells and the tastes, isn't unfamiliar to us as ethnographers. Wouldn't it be a lot easier to just send readers to Bali to see the cockfight themselves? This is why Guillaume invites tourists to come to the terroirs of Saint Chinian. Here you will find out what it's all about, he seems to underline. It is necessary for the tourists to actually be there, amidst the terroirs, in order to understand what they are really about. Of course the comparison goes further: Just as there are millions of reasons for not expecting all readers of anthropology to go out there and check out cockfights, certainly you cannot expect all customers to be personally passionate about the terroirs of your region.

As such the attempts made by growers is a little bit like the skyscraper experience: First you move up there to achieve a clear, objective guarantee for the quality of the bottle. You think you get that with the AOC, guaranteeing the respect of certain clearly defined objective parameters. It's all very transparent. But then you notice that you've left all the things that actually make the AOC and its typiquality work, down there in the streets. The sounds, the smells, the intimate, subjective encounters. Caught there with one leg solidly planted in modern, though impossible, panoptic clairvoyance and the other deeply embedded in post-modern, though somewhat useless, lived experience, deadlock seems inevitable. From the Tour Montparnasse you will gaze towards distant horizons and believe in messaging. Somewhere up there north, pass the Seine, the Louvre and Montmartre, lies Scandinavia waiting to receive your truth. You actually believe that. The transparency and guaranteed controls of the AOC system establishes a platform for such *erotics of knowledge* (Certeau 1984:92). Unfortunately, trying to make it work as a vehicle for transporting quality untouched and unchallenged proves impossible.

Guillaume knows this. That's why he won't even attempt it. He accepts that the only way out is to bring consumers down to see for themselves. Like Certeau, he flees to the streets below him. The only problem is that we can't all go to Saint Chinian to make our own experience of the landscape and the vines. As non-modern scholars we might add that the problem could stem from the inability of the bottles to bring with them crucial non-humans of the local smell-, sight- and soundscapes. Mountains don't move easily. But why consider it an all or nothing? Why not try to dissolve the object into its multiple construction and find out how new connections can be made? How to leave open the hyphens that used to connect Cathar ruins and the songs of cicadas for new alliances to be made elsewhere? This whole problem of transporting or not transporting meaning across distances is a post-modern confusion, since it still works and makes assumptions on a modernist spatial canvas. Geography is considered a separator of meaning, something that puts distance between producer and consumer, or field and audience. "On the contrary," Michel Serres tells Latour in an interview about time and space, "take your inspiration from topology, and perhaps you will discover the rigidity of those proximities and distances you consider arbitrary. And their simplicity, in the literal sense of the word *pli* [fold]: it's simply the difference between topology (the handkerchief is folded, crumpled, shredded) and geometry (the same fabric is ironed out flat)" (Serres & Latour 1995:60). The primary activity of making arrangements for bottles to travel isn't transportation across distances but the collapse of distances, the making of new connections.

### 27.10.05, Sopexa, Paris: Buffet-is-written-with-hyphens

French AOC wine needs to function as quality in other places if France wants to preserve its (now continuously limited) position on the global market. Following the praxis of folding realities, we now know that this problem asks of the rhizomatics to stay open in order for the consumers to be able to work with it and place hyphens. You tried it out for yourself: hyphens can be placed in many ways. Hyphens are the stuff that stability is made of: the more hyphens, the larger the nets-working and consequently the stronger the construction – this is what makes wine a

multiple object. So, how can the possibility of hyphens be ensured? The public relations company Sopexa in Paris is occupied at exactly that task of translating French AOC wine (along with other foodstuff products) to consumers around the world. One way of doing this, a successful one, is *Apéritif à la française* which is an annual multiple series of parties customized to different countries around the world. The parties are organized around buffets which include AOC wine. Somewhere it may be that a circus frames the buffet; in some other place it might be a fashion show. *Apéritif* is an attempt to let the consumers gain easier access to the AOC wine, and the procedure is to let him taste and experiment his way through the buffet, thereby making his own way to a notion of quality. "If the Japanese want to drink Bordeaux on the rocks from teacups, then why shouldn't we let them do that," director of exterior relations, Marie-Noëlle, says.

The same thing can be said (in a more or less modified version) about the praxis of ethnographic writing: if the recipient of the text wants to understand it in an unintended way, there is not the slightest thing we can do about it. Unless, of course, we choose to travel with every single copy of this text, twist the arm of the reader and make him repeat after us *hyphens-are-the-salt-of-the-earth* ... or whatever we may come to think of. The point is that we have now spent many preceding pages on outlining the great importance of the human as well as the non-human. Therefore it now seems only suitable to underline that it would be naïve at best to state that any of our fieldwork could have been carried out objectively. And furthermore it becomes obvious that, following the buffet-principle, we don't want that objectivity. On the contrary we should strive not only to think with hyphens, but also to *write-with-hyphens*. The object can never be fixated but will always depend on its surroundings and contexts. This means that reality always presents itself in a context which is rhizomatic and heterogeneous, just like the buffet, the Bordeaux-teacup-ice cube-Japan, or the turnip-white-wine. This in turn makes the slice of reality that we look into, our object of study, dependent on the actors we ally with.

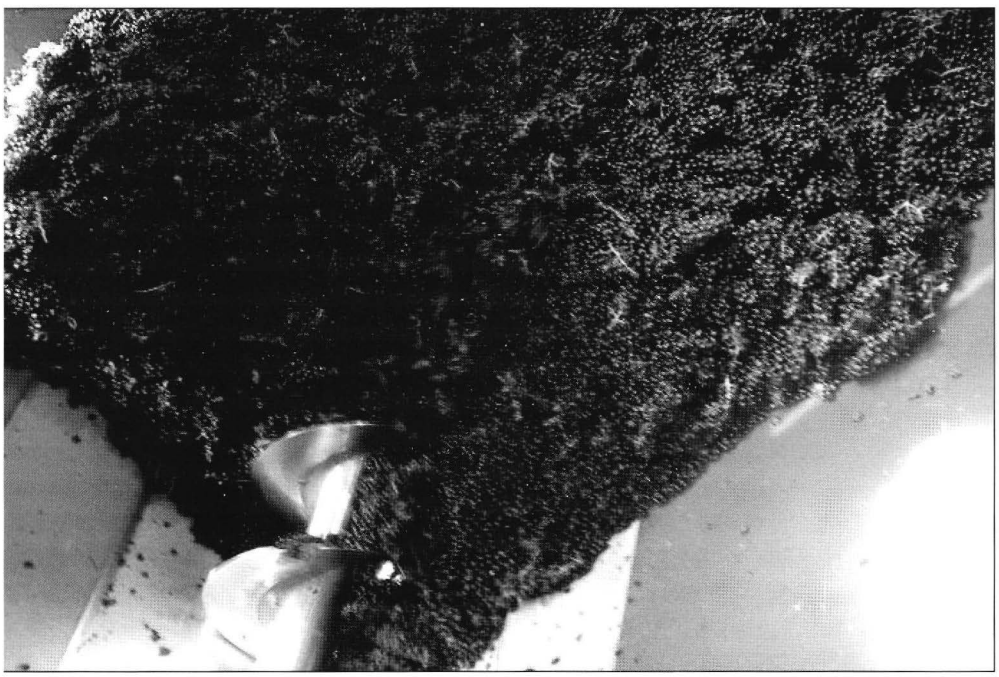
In this heterogeneous setting everything and everybody is equally important, which is why a truth is never limited to, for example, one person's intentionality. Every one thing can only become as a part of a rhizomatic structure that, if you were to designate it with words, would consist of a whole bunch of hyphens. The beauty of them, being the principle of their infinity: We are allowed to place hyphens at the beginning or at the end of a becoming, leaving it open to new elements and combinations. The openness leaves us, as ethnographers, level with Sopexa. And it makes you, dear reader, an ally in our production, the intention being that you should grab on to whatever ends this text presents to you. Our concern as authors should be that of the buffet: how to leave room for the interaction and engagement of readers. The point is that our writing-the-field-with-hyphens (or reading it) must never leave us unaffected. The ethnographers too must become in order to succeed. Whereas Guillaume operates in a post-modern space, essentially modern in its geometric, separating form, but endowed with doubts about our ability to transcend it, the buffet is an argument for non-modern spatiality. Nothing takes place without transformation.

If we become *ants*, we can move around a different world than that of modernity and post-modernity. We can start noticing and

tracing the associations between the factual panoramas and the lived intimacies, between the trees and the rhizome. We can recognize that our task lies not in bringing messages across, but in making new connections. That fundamentally redefines what we need to do in order to succeed in our ethnographic praxis.

If you have a look around you will find that representation works through transformation. This is the experience gained throughout our fieldwork. Machines rip open hyphens in order to place new ones. For example, in order to turn the harvest into wine, the pedicels must be separated from the grapes. This is done by the *egrappoir*. It would not be very successful, however, if that was all it did. What makes it useful is the fact that new connections are made in the wake of the cutting of old ones. The peals crack open, leaving the sugar inside the grape open to micro-organisms normally present outside the grape. The process of fermentation is made possible. Insisting that ethnography must be performed with open-ended hyphens should take this into consideration: Success rests upon the ends (in the end) not being left entirely open.

The point here is that ethnography too has to become as well as everything else. This is not a choice, it's an obligation. The war machine is a great way of imagining fieldwork. Having an eye for the endless hyphens, moving around different positions, posing research questions and engaging with informants in order to stir up and dissect the rhizome, are both fruitful



Egrappoir: One of many transformations at work in the field. Separating the pedicels from the grapes, it marks the end of cultivation and the beginning of vinification. Clusters of fruit come in, defined and connected in certain, recognizable forms, but they come out changed. Pedicels become fertilizer, grapes become basic ingredients for wine-making. As the machine cracks open the peal, microscopic organisms (vital to the process of fermentation) that used to be outside become mixed up with the juicy, sugary flesh that used to be inside. New becomings are made possible.

and necessary activities. But they alone won't make the ethnographic product work. Sooner or later we'll need to supply new definitions to the infinities we've cut open. But we'll need your help, dear reader, to do this. You will need to place the last hyphens.

The dilemma is this: Recognizing, on the one hand, that folding is the only way of holding should take away focus and relevance from disputes over re-presentation and instead turn the readers' active involvement into an asset, a condition for ethnographic survival. It is crucial, not problematic, that they are able to attend the buffet and take part. On the other hand, becoming something (including a text on sociomaterial heterogeneity) also involves sealing of ends, making reductions and establishing treelike, towering positions above the rhizomatic plain. The texts we do should find ways of balancing the open-endedness, enabling them to fold on to their audiences, and the solidity they need to make sense and answer the questions they address. It goes for us, it goes for the wine-grower, and it goes for everybody else: Engaging the world means engaging in folding and unfolding, ripping up some connections in order to establish others. Whether it's the egrappoir separating pedicels from grapes or a research question separating the things of interest to the ethnographer, deconstructions only make sense if they lead to new constructions. Allowing the temporarily messed-up rhizomatics to fold together in new ways is the only engine of survival.

*Jon Frederik Høyrup*
Ethnographer, researcher
Copenhagen Living Lab
Njalsgade 88, 2.
DK-2300 Copenhagen
Denmark
e-mail: jonhoyrup@gmail.com

*Anders Kristian Munk*
Ph.D. student
Oxford University Centre of the Environment
South Parks Road
OX1 3QY, Oxford
United Kingdom
e-mail: anders.munk@ouce.ox.ac.uk

## Notes

1 By heterogeneity we mean the potential of an apparent oneness to be many things. This relates to a fundamental insight of actor-network theory: "That which is complicated comes in simple packages" (Law 2002:120). What networks do is basically connect elements that could appear in infinite ways into something that makes sense. As Sarah Whatmore puts it: "This networking ontology, like the rhizomatics of Deleuze and Guattari, emphasizes the affective relationships between heterogeneous actants, disturbing their morphological particularity and mutability through all manner of energetic exchanges within and between them. Cast in these terms, hybridity, signals not just the inter-connectedness of pre-given entities but the condition of immanent potentiality that harbours the very possibility of their coming into being" (Whatmore 2002:161).

2 Folding represent a different conception of time and space. They are not separators of meaning, but rather something that becomes meaningful through connections: "Space is an infinitely folded chaosmos – the space of a concept, no less that of a life (cf. Guattari 1992). The trick is not to join the dots, banking on identity and integration, but to construct an endurable line of flight across the manifold. Thus, 'multiplicity is the real element' and 'immanence is constructivism'" (Deleuze 1995:146 quoted in Doel 2000:128).

3 The tree and the rhizome are opposed ways of thinking. The question is whether things are defined in themselves or through infinite relations. Trees are rooted. Branches and leaves can be defined as part of the same whole. They rise above ground to provide solid, panoramic platforms. Rhizomes deploy contingently and horizontally. On the plains the definition of a single straw becomes impossible. They are all part of the same rhizomatic structure (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:20).

4 According to Marcus, the objects of anthropology are produced in a multiplicity of locations. Single-sited fieldwork thus rarely makes sense in a globally connected world system, and we should adopt "strategies of quite literally following connections, associations, and putative relationships" (Marcus 1998:81–82).

## References


Brown, Steven D. & Rose Capdevila 2005, 1999: Perpetuum Mobile: Substance, Force and the Sociology of Translation. In *Actor Network Theory and After*, ed. John Law & John Hassard, pp. 26–51. Oxford: Blackwell/Sociological Review.

Certeau, Michel de 1984: Walking in the City. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, ed. Michel de Certeau. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Clifford, James 1986: On Ethnographic Allegory. In *Writing Culture, The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford & George E. Marcus, pp. 98–122. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Conley, V. 2005: Rhizome + Technology. In *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, pp. 234–235. New York: Columbia University Press.

Crapanzano, Vincent 1986: Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford & George E. Marcus, pp. 51–76. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Deleuze, Gilles & Felix Guattari 1987, 1980: *A Thousand Plateaus*. New York: Continuum.

Doel, Marcus A. 2000: Un-glunking Geography. In *Thinking Space*. ed. Mike Crang & Nigel Thrift, pp. 117–135. London: Routledge.

Geertz, Clifford 2000, 1973: Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. In *Anthropological Theory – An Introductory History*, ed. McGee, Jon R. & Richard L. Warms, pp. 496–516. Mountain View, California: Mayfield.

Haraway, Donna 1988: Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 575–599.

Haraway, Donna 1991: A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the late Twentieth Century. In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*, pp. 149–181. London: Free Association Books.

Latour, Bruno 1999: *Pandora's Hope – Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Latour, Bruno 2004: *The Politics of Nature – How to Bring the Sciences in to Nature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Latour, Bruno 2005: *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Law, John 2002: On Hidden Heterogeneities. In *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, ed. John Law & Annemarie Mol, pp. 116–141. Durham: Duke University Press.

Marcus, George E. 1998, 1995: Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. In *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*, ed. George E. Marcus, pp. 79–105. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Serres, Michel & Bruno Latour 1995: *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Star, S. L. 1991: Power, Technologies and the Phenomenology of Conventions: On Being Allergic to Onions, In *A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*, ed. J. Law. London: Routledge.

Veran, Helen 2005, 1999: Staying True to the Laughter in Nigerian Classrooms. In *Actor Network Theory and After*, ed. John Law & John Hassard, pp. 136–156, Oxford: Blackwell/Sociological Review.

Voltaire 1997, 1990: *Candide ou l'optimisme*. Paris: Larousse-Bordas.

Whatmore, Sarah 2002: *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Cultures, Spaces*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

# "You Are Nobody While You Are Waiting"
## Asylum Seekers' Experiences of Nothingness

By Rebecka Lennartsson

"You understand, you are nobody while you are waiting." The woman in front of me throws her hands out.

She is a young, single mother from an African country, whose application for asylum has been refused, and who has already packed her suitcase once to go back to the country where she lost her first child. But then came the law on temporary asylum,[1] which gave her a new chance, and now she is waiting once again. Her narrative about the despair and exclusion of the asylum situation is one of many that emerged during the project *Life in Transit.* The project deals with the situation of asylum seekers living in accommodation of their own, which has been conducted for the development partnership Aros Asyl.[2] The study has involved meetings with people who are literally on the border of Swedish society. They all have different social and cultural backgrounds, they had different reasons for fleeing from their countries, different experiences of the escape and of life in exile. Despite this, there are many similarities in their narratives about life in transit. The woman's testimony, this sense of nothingness, of being unseen, unheard, unimportant – being *nobody* – recurs in several of the informants' narratives. In the following I shall highlight some central themes emerging from these stories from the margins of society, which all in some sense concern the question of identity.

### Identities in Transit

In recent years cultural identities have become a hot issue both nationally and globally, on the political and the academic agenda alike (Appiah 1994; Taylor 1994). The multicultural society, with all the encounters, conflicts, blends, and clashes that it entails, constantly raises questions of identity: "Who am I?" "Who do I belong with?" (Alsmark 1997; Eriksson *et al.* 2002). In particular, the idea that it is dangerous to lose one's identity tends to come up in connection with migration, rootlessness, and globalization. We often understand identity as being closely associated with place and history – with homeland, origin, and ethnicity. The sense of lost or disrupted identity that many migrants testify to is consequently interpreted against the background of this loss of the known world, of one's country, one's home, one's social and cultural context. From this perspective, identity seems synonymous with a cultural identity – a kind of collective, authentic self, produced by a uniform culture and the shared historical experiences of one's own group.

But identity is not only built through our origin and our history. The creation of the self, as Charles Taylor has shown in his influential essay *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (1994), is a never-ending dialogic process which contains both personal and collective dimensions (Ålund 2000:60). Our identities are not fixed and unchanging; they develop throughout our lives. On the one hand, there is the need to distinguish oneself as an individual, especially from others, and on the other hand identity is dependent on a social and cultural context, where the self is developed in interaction with others and in belonging to one or more groups. Cultural identity in that sense does not proceed from an unchanging essence, but is defined as a becoming as much as a being, deriving its nourishment from the present and the future as much as from history (Hall 2002:233).

For migrants, in classical anthropological terminology, this identity creation contains all the stages of the passage rite: separation, when one leaves one's old life, normal time, and familiar routines behind; transition, when one has left the old but not yet entered the new

– a period of danger, ambiguity, and lack of identity; and finally the return to society, when one attains a new position in a new context that contains the past and the people, places, and shared histories left behind, the experiences acquired along the way, and the new connections and communities one establishes (Turner 1969). After a chaotic time of breaking away and splitting up, one aspires to regain normality, trust, and security in one's everyday life (Brekke 2004:19; Shahnavaz & Ekblad 2002). In the new country one must find new routines and new contexts to belong to if one is to build an identity. This in turn requires an ability to imagine both one's past and one's present, and not least one's future. The world must to some extent be made comprehensible, meaningful, predictable, and capable of being influenced if it is to be manageable (Alsmark 1997; Brekke 2004:18, 25). Many scholars have studied the new ethnicities that emerge in complex and transcultural contexts, where new communities take shape, beyond the association of ethnicity with "origin" and "purity" (Ålund 2000:68). To get beyond ideas of cultural identity as being homogeneous and stable, tied to a specific place and a special origin, many scholars have begun to use analytical terms such as diaspora, creolization, and cultural hybridization. These are intended to describe the cultural identities that are created by multiple places and multiple histories. we have a relatively large amount of knowledge about how people build the self through new groupings, new solidarities, and communities in new and alien contexts and societies.

For the women, men, and children seeking asylum, life during the long wait for a decision, however, can best be compared to a transit situation. The transition marks a move from one state to another; it is by definition a transient and highly temporary phase. During the wait one is still, in many respects, in the transition stage of the passage rite; a phase characterized by liminality, when one is neither here nor there, neither inside nor outside (Turner 1969). When the decision is announced – either a residence permit or a refusal of asylum – the next phase begins. For many asylum seekers, however, liminality is their reality for year after year.[3] In the interviews several of the informants say that they have been waiting a very long time for the decision by the Migration Board. For those who appeal against the decision, months are added to months and become years. The person in the study who has waited longest for a residence permit is a man who has been in Sweden as an asylum seeker for over seven years.

## Empty Time

What sets its stamp on the life of asylum seekers, more than anything else, is probably waiting. They await investigations, decisions, information, and implementation (Norström 2004:204). When I have asked the informants to describe the waiting, they call it an "empty time", a period of boredom, difficult memories, and feelings of vulnerability, of anxiety, confusion, and nervousness. The sense of waiting also varies in proportion to how long a person has been here. "You wait in *different* ways," a man explains, meaning that the waiting is perceived differently depending on whether one has recently arrived or has been here for a time, or when the wait has become so long that one loses hope. The "honeymoon phase" is used as a name for the first time in Sweden by those who work with asylum-seeking refugees. Those who have just arrived and have succeeded in leaving the old country behind have a sense of relief, a certain relaxation, and a feeling that things now can only get better. The transition phase, with all

the danger, uncertainty, and impermanence associated with it, is past. The return to society now awaits. Many of the informants agree with this description. Having just arrived, they have regained their future. They have faith in the system, faith in Sweden with its knowledge of the world situation and its ability to made a fair assessment. A man from Kosovo describes the experience of arriving in Sweden in the words: "I was reborn." People do not think about the past or the future. He came with his family to Sweden and felt a great relief. Then they had to wait two and a half years at a refugee reception centre in Alvesta before the first decision came. Their application had been turned down. The first negative decision usually coincides with a deterioration in health. Both health care personnel and the asylum seekers I interviewed corroborate this. The vast majority of them, of course, think that they have perfectly valid grounds for receiving asylum and have pinned all their hopes on a permanent residence permit. The negative decision brings the painful discovery that the doors to Sweden are not open, and they are forced to consider the possibility of having to return to the homeland. This means remaining on the margin, in the exclusion that it involves to wait for asylum.

The involuntary passivity during the wait is described by most of the informants as a great strain. The contrast between the active flight from the old country, when they take their life into their own hands, and the passive wait for asylum, when their lives are in the hands of strangers, is very distinct. During the period of this study, the asylum seeker, after being refused asylum, was not allowed to work or to pursue an education. The intention was that the individual should lose any roots in Sweden and adjust to the idea of returning home soon. However, the majority of negative decisions were appealed against. This meant that the case was opened again, and the process could be greatly protracted. During this period the asylum seeker had no legal opportunity to get an education or to earn money. Waiting around with nothing to do, according to many of the informants, increases the frustration, depression, and anxiety. Work is emphasized by all the informants as significant for maintaining health – it makes them feel that they can participate and are needed, it structures their everyday lives, giving them meaning and content, it gives social contacts, training in the language, and it has the potential to open doors into Swedish society. The economic arguments are particularly weighty. Whatever the outcome of the asylum application, you are stronger if you are not penniless. Other people stress the social character of work. It means not only meeting people through the job, encouraging communication in the new language and establishing channels of contact. It is also a significant part of social interaction in Swedish culture – as unemployed Swedes also become painfully aware of. For many people, a job is a foundation stone for identity building. This is a fact that a woman from Bangladesh highlights in her frustration at not being able to introduce herself with reference to her job:

> When you start talking, the first thing people ask is: what do you do? Now I've said for three years that I'm taking SFI [Swedish for immigrants] and SFI and SFI. I get tired of it. People look at me actually. "Why are you taking SFI?"

The lack of work, studies, or trainee places contributed to the sense of stagnation and exclusion. In life in transit, a person does not have the ability to develop as an individual and build an identity; one is in the border zone between what was and what will be, and one

cannot control the direction. The fact that one is prevented from planning one's future is a frequent topic in the interviews. *Powerlessness* is a constantly recurring theme in the narratives about the everyday life of asylum seekers. Both men and women describe the frustration they feel about not having a chance to influence their destiny. "You can't plan your life. You have no control over your fate," says a woman from Eritrea during the interview. She thinks her six years of waiting have been a waste of time. *Lost* is the word she uses. She wanted to study economics, to acquire an education, to get ahead in life, but her hands were tied after the first refusal of her application for asylum. The lost time caused her sorrow and anger. It is time that can never be regained.

Here is the story of a young man from Lebanon who came to Sweden as a 19-year-old and who now, after waiting for over seven years, has been granted a temporary residence permit.

Informant: I am so sad. I'm not happy, for my best time is lost. My youth. This time will never come back. [...] When I am thirty years old I can't do what a fifteen-year-old does. In my homeland I did not grow up in the right age. So, I have had a difficult life. I haven't grown up as a child.

Author: You haven't had a childhood either, you mean?

Informant: At the same time I have lost my youth too.

What is stressed above all in the interviews, however, is not the long wait in itself, but the uncertain temporal horizon. Uncertainty both about the outcome of the asylum application, and about how long one is forced to wait for a decision, affects the individual's self-perceived health (cf. Brekke 2004:22). The asylum seeker's entire energy is expended on worrying about the outcome, contemplating the prospect of staying and developing strategies to handle a life with very limited probabilities. They make comparisons with each other and with similar asylum cases. If others receive an answer earlier, their own waiting seems even longer and more unfair. Some of my informants had first been told how long they would have to wait, but the decision still had not come at the stated time.[4] The letter box takes on a crucial significance. A couple described what they feel every day when awaiting the postman: palpitations, anxiety, fear, hope. A young man dwelled particularly on how the process wore him down mentally. Time after time he was given a new date for a decision on his application, and time after time it was postponed with reference to the complicated nature of the case.

I myself didn't expect a positive decision. But I wanted to have it over and done with, wanted to know. I must know if it didn't work out with the new law before the eighth of October. [...] He says it's a really difficult case, if he had made a decision a long time ago it would have been negative. And I say, "Do it. Better than it getting on my nerves." [...] "But please, listen to me! Send something! Send a rejection! Stop making promises all the time, it gets on my nerves!"

Finally the man felt so dejected and drained of any feelings other than aggression that he would rather hear a refusal than yet another postponed decision. Everything drags out, he says, and the waiting is a strain on the body and the mind.

The worst thing is if you don't get any help. I can feel that I'm not well, I'm getting aggressive. I tried to concentrate. I've taken medicine – it's no fun to take a load of medicines every day. But I want to try to take it easy, because they have filled me with aggressive emotions.

The uncertainty, the impossibility of forgetting about the waiting, and at the same time the inability to influence the situation breaks

people down when they are in a state of both exclusion and uncertainty for a long time. Not being able to plan one's future or having any idea of what is waiting round the corner is a strain on people. A young man who had been waiting for a long time compared it to torture: "You might not be physically abused, but they break your feelings," he said. "Here they crush your feelings, attack your mind. I myself think that physical torment is better. It hurts for a few days and then it disappears. But the mental torment stays there."

## The Politics of Misrecognition

The epithet "refugee" makes me feel like an "asylum object", an administrative problem for the authorities to handle. But I am and want to be much more than an administration problem (quotation from the Argentinian Mario Quintana after Ana Martinez 2005).

Identity creation always takes place in relation to other people and their view of the category in which one is classified. For an asylum seeker in Sweden today, there is a rather limited and one-sided set of images to relate to. The image of the refugee changed in the Swedish media around the turn of the millennium. The Latin-American refugees who could be described in the media in the 1970s were people who were prepared to return. They were not portrayed as victims, nor as a threat to society. If anything, they were portrayed as heroes of a kind (Lundberg 2000:91). The refugees we meet in today's media are losers, whether they are presented as frightening aliens or portrayed sympathetically (Lundberg 2000). They are almost exclusively associated with problems – for themselves and for society.

The refugee has been defined as a social problem, as a burden and sometimes as a threat that we investigate, define, survey, produce knowledge about, educate, or repatriate. Media reporting, according to researchers who have analysed the discourse, risks reinforcing the difference between "us" and "them", the latter being ascribed characteristics that are felt to be alien and unusual, giving "us" the task of solving the problems that this causes (Brune 2001:29; Tesfahuney 2001). This means that asylum seekers often embody the Other (Brune 2001; Bauman 2004). They are the dark mass, the threat, the flow, which must be stopped, controlled, administered, deported. In a social climate where the immigrant increasingly embodies the threats raised by the Other, the alien is rarely discussed as anything but a problem. Words like *asylum*, *refugee*, and *exile* are fraught and powerful, with a significance that goes beyond the concrete definition. They have the power to stigmatize and are associated with negative states and characteristics (cf. Norström 2003:198). Society gives the asylum seeker a special and stigmatized identity, conjuring up asylum camps, miserable conditions, shady dealings, and a dark, incomprehensible background.

If a category of people are constantly portrayed in negative images, associated with tragedy and misery, and regarded and described as losers, this creates *misrecognition* (Taylor 1994:37). Other people's reactions and looks create the frame for one's own self-image. There is great risk that one accepts a disparaging image of oneself, internalizing and reinforcing the hopelessness, exclusion, and despair (Taylor 1994:38).

In several of the interviews I seem to be able to see how these representations give rise to frustration in people. This is perhaps particularly clear in the couple who developed different strategies for coping with their situation. The man in the family seems squeezed into a corner where all he can do in the end is to assume the role ascribed to him as the threatening alien. "What exactly do they

want? That I should barricade myself with a Kalashnikov to protect my family?"[5] In the midst of his indignation and frustration during the interview, we laugh at the obvious irony, which expresses a clear awareness of the stereotypes that he is expected to identify with. "Asylum seekers have no voice," he says, and his wife agrees. But whereas he refuses to accept it – "we have been silent long enough!" – she wants to tone him down and make him adopt the role of the quiet, compliant conformist. Her entire narrative is permeated by a desire to distance herself from the noisy, troublemaking refugees they say they have encountered during their time as asylum seekers. She talks about ill-bred children who vandalize gardens, and about people who dump rubbish in the countryside. Charles Tilly, who has analysed the reproduction of inequality through material circumstances and social relations, uses the terms adaptation and emulation to show how inferior groups become a part of the structures that create their subordination (Tilly 1998; de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005:36). The man's frustration and willingness to assume the role of the threatening alien can be understood as emulation; his behaviour can be interpreted as a protest or opposition, but ultimately it actually helps to reinforce the prevailing power order and his own marginalization. The woman's strategy, on the other hand, can be compared to adaptation; an acceptance of the prevailing power structures. Both strategies help to maintain rather than oppose or break down the discursive constructions of asylum seeker. Frustration about not being seen as anything other than a Refugee or an Asylum Seeker is a theme that came up spontaneously in several interviews. A couple of informants expressed a sense of being ignored or disbelieved in care situations, because of their exclusion from society. One woman went to the doctor with a severe headache which prevented her from looking after her two-year-old son. She was turned away with the reproach that "she thinks too much" and was encouraged to "think positively". Her problem was interpreted exclusively in terms of the situation in which she found herself, and could thus be dismissed as an effect of brooding. A young man tells of how he became so depressed after a deportation decision that he tried to commit suicide by taking tablets. A friend found him unconscious and drove him to the emergency ward in Västerås.

> So when I got the decision on repatriation it was difficult. After that I felt bad. I couldn't cope. I tried to kill myself. Ended up in hospital. You know: "What have you done? Why?" After a few days I met the doctor. "But we can't do anything about that!" So I said, "I haven't asked for it. I haven't asked for help." "We can't arrange a residence permit for you!" "But I didn't ask you to, I haven't asked you to arrange a residence permit for me." "But why did you try it? It's meaningless for you to act like this!"
>
> But I myself couldn't bear to live.

The man's desperate attempt to take his own life was interpreted as an effort to manipulate the health service into issuing a certificate that would affect his asylum case. He felt insulted that his despair was not taken seriously, but construed as a fraudulent way to get round the asylum laws.

In the encounter with the decision-making authority in the asylum case, we see even more clearly the limited potential of the asylum seeker to be seen as a unique individual. Several of the informants testify to the vulnerable situation of stating the reasons for seeking asylum and telling one's story to the official in charge (cf. Norström 2003). Here it is a matter of convincing the official that one belongs to the category of "victim". On this

occasion the asylum seeker has a lawyer and an interpreter. Many people find the interview like an interrogation, and they greatly fear that they will not be believed.

> The interview was terrible. You get really nervous, and then when there's a tape recorder – they are so serious, an interpreter, and you can't understand any Swedish, you get nervous and confused when they ask questions. You have to look into their eyes, nowhere else. I usually can't do that

This is the account of a woman from Bangladesh. The attending official is felt to be impersonal and replaceable, and the asylum seekers feel that there is no one on their side – not even the lawyer, some say. They feel suspected and not treated as a fellow human being but as a case. "The lawyer is with the Migration Board. He didn't represent me, he just acted as an interpreter," says a woman from Eritrea. A woman from Iran who had fled from her country because of an imminent threat of honour-related violence, tells of an official at the Migration Board who sat and chewed gum during the interview. She was rude, joked with secretary and did not listen to the woman's story. Everyone around her in the interview situation seemed to have a relationship to each other, and talked above her head about what they were going to do at the weekend. After two months came the negative decision. Eva Norström writes in her dissertation *I väntan på asyl* ("Awaiting Asylum", 2003) about how bureaucratic systems risk producing indifference. By reducing people to clients and thus to more or less de-individualized "cases", the human factor can be lost. Several of the informants in the interviews I conducted said that they have faith in the Swedish system and the regulations, but instead they see the defects in the people working in the system. "It's not the rules that decide, it's the officials," says a woman. Distrust of those who are responsible for deciding one's case seems to be common. Some people explain that they are on their guard because of experiences from their homeland. Others refer to what they feel to be incorrect and unfair treatment by people in authority in Sweden. One couple reckons that about 80 per cent of the officials in asylum cases do their job as they are supposed to, but others do a bad job. Some point out that the reasons stated for the decision do not correspond to the facts that they presented during the interviews with the Migration Board. They interpret this as showing that their case has not been taken seriously and the officials have not bothered to examine the details. For others it seems as if those who take the decisions have obvious gaps in their knowledge when it comes to the situation in their home countries. They sense that the decisions are arbitrary. Several say that they feel uninformed and that it is up to themselves if they want to have their asylum case handled properly (cf. Brekke 2004:58). A couple also express a downright fear of the Migration Board, and feel that they risk being punished if they do not behave properly or talk to the media.

## Accommodation – the Importance of Choosing

The Migration Board is responsible for arranging accommodation for asylum seekers. They provide places at refugee reception centres all over Sweden. Asylum seekers who do not want to live at such a centre can choose to find a place to live independently, but must then arrange all the practical matters themselves. They usually find accommodation through contacts with relatives, friends, or fellow countrymen or through a lodger system, whereby they hire rooms in a dwelling.[6] For most asylum seekers this means living

in cramped conditions, with little space for private life, with provisional solutions and frequent moves. Independent accommodation has been heavily criticized, since it is assumed to contribute to ethnic segregation and exclusion for asylum seekers. This form of accommodation is associated with shabby flats, destitution, and children suffering (SOU 2003:75, Lennartsson 2007). Since 1 March 2005 no housing allowance is paid to those who choose to arrange their own accommodation. Further economic restrictions have been suggested as a way to steer asylum seekers' choice of accommodation. Despite this, more than half of all asylum seekers in Sweden choose to find their own place to live. The negative public discourse that has arisen about independent accommodation is partly due to the suspicion that asylum seekers wish to avoid control by the authorities, to shut themselves out of society, prevent integration and evade their obligations (Lennartsson 2007). In view of this suspicion, it is particularly interesting to hear the asylum seekers' own reasons. When asked why they chose to arrange their housing independently, twelve of the sixteen people interviewed in depth stated as their first answer that independent accommodation is a better way into Swedish society. The others answered first that they were offered the possibility. Yet it is rather a question of *how* than of *why*. When one asks about the advantages of independent accommodation, the answers always bring up integration and contact with the surrounding society. Independent accommodation paves the way for more encounters with other people, both native Swedes and immigrants. "It is easier to make friends", it "eases social contacts", and "I wanted to have contact with Swedish society", are what some of the informants replied in questionnaire interviews. Here is what was said by a woman from Iran who came alone to Sweden with two children, and after a short time at a refugee reception centre chose to arrange her own accommodation:

Author: How did you arrange accommodation?

Informant: I had a lot of relatives. My sister who has lived in Stockholm, she had her husband's sisters and brothers here in Uppsala. I got help through them. They found a sublet flat. We paid about 2,500 at that time. It was just one room and kitchen.

Author: I see. Did it work out better, do you think?

Informant: Yes, yes. Definitely. Definitely. And then: we didn't feel different. We met lots of people who weren't in the same situation as us. We met Swedes, we became a part of society, started school, started working and training and developed a lot here. [...] We got into society so quickly. I learned the language much faster. Almost forgot the problems I had had in Iran. I felt secure.

Other reasons commonly stated are that people felt freer, more independent, and less supervised in their own accommodation. It gives the conditions for a more "normal" life. The state of normality is particularly desirable. In independent accommodation one can have a life where one is not constantly reminded of the impermanence and uncertainty of existence. Creating what feels like a *home* is in contrast to the Migration Board's wish that asylum seekers should not become too settled but be constantly prepared to move. Independent accommodation also requires an active choice and a personal decision. There is an obvious aspiration to maintain some kind of control over one's own life; not to be placed, moved, or told to go somewhere.

The concept of home is loaded with certain individual and cultural differences in meaning. In Swedish culture the word *hem* (home) coincides in principle with *bostad* (dwelling), although there is a qualitative difference, with the word *hem* being charged with much more

significance. For other cultures a dwelling can be temporary whereas the home has other dimensions, consisting of a place, a family, a kin group, or some other social or material context. For those who are torn up by the roots and find themselves on the run, the terms "home" and "homeland" lack concrete meaning, according to Edward Said in *Orientalism* (2003). Access to a dwelling is at all events a significant part of Swedish welfare. "Having a weak or marginal position on the housing market, or being completely homeless, means being on the outskirts of welfare, or totally outside," write Marie Nordfeldt and Lars-Erik Olsson in a study of immigranthood in relation to homelessness (2006:145). According to them, the logic of the housing market in the 1990s has been reinforced at the expense of the principle of a dwelling as a social right. It has had the consequence that groups lacking economic resources, which include refugees, find it more difficult to get into the housing market (ibid.:146). The European organization FEANTSA[7] proceeds from three domains in its definition of a home: a physical domain, a social domain, and a legal domain. The physical domain represents the actual place or dwelling. The social domain presupposes the possibility to have a private life, and the third domain means having the legal right to one's home. If any of these domains is missing, it can be defined as a kind of homelessness. With that definition, several of my informants could be regarded as partly homeless (Nordfeldt & Olsson 2006:151).

The most common reason for choosing to live independently has a more negative character. People do not choose to arrange their own accommodation because they find wholly satisfactory solutions that way. They do so more to avoid the Migration Board's reception centres. The majority of the informants have experience of living in camps. Others have never lived in accommodation organized this way, yet they seem to have firm ideas of what it means. This suggests that there are negative ideas about life in refugee reception centres which are spread between asylum seekers. The negative associations are scarcely reduced by the fact the usual expression for this kind of accommodation, in the form of the English word *camp*, evokes thoughts of refugee camps.

In many cases the reception centres are placed in the countryside or in small communities far from big cities. Unlike many of those who work with the reception and integration of refugees, asylum seekers seem to distrust the potential of small places to provide jobs and integration. The idea that it is easier to be seen as an individual and incorporated in a social context that fosters genuine encounters between people in small municipalities sets its stamp on parts of the work with refugee reception (Bygdell 2005). For asylum seekers themselves, however, living in a reception centre in a small place often seems to represent isolation, boredom, stagnation, and pronounced social exclusion (cf. Hadodo & Åkerlund 2004). The possibility of integration seems extremely limited. A woman who lived at a reception centre for a while before she organized a place to live independently describes her experience as follows:

> Informant: You know, when we come to a new country, everything is different for us. If we separate people from different places it gets even worse. We have lost a lot from our country. We don't have the same language, the same country – everything is new for us. If we are going to be outside, [inaudible] we live in a community that is only for us who come from other countries, we can't mix with Swedes. You feel even more separate, you don't feel well. But somewhere – you can call it prison. You don't have anything for yourself, you're not like ordinary people. That's

how it feels. That's just how I felt. We just sat at the window all day. Everybody – one family came from Bosnia, another from Pakistan, one from Kurdistan – and all have the same problem. And then – you get confused. You can't get into society.

Author: You are reminded of the situation, you mean?

Informant: Yes, exactly, the whole time. They have the same problem. One person sits and talks about it and cries, others…; it's just problems.

Towns and cities have the attraction of libraries, swimming baths, and leisure pursuits, organized activities and being close to other people. Some of my informants thought that independent accommodation gave greater freedom to choose who to socialize with. Living in a camp, there is only the company of other asylum seekers who happen to be there at the same time. For many people it is a constant reminder of the stigmatized status of the asylum situation. Reasons mentioned during the interviews are that "there were too many immigrants at the camp", they "did not want to share a flat with others" or "my children would not be able to learn Swedish". Living at a refugee reception centre seems to generate a feeling that the desired integration is obstructed and one is identified solely as belonging to the category of refugee. The physical environment in a badly maintained camp affects the individual's self-perceived health. One man describes the centre as "a slum". One family says during the interview that the physical environment reminded them of the war-torn region from which they had fled, with big, grey concrete buildings. The children asked: "When will we get to Europe?" They could not believe that the country their parents had described as free and fair would look like the home they had escaped from.

Even if one is happy with the environment, the standard, and the neighbours in the reception centre, a sense of vulnerability and strain is caused by the way the police come to collect families for deportation. Traumatic police actions upset both children and adults, creating fear and unrest (cf. Löwén 2006:125). But life in organized accommodation can be restless for other reasons. People belonging to different groups from areas of conflict and war can be placed together and expected to act like good neighbours. A couple I interviewed gave several examples of how they perceived the reception centre as conflict-torn and disruptive. Quarrels which they interpreted as cultural conflicts were common, with a negative effect on the family's health and well-being. Some stated fear of other refugees as the main reason for choosing to arrange their own housing. Several people describe conflict and violence on housing estates and in school, fear of their fellow countrymen, and general vulnerability. There are "a lot of people and a lot of problems" at a reception centre, and "you have no freedom", according to several questionnaire responses. A young woman from Iran with a husband and children felt her life was threatened by other refugees at the centre in Gimo. There were some young men who troubled the family, banged on their door, and threatened them. They were then moved to Ludvika, but when the reception centre in Gimo was closed, the troublesome young men followed. After the woman and her family had succeeded in arranging a home of their own, they moved out of the centre.

For some people the choice of independent housing is a matter of evading the authorities' control. The possibility of working is an important reason – some say that it is crucial for where you live. If your application for asylum has been turned down but you nevertheless want to work, it is presumably easier to do so outside the Migration Board's own camps.

## "I Built My House on the Sea"

On one occasion during an interview with the aid of the questionnaire at the asylum health centre in Västerås, the interviewed woman suddenly and unexpectedly burst into tears. The question that had triggered the powerful emotions was: how many times have you moved within Sweden? Talking about the repeated moves reminded her of the vulnerability of her life as a refugee. Her narrative above all concerned one move from a centre organized by the Migration Board. Owing to shortage of space and transport difficulties, each family could not bring along more than what could be contained in a removal box. Everything that they had managed to gather during the time at the reception centre was lost: bicycles for the children, toys, furniture, television set.

Research shows that if a person is unable to establish ties to a place, then selected objects instead carry the symbolic value otherwise invested in the home (Wettstein 2006). Being denied an opportunity for continuity in one's life through such objects can be a painful experience. Memories and experiences are manifested in physical things. They can contribute to a sense of coherence and security that must be regarded as important for people as cultural beings. A woman from Iran who had been granted a residence permit at the time of the interview describes her current dwelling as her first real home in Sweden.

Informant: I have a girl who is 25. You understand? I must have an old … house. The time that I have lost – I start from this time; I'll soon be a grandmother, that old. So I have designed my living room like an old church, you could say, with dark brown wood and, what's it called, sofas, a bit of a mixture with brass and gold colours. [laughter] And old pictures and things like that. I don't know … Antique things. […] I mustn't think that I have started anew. I had them from thirty years ago and up to now. They have got old now. I had had them before, they have got old now.

Author: So you have a kind of line backwards in time? … Do you miss it? Would you like it to be things that belonged to your family or things…

Informant: Yes. Because, you know, I have started so many times from zero. New all the time. I have built my house on the sea. So it does not last. Several times. But this time I feel secure.

The possibility of making the dwelling into a home seems to be very important for generating the security and stability that are crucial for well-being. Through the home and the things with which one surrounds oneself, it is possible to express and thereby shape a new identity, based both on lived history and on the experiences acquired in the new existence. The woman in the quotation above had lived for many years in temporary accommodation, in great insecurity. She felt a strong need to create a home that expressed continuity and reflected her identity. Families who have moved many times describe the same sorrows and problems. Two couples who have moved an extreme number of times stated that their children had lost their childhood. They could never bring home friends or establish contacts on account of repeated moves. For the same reason, they have not been able to collect toys and things that they could regard as their own. Being constantly on the run means not being able to get attached to a place or a thing that you may be forced to leave behind. According to one informant who works with asylum-seeking children in Västmanland, the enforced moves are a highly traumatic experience. When reception centres have been closed down, the moves have sometimes been sudden. It has happened that the information about the move has not reached the asylum seekers. Some have packed their bags quickly and stepped on the bus without being told

where they were going. No transport has been arranged for bulky belongings. At worst, the moves have felt like deportation. This can exacerbate already serious problems, not least for the children, who often suffer traumas in connection with moves and associate it with having to flee. In one case the meaning of the move seems particularly obvious for the children. A family in Västmanland with two children aged 10–12 was evicted from their home by the landlord. With the assistance of concerned people they managed to find a flat across the street. When the parents began to pack, the children became agitated and afraid. They felt that they were about to run away again and did not believe their parents' assurances that they were just moving to another place nearby.

In a life that is otherwise full of rootlessness, separation, and constant moves, one may assume that particularly great significance is ascribed to objects – not least for the children's development of secure spheres based on recognition, on familiarity and routine. If they cannot create a context for themselves through a home or a place that is perceived as a home, this has a detrimental effect on the refugees' mental and physical health, which is generally poor to begin with (cf. Törnell 2003:279). People who have been expelled from their home countries through violence or fear and are not admitted elsewhere do not just change their domicile; they lose a place on earth, says Zygmunt Bauman (2004:143). Against the background of that knowledge, the tendency of asylum seekers to choose their own housing can be interpreted as a strategy to counteract marginalization and to avoid being reduced to the administrative category of asylum seeker, which cannot be described as either adjustment or emulation.

## Border People

In both the public and the private sphere, an asylum seeker today faces a number of obstacles when attempting to emerge from the transit phase and start a new life. The state of asylum presupposes rootlessness and constantly being prepared to move on once again. When the wait for a decision by the immigration authorities draws out, the individual is placed in a state where many of the constituents required for identity construction are removed. In the public sphere an asylum seeker is categorized according to a media discourse which portrays him or her as either a victim or a threat. If a person is refused asylum and lacks a full personal identity number, it is impossible to get a job or an education, which leads to a sense of stagnation and loss of control, powerlessness and hopelessness. In the private sphere, asylum seekers often feel alone; divided families, no access to new meeting places, and often limited economic means dictate the framework of everyday life. When I have asked interviewees what would make them feel better while awaiting asylum, their most common immediate answer has been: "If they treated us like ordinary people", "an ordinary life!" and the like. Achieving as great a sense of *normality* as possible seems to be of the greatest importance for preventing people from being broken down during the asylum process. Identity is not only based on background, history, origin, and ethnicity. It is just as much a matter of here and now, being seen and confirmed and able to imagine not only the past but also the present and the future (cf. Brekke 2004). Perhaps *recognition* for most people who are on the run is not primarily about the recognition of a cultural identity, a particular origin or ethnic affiliation, but rather primarily about the right to be treated as a fellow human being (de los

Reyes & Mulinari 2005). The sense of having a choice, of having some influence over one's life and being able to plan one's future is crucial for the feeling of being someone. The character of the time in the waiting room has major consequences for the individual's sense of a whole and integrated self and for his or her continued life, regardless of what the outcome of the asylum application is. It is of the utmost importance that we create possibilities for asylum-seeking women, men, and children to *be someone* while they are waiting.

*Rebecka Lennartsson*
Fil. dr
Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology
Uppsala University
Box 631
SE-751 26 Uppsala
e-mail: Herkulez@telia.com

Translation: Alan Crozier

## Notes

1 The temporary law came into force on 15 November 2005 and applied until 31 March 2006. It allowed asylum seekers who had previously been turned down to apply once again. At the time of writing, the woman's application had been refused again and she had decided to return to her homeland.

2 The present article is based on material collected by the project "Life in Transit", which was conducted on behalf of the development partnership Aros Asyl between November 2005 and March 2006. The study proceeded from the topics on which the partnership focused in its work: health, accommodation, education, work, parenthood, and leisure. The partnership seeks to create the conditions for maintained or improved health in asylum seekers in independent accommodation. The report in Swedish, *Mellan hopp och förtvivlan: Erfarenheter och strategier i väntan på asyl – en etnologisk undersökning om situationen för asylsökande i eget boende i Västmanland och Uppsala län*, sums up the results of the project. The report is available at NTG Asyl during 2007. A summary in Swedish can be found at www.uparos.se. The project consisted of 58 structured interviews and 16 in-depth interviews with adult asylum seekers and former asylum seekers living in independent accommodation in Västmanland and Uppsala, and 16 interviews with child asylum seekers in independent accommodation in Uppsala.

3 Maria Appelqvist (2005a) has made a schematic estimate of the length of the waiting period, based on data available on 31 July 2004. The number of people registered by the Migration Board then was 40,047. Of these, 907 people had been granted a residence permit and were awaiting placement in a municipality. At the time of the estimate, asylum seekers waited on average 263 days for a decision on their first application. The aim of the Migration Board is to communicate the first decision within six months. The majority of asylum seekers appeal against a negative decision. The average period waiting for a decision on these cases by the Aliens Appeals Board was a further 178 days. The average waiting time for the 90 per cent of people whose first application was rejected was thus 441 days. It is important to point out that these are average figures. For some people the application is handled relatively quickly, even with an appeal. For others the process can last for many years.

4 Jan-Paul Brekke found the same problem in his study of people's everyday life while awaiting asylum (Brekke 2004:22).

5 The couple tell of their experiences during the 18 months they spent at the refugee reception centre in Fagersta, where the disturbances were so serious that the children finally refused to go out and the family felt very insecure.

6 For a longer discussion and description of independent accommodation, see the report *Mellan hopp och förtvivlan* (Lennartsson 2007).

7 The Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless brings together voluntary organizations from 29 countries in Europe (Nordfeldt & Olsson 2006:146).

## References

Alsmark, Gunnar 1997 (ed.): *Skjorta eller själ? Kulturella identiteter i tid och rum.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Ålund, Aleksandra 2000: Multikultisamhälle i vardande. Ungdom, kultur och sociala rörelser. In *Etnicitetens gränser och mångfald,* ed. Erik Olsson. Stockholm: Carlssons.

Ålund, Aleksandra 2003: Etnicitet, medborgarskap och gränser. In *Maktens (o)lika förklädnader. Kön, klass och etnicitet i det postkoloniala Sverige.* Stockholm: Atlas.

Appelqvist, Maria 2005a: *Mottagningens integra-*

*tion – från asylmottagning till bosättning.* IMER, Malmö högskola, Slutrapport.

Appelqvist, Maria 2005b: Forskningsprojektet *"Välfärdens gränser – från asylmottagning till lokal integration" och tankar kring jämställdhetsperspektivet.* Malmö Högskola.

Appiah, Anthony K. 1994: Identity, Authenticity, Survival. Multicultural Society and Social Reproduction. In *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition* by Charles Taylor. Göteborg: Daidalos.

Bauman, Zygmunt 2004: *Samhälle under belägring.* Göteborg: Daidalos.

Brekke, Jan-Paul 2004: *While we are waiting. Uncertainty and empowerment among asylumseekers in Sweden.* Report 2004:10. Institutt for samfunnsforskning, Oslo.

Brune, Ylva (ed.) 2001: *Mörk magi i vita medier. Svensk nyhetsjournalistik om invandrare, flyktingar och rasism.* Stockholm: Carlssons.

Bygdell, Cecilia 2005: *Integration.* Photocopy, Upplandsmuseet.

Eriksson, Catharina, Maria Eriksson Baaz & Håkan Thörn (eds.) 2002: *Globaliseringens kulturer. Den postkoloniala paradoxen, rasismen och det mångkulturella samhället.* Nora: Nya Doxa.

Hadodo, Behiye & Åkerlund, Eva-Marie 2004: *För den som väntar stelnar tiden i ett evigt nu. En studie av barn och föräldrars livsvillkor i den asylsökande familjen.* FoU-Södertörn skriftserie 40/04.

Hall, Stuart 2002: Kulturell identitet och diaspora. In *Globaliseringens kulturer. Den postkoloniala paradoxen, rasismen och det mångkulturella samhället*, eds Catharina Eriksson *et al.* Nora: Nya Doxa.

Lennartsson, Rebecka 2007: *Mellan hopp och förtvivlan. Erfarenheter och strategier i väntan på asyl.* En etnologiska undersökning av asylsökande i eget boende i Västmanland och Uppsala län utförd för utvecklingspartnerskapet Aros Asyl. NTG asyl.

Löwén, Åsa 2006: *Asylexistensens villkor. Resurser och problem i meningsskapande hos asylsökande barn i Sverige.* Uppsala: Universitetstryckeriet.

Lundberg, Svante 2000: Farliga flyktingar? In *Att möta främlingar*, ed. Göran Rystad & Svante Lundberg. Lund: Arkiv förlag.

Martinez, Ana 2005: Att benämna världen. *Karavan* 3.

Molina, Irene 1997: *Stadens rasifiering. Etnisk boendesegregation i folkhemmet.* Diss. Uppsala universitet.

Norström, Eva 2003: *I väntan på asyl. Retorik och praktik i svensk flyktingpolitik.* Umeå: Boréa.

Olsson, Erik (ed.) 2000: *Etnicitetens gränser och mångfald.* Stockholm: Carlssons.

Reyes, de los, Paulina & Diana Mulinari 2005: *Intersektionalitet,* Malmö: Liber.

Said, Edward 2003: *Orientalism.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Shahnavaz, S. & Ekblad, S. 2002: *Skolsköterskornas möte med asylsökande och andra nyanlända invandrar- och flyktingbarn.* Stressforskningsrapport 307-2002. IPM, Stockholm.

SOU 2003:75: *Etablering i Sverige. Möjligheter och ansvar för individ och samhälle.* Betänkande av utredningen om flyktingmottagande och introduktion.

SOU 2006:37: *Om välfärdens gränser och det villkorade medborgarskapet.* Rapport av utredningen om makt, integration och strukturell diskriminering.

Taylor, Charles 1994: *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Tesfahuney, Mekonnen 2001: Globaliserad apartheid. Fästning Europa, migration och synen på de Andra. In *Sverige och de Andra. Postkoloniala perspektiv*, ed. Michael McEachrane & Louis Faye. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

Tilly, Charles 1998: *Durable Inequality.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Törnell, Brita 2003: Migration, etnicitet och hälsa – underlag för indikatorer. In *Välfärd, jämlikhet och folkhälsa – vetenskapligt underlag för begrepp, mått och indikatorer*, ed. Christer Hogstedt. Stockholm: Statens folkhälsoinstitut.

Turner, Victor 1969: *The Ritual Process.* Chicago: Aldine.

Wettstein, Margrit 2006: Plocka upp livet. *Kulturella perspektiv* 1–2.

Wintzer, Stig 2005: *Sjukvård åt asylsökande. Omfattning och kostnader år 2005.* Sveriges kommuner och landsting.

# Deadly Identities?

## Homosexuality, Adolescence and Parasuicide

By Tone Hellesund

The purpose of this article is to explore some of the challenges that lesbian- and gay-identified adolescents face in contemporary Norwegian society, in order to understand why some of them try to take their own life. The main source is interviews with twelve lesbian/gay-identified individuals who considered or attempted suicide during adolescence or young adult years, and who connect this parasuicide (suicide attempt) to problems regarding their homosexuality. While suicide and death is the existential framework for the research project, suicide attempts turned out not to be the main theme of the texts. I let the informants themselves choose which issues they regarded as important for explaining their suicide attempt to me. In the stories of the informants the suicidal thoughts and attempts were expressed as consequences of the general incompatibility between homosexuality and (a good) life. The story about the suicide attempt became the story about why they experienced homosexuality in such a deadly way.

The Lebanese author Amin Maalouf has inspired the title of this article. He writes about murderous or mortal identities, identities which kill (Maalouf 2000:26). Even if Maalouf primarily intends to explain why people kill each other on the grounds of an "overdeveloped" ethnic, national or religious identity, his thoughts also seem relevant to my project concerning homosexually identified adolescents and parasuicide.

The way we talk about identity opens up for particular self-conceptions and particular modes of actions. Same-sex desire as an explanation for parasuicide is only possible within certain narratives, while it would give no meaning within others. The widespread notion of identity which Maalouf criticizes sees identity as inborn, stable, and essential. Other theorists further stress the *fundamentality* which this kind of attachments represent, and the Norwegian sociologist Kjetil Rødje is among those who choose to make a clear distinction between "the self" and "identity". While he sees identity as something you have or gain, the self is something you *are*. Norwegian words like *selvmord* (self-murder – suicide) and *selvforståelse* (self-understanding" – self-conception) illustrate that the self is not open for the subject to mould, but is a constituent and essential part that the individual can get to know, but which also can be lost (Rødje 2000:12). It is a part that can be murdered – through suicide. The interconnectedness of the self and the identity in the field of sexualities will be explored in this article.

I will use both concepts like "homosexually identified" and "homosexual" to describe my informants who are romantically and sexually attracted to their own sex. By "homosexually identified" I hope to indicate that I see identity as only one possible response to same-sex desire, love or sexual encounters. The concept homosexual is sometimes used for the sake of simplicity, but also because it for me rests on a constructivist Foucauldian tradition where the recent historical creation of "the homosexual" is an important premise (Foucault 1976). In contrast to this, all my informants use the term *homofil* or *lesbisk*.

### Adolescents, Homosexuality and Parasuicide

What stories about homosexuality do we find in Norway today? I claim that the Norwegian self-conception rests on Norwegians being liberal and open towards homosexuality and homosexuals as well as other "transformations of intimacy" (Anderssen & Hellesund 2007). In an article called "The Doorkeepers of the Church", this is exemplified by a young female

journalist who writes critically of how the Church of Norway denies lesbians and gays ecclesiastical positions and how this seems "absurd to outsiders".

> Norwegians in general have long ago finished debating homosexuality. In everyday life this is a non-issue. Few raised their eyebrows when our crown-prince was given the "Homofrydspris" (pro-gay prize) of the year, even if he will be our next king and head of the Church of Norway. The big poll conducted by Opinion before Christmas showed that 66% of the population think that cohabiting homosexuals should be allowed to be catechists, priests and deacons (*VG*, 2002).

This quotation illustrates how a widespread tolerance for homosexuality is taken for granted, and how the church is often seen as the only obstacle left to the full inclusion of homosexuals into the symbolic order of the Scandinavian welfare states.

Against this background it is hard to understand the alarmingly high numbers of lesbian- and gay-identified youth who report contemplating or having attempted suicide. In the first big survey of lesbian and gay life in Norway that was published in 1999 (Hegna, Kristiansen & Moseng 1999), every fourth participant under the age of 25 reported at least one attempted suicide. A feeling of isolation and loneliness, a wish to escape a straining situation, and problems accepting themselves as homosexuals were the main reasons given for these attempts. Although the numbers in studies of homosexually related parasuicides are questionable (Hellesund 2006),[1] this and other contemporary western studies document that many lesbian/gay/queer young people experience aspects of their "homosexuality" as highly problematic, some even to the extent that they prefer to try to take their own lives rather than going into adult lives as "gay". Particularly in the context of the post-modern era – with its supposedly free-floating identities and sexualities, and the dramatic increase in the societal acceptance of homosexuality – this seem to be a paradox that needs to be explored.

Against the claim of many liberals, homosexuality is still a big issue in everyday life for many people. There is no lack of response on the issue on television debate shows and their popular polls, newspaper online debate forums etc. Two weeks during the autumn of 2002, some 25,000 people posted to the online debate in the newspaper *Dagbladet*, regarding whether celebrity-lesbian Anne Holt should be allowed to adopt her partner's inseminated baby or not. Several public opinion polls show that homosexuals are still seen as outcasts by large groups of the population, and a 2001 poll from MMI showed that three out of ten participants stated that it would cause trouble if a close family member introduced a partner of the same sex. Only 4 out of 10 stated that they were sure this would not create a problem in their family (*Dagbladet* 23.12.2001). Both the above and the 1999 NOVA survey document that many Norwegian lesbian- and gay-identified people experience negative attitudes towards homosexuality and some also experience discrimination and violence. I will argue, though, that suicidal thoughts and attempts by homosexually identified youths should not primarily be interpreted as a direct result of discrimination and persecution. Instead the discrimination should be seen as symptoms of heteronormative structures that represent risks in more subtle ways. I suggest that it is these structures, of which we all are a part, rather than its symptoms, that open up the possibility of suicide.

## Methods

I have interviewed twelve individuals between 18 and 45 years old, focusing on their personal

histories of suicidal thoughts and suicidal attempts in adolescent years. These individuals, six men and six women, were recruited through an advertisement in the main Norwegian lesbian and gay newspaper, *Blikk* (7), and through direct approaches to persons whose stories I superficially knew either through public texts (2), or through personal contacts (3). My focus has been on the construction of narrative regarding the connection between parasuicide and homosexuality. This connection was already established by the informants, either through texts or narratives, or through the response to my advertisement. The advertisement opened up not only for stories about parasuicides but also for suicidal thoughts. Three of my informants told me about suicidal thoughts rather than parasuicides. In addition to my sample I was also contacted by two other persons who had survived parasuicide, but who did not want to go through formal interviews. The interviews lasted between 1 and 6 hours, most between 1.5 and 2 hours. One of the informants I interviewed twice, and I have received supplementary e-mails from two informants, and poetry related to these issues from another informant. Five of the interviews took place in my office, three in hotels, and six in the homes of the informants. The informants spent their adolescent years in different parts of Norway (the counties of Nordland, Nord-Trøndelag, Sogn og Fjordane, Hordaland, Rogaland, Vest-Agder, Akershus and Østfold). Some came from rural areas and some from small towns or suburbs. None grew up in major towns, although a big town might have been only a short drive away. At the time of the interviews five of the informants lived in bigger towns, while seven still lived in small towns or rural areas. The methods used for parasuicide were weapons, hanging, other forms of suffocation, and pills. Some were barely saved; others were never close to dying. There did not seem to be any obvious connection between the degree of desperation and choice of method. Seven of the informants told me about hospitalization in connection with their parasuicides. Two were submitted only to somatic wards, and the rest also spent some time at psychiatric wards. A couple of the informants are physically marked for life due to their parasuicides. Three of the informants have been in close contact with the psychiatric health system long after the parasuicide took place.

Obviously this sample does not offer any kind of representativity. Most lesbian/gay-identified adolescents do not commit parasuicide, and among those who do, homosexuality is one of many reasons for the attempt. The self-declarations that issues regarding homosexuality were the main reason behind the suicidal thoughts or attempt has been the starting point of all my interviews. Despite its limitations, my sample was more varied than I anticipated, and the stories told also differed in many ways. Two main explanations were given for the willingness to tell their stories to me. Some of the informants explained that they hoped an interview would help clarify their own thoughts, and took the opportunity to tell an important autobiographical story which has a very limited potential for getting an audience. Most of the informants however, explained that they were willing to tell their story in the hope that this could prevent suicides in lesbian/gay-identified adolescents in the future.

## Sexuality as the True Self

Truth and essence are connected in a fundamental way among my informants. All of the informants saw their own homosexuality as a deeply rooted and inborn disposition (*leg-*

*ning*), which is a fundamental part of their self. Without the recognition of the inborn sexuality the self is not its true self.

While some of the adolescents tell about discovering homosexual desires in their teens, many also report "homosexual feelings" from childhood on. For both groups it seems to be the assumption of *articulated identities* that represents the hardships. The childhood crushes and sexual acts are mostly described as unproblematic. It is not until they are interpreted as *homosexual* they become a source of distress. The conscious relation to a homosexual identity is described as either a discovery or an articulation (of something already existing as pre-narrative), mostly a painful one. An inborn disposition is also an important element in the creation of a blameless homosexual identity. Kari speaks on behalf of most of the other informants when she says:

> I have speculated a lot about why me, why should I get this disposition, why should I get this stone in my head? But I think, I KNOW, I was born this way. It's not something I've chosen, in that case I wouldn't have chosen the childhood and adolescence I have had. That's just stupid. I know I was born this way, and I can't help becoming who I am.

Not surprisingly, many of the stories I have collected resemble other self-narratives about homosexuality. They seem to fit particularly well into what sociologist Ken Plummer calls the typical modernist gay self-narrative. This narrative was the dominant one in the last half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, and has been used in the battle to gain civil rights. The modernist homosexual story follows certain genre norms:

- It starts in childhood and follows a linear progression.
- Childhood is usually seen as an unhappy time. Often a strong sense of difference. Deterministic tale, suggests that something happens at birth or childhood which sets up this "difference"
- A crucial moment appears – often in early adolescence – where problems appear that lead to a concern – or discovery – of being "gay". Common problems are secrecy, guilt or shame, fear of discovery, suicidal feelings
- Problems are resolved in some fashion, usually through meeting other lesbians or gays in a community
- A sense of identity or self is achieved as gay or lesbian, along with a sense of community (Plummer 1995:85–87).

The modernist stories claim to tell the truth, and believe in clear categories. While Plummer primarily focuses on the narrator, I want to stress that the cultural context and the receptors are just as crucial for the construction of particular narratives as the narrator.

Some of the most visible discourses about homosexuality adolescents have access to, are still embedded in an essentialist tradition (Anderssen & Hellesund 2007). These discourses not only see homosexuality as fundamentally different, but also in some ways constitute the homosexual as the fundamental different, the fundamental other. Adolescents facing same-sex desires simultaneously face an identity which – according to some of our contemporary discourses on homosexuality – forces them to leave central aspects of their old identities and subject-positions behind.

All the informants in my study see sexual identity as much more than an identity. They see it not as something you "have" or "gain", but as a deeply rooted disposition, something you *are*. The problem for some adolescents seems to be that the homosexual identity does not feel like a representation of the self. Rather it is something which violently annihilates the self, at least in the eyes of the other.

## Disruption

One approach to the identity-formation of adolescents who experience same-sex attraction would be to see the possible formation of a homosexual identity as an important breach or turning point. In anthropologist Gay Becker's *Disrupted Lives*, a book about different forms of major life disruption, she argues "that when expectations about the course of life are not met, people experience inner chaos and disruption. Such disruptions represent loss of the future. Restoring order to life necessitates reworking understandings of the self and the world" (Becker 1997).

The individuals I interviewed tried to take their own lives in their adolescent or young adult years. They tell about great unhappiness and despair, and they tell about a feeling of entrapment in an unbearable and overwhelming situation. While some grew up in contexts with loudly expressed homonegativity, others tell about an environment with mostly liberal attitudes toward homosexuality. In answer to my question about what they think should have been different, what could have prevented this despair from developing, several identified the lack of proper homosexual role models as an important cause. They also express negative attitudes towards the homosexuals visible in the public sphere. These figures made it impossible to identify with the group of "homosexuals". Anne (25) tells about how she perceived visible homosexuals when she was young:

> I remember a TV debate where there was this woman, maybe she was the leader of an organization for homosexuals or something, who I found extremely unsympathetic, and like, she was everything I did not want to be, because she was very manly and you know…

I press Anne to tell more about what this woman was that Anne herself did not want to be, and with ironic distance she says: "Well, she wasn't good-looking at all, she was rather ugly, she was wearing ugly clothes, she was angry, and she stated opinions I totally disagreed with." Frank (45) agrees with Anne in her views about visible homosexuals.

> Well, those who are visible in media and places like that, they are the outgoing ones, the ones who scream and drag. This is really bad, because they really ruin a lot. They ruin a lot more than they realize. They scare people away [potential gays] and they create homophobia. I really feel strongly about this, because most of the gays I know are normal, regular people, like you and me, he, he, he. Why do they [the flamboyant ones] always have to portray them [homosexuals]? *The Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* [he is referring to the Norwegian version, *Homsepatruljen*, of this popular American television show], they ruin like hell.

As adults several of my informants[2] still find it problematic that what they see as negative stereotypes, as bull dykes and feminine men, are the ones who, from their perspective, are mostly portrayed in the media.

Anne tried to kill herself in her mid-teens. Both she and her family were active Christians, and when Anne continued to fall in love with girls and slowly came to see herself as lesbian, she not only feared God's punishment, but also the reactions of people around her. She felt her whole existence would vanish if the world was to see her as a lesbian. She definitely saw homosexuality as a fundamental difference.

> I just had this intense wish to be nice and good. I worked hard at school, wanted to be a good girl, wanted to be polite, wanted people to like me, all those kind of things. I wanted to be good at sports, wanted to have friends, wanted to be a good Christian, and then THIS came, and didn't fit in the pattern at all. And the thought of identifying with a group I at that time saw as total outcasts was impossible.

By being best at sports, in school, and in being a good Christian, Anne tried to build an identity that would permanently establish

her as a worthy and accepted subject. Despite the hard work, she feared that these identities could easily be eradicated if her secret was known. "I felt that to be a homosexual would break down everything I had tried to build. Then I would become a homosexual first and foremost, not all the other things."

The homosexuality, "THIS", is seen as a life-sentence, radically disrupting the anticipated future. Nora (31) was 12–13 years when she felt that girls were the most interesting, and about the same age when she found the word "lesbian" terrible.

> That was something so frightening, or so horrible, that there was just no question of taking it in. And when I was about 15–16, then I thought that being a lesbian would be the end of life. There was no future; it was just OUT OF THE QUESTION to seriously consider it... that kind of life. It was out of the question because it was disgusting and frightening, and I would be rejected everywhere and I myself thought it was bad, and everyone else would think it was bad. So, I guess I pictured myself as one who would be totally alone in the world. Without anyone knowing that I was a lesbian. And that felt terribly sad and frightening.

Both Nora's and Anne's stories exemplify how homosexuality seems to override any other affiliation or identity trait, and at that time seemed to determine all parts of the future. Amin Maalouf's claim that we all should be encouraged to accept the diversity of our individualities and to see our identities as the sum of all our various affiliations instead of "just one of them raised to the status of the most important, made into an instrument of exclusion" (Maalouf 2000:129). My informants find themselves in a situation where they experience exactly this erasure of individuality, this reduction to one identity affiliation, and Maalouf's statements seem as relevant in regard to homosexuality as to ethnic, national or religious identities. In an essay called *Dying Man with a Movie Camera*, the critic Peggy Phelan "suggests that queers have a particularly fraught relationship to the death drive by virtue of having survived what she calls our first deaths, our abjection from the social and symbolic order that makes us" (Martin 1996). For many adolescent homosexuals the homosexual identity seems like such a death. The homosexual identity is not seen as an identity for life, at least not the life they had taken for granted until then.

Sexuality, understood as a fundamental difference in modern western culture, is explored by theorists like Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. They claim that in our culture it is mainly possible to understand sex-gender in terms of fundamental difference: male as fundamentally different from female, heterosexuality as fundamentally different from homosexuality. Male and heterosexual are seen as the norm, female and homosexual are seen as difference or pathology. The interconnectedness of these binary categories is central. For some adolescents, on the verge of entering a homosexual identity, the experience of leaving the category of normalcy and entering the one of deviance is staggering. In her work about persons seriously injured in road accidents, sociologist Ingunn Moser offers valuable insights into another field of displacement into difference. Waking up from the anaesthesia, her informants have to start the process of *becoming* disabled. In this process "one is quite violently displaced from one discursive order to another. One is displaced into disability" (Moser 2003:38). Ingunn Moser uses the concepts *decomposition* and *recomposition* to describe this process. To decompose oneself as a part of "we", and recompose oneself to be one of "the others", can be a hard process. One of the reasons why some adolescents find recomposition as

*a homosexual* so hard seems to be that it is not perceived as a voluntary recomposition. My informants see homosexuality as a core of oneself one has not chosen, but as something you either have to hide or to express. In her study of lesbian identity in Sweden, the ethnologist Pia Lundahl has shown how authenticity and full inclusion of homosexuality in the self-presentation is a demand among young lesbian identified women. This focus on authenticity, which is highly stressed in our society, makes expression the only fully legitimate choice. This is articulated by my informants as well as by the dominating discourses.

## The Necessity of Sexual Identity

Despite the fact that they felt my advertisement was relevant in regard to their life stories (and thus got in touch with me), two of my informants did not have a clear identity as "homosexuals". Jenny was 31 when I interviewed her, and she had been struggling with questions of sexual identity since her teenage years. She had had a few sexual encounters with men and women, and preferred women. She had never been in love with a man, but had been violently in love with women. She had not been in a romantic relationship with either. Jenny was reluctant to claim a lesbian identity, both because she could not imagine combining that identity with the life she was living, and because she was afraid that she imagined the whole thing, and maybe it would pass, as her mother suggested it would. Erik (25), on the other hand, was very clear about his sexual preference for men, which he had been acting on quite excessively. He was, however, as clear about his romantic preference for women. When I asked him whether he saw himself as gay, he answered:

> No, I don't know how I would describe myself. People always want to categorize other people. For me, I have a small problem or dilemma, because I have never been in love with a boy, more attracted to them. But I have always fallen in love with girls. Until this day. But physically I want to be with a boy, but psychologically, or if I think about a relationship, I'd prefer to be with a girl. … something must be totally wrong, at least something is not right.

When I asked Erik later in the interview whether he sees it as negative or positive that he does not fit into clear sexual categories, he answers that he sees it as negative because it shows that he doesn't know himself as well as he should. "If I had known myself well enough, I would have known what I was." The knowledge of and confession of the sexual core, the self, are desperately missed by some of those who are unsure of, or cannot seem to find, this core. For both Jenny and Erik the lack of a distinct and clear-cut sexual identity is seen as a strain, and particularly Jenny seemed to use a lot of time and energy to worry about it.

Together with Erik, Jenny believes one is born with a particular sexual disposition. The problem is that she cannot seem to pin down this disposition in herself. Her disposition doesn't communicate clearly enough, and she is also worried that this communication might be disturbed by external (and thus inauthentic) voices, like her family's prejudices etc. What is the real truth about Jenny? Charles Taylor describes this kind of dilemma in our "cult of authenticity":

> There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for *me* (Taylor 1995:29).

Without the discovery and articulation of one's true self, one also misses the opportunity to "realize the potentiality that is properly

one's own" (Taylor 1995:29). Neither Jenny nor Erik have managed to establish what Jeffrey Weeks (1995) calls a "necessary fiction" about their sexual self. Both missed having a romantic relationship, being a part of a couple, and through this having what they saw as "a life". Without having an identity to put on the table, without knowing which sex they wanted their future partner to inhabit, this did not seem within reach. Erik says that without this "necessary fiction" as a guide for the future storyline, it seems hard to achieve the expected progress in life:

> I am doing okay, but I might not be happy, because something essential is lacking in my life. I am 25 years old, and many of the people I went to school with have got great educations, families, have bought apartments and houses, and from my perspective they must be happy. Because they have something that I don't, which I would like to have. I am in a situation where I don't know if it's the one or the other... but I would like to have a person. And it is my responsibility to find out whom I want. So happiness for me, that's to be happy together with someone. Material stuff doesn't matter, but to have someone to share it with. When I see friends and acquaintances who get houses and jobs and families, it's like they're on an escalator where I am left at the bottom while they reach the top.

Jenny and Erik exemplify that the essentialist understanding of homosexuality is not only problematic for some of those who clearly fit into the deviant category "homosexual", but also for those who do not fit clearly into any of the binary categories. Martin (30) gives voice to a widespread notion when he attacks my use of the Norwegian word *homoseksuell* instead of *homofil* (the widely used term in Norwegian). To him "homophile" underlines that same-sex attraction is mainly about emotions, and he strongly dislikes views of "homosexuals" as overtly sexual. Anne, Nora, Martin and Frank shunned a lesbian/gay identity because it strongly conflicted with the image of the self as (gender-) normal, decent and moral. By opposing the myth of the aggressively sexual homosexual, they also resisted being reduced to their sexuality, resisted *being* their sexuality.

The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs claimed that suicide can always be said to be about solitude:

> People only kill themselves following or under the influence of an unexpected event or condition, be it external or internal (in the body or in the mind), which separates or excludes them from the social milieu and which imposes on them an unbearable feeling of loneliness (Halbwachs 1978:10).

This feeling of loneliness also seems to be part of the entrapment felt by the identity-challenged homosexually inclined adolescent in my study. The dual experience of being reduced to their sexual identity and at the same time not finding recognition for this identity, created vast amounts of loneliness in many of my informants' lives.

In her essay from 1943, *We Refugees*, Hanna Arendt writes about the painful experience around the forced disruption in many Jewish identities (Arendt 1978). The dramatic breach in self-conception many Jews experienced when their Jewishness was transformed from hardly being a difference at all, to becoming a fundamental and deadly difference, seems to be relevant also for other outlaws. *Forced disruption* is a concept which captures the feelings that homosexual love or/and desires aroused in my informants. As adolescents all my informants saw their "homosexuality" as highly involuntary, and they long tried to resist the forced disruption this would imply. Certainly it is also possible to see this kind of disruption as a welcome and exciting possibility, as many adolescents also do. Whether it is possible within our culture to express same-sex desire or same-sex love without any

experience of displacement into difference is yet to be explored. What my informants wanted more than anything was to escape the eyes of the others, the eyes with power to reduce them to outcasts. To be unnoticeable is to survive, as Richard Sennett writes in his book about *Authority*.

> To wear one's normality as a mask, to long for the indifference of the authorities: this leads to the practice of a self-discipline far more rigid than anything the Victorians could have imagined (Sennett 1980:96).

For seriously injured victims of road accidents, or Jews wearing a yellow star, the attention of the authorities is impossible to escape. Many lesbian- and gay-identified adolescent experience the conflict between being "highlighted or invisible" as the Norwegian psychologist Anbjørg Ohnstad calls it (Ohnstad 1999). The longing for indifference, which is often a strong one, does however conflict with the longing for recognition, often an equally strong force.

For my informants the very same sexual identity or notion of homosexuality they initially resisted came to seem necessary for exploring crushes, desires and relationships. They had to start their individual processes of building a lesbian/gay identity that gave room for close erotic and emotional contacts, and at the same time to protect the self against the unwanted elements of this identity. The position of a blameless lesbian/gay identity seems to be connected to inbornness, continuity, flawless gender fulfilment, and a focus on love and family-building rather than sexual desires.

## Ambivalences

In her essay "Extraordinary Homosexuals and the Fear of being Ordinary", literary analyst Biddy Martin argue that within queer theory and the lives of profiled queers we have seen "An enormous fear of ordinariness or normalcy" which has resulted in "superficial accounts of the complex imbrications of sexuality with other aspects of social and psychic life, and in far too little attention to the dilemmas of the average people that we also are" (Martin 1996:70). My material reflects quite the opposite. The informants again and again stress that they are normal, want to live normal lives, and have no wish to challenge gender structures or other structures in our society, except that they want to be able to live peaceful lives just as same-sex lovers do. Since many queer-oriented academics (myself included) assume fixed identities of gender and sexuality mainly to offer limitations and burdens, Martin claims that this has led to "a radical anti-normativity and a romantic celebration of queerness or "homo-ness" as the very demise of current forms of societalization" (Martin 1996:69). In my material it is the "Fear of Being Extraordinary" and the wish for normalcy despite one's (extraordinary and/or deviant) sexuality that dominates. The balancing of a known place in the world – a place they believe will be shattered if they take on a homosexual identity – and the enormous weight and pressure they ascribe to "homosexuality", was for some time a struggle for life for my informants. Frank (45) still yearns for normalcy, and knows to appreciate the everyday signs of it. When I ask him what he thinks is necessary for living a "good gay life" he answers:

> To have a relationship. A stable relationship, that's what I think means the most. But like me and my cohabitant,[3] we live in an apartment [...] and to feel that you can say hello to the other neighbours. They know you live with a guy, but they still say hello and smile. You feel that you are a part of society without having to force your life on somebody. Why should

you absolutely flaunt it to everyone? What means something is that in the society where you live your everyday life, you are accepted as who you are, and where your homosexuality takes second place, if it has any significance at all. It's the safety in living with someone, without it being seen as something special, but being seen in the same way as the heterosexual neighbours downstairs. That is a good life.

The craving for normalcy, and the sometimes harsh statements about those homosexuals who seem deviant in one way or another which several of my informants express, can from a queer perspective obviously be interpreted both as shame and as subjection to heteronormativity. This resistance towards identifying with the minority group is, however, also about resisting the reductionism that the categorization as homosexual often implies. These adolescents refused to let go of their complex identities and identity representations and mainly be seen as homosexuals. This is a resistance to the societal pressure both to pick a sexual identity and stick with it, and to internalize the sexuality system according to the Foucauldian argument: "Power in the modern world operates primarily by way of the normalization, discipline, and regulation of sexuality, by way of norms that are internalized and then begin to appear to be the truth of our selves or subjectivities" (Martin 1996:68). Though most of my informants have developed a lesbian/gay identity in adult life, their adolescent resistance to the homosexual identity they feared their sexual attractions would predict, can be seen as a battle to defend the self. The homosexual identity was not connected to their subjectivities, their ways of knowing themselves and their bodies, or their social identities. The identities they were offered conflicted dramatically with their own subjectivities, and the way they saw themselves in the world (Moser 2003:110f.). The identity also rendered impossible the anticipated future, and limited their feeling of autonomy and agency. By resisting fulfilling stereotypes, by insisting on being something more than a fundamental difference, they tried to hold on to their agency. They tried to cling to the social and symbolic order they knew, and slowly they also tried to bring the new element of their identity – the homosexuality – into this social and symbolic order. Precisely by being gender-normal, decent, and moral *as well as homosexual*, they tried to carve out a new place for themselves in this order.

Along with most lesbian- and gay-identified adolescents, my informants after all *have* managed to turn their lesbian/gay identities into identities for life. Through the years, they have managed to shape selves which allow them to live what they see as good lives, as both complex and autonomous individuals and same-sex lovers. Most of them strongly disagree with constructivist understandings of sexualities. If sexual identity is not inborn, stable and essential, it seems much more open to critique and to demands that homosexuals should give up their deviant ways. Paradoxically, accepting a homosexual identity as an inborn disposition (associated with essentialist views), seem to be both part of the initial crisis and the solution and a way out of the crisis for these informants.

The tension between deadly identities and identities for life remains unsolved in my text. One solution to the dilemmas presented is to continue to work for more acceptance of homosexuality as a valuable way of life, to show adolescents how homosexuality can be part of an identity for many kinds of good lives. Another strategy could be to work to oppose the demand for normalcy, to work to dissolve sexual identities altogether, and thereby remove the disruption that taking on

a homosexual identity currently represents. These two different strategies could also be characterized in Steven Seidman's words: "Whereas gay identity politics aims to normalize being gay, queer politics struggles against normalizing any identity" (Seidman 2001:326). Both these strategies should probably be used to minimize the negative difference that sexual preference implies.

The story of contemporary homosexualities in Scandinavia is not primarily the story of health risks, parasuicides, and public policy programmes. But contemporary homosexualities are about creating meaning from a still marginalized position. My concern has been to document, understand and explain the unhappiness, fear and despair some adolescents experience when they are attracted to, or fall in love with, persons of the same sex. Although these are far from the only feelings arising from same-sex desires, I claim that this unhappiness, fear and despair are not reducible to individual psychology, that they do not only cover general teenage problems, and that they are not imagined obstacles existing only in the heads of these individuals (as quite a few have indicated when I have told them about my project). Despite the fact that most lesbian/gay-identified individuals see major progress regarding tolerance and acceptance, there are still societal structures and narratives about homosexuality that make suicide a relevant solution for some same-sex lovers. Along with all my informants, I hope that the tragic stories of homosexuality will soon be replaced by healthier, happier stories.

*Tone Hellesund*
Researcher
Rokkansenteret
Nygårdsgaten 5
N-5015 Bergen
e-mail Tone.Hellesund@rokkan.uib.no

## Acknowledgements

The Norwegian Research Foundation has financed this work through its Welfare-programme. Nils Gilje, Kirsti Malterud, Per Solvang and two anonymous referees, my colleagues in the group for health-research at the Stein Rokkan Center for social studies, my colleagues Tor Folgerø, Hilde Danielsen and Gry Heggli, the participants in the Network for lesbian and gay research in Oslo, the organizers and participants at the session "Kulturell avvänjning" during the 30th Nordic Congress of Ethnology and Folklore Studies have all offered valuable critique and suggestions.

## Notes

1 Central and frequently mentioned studies in regard to homosexuality and parasuicide are Garofalo *et al.* 1998 and Remafedi *et al.* 1998. Lately the psychologist Ritch C. Savin-Williams in particular has questioned the methods and findings of these and related studies. His main arguments against all these studies are: (1) The sample of adolescents in studies about homosexuality is highly problematic because most "homosexuals" are not "out" as adolescents. Supported by several studies, Savin-Williams argues that early coming-out is linked to a complex set of problems, and that the sample of adolescent homosexuals represents a highly biased selection from the segment of the population later possible to identify as homosexuals. (2) The second major objection has to do with the self-report used in most studies on suicidal behaviour. Savin-Williams' own studies indicate that we see a much higher misreport concerning parasuicide among homosexually identified adolescents than in heterosexually inclined adolescents. This in itself seems to be an extremely interesting finding which needs to be further explored. Following Savin-Williams I believe that it is an open question whether more adolescents living "lesbian/gay/queer lives" try to take their own lives than the overall adolescent population. Despite this, there are not many lesbian/gay/queer youth experiencing aspects of their "homosexuality" as highly problematic, some even to the extent that they prefer to try to take their own lives rather than going into adult lives as "gay".

2 Despite my limited material I want to suggest that on this issue we see a shift from one gay generation to another. The older segment of my informants had a lot more to say, and had a lot more negative feelings towards gender deviance or other forms of deviant homosexuals, than the younger segment. Some of the youngest ones did not seem to quite understand the problem I presented.

3 In Norway *samboer*, cohabitant, is the most

commonly used term to describe one's partner in a non-married love relationship. *Samboer*/co-habitant is gender-neutral and can also be used for live-ins who are not lovers (like sisters or a roommate), but most frequently it describes a live-in lover.

## References


Anderssen, Norman and Hellesund, Tone 2007: Heteronormative Consensus in the Norwegian Same-Sex Adoption Debate. *Journal of Homosexuality.*

Arendt, Hannah 1978: *The Jew as Pariah. Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age.* New York: Grove Press.

Becker, Gay 1997: *Disrupted Lives. How People Create Meaning in a Chaotic World.* London: University of California Press.

Foucault, Michel 1976/1990: *The History of Sexuality.* London: Penguin Books.

Garofalo, R., Wolf, R. C., Kessel, S., Palfrey, J., and DuRant, R. 1998: The association between health risk behaviours and sexual orientation among a school-based sample of adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 101, 895–902.

Halbwachs, Maurice 1978: *The Causes of Suicide.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hegna, Kristinn, Kristiansen, Hans Wiggo and Moseng, Bera 1999: *Levekår og livskvalitet blant lesbiske kvinner og homofile menn* [Life-conditions and life-quality among lesbian women and gay men]. NOVA report 1999; 1.

Hellesund, Tone 2006: En kommentar til forskning om selvmord og homofili [Research on suicide and homosexuality. A commentary]. *Suicidologi* no. 2, vol. 11, p. 23.

Lundahl, Pia 1998: *Lesbisk identitet* [Lesbian Identity]. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag.

Maalouf, Amin 2000: *On Identity.* London: The Harvill Press.

Martin, Biddy 1996: *Femininity Played Straight. The Significance of Being Lesbian.* New York: Routledge.

Moser, Ingunn 2003: *Road Traffic Accidents. The Ordering of Subjects, Bodies and Disability.* Diss., University of Oslo, Faculty of Arts.

Ohnstad, Anbjørg 1999: Vite for å forstå – homofili i psykologien [Knowledge for understanding – homosexuality in psychology]. *Tidsskrift for norsk psykologforening* vol. 35 (6).

Plummer, Ken 1995: *Telling sexual stories. Power, change and social worlds.* London/New York: Routledge.

Remafedi, G., French, S., Story, M., Resnick, M., and Blum, R. 1998: The relationship between suicide risk and sexual orientation. Results of a population-based study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88, 57–60.

Rødje, Kjetil 2000: *Viljens triumf.* Master's thesis in sociology, University of Oslo.

Seidman, Steven 2001: From Identity to Queer Politics: Shifts in Normative Heterosexuality and the Meaning of Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies* vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 321–328.

Sennett, Richard 1980: *Authority*, New York: Norton.

Taylor, Charles 1995: *The Ethics of Authenticity.* Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press.

*VG* 27 August 2000 [newspaper], journalist Kristin M. Hauge.

Weeks, Jeffrey 1995: *Invented Moralities. Sexual Values in an Age of Uncertainty.* New York: Columbia University Press.

# Transplantation with Kidneys from Marginal Donors

## Risk Patients' Informed Consent to Different Treatment Alternatives

By Markus Idvall and Susanne Lundin

### Introduction

In autumn 1998 the Department of Kidney Medicine and Transplantation at the University Hospital MAS in Malmö (UMAS) began to use a new kind of patient information. It was addressed to patients waiting to receive a transplant of a kidney from a deceased donor. The remarkable thing about the new information, in the form of a three-page letter, was that the department offered its patients the opportunity to have their names on two different waiting lists for transplantation simultaneously: one waiting list for kidneys from "satisfactory donors" (*fullgoda donatorer*) and one for kidneys from "marginal donors" (*marginella donatorer*). The department's offer of organs from "marginal donors" was a way to cope with the increasing transplantation needs and at the same time tackle the chronic shortage of organs that had been a problem for several years. The new information and the alternative waiting list, however, were in stark contrast to accepted practice both in Sweden and in the rest of Scandinavia. Until now the hospitals had carefully avoided making patients perform the type of evaluation that the department in Malmö introduced. The information to patients on the waiting list explicitly stated something that the general public did not know of, and something partly denied by transplantation workers in general: that the range of organs on offer from deceased donors was not just limited but also varied greatly in quality.

The intention was that this letter, signed by the head of the department, would be spread through the different dialysis units of the southern health care region to patients waiting for a transplant. The written information was also to be supplemented with oral information from doctors at the dialysis unit and from transplant coordinators (Persson 1999a:15). After receiving both written and oral information, the patient was expected to state whether he or she accepted or declined an organ from a marginal donor. The letter to the kidney patients had thereby taken the step from patient information to informed consent.

The issue of informed consent goes back to the Nuremberg trials after the Second World War and the Nazis' inhumane research on people in the concentration camps. In the 1960s the Helsinki Declaration became the fundamental ethical document steering how medical research should be performed on patients. In Sweden in the 1990s the issue of informed consent was discussed as regards how medical treatments should be given in the health service; this meant that the question of informed consent no longer concerned only research but also everyday clinical practice in hospitals. The Swedish Health and Medical Services Act had long since stipulated that the health service should inform its patients about their health status and about possible treatments (SFS 1982:763), but the question of how the actual consent should be expressed in connection with the medical information given to the patients was still not sufficiently elucidated or regulated (SOU 1997:154:51–60, 69f.). Against the background of this ongoing discussion about patients' rights rather than the obligations of the health service, the way the transplant unit at UMAS informed about marginal donors and received consent from the patients on the waiting list at the end of the 1990s can be seen as an appropriate and up-to-date manner of applying the new ideas that were circulating, about patients' participation in their own treatment (SOU 1997:154:290). In the Swedish transplantation community, however, the new procedure for informed consent provoked strong reactions. The ap-

proach of the Malmö department differed radically from that of other transplantation clinics in Sweden. The criticism came from public authorities, other transplant units in the country, researchers, and kidney patients. The main objection was to the new information procedure, the informed consent which meant that kidney patients themselves would have an influence on the type of treatment they should receive – an organ from a "marginal donor" or from a "satisfactory donor". In a letter to the clinic at UMAS, dated 4 November 1998, the National Board of Health and Welfare urged the clinic to return to the established procedure with just one waiting list.

> We are well aware of the discussion going on in Sweden and the rest of the world about the results achieved by the transplantation of organs from marginal/suboptimal donors. We realize that it can be difficult to decide whether organs from an elderly or not perfectly healthy donor are good enough for transplantation or if one should refrain from saving the organs. It is the duty of doctors, [however,] in accordance with science and tested experience, on the basis of available data and in full knowledge of the need for organs for transplantation, to decide whether the organs should be used or not and also to allocate the organs among the patients awaiting transplantation. It is also the duty of doctors to decide whether to use one or both kidneys to achieve sufficient kidney function. The National Board of Health and Welfare considers it unsuitable to leave this to be decided by patients awaiting transplantation and to require an answer from the patients in question. Laymen cannot reasonably make an objective assessment of the detailed information about the results of transplantation with kidneys from marginal donors.

During a hearing in spring 1999 the National Board of Health and Welfare repeated its criticism of the way the transplant unit practised informed consent with its patients. At this meeting there were also bioethicists and representatives of the national kidney patients' association, who expressed critical views of the specific case (*Nytt från Socialstyrelsen* 1999). The transplant unit at UMAS did not give way, however, but referred to the new national rules about increased patient influence which applied from 1 January 1999, and which had been preceded by a government bill tabled in parliament in September 1998 (Regeringens proposition 1998/99:4, pp. 21–34; Persson 1999a:15f.).[1] This bill from autumn 1998, which was thus published almost two months before the National Board of Health and Welfare wrote its critical letter to the UMAS clinic, established the principles of patients' right to information about and participation in their own treatment – principles that in turn went back to an earlier bill, tabled in June 1998, and to a government inquiry from 1997 (Regeringens proposition 1997/98:189; SOU 1997:154). During much of the 1990s, the tendency in the public discourse about health care had been that patients in the future should be given increased opportunity for codetermination in their own treatment. Despite the new national regulations, and despite the fact that the National Board of Health and Welfare had previously sanctioned the ongoing development towards greater influence for patients (Regeringens proposition 1998/99:4, p. 22), it now disapproved of the transplant unit's information letter and its method for obtaining consent from patients on the waiting list.

What was the conflict between the transplant unit and its critics really about? Did the criticism arise solely as a consequence of the very novelty of the patient information and the patients' subsequent stance? To a certain extent this may be the case. However, we think that the differences were also due to more fundamental factors. Superficially, the critics of the reform seemed to be opposed to the way the informed consent worked, or more

exactly, how they assumed that it worked. At a deeper level, however, it seems to have been a conflict of values. When the clinic in Malmö introduced a new procedure for informed consent, it challenged a set of moral values linked to the relationship between patient and doctor.

The aim of our article is to investigate and explain in cultural terms the oppositions that came to light when the department at UMAS introduced its new procedure for informed consent.[2] The ambition is to use this empirical case to shed light on a number of prominent societal processes concerning the interaction between the public sphere which is institutional health care on the one hand and individuals' – read: patients' – private life-world on the other. The focus is on a discussion of the risk society and biomedical risk culture, that is, a society whose culture creates more and more strategies for handling risk. The concept refers to the cultural process that shapes reflexive individuals who are concerned with tackling the negative consequences of industrial society. Today's late modernity is characterized by increased demands that patients should assume responsibility for their disease and treatment, while care providers are simultaneously expected to become more competent at risk management in various clinical situations (Beck 1992, 1995:1–35; Rose 1999; Vallgårda 2003; cf. Lupton 2003; Sachs 1998). Our assumption is that the transplant unit at UMAS represents one such emerging risk culture and that it is these patterns of values and practices that the critique from the National Board of Health and Welfare is really about. To understand what took place at the transplant unit in Malmö, it is necessary to start from the global context from which the biomedical risk culture arose (Beck 1992:36–50). We therefore begin the next section with a discussion of the global risk system with which the risk culture is connected. We then turn to the specific Swedish context to examine the interaction between clinic and patient. We go on to show how individual patients managed personal risk in connection with informed consent. We round off by discussing the consequences of the conflict.

The method we use is an analysis of the written information that the department sent to its patients on the waiting list for transplants in 1998, and of the criticism of this information in written documents. We have also interviewed 22 kidney patients, 15 men and seven women aged 61–74, who were on the waiting list at the time of the interview or who had been on it. All these people had received information about transplants of kidneys from marginal donors and had stated whether or not they would accept a kidney of this type.[3]

## The Global Risk System

In his book *Risk Society* (1992) the sociologist Ulrich Beck discusses the concepts of risk culture, risk system, and risk positions. Virtually all technical advances, according to Beck, are characterized by an inherent duality. They are often the foundation for a society's welfare, but they can simultaneously have negative consequences in the form of various risks. This is a complexity that has been described in terms of opportunities and threats, and which has been applied, for example, to discussions of nuclear power, space exploration, and not least biomedical research. In every case it is a matter of finding a balance that maintains hopes of welfare (possibility) without the price being too high (threat) in the form of things like pollution, international crises, or reduced human value and curtailed human rights.[4] The process which this balancing act

involves derives from a risk mentality and entails a series of renegotiations of old norms and action systems.

During the years at the end of the 1990s and the start of the 2000s the work of kidney transplants had developed into precisely the kind of global risk system described by Ulrich Beck. Kidney transplants took place in the form of successful and routine treatments all over the world. The success was based on vigorous development in biotechnology over a couple of decades, which had led to the advancement and refinement of medicine in several different spheres: removal of organs, storage of organs outside the body, anti-rejection medicines, and so on.

The success of biotechnology, however, had not been able to do anything about the shortage of organs. That had prevailed for a long time. In fact, the scarcity of organs was more acute than ever because the technology had been developed and made it possible in theory to treat more patients. One way to deal with this shortage was to seek alternatives for expanding the pool of donors. These efforts ranged widely. They comprised both clinical applications and preclinical research. In some countries, including Sweden, relatively many live kidney donors were used to increase the number of possible transplants. In operating on the donor it was necessary to break the rule of thumb which said that no injury should be caused to a healthy person. At the same time, it made the gift from one living person to another into the kind of altruistic act with which transplant activity is so intimately connected, and in which it originates to a certain extent (cf. Fox & Swazey 1992:38f., 2002:xiv). Research was also done on xenotransplants, or the possibility of using animals as organ donors. Here, however, it had been increasingly clear for some time that there was a risk of virus infection, so the research world was looking for alternative spheres. One such sphere was stem cell research on human embryos. Both xenotransplantation and stem cells, unlike the more clinical efforts at expansion, received a great deal of attention in the media. They were associated with both possibilities and risks (Hansson 2003; Ideland 2002; Idvall 2003:141ff.).

Around the turn of the millennium, the global risk system for kidney transplants was diverse and difficult to survey. The time was definitely past when the technology existed solely in rich countries in the West. International transplantation activity covered a great many different societies and cultures with very dissimilar value systems. On the global arena there were major differences in the outlook on humanity, which had consequences for who was defined as a donor, how transplants could take place, and even whether such operations could be permitted at all. At the same time, the global transplantation system was close-knit, with cross-border contacts between different players. It was intimately associated with a multitude of what Beck (1992:23) calls *risk positions* arising from specific local contexts and individual destinies, and connected to the roles as both organ recipient and donor.

The interest in transplanting kidneys from so-called marginal donors grew considerably during these years at the end of the 1990s and the start of the 2000s. Research on how old and damaged kidneys function as transplants was being intensively pursued (Choo 1999; Davis & Marsh 1999; Mange *et al.* 2001; Ojo *et al.* 2001; Pokorna *et al.* 1997). Transplantation units in the USA and Europe simultaneously stretched the limits for who could be considered suitable organ donors. The boundaries for defining marginal donors varied, but the aim was the same everywhere: to extend the

existing pool of donors. Age was the most fundamental criterion for defining a marginal donor. The transplant unit at UMAS was one of the clinics with the oldest marginal donors in the world. Here all deceased donors over the age of 70 year were labelled as marginal (Omnell Persson *et al.* 2002:1497; Persson & Omnell Persson 2002:109; Örn 2001:3765). At other transplantation clinics in Europe, in Holland and Italy for example, the boundary for marginal donors ran somewhere between 55 and 65 years (Battaglia 2004; De Rosa *et al.* 2004; Faenza *et al.* 2004; Snoeijs *et al.* 2006). At different clinics in the USA the limit for marginal kidney donors was 55 years. These included Stanford, for example, where double kidney transplants were performed using kidneys from donors who were over 55 (Persson 1999b:1). Even *low* age could define a donor as marginal. In other words, children who had died were used as donors at a number of hospitals (Persson 2001:2; Satterthwaite *et al.* 1997).

Another main criterion for marginal donors concerned certain forms of chronic diseases. These diseases which deceased donors could have had during their lives included diabetes, high blood pressure, certain infections, and so on (Fox & Swazey 2002:xv; Persson 1999b:1).

Further criteria for the definition of marginal donors could concern how the kidneys had been retrieved from the dead donor (irrespective of the donor's age or health-related background). A specific form of acquisition was kidneys from *non-heart-beating donors* (NHBD). At the transplantation clinic in Pittsburgh a programme was started in 1992 for transplantation with NHBD kidneys, in order to use more organs than had been possible when using only donors who had died of cerebral infarction ("brain-dead") (Fox & Swazey 2002:xii). Since it was necessary to wait a few minutes after the heart had stopped beating, the concept meant that the kidneys had to manage without the donor's blood circulation just before the operation was performed. This "warm ischaemia time" for the kidneys was a significant factor for the quality of the organs. A long ischaemia time entailed the risk of impaired organ function in the recipient (Bäckman & Fehrman-Ekholm 2002:97).[5] NHBD kidneys were later the subject of discussion as to whether they really were marginal because of their prolonged ischaemia time (Bos 2005; Knight *et al.* 1999; Persson 2001:3; Sells 1999:1324; Snoeijs *et al.* 2006; Weber *et al.* 2002). But the kidneys in question were above all associated with a number of ethical dilemmas concerning the handling of the donors. "The use of non-heart-beating donors", according to the social scientists Renée C. Fox and Judith P. Swazey (2002:xii),

> has evoked considerable debate over how irreversible the loss of pulmonary and cardiac function is; how long the interval should be after the complete cessation of circulatory function before death is declared; whether giving drugs to these donors to minimize the effects of warm ischaemia on organ viability before they are pronounced dead could hasten or cause their death; and whether the planned terminal management of non-heart-beating donors is compatible with the humane and respectful treatment of dying persons and their families.

The efforts to stretch the limits for donors were inspired by the need to provide kidneys to patients on the waiting list. But when these efforts accumulated, it also raised questions about who was to receive the marginal kidneys. What categories of potential recipients should these marginal organs be matched with? Some people thought that kidney patients who were relatively young and healthy should be given marginal kidneys. This was a way to minimize the risks, in that the recipient, unlike the

donor, was young and healthy and had good chances to retain a transplanted kidney. Others thought the opposite, that it was sick and old patients who should be given the marginal organs. Although this would mean that the risks were maximized when both donors and recipients were risky, one could simultaneously expect a more effective use of the scarce resource that kidneys constituted, since the marginal organs would probably not function as long, irrespective of the recipient. These kidneys were thus not suitable for younger and healthier recipients who could expect a relatively long survival compared with older and sicker recipients (Baskin-Bey *et al.* 2005; Keith *et al.* 2004).[6]

Another discussion provoked by the new risk donors concerned how much the patients should participate when marginal organs were matched with recipients. Did the patients need to be involved in this matching of appropriate recipients of the risky transplants? Or was it perhaps just doctors who should have the responsibility for this selection of recipients (cf. Sells 1999)? Usually the potential recipients were neither informed nor asked for consent, which meant that marginal organs were transplanted without the patients' knowledge. If the treatment was successful, no problems arose. But if the transplant failed, the patient could ask questions to which there was no adequate answer. Why had the organ stopped working? Was it my own fault? Or was it just bad luck? When the transplant unit at UMAS decided to make the system transparent, it was one of the few places in the world which obtained informed consent before using a marginal organ (cf. Knight *et al.* 1999).

The differences between countries and regions in the information given to patients shows that the global risk system gave rise to local strategies of distinction for managing the risks associated with marginal organs. There is a great deal to suggest that transplantations raise existential issues. Irrespective of whether it is a fully satisfactory or a marginal organ, the fact that the body's boundaries are transgressed can challenge the individual's self-understanding (Youngner 1996; Åkesson 1997; Lundin & Idvall 2003). Another specific feature of transplants with marginal organs is that people who undergo such a treatment do not just reflect on the consequences of this incorporation but also risk identifying themselves with the quality of the organ – in other words, that they feel marginalized and inferior to other patients. Parallel to the divergent information processes, patients could thus develop different kinds of self-understanding depending on which country or region they live in.

## Risk as Possibility

> Are patients willing to receive such a kidney? Are patients prepared to accept a slightly elevated risk in order to shorten the time waiting for a transplantation? Don't different patients have different views? (Persson 1999a:15)

These questions were asked at a meeting in autumn 1998 between representatives of the transplant unit in Malmö and nephrologists from the southern health care region. Statistics presented at the meeting showed that the kidneys which the unit had transplanted from marginal donors had functioned less well and shown shorter survival rates in the receiving body than kidneys transplanted from optimal or satisfactory donors. The statistics were telling, and the doctors now wanted not only to make the patients realize that kidneys from different donors differed in quality. The patients should also take part in the procedure of selecting recipients that the unit initiated as soon as an organ became available. Through

the letter of information that would soon be distributed to dialysis units in the region, the doctors wanted patients to be able to make a decision about the set of risks that the doctors themselves had identified after a few years of performing transplants with kidneys from old and sick donors (Omnell Persson *et al.* 2002:1497; Persson 1999a:15).

In the letter, which was written after the doctors' meeting in autumn 1998, a great deal of space was devoted to the risks associated with marginal kidneys. The message was that transplanted marginal kidneys would in all probability function less well than kidneys from satisfactory donors. There were signs, for example, that the "creatinine value" – patients with kidney failure learn the basic principles of this measure from their many visits to doctors – could rise to "a slightly higher level" and thus foreshadow poor kidney function and ultimately ill health, which was the last thing these patients wanted.[7] The limited functioning time of the new kidney was another problem that these patients could encounter. The limitations meant that kidneys could fail to start immediately after transplantation and that they could stop working long before transplanted optimal organs generally did. It could not be ruled out that a person given a marginal kidney would be obliged to "return to dialysis" after just three or four years because the transplanted organ was no longer working, that is, to a form of treatment that many kidney patients see as a serious impediment to their quality of life.

At the same time – and this was the basic idea of the letter – the new organ with its probably reduced functional level was better than no kidney function at all. Kidneys from marginal donors were thus an intermediate form between transplantation from an optimal donor and continued dialysis. As transplants, the marginal kidney would always be just "second best".[8] But as an alternative to dialysis it was a superior form of treatment. The various dialysis treatments available could never purify the body as efficiently as a well-functioning transplant in the body. Transplantation also meant, in most cases, a possibility to live a more active and less restricted life than when needing regular dialysis.[9]

Based on this condition that a transplant was better than continued dialysis, both medically and psychosocially, the letter of information also had a discussion of risk and waiting time. A long wait was described as a threat to all patients. "The waiting time for a kidney transplant", as stated in the third and fourth line of the letter, "is on average about two years at present and risks becoming even longer." It was pointed out that the danger of the long waiting time was particularly serious for older patients, who ran the risk:

> that they might not be offered any transplant at all before their general status and any other diseases had the result that they could no longer remain on the waiting list for transplants.

The length of the waiting time was related in the letter to different strategies of choice and personal expectations of what the future could involve. Those on the waiting list who nevertheless found their dialysis "fully acceptable" should, according to the letter, contemplate a transplantation with a kidney from a satisfactory donor, but they would thereby risk "a longer waiting time". The "possibility" of "a shorter waiting time" was correspondingly associated with the acceptance of a transplant of a marginal kidney. This alternative, in this context a response in the affirmative, was quite simply the fastest alternative, as the letter described it. The clinic thus promised indirectly that the extension of

the pool of donors, which was necessary to achieve shorter waiting times, would not take place unless the individual patients gave their permission for it. A kind of patient democracy was thus being built up.

With the risk information, the department thus gave its patients the chance to break a development that they perhaps did not wish. At the same time, the department used the expression "marginal donor" not just in terms of *risk* in the letter but also in terms of *chance* and *possibility*. This orientation towards the more positively charged concepts was particularly clear at the end of the letter:

> A condition for our acceptance of a marginal donor is that we as transplantation doctors assess that there is a *good chance* of a successful transplantation. If the donor's kidney function is doubtful, one can choose to transplant both the donor's kidneys to one and the same patient. This increases the *possibility* of achieving sufficient kidney function (our italics).

The department's information expressed the way a risk society handles threats – presented here as a scenario with both risks and opportunities. The talk of marginal donors indicated several serious problems, but was primarily intended to activate the patients, to make them aware of an alternative solution to a problem that seemed insoluble as long as it was not mentioned. Risk as possibility was the attitude that was to be created in the patients.

## Patient Response and Responsibility

The letter was accompanied by a separate slip on which patients were asked to inform the department whether or not they would accept a kidney from a marginal donor, by completing and signing the form. Usually the response was returned after the kidney patients had received both written and oral information. Occasionally, however, the response was given without the patients having had any oral contact with doctors about the matter. One of our male interviewees, who was positively inclined to a marginal kidney, remembered for example that he "thought about it for thirty seconds at most" and then handed in the form to the dialysis clinic without having talked to his doctor.

Sometimes patients gave oral, but not written, responses to the clinic. This approach occurred chiefly among those who declined a kidney from a marginal donor. Often this answer was given when the patient met a doctor at the transplant unit. The fact that those who declined gave their answer in this less formal way than those who accepted is an indication that the department was primarily interested in documenting positive responses. No one was to be given a kidney from a marginal donor without having completed the form attached to the letter. A no to a marginal donor, on the other hand, could in many cases be a temporary answer; it could be changed to a yes after further waiting time had elapsed for the individual patient. A man of about sixty whom we interviewed, for example, had been negative a year or so earlier. During the interview it emerged that he had adopted a new position: "I could take one [a kidney] from an older person. Not too old."

The patients' responses – in writing or orally – became an active part in the treatment of each patient at the department. Unlike other clinics in Sweden, the positive or negative responses were to be an important factor when doctors, transplantation coordinators, and others matched recipients with organs (Machado 1996:68ff.). The information about marginal donors thus functions, in the words of the sociologist Nikolas Rose (1999:74), as a kind of technology for making people responsible, and ultimately this led to a new division of responsibility between doctor and

patient (see also Vallgårda 2003:15, 163). The letter in itself was a kind of appeal to the patients to be aware of the risks and to be responsible for their own treatment (cf. Vallgårda 2003:154f., 160f.). Parallel to this process where the patient was involved, doctors were also made responsible. It was their duty to translate into practice the picture of the care situation painted in the letter.

Being able to choose between different alternatives for one's own treatment was mostly associated with something positive both by those who said yes and by those who said no to marginal donors. In both cases thoughts went to a form of deliberate actions which showed that one had control over one's own situation and one's own body. A person became a responsible and reflexive individual who did not deny his or her disease by failing to acquire information. Parallel to the responsible attitude, however, there was also a longing to evade assuming responsibility for one's own health care. It can be an advantage to be "blissfully unaware" of the kidney you get, said a man who had agreed to accept a marginal kidney and at the time of the interview was still waiting for a transplant. Knowing what kind of kidney you have received can be a burden, as one of our female informants also confirmed. Throughout the interview she had been favourable to the type of patient information that tells what kind of kidney you get. At the end of the interview, however, she began to reflect on the relationship between this knowledge and the expected quality of the kidney. She herself had received a kidney from a satisfactory donor and thought it was important that she had been told that it was "a very fine kidney". She added that if she had been given "a worse kidney" she would not have wanted to know this. Although she had said earlier in the interview that she was positively disposed to the information, she now explained that health care staff perhaps should not "say too much". Knowing that one has received an inferior kidney would only worry the individual, she felt.

We were able to detect such anxiety about the quality of the transplanted organ in some of our informants who, after having accepted a kidney from a marginal donor, were given an organ from a deceased donor whose age was on the borderline for classification as marginal. In these isolated cases the anxiety seemed to have to do with the fact that the recipients themselves had one of the complicating diseases that defined a marginal donor. In this way these people were transformed, through the definition in the letter of information, into suitable matching objects – but also into risk patients.

## Matching

When we met Gerhard for the interview he was waiting to receive a transplant. He had said yes to a kidney from a marginal donor, and during our conversation he declared very firmly that the organ was coming from an "older person". When we brought up the disease criterion he dismissed it.

> I haven't heard them say anything about taking marginal kidneys from people with diabetes or high blood pressure. I think that a marginal kidney should be from a healthy person.

Gerhard's wife, who was present throughout the interview, likewise refused to believe that dead donors could have diabetes. If this was the case, at least it should not affect the recipient of the donated kidney. She said outright:

> We don't want to get any more diseases than we already have. It's terrible to have diabetes. Those people on dialysis who have diabetes feel much worse than others.

High age, but not disease, was a factor on which Gerhard and his wife adopted a position when Gerhard said yes to a marginal kidney. It was thus only half of the department's definition of marginal donor that received attention when Gerhard and his wife together discussed the possibility of accepting a marginal organ. For Gerhard, who will soon be seventy, it felt natural to consider age. In contrast, the disease criterion was not something that Gerhard had thought about, despite the fact that he himself had a long history of serious diseases. If he were to receive a new kidney, it would be his second kidney transplant. He had had the first about thirty years earlier after having undergone dialysis for a couple of years. This kidney functioned for a long time, but he was finally forced to go through a major operation because an aortic hernia had been discovered. The transplanted kidney did not withstand the strenuous operation, and Gerhard had to return to dialysis. Gerhard's illness meant that it was difficult for him to get a place on the waiting list for a kidney transplant. Not all the doctors thought that he would manage a new transplantation. He was nevertheless keen to have another transplant, and he declared in the interview that he had "pushed" to get his name on the waiting list. His persistence eventually brought results and his request was granted.

Gerhard's story illustrates not just the type of risk patient that transplant surgeons increasingly encounter when selecting patients for the waiting list or for transplantation. Gerhard's way of handling the information about the alternative waiting list with marginal organs also agrees with a general attitude in the interview material. In talking about the awaited organ, most of our informants chose to confine the definition of marginal donors to the age criterion, while the disease criterion was filtered out. For example, when we asked them to explain what a marginal donor means, most of them replied with words that drew attention to the criterion of high age: "elderly", "older donor", "older kidney", "older person", "over-age", "not like a new one", "aged". Some also chose to underline the primacy of the age criterion by explaining, as Gerhard and his wife did, that the doctor they had spoken to had not said anything about disease.

The disease criterion in the letter of information had virtually disappeared from the informants' consciousness. How could this happen? To reach an understanding of the phenomenon it is necessary to examine the context to which the letter belonged. It was only one of several information channels. There were in addition a number of more or less informative conversations between patients and health care staff. The written information was the most formal part of the department's contacts with the patients, a material expression of the structure of medical knowledge and power that every patient encounters. This document formulated the clinic's rules for the allocation of organs. The oral information had a more situational character, and here one could expect that a significant part of the policy statement in the written information was conveyed. At the same time, the oral information was a negotiation between two or more persons, between doctor and patient/next-of-kin. In this negotiation there could be shifts away from the basic policy.

Ignoring the disease criterion is an example of this kind of rationalizing shift. It was a process whereby the biological matching of the donor's organ with a recipient was accompanied by a kind of cultural matching. This matching presupposed that patients who had said yes to a kidney from a marginal donor of-

ten perceived themselves as "old" or "elderly" at the time, but less often as "sick" (other than being kidney patients). By being registered on the waiting list for transplantation they had shown that they were "in reasonable form" or "in good health". The disease criterion was in a way superfluous since it did not agree with the patients' self-image. Patients who said no to kidneys from marginal donors correspondingly had a tendency to regard themselves as not being sufficiently old and sick to be able to agree to the specific offer. The doctors, for their part, may have undercommunicated the disease criterion to avoid touching on a subject that must be rather sensitive for someone awaiting a transplantation, a matter concerning contraindications rather than justifications for this transplantation: that diseases can be spread via the transplanted organ if it is not adequately checked. Talking about disease, in the doctors' view, could be more of a hindrance than a help in this dialogue when a patient has to be persuaded of the possibility to get back to a complete life with the aid of a transplantation.

It becomes even clearer that it is a cultural process that can be called matching with the envisaged donor if we consider the less frequent situations where the full and adequate definition of marginal donor is used. This definition, taking in both disease and age, was stated above all by the informants who had some kind of complication themselves, in other words, when their self-image included both characteristics. A man with diabetes whom we interviewed, for example, could identify without difficulty the two main criteria for marginal donors:

> A marginal donor can have a certain disease and can be over 70 years old. Being over 70 didn't matter, but they may have had something like I have.

It is difficult to say to what extent the informants really were unaware of the disease criterion. It seemed to be most common that they toned down this information; this is borne out by the way most of them did not protest against the disease criterion when they were asked directly by us. Some actually called to mind that they had heard it mentioned. Some, however, objected to the idea that disease should be an appropriate characteristic of a marginal donor. One man, for example, felt that the designation "elderly" agreed well with what was meant. He added: "Marginal donor is too negative". Another male informant likewise reacted to the word "marginal" and refused to associate it with disease: "I don't know why it [the kidney] should be called that [marginal]. It's better to say an old kidney, it's more honest and to the point."

## A Step Backwards?

In 2000 the transplant unit at UMAS revised its letter of information about marginal donors as a consequence of the criticism levelled against the reform. The letter retained its basic structure, but with some additions and rearrangements, which showed how they had heeded the issues of risk and responsibility that the National Board of Health and Welfare and others had taken up. For example, the letter had a clearer target group than before. Although it was still handed to all dialysis patients on the waiting list for transplantation, there was now also a distinct turning point in the middle of the text, consisting of two short new paragraphs which considered the potential kidney recipients' varying need for "long-term functioning" in the new organ, one paragraph in normal type and one in italics:

> The need for long-term functioning in a transplanted kidney differs, partly because of differences in expected survival for the patient. A young patient

with a long expected survival should not, on medical grounds, be transplanted with a kidney from a marginal donor, since it increases the risk of needing a retransplantation (transplantation a second or third time). Whether or not a patient is to be offered a transplant of a kidney from a marginal donor is a medical decision that is taken jointly by the transplant surgeon and the patient's nephrologist.

*This letter of information is given to all patients who are in question for transplantation with a kidney from a deceased donor. The rest of this letter, however, is especially aimed at those patients who can be offered transplantation with a kidney from a marginal donor.*

Some of the criticism against the new procedure for information and consent at the UMAS transplant unit had been based on a worry that the "wrong" patients on the waiting list – that is, the relatively young patients – would register an interest in marginal kidneys and thus receive this type of organ (*Nytt från Socialstyrelsen* 1999; Nordstedt 1999:8). With the new information geared more to the target group, the department in future covered itself against this kind of criticism.

The target group of the letter had become more distinct, but it was still not stated explicitly that the envisaged recipients of marginal organs were the relatively old and sick patients on the waiting list. Instead the sentence quoted above, "Whether or not a patient should be offered transplantation with a kidney from a marginal donor is a medical decision taken jointly by the transplant surgeon and the patient's nephrologist", had been given a key position in the information text. It was stated here as clearly as could be that no patient could decide alone whether he or she should receive a kidney from a marginal donor, if the National Board of Health and Welfare or anyone else should have imagined that. Moreover, the sentence reinforced a formulation in a previous paragraph which also clearly stressed that doctors had the main responsibility in this context. This was taken verbatim from the original letter:

A condition for our acceptance of a marginal donor is that we as transplantation doctors assess that there is a good chance of a successful transplantation.

The revision of the letter thus seems to have meant that the radical patient role that the department had first signalled, which had the consequence that patients' personal wishes had become an active part in the selection of organ recipients, took a step backwards. The information part was retained, however, which meant that the statement of possible risks was unchanged. The department's efforts to achieve informed patients were maintained. The point in the information which was affected concerned the patients' personal responsibility. The written information was no longer general but aimed at a vague category which was defined in terms of what it did not include, namely, the younger patients on the waiting list. The aim that *all* patients should have an opportunity to influence their own treatment had thus been toned down. In the future the emphasis was on the information rather than on the consent.

How much participant patienthood was challenged by the modification of the letter is difficult to say. When we compare the interviews with the people who had received the information about marginal donors before and after the revision in 2000, we see no differences between these two categories as regards their perceptions of the situation of choice in which they found themselves. This probably has to do with the fact that the clinic, even before the revision, had made a selection in that the doctors also gave oral information to certain patients. The written information was geared to all patients on the

waiting list, but through the oral information it was in fact just a narrower group of patients who felt affected by the current information.

Despite the revision, then, the new patient information remained a technique that caused shifts in the distribution of responsibility between doctors and patients. The doctors had entered into a more negotiating than deciding position compared with the time before the introduction of the information, which meant, among other things, an increased obligation to listen to the patient (Frank 1995). The relatively old and sick patients had been given and had assumed a greater responsibility for decisions than before, which simultaneously clarified their position as active consumers of health care. What we see is the emergence of a new moral practice in the Swedish health service, a new culture of care. On the one had we have the doctors who have traditionally had the preferential right of medical interpretation, but now increasingly adopt a listening position to find out the patients' personal experiences and needs. On the other hand we have the patients who make personal interpretations of the medical information they have received and then make strategic choices (cf. Nordgren 2003).

The situation at the UMAS transplant unit thus implemented parts of the new legislation on increased patient influence (Regeringens proposition 1998/1999:4). In addition, the local events in Sweden were an expression of overarching global processes, that is, a reflexive modernity which creates individual and personal division of responsibility. In this modernity, as we discussed in the introduction, societies are increasingly concerned with meeting the consequences of industrialism and organizing themselves for risk management. The department at UMAS is an illustrative example of this cultural process.

## Conclusion

All over the world, the transplantation system is generating a number of risk positions which are based on how individual bodies are handled and valued. When donors are to be identified and recipients selected, this produces threats which test the solidarity in materials and values within and between different societies (Beck 1992; Scheper-Hughes 2003:1646; Lundin 2007; Idvall 2007). This becomes clear when transplantations are related to a global level, where body parts in the form of cells, tissues, and organs from both humans and animals change owners in a wide variety of ways. The Helsinki Declaration from 1964/2004 and the European Convention are intended to establish guidelines and ideas for a global programme of action. In several cases, however, it has proved impossible to create a concerted European stance. The European Court has therefore declared that certain problem fields, such as the issue of where life begins, which is significant for stem cell research and transplants of embryonic cells, should be decided at national level.[10] The declaration that research involving humans should be preceded by informed consent is nevertheless an unconditional rule. The same also applies to a number of biomedical treatments such as transplants of different kinds. The requirement of informed consent is thus an important normative guideline and an indisputable condition for how the relationship between medical expertise and laymen should be regulated.

At the national level too, there is a tension between general regulations and shared patterns of values. This is obvious if we examine what happened when the transplant unit at UMAS distributed the letter of information to its patients. The criticism by the National Board of Health and Welfare concerned the

information about marginal organs and the explanation of possible risks. What the Board objected to most was that the patients were brought into the decision-making process – and this despite the fact that this sharing of responsibility was fully in line with European practice and new Swedish legislation. The National Board of Health and Welfare and other critics were of course aware of this new patient legislation. They nevertheless – unconsciously – expressed precisely the view of the doctor–patient relationship that the new law was supposed to counteract. There is thus a great deal to suggest that the confrontation between the department at UMAS and its critics was not in fact about people being offered inferior or risky organs. It was a conflict of values in which the differences concerned outlooks on risk management. The clinic's strategy of making laymen participate in risk assessment is in contrast to the critics' more conservative ideas that only experts should take problematic decisions.

*Markus Idvall, PhD*
*Susanne Lundin, professor*
Department of European Ethnology
Lund University
Finngatan 8
SE-223 62 Lund
e-mail: Markus.Idvall@etn.lu.se
Susanne.Lundin@etn.lu.se

Translation: Alan Crozier

## Notes

1 The department also reported its own studies which showed that their patients had reacted favourably to the new information, that is, to both double waiting lists and increased codetermination (Omnell Persson *et al.* 2002).
2 Our work is based on a study that was initially conducted on behalf of the transplant unit at UMAS and financed by Lennart Jacobsson's donation. As a whole, however, the project was mainly financed and conducted under the auspices of the Vårdal Institute. In consultation with the transplant unit it was decided that the identity of the clinic was to be disclosed in the text. The reason for this was twofold. First, our wish to account for the sources of our argument made it quite difficult not to reveal the identity of the clinic. Second, the text has been planned not only as a scientific work but also as a kind of report on those issues that split the transplant unit and the National Board of Health and Welfare. This genre also speaks against total anonymity for the clinic.
3 Of the 22 people interviewed, 15 had said yes and seven had said no to marginal donors. Of the 15 men in the study, 13 had said yes to marginal donors but only two of the seven women.
4 It may be interesting to note that the law on ethical appraisal of research on humans, the main task of which is to safeguard the interests of the people who are the objects of research, makes assessments on the basis of the criterion of benefit versus risk/possibility versus threat (SFS 2003:460). This criterion goes back to the Nuremberg Code of 1947. As medical development has accelerated and societies have been transformed into what Beck calls risk societies, it was deemed necessary to tighten demands on medical research and its application in the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with Regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine* (CETS No. 164). The Convention is the basis for the law on ethical appraisal of research on humans (SFS 2003:460).
5 Ischaemia is about the circulation of the blood in the body and describes a condition when the supply of blood to a certain tissue is too small in relation to the need of that tissue, a condition which impedes the function of the tissue (*Nationalencyklopedin* 1992:583).
6 The matching principle that has become most common in both Europe and the USA stipulates that organs from elderly and sick donors should be given to elderly and sick patients on the waiting list for transplants (Smits *et al.* 2002; Omnell Persson 2003:V; Carter *et al.* 2005; Schold *et al.* 2006).
7 Creatinine is described in *Nationalencyklopedin* (1993:387f.) as "the final product of creatine that is released by muscular action. The concentration of creatinine in serum is dependent on the individual's muscle mass and the ability of the kidneys to secrete creatinine with urine. The determination of the creatinine concentration in serum is used in human and veterinary medicine as a relatively coarse measure of the functioning of the kidneys. Normally this concentration varies between 60 and 115 µmol/l. Women have slightly

lower values than men because of their smaller muscle mass." Patients receiving dialysis and awaiting transplantation often have a creatinine value between 500 and 1000 µmol/l (Ekberg 2002:139).

8 The expression "second best" is the department's own, referring to the fact that everyone on a waiting list for kidney transplantation wants "the best" but that some must accept "second best" so that as many patients as possible will be able to receive transplants (Persson & Omnell Persson 2002:109).

9 Waiting patients who are forced, because of organ shortage or for other reasons, to go on having dialysis generally have a lower survival rate than those who receive marginal organs, as shown by various medical studies and follow-ups (see e.g. Ojo *et al.* 2001).

10 *European Court* (case no. 53924/00, judgement of 8 July 2004).

## References


Åkesson, Lynn 1997. *Mellan levande och döda. Föreställningar om kropp och ritual.* Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

Bäckman, Lars & Fehrman-Ekholm, Ingela 2002: Donation – en förutsättning för transplantation. In *Transplantation*, ed. Cecilia Johnsson & Gunnar Tufveson. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Baskin-Bey, Edwina S. *et al.* 2005: United Network for Organ Sharing's expanded criteria donors: is stratification useful? *Clinical Transplantation* 19.

Battaglia, Michele *et al.* 2004: Medical and surgical complications after kidney complications from "suboptimal donors". One centre's experience. *Transplantation Proceedings* 36.

Beck, Ulrich 1992: *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity.* London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Beck, Ulrich 1995: *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk.* Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press.

Bos, Mike 2005: Ethical and Legal Issues in Non-Heart-Beating Organ Donation. *Transplantation Proceedings* 37.

Carter, Jonathan T. *et al.* 2005: Expanded Criteria Donor Kidney Allocation. Marked Decrease in Cold Ischemia and Delayed Graft Function at a Single Center. *American Journal of Transplantation* 5.

Choo, Vivien 1998: Double kidneys are feasible. *Lancet* 351.

Davis, Connie L. & Marsh, Christopher L. 1999: Reduction of organ-retrieval damage and organ-discard rates. *Lancet* 354.

De Rosa, Paride *et al.* 2004: Suboptimal Kidney. The Experience of a Single Transplant Unit. *Transplantation Proceedings* 36.

Ekberg, Henrik 2002: Transplantation av njure. In *Transplantation*, ed. Cecilia Johnsson & Gunnar Tufveson. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Faenza, Antonio *et al.* 2004: Utilization of Suboptimal Kidney Donors. *Transplantation Proceedings* 36.

Fox, Renée C. & Swazey, Judith P. 1992: *Spare Parts. Organ Replacement in American Society.* New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fox, Renée C. & Swazey, Judith P. 2002: *The Courage to Fail. A Social View of Organ Transplants and Dialysis. With a New Introduction by the Authors.* New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers.

Frank, Arthur W. 1995: *The Wounded Storyteller. Body, Illness, and Ethics.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hansson, Kristofer 2003: *Djur som donatorer. Xenotransplantation i svenska medier 1995–2002.* Meddelanden från Etnologiska institutionen och Folklivsarkivet. Lund: Etnologiska institutionen med Folklivsarkivet.

Ideland, Malin 2002: *Dagens gennyheter. Hur massmedier berättar om genetik och genteknik.* Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Idvall, Markus 2003: Främmande kunskap. Informationens strategiska betydelse för utvecklingen av xenotransplantation. In *Kunskapssamhällets marknad*, ed. Markus Idvall & Fredrik Schoug. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Idvall, Markus 2007: Prioriteringar och etnologi – njurtransplantationers symboliska värden i organbristens spår. In *Makt över mitt eget liv. Flervetenskaplig forskning om långtidssjukas möjligheter och hinder i familj, vård, omsorg och samhälle. En antologi från Vårdalinstitutet*, ed. Björn Lindgren. Lund: Studentlitteratur. (In press).

Keith, Douglas S. *et al.* 2004: Effect of Donor Recipient Match on Survival after First Deceased Donor Renal Transplantation. *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* 15.

Knight, Amanda J. *et al.* 1999: Dual renal transplant from a non-heart beating donor. *Transplant International* 12.

Lundin, Susanne 2007: Gamla kroppar och nya tekniker. In *Åldrandets betydelser*, ed. Lars- Eric Jönsson & Susanne Lundin. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Lundin, Susanne & Idvall, Markus 2003: Attitudes of Swedes to marginal donors and xenotransplantation. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 29.

Lupton, Deborah 2003: *Medicine as Culture. Illness, Disease and the Body in Western Societies.* London: Sage.

Machado, Nora 1996: *Using the Bodies of the Dead. Studies in Organization, Law and Social Process Related to Organ Transplantation.* Uppsala: Uppsala University.

Mange, Kevin C. *et al.* 2001: A comparison of the survival of shipped and locally transplanted cadaveric renal allografts. *New England Journal of Medicine* 345.

*Nationalencyklopedin* (vol. 9) 1992. Höganäs: Bokförlaget Bra Böcker.

*Nationalencyklopedin* (vol. 11) 1993. Höganäs: Bokförlaget Bra Böcker.

Nordgren Lars 2003: *Från patient till kund. Intåget av marknadstänkande i sjukvården och förskjutningen av patientens position.* Lund: Lund Business Press.

Nordstedt, Lars 1999: Marginella donatorer – enligt överenskommelse. *Njurfunk* no. 3.

Ojo, Akinlolu O. *et al.* 2001: Survival in Recipients of Marginal Cadaveric Donor Kidneys Compared With Other Recipients and Wait-Listed Transplant Candidates. *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* 12.

Omnell Persson, Marie 2003: *Utilization and allocation of organs for transplantation – medical and ethical aspects.* Lund: Faculty of Medicine, Lund University.

Omnell Persson, Marie *et al.* 2002: Kidneys from marginal donors: views of patients on informed consent. *Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation* 17.

Örn, Peter 2001: Två kölistor för organtransplantation minskade väntetiden kraftigt. *Läkartidningen* 98.

Persson, Nils H. 1999a: Patientens rätt att välja vid njurtransplantation. *Njurfunk* 2.

Persson, Nils H. & Omnell Persson, Marie 2002: Fördelning av organ. In *Transplantation*, ed. Cecilia Johnsson & Gunnar Tufveson. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Pokorna, Eva *et al.* 1997: Survival and Function of a Renal Graft From a Marginal Cadaver Donor. *Transplantation Proceedings* 29.

Rose, Nikolas 1999: *Powers of Freedom. Reframing Political Thought.* Cambridge, New York & Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Sachs, Lisbeth 1998: *Att leva med risk. Fem kvinnor, gentester och kunskapens frukter.* Stockholm: Gedins.

Satterthwaite, Roger *et al.* 1997: Outcome of en bloc and single kidney transplantation from very young cadaveric donors. *Transplantation* 63.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy 2003: Keeping an eye on the global traffic in human organs. *Lancet* 361.

Schold, Jesse D. *et al.* 2006: The Expanded Criteria Donor Policy. An Evaluation of Program Objectives and Indirect Ramifications. *American Journal of Transplantation* 6.

Sells, Robert A. 1999: Informed Consent From Recipients of Marginal Donor Organs. *Transplantation Proceedings* 31.

Smits, Jacqueline M.A. *et al.* 2002: Evaluation of the Eurotransplant Senior Program. The Results of the First Year. *American Journal of Transplantation* 2.

Snoeijs, Maarten G.J. *et al.* 2006: Kidney Transplantation Using Elderly Non-Heart-Beating Donors. A Single-Center Experience. *American Journal of Transplantation* 6.

Vallgårda, Signild 2003: *Folkesundhed som politik. Danmark og Sverige fra 1930 til i dag.* Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

Weber, Markus *et al.* 2002: Kidney transplantation from donors without a heartbeat. *New England Journal of Medicine* 347.

Youngner, Stuart *et al.* 1996: *Organ Transplantation. Meanings and Realities.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

## Sources

CETS No. 164. Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with Regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine. Council of Europe.

*European Court* (case no. 53924/00, judgement 8 July 2004).

*Nytt från Socialstyrelsen* 1999, no. 19.

Persson, Nils H. 1999b: Rapport från AST/ASTS Chicago 99-05-15-21. (Unpublished manuscript available at www3.svls.se/sektioner/tp/reserapp/AST_NHP.html).

Persson, Nils H. 2001: Kongressrapport ISOS 2001, Nagoya. (Unpublished manuscript available at www3.svls.se/sektioner/tp/reserapp/Nagoya.htm).

Regeringens proposition 1997/98:189. *Patientens ställning.*

Regeringens proposition 1998/99:4. *Stärkt patientinflytande.*

SFS (Svensk författningssamling) 1982:763. Hälso- och sjukvårdslag.

SFS (Svensk författningssamling) 2003:460. Lag om etikprövning av forskning som avser människor.

SOU (Statens Offentliga Utredningar) 1997:154. *Patienten har rätt.* Delbetänkande av Kommittén om hälso- och sjukvårdens finansiering och organisation (HSU 2000). Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.

# Sick Children

## How Medial and Personal Experiences are Woven Together

By Malin Ideland

I am sitting with Daniel's head in my knee. Daniel is autistic. He doesn't speak, gets easily upset, lacks the ability to fantasize and has difficulties understanding verbal instructions and social rules. But he loves music. His parents, Birgitta and John Gren, are convinced that their son's disease has been caused by an immunization. This explanation is not scientifically proved, which has consequences for the family. At the time I am visiting the family, they are in the middle of a legal process against their insurance company. Birgitta and John are claiming financial compensation for their son's brain damage, but the insurance company asserts that autism is a genetic disease, which is not covered by the insurance. The parents' explanation of their son's injury is not accepted, and Birgitta and John consider it a societal conspiracy. They think that experts do not want to admit that immunization may cause brain damage, since that would decrease the numbers of children who become immune and increase the number of law suits and claims for damages (interview 1).

After several hours I leave the Gren family with my head filled with questions. If everything these despairing parents have told me is true, our children are subjects of a terrible societal conspiracy. I feel afraid and unsure. If I had to choose at this point if I should immunize my children or not, I would probably say no to the vaccination. The sick child and the desperate parents convince me, even if it is just for a little while, that the alarms about a connection between autism and immunization against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) are true. The meeting with living evidence, Daniel, beats assurances from nurses and infection specialists that vaccination of children is totally safe.

I am not the only parent who has hesitated to vaccinate my small children. At the end of the 1990s came alarming reports that the MMR vaccine could cause autism. A British research team had found that children who had previously developed normally – they had begun to talk and have contact with people – a week after the vaccination lost contact with the world around them and retired into themselves. The research team had found traces of measles virus in these children's intestines and saw this as evidence for the connection between the immunization shot and the autistic behaviour (*The Lancet* 1998:351:637–641). The research team has later been reported for fraud in this particular case and they have withdrawn their results.[1]

The discovery of the connection was reported in the media all over the world, and in Europe the vaccination frequency decreased by several per cent. In some areas less than 90% of the children were vaccinated, a limit that is called "herd immunity". The same vaccine as the research team had tested was offered to all Swedish children when they were about 18 months, and also in Sweden the herd immunity was not maintained.[2] The infection specialists started to worry about an epidemic that would particularly affect sick and weak children (Bergström, Mäkinen & Romanus 2001).

In interviews with parents who have either hesitated about vaccinating or have not vaccinated, several reasons for their view have been highlighted.[3] One important reason is that they want to keep nature going. The parents think it is more "natural" to get diseases than to be vaccinated against them. And if it is natural it is good. Their arguments thus rely on the idea of nature's inherent goodness. Some even think that it may be positive for children's development to get diseases like measles. Nature's goodness and the need for natural life is a heavy argument. Another

theme is the thought of "the limited good": if we prevent some diseases, something else – probably worse – will strike us.

In this article I am going to discuss a third theme, which seems to have been important for the public debate as well as for individuals' decisions – meetings with sick children. These children have met the parents through mass media or in real life, and they had consequences for the parent's choices. I am going to discuss why these children have been so important and how medial and real children become integrated in people's handling of risks – for example the choice between the risk of your child getting measles and the risk of the vaccine's side-effects.

With these sick children as a starting point I will also discuss how medial and personal experiences are woven together and jointly shape a foundation for people's opinions and risk calculations. In the public debate the mass media are often blamed for people's behaviour. Also in the discussion about the decreasing numbers of vaccinated children, the media have often been presented as the root of all evil. And of course, the media are important for people's opinions on biotechnology. The media work as a filter deciding what stories are told about biotechnology . The filter is based on our cultural norms and values. And as a filter it has an influence on people's thoughts since it tells certain stories, but not others (Ideland 2004). The mass media create frames for our interpretation of everyday life. But the media stories are woven together with the private life situation and the personal outlook of life. Consumption of media stories about biotechnology is at the same time a kind of production of private stories about biotechnology. Experiences from media and life merge and create new stories (Linderman 1996), and in this article I will show how sick children from media and real life together shape the foundations for parents' risk calculations.

Children's vaccination is an interesting case that can help us to understand how people relate to mass media and use them for handling risks. It is a delimited area, in the media debate as well as in people's everyday life. Vaccinating children is something you do in a very limited period of your life, and on these occasions the thought of vaccination risks is raised, while at other times one does not think about it. It is also a subject that concerns nature and technology, parenthood and responsibility, illness and death.

To illustrate the handling of sick children I will first give examples of how they are represented in media and then how children from real life are woven into the parents' risk calculations. Therefore I first focus on the two television programmes that started the Swedish debate on vaccination and autism. I use the word "medial experience" since I maintain that these programmes actually were so emotional that they made lasting impressions in people's minds. These media stories should be understood in relation to personal stories about how parents have thought about vaccinating their children. After that I will show how sick children from the informants' private life were used as arguments for both vaccinating and not vaccinating. Finally I get back to the question about sick children's symbolic value and the integrating of media stories and personal experiences.

## Medial Children

In Sweden the research findings about a possible connection between the MMR vaccine and autism were discussed in two current-events programmes, *Reportrarna* and *Kalla Fakta*. In *Reportrarna* the viewers meet the identical twins Heidi and Anne, two 8-year-old Dan-

ish girls. They are singing and jumping but it is obvious to the viewer that something is wrong. Their mother says that the girls were "normal" until their vaccination at the age of 15 months. But just a week after their MMR vaccination something happened, something that their mother describes as a "sudden and strong" change in the girls behaviour. Anne acted "as if she was sitting in a glass case". Six months later Anne was diagnosed with autism and Heidi with Asperger's syndrome, also a form of autism. Their mother says that she has never doubted that the vaccine caused the change of the girls' behaviour (*Reportrarna* 7 September 1999).

Slightly more than a year later, *Kalla Fakta* put the vaccination debate on the agenda again. First the viewers meet Sofie's crying mother, who tells the audience that "If I had been stronger, I could have protested." The story is illustrated by pictures of, as far as we can see, a healthy and happy baby. The feature about Sofie and her mother is very affecting. The mother, Sonja, cries during her story about her daughter. The photo of the happy baby is shown again and Sonja says "this is the last one..." She tells us how Sofie, after her first vaccination, 5 months old, got cramps and they had to go to the hospital by ambulance, but the doctors could not explain the cramps. The same thing happened after the second vaccination and before Sofie was to have her MMR shot, Sonja questioned whether it was good for her daughter. "But I was recommended to continue. I was a good mother who did what I was told. Today I can see that I did wrong" (*Kalla Fakta* TV4 26 October 2000).

After the vaccination Sofie took cramps again. She became unconscious and stopped breathing. Her grandmother, who is a medical practitioner, was visiting the family and she gave artificial respiration while Sonja called for an ambulance...

The television audience still does not know whether Sofie is alive or not. The feature is very dramatic, but at this point it is cut and an old black and white newsreel about the blessed polio vaccine is shown.

After the newsreel the audience can relax. We are taken back to Sonja and Sofie, now about 6 years old. She is singing a song with a little help from her mum. The reporter tells us that Sofie survived, thanks to her grandmother's medical knowledge, but that she got a difficult form of epilepsy.

After that the viewers, via the reporter, visit Kevin – an autistic boy whose parents, like Birgitta and John Gren, are fighting against their insurance company to have their son's vaccine injury recognized. Once again we hear the same story: A child who was developing normally until the vaccination suddenly changed to autistic behaviour (or in Sofie's case – got epilepsy). All the parents are convinced that the vaccine is the root of the evil and all of them are fighting against authorities, drug companies and insurance companies to have the damage acknowledged. The features are emotional and convincing and the message is clear: the MMR vaccine may cause brain damage and our children are victims of a societal conspiracy.

The mass media work as meeting places. The desperate parents on the television screen can be described as vicarious friends. They are persons whose lives we can identify with, and we can feel sorry for them (Lilliequist 2000). The sociologist Ulrich Beck points out that there is a tendency today to describe general problems in terms of individual problems (Beck 1992:110). In particular mass media use a narrative technique to let an individual personify a larger theme (Lakoff & Johnson

1980; Levi 2000). If you tell the story about a new finding result, a disease or perhaps a medical treatment through a portrait of an individual, medical journalism has more impact on the public than if you tell the story in statistical or medical terms. Through the individual the media consumer can identify with the medical news.

It is important for the journalist to choose the right person. The person must represent qualities which harmonize with the message, and, most important, the person must arouse empathy. The autistic children fitted in well in this context. The fear of one's own child being autistic is strong. This is a disease that is culturally unmanageable, the stereotypic autistic children represent everything a "normal" child is not supposed to be – introverted, lacking fantasy and socially disabled.[4] Children must be "normal". Most parents' wish for their children is that they should be " like everyone else". Also, society controls "normal" development through check-up at the child welfare centre. The requirements that parents should ensure their children's health and development are explicit. There are rules, but at the same time you always have a choice. Vaccinate or not?

But the freedom of choice is also connected with responsibility. The parents have to make the "right" choice. It is up to them to consider – real or imaginary – risks and make the right decision on their own. The decision can lead to serious consequences, and in the television features it is obvious that, for example, Sofie's mother Sonja expresses her own failure. She feels responsible for her daughter's epilepsy, since she did not protest. The ethnologist Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl points out that parenthood has been an exception from cultural release. When women get pregnant they go from being free in their practices to being carriers of rules and expectations. Society has opinions on what is best for the child from the day the woman gets pregnant. But the responsibility for the child lies with the parents, mostly the mother. Parenthood has become an area where morality and responsibilities limit the individual's freedom (Hjemdahl 2003:30 ff.; see also Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten 1997; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1995). This also contributes to an increased feeling of guilt in the parents if something goes wrong – if the child is harmed, either by measles or by the vaccine. Hjemdahl writes that "Accidents are disappearing; it is always someone's responsibility, someone who should have known better, taken better care" (Hjemdahl 2003:33, my translation). The medial children and their parents also send the message that parents have to look after their own children, since society is not prepared to do so.

The medial children gave faces to the suspicion that the MMR vaccine could be dangerous. The mass media in this case were worrying people, and right after these television features this medial experience was enough to make parents unwilling to vaccinate in some cases. But for the parents I have interviewed 5–6 years later, other experiences seem to be more important for their decisions.

## Real Children

Today, about seven years after the media debate, the stories about vaccines and autism are still told on the Internet, in open day-care, the waiting room at the child welfare centre and other places where parents of newborn children meet. This happens despite the fact that the scientists have withdrawn their results, apologized and been reported for fraud. They are also told even if the infection doctors over and over again announce that there are no con-

nections between the vaccine and autism, that it is much more dangerous *not* to vaccinate. Why is this story still alive?

I can think of a number of reasons for why this story is still alive. One is that the diseases, measles, mumps and rubella nowadays are out of sight – and therefore also out of mind. They are not seen as a threat any more. Another reason might be that many parents have misunderstood how the immune system works. The anthropologist Emily Martin shows in her study *Flexible Bodies* (1994) how the cultural understanding of the immune system is based its need to be flexible. A flexible immune system might perhaps need training, from diseases – not vaccines. But when I look at the interviews with the non-vaccinating parents, one weighty reason is that these parents have personal experiences that are in opposition to public medical recommendations. These experiences – from the "real world", not from mass media – create suspicions that the staff at the children's welfare centre do not know what they are talking about, or maybe are not telling the truth (for example, interviews 2, 3, 4). Their own stories disagree with the medical discourse. I would like to show how the individual interpretation of the medical discourse depends on the personal life situation and earlier experiences.

After my meeting with Daniel Gren I was definitely doubtful of health care in general and vaccinations in particular. John and Birgitta Gren are not the only parents who are convinced that their child's handicap is caused by the vaccine. Several of the interviewed parents tell me that they have friends with autistic children, whose parents also are convinced of the connection (interviews 2, 3, 4). Lisa, who after many doubts finally vaccinated her two daughters, tells, for example, about her colleague who is working as a kindergarten teacher.

> L: I had a colleague whose child developed autism after this (MMR-vaccination). [...] She maintains that her son was completely normal before, but that something happened after the vaccination. [...] One friend told me that she thought that it (the idea of a connection between MMR and autism) developed because many parents haven't had too much contact with other children before their children reach the age of 18 months. So they hadn't seen that their children were different. [...] But I felt that that was not the case with my colleague. She was educated and had seen a lot of children in her job. Then we got cold feet again and we discussed a lot about what to do with Alva (Interview 3).

It was the real children the parents talked about, not the medial children. The real children appeared as living evidence of the connection between autism and vaccination. The feeling of "being there", having seen the uncut picture of reality, gives a feeling of authenticity. The mass media, however, had been an important part in the construction of the frame for interpreting the real children's handicaps. The media have aroused a thought, presented an explanatory model for autism. After that personal experiences can be reflected in the medial explanatory model and they become interwoven. Mass media messages influence people when they fit together with the personal outlook on life and give meaning to the private life situation.

Other kinds of personal experiences were additional foundations for the parents' decisions. Among other things, their own experience of having measles, rubella and mumps was important for their standpoints. This experience is something most parents of small children share nowadays. Some of us may only remember the fever and the itching. Others have memories of being sent to sick friends to get it over and done with. Very few of us remember difficult complications and dying from the diseases. Experiences of having these

diseases are probably not argument enough for vaccination. Instead the memories bring out the harmlessness of the diseases. Measles, mumps and rubella were "natural" parts of everyday life until the 1980s.

"Natural" can in this context be understood as harmless from two different aspects. The first aspect is "natural" as synonymous with "normal". A disease "everyone" gets can not be particularly dangerous in the welfare state of Sweden. Or can it? Earlier it was "normal" to suffer from measles, mumps and rubella. But "natural" can also be understood in a more literal way. The interviewed parents emphasize their wish to "keep nature going". Some of them maintain that they don't want to use "too much medicine". They accentuate that they try to avoid giving their children penicillin and antipyretics "without cause" (interviews 2, 4). And if the virus spreads in "the natural way", it feels less dangerous than getting the same virus, in a smaller dose, through a shot. It might even be seen as positive to become sick – since you are then training your immune system.

"Natural" is used as an argument for a specific purpose. Celebrate the "natural" is something we only do on special occasions (Ideland 2002a). Biotechnologies and medicines which have been integrated in the cultural mind do not meet resistance because they are "unnatural" (Marvin 1988). Keeping nature going is seldom an argument when it comes to surgery, transplants or even antibiotics. But in a time when society is getting more and more technified and people are feeling alienated from their origin, nature is seen as the good power and technology – in some cases – is seen as the evil power. This might be an explanation for the interest in Stone Age food and alternative medication, and also for the reluctance to vaccinate. The belief in a good and kind nature might create mistrust against technology (Ideland 2002a).

But even if the parents have a trust in nature and mistrust in technology, personal experiences may lead them to vaccinate their children anyway – against some diseases, not others. Marie's grandfather suffered from polio injuries, and therefore it was important for her to give her son the polio shot (interview 2). Pia has never had rubella; she was vaccinated against it after her first pregnancy. If her daughter does not "succeed" in getting rubella by natural causes, Pia wants her daughter to have the vaccination before she reaches her teens (interview 3).

The lack of experiences, medial as well as personal, lay the foundation of the parents' decisions. Pia, for example, has not vaccinated her daughter against the very severe diseases diphtheria, polio, tuberculosis, tetanus and whooping-cough. She might consider giving her daughter this vaccination in the future, if there is an epidemic. But for now she cannot think of any reason to vaccinate her child. She does not know any people in the risk zone for these diseases, and is therefore not afraid that her daughter will get them. Some parents reason in the same way when it comes to why they do not want to vaccinate against measles, mumps and rubella. The risk of epidemics is so small that I don't have to vaccinate my child. The thought of herd immunity is far away. When asked if they could consider vaccinating for other children's sake, they answer that they have not thought about it. They are, like most parents, closest to their own child, they want to secure their own child. If there is a measles epidemic, and children suffering from measles are shown on the television, might the herd immunity grow again? Parents who then are choosing whether to vaccinate or not will have a new medial discourse to relate to,

to reflect their own experiences against at. Interpretation of personal, as well as medial, experiences is done in relation to the existing discourse (Fairclough 1995; Linderman 1996). The changing of medial discourse also opens for the possibility of reconstructing personal stories. And then the value and meaning of biotechnologies like vaccination acquire new cultural meaning (Brodwin 2000).

Perhaps this is the media's primary function in the construction of people's identities, attitudes and personal outlooks of life. The media supply different stories, which we can use as a mirror. Not least of all, the media play a major part in the construction of risks in modern society (Beck 1992:23). The media define what risks people are conscious of. What is the threat of the day? Is it tsunamis, terrorists or bird flu? We can blame, or thank, the media for parents' private risk calculations about vaccinations. But the parents' decisions seem to be based on personal experiences and ideologies, not on what the media tell them.

## Helping Children

The sick children run all through the stories about the parents' arguments for and against vaccination. It may be other people's sick children, the fear for their own children being sick, or themselves or their relatives as sick children. What these experiences have in common is that they bring risks, or the lack of risks, closer to the individuals. This closeness is crucial for how people relate to scientific risks and possibilities (Ideland 2004). The meeting with a sick child – on the television screen or in real life – is perhaps one of the most convincing arguments there is, especially for a parent at a critical point in life. Kevin, Sofie, Anne, Heidi – and for me also Daniel – are children who seem to live in another world. The ones who meet them will of course get an explanation for why they live in this different universe. How did they end up there? In all times people have searched for answers to why some children become different (Lundin 1997:123). Today we can choose among, for example, genetic, hormonal, social and psychological explanations. But sometimes there is no explanation, and autism is not yet scientifically explained, even if a genetic explanation is the one that is considered the most likely. This lack of knowledge gives rise to popular models of explanation. The MMR vaccination is one popular explanation. Before vaccination Daniel, Sofie and the others were "normal" children. And children should be "normal", "like everyone else", as we saw above. Therefore these children awaken special feelings, and they work with an almost unbeatable rhetorical power of persuasion.

The Swedish geneticist Bengt Olle Bengtsson (1999) claims that the argument that biotechnology will help sick children eliminates criticism against this specific technology. That is why the sick children are such a powerful metaphor. They make people feel empathy and then you, as a scientist or biotechnology entrepreneur can gain a hearing for your arguments. Gene therapy is intensively discussed, but seems defensible when it comes to helping sick children. Embryonic stem cell research encountered sympathy with some help from Daniel, 8 years old and suffering from diabetes – a disease that stem cell research might be able to cure (Ideland 2002b). Perhaps we can even understand a family who wants to give birth to a genetically adapted child who can save his or her older brother or sister, who is suffering from leukaemia.

The power of the sick-child metaphor is also obvious when it comes to media descriptions of the MMR vaccine. On the one hand, we

have infection doctors who talk about how many percent of the population have to be vaccinated, or about epidemics in Ireland and the Netherlands. On the other hand we have the faces of autistic children – medial or real. And when you, as a parent, feel insecure about whether you should vaccinate your little child or not, the second argument becomes very powerful. It is possible to identify yourself with the crying parents, who are convinced that the shot is to be blamed for their children's handicap. The fear of your own child being hurt in the same way is indescribable. In other words, the numbers who must be vaccinated or the reports which show that there are no connections between the MMR vaccine and autism have very little effect. The sick child is a more powerful argument and is therefore integrated in parents' risk calculations.

But, we should finally ask ourselves, why do over 95% of parents vaccinate their children? The autistic children are there as living evidence, on the television screen and in reality. The staff at the child welfare centre and infection specialists are often bad at presenting emotional arguments. But even when the debate was intensive, around 90% still chose to vaccinate. In the end parents try to see to what is best for their own child. The risk of side-effects of the vaccine was estimated as less than the risk of getting the diseases. And there is faith in Swedish health care. The personal experiences are often good, and as a parent of pre-school children you are often willing to follow advice from the child health care centre. Annika, whom I interviewed after she had vaccinated her son, told me that she hadn't hesitated for a second. She just shrugged her shoulders when I asked if she had been worried about the alarm reports, even though she was aware of the reports (interview 5).

Maybe Annika also had read some of all denials that have been published in the newspapers. There are alternative medial discourses, just as there are alternative medical discourses (for example anthroposophical medicine). As individuals, with unique personal experiences, we reflect ourselves in the discourse that best fits with our personal life situation. In some cases it is about neglecting discourses, in other cases it is about integrating them in one's own thinking. The mass media influence people, especially when they say what we want them to say, or maybe when they say what we expect them to say. The mass media message has to fit into the personal explanatory model for existence.

*Malin Ideland*
Ph.D.
Lärarutbildningen
Malmö Högskola
SE-205 06 Malmö
e-mail: malin.ideland@lut.mah.se

## Notes

1 In 1998 the paediatrician Andrew Wakefield *et al.* published an article in *The Lancet* about a possible connection between the MMR vaccine and autism. In February 2004 *The Lancet* withdrew the article, since some irregularities in the study had become known. Wakefield's research team, for example, had been paid by an organization representing parents who were in the middle of a legal process about vaccine damage. Wakefield's results were also criticized for how they had chosen the twelve children in the study (*The Lancet* 1998:351:637–641, http://image.thelancet.com/extras/statement20Feb2004web.pdf).

2 The decrease was only related to MMR. Other vaccines, for example against diphtheria, maintained herd immunity at about 99% (Bergström, Mäkinen & Romanus 2001).

3 In this project I have conducted seven interviews (including nine persons), three of them with parents who have not vaccinated their children, one with autistic Daniel's parents, three with parents who have vaccinated their children. These people I have contacted through different channels. Some of them I have met at the children's health centre, where I was making observations, some of them

I have contacted through personal connections and Daniel's parents I met at a court trial. One informant I reached after a call for parent's opinions on vaccination at the website *Allt för föräldrar* (www.alltforforaldrar.se). This call also resulted in 10 questionnaires by mail. It has been difficult to get in contact with parents who have not vaccinated, since they did not show up at the children's health care, and the confidentiality prevented me from getting in contact with them through nurses. In the project I have also analysed mass media stories about the MMR vaccine and discussion forums on the Internet. This article, however, is mainly based on the interviews and the television features in *Kalla Fakta* (TV4 26 October 2000) and *Reportrarna* (7 September 1999). The project "Mass Media, Medicine and Power" has been financed by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation.

4 The stereotype of an autistic person is Dustin Hoffman's character Rain Man in the movie with the same name. In the real world autism can include everything from high-functioning persons with Asperger's syndrome, who might have small social "dysfunctions" to severe mentally retarded. What I describe here is the stereotypical picture – which is important for the fear of autism.

## References


Bäck-Wiklund, Margareta & Bergsten, Birgitta 1997: *Det moderna föräldraskapet. En studie av familj och kön i förändring.* Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

Beck, Ulrich 1992: *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity.* London: Sage Publications.

Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth 1995: *The Normal Chaos of Love.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bengtsson, Bengt Olle 1999: *Genetik och politik. Berättelser om en vetenskap mitt i samhället.* Stockholm: Norstedts.

Bergström, Marianne, Mäkinen, Monika & Romanus, Victoria 2001: *Vaccinationsstatistik från barnavårdscentralerna.* Rapporter insända januari 2000 och januari 2001 gällande barn födda 1997 och 1998. Stockholm: Smittskyddsinstitutet. www.smittskyddsinstitutet.se/upload/PDF-filer/BVC-rapport-2001.pdf.

Brodwin, P. 2000. *Biotechnology and Culture. Bodies, Anxieties, Ethics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Fairclough, N. 1995: *Media Discourse.* London: Edward Arnold.

Hjemdahl, Kirsti Mathiesen 2003: *Tur-retur tema-park. Oppdragelse, opplevelse, kommers.* Kristiansand: HøyskoleForlaget.

Ideland, Malin 2002a: *Dagens Gennyheter. Hur massmedier berättar om genetik och genteknik.* Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Ideland, Malin 2002b: *Det gäller livet – mediernas roll i stamcellsdebatten.* Stockholm: Institutet för mediestudier.

Ideland, Malin 2004: Drömfabriker. Mediala förhoppningar och skräckvisioner. In *En ny kropp. Essäer om medicinska visioner och personliga val*, ed. Susanne Lundin. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Ideland, Malin 2005: Hybrid-TV. Populärkulturens roll i den offentliga debatten. In *ETN: POP*, by Malin Ideland, Carina Sjöholm & Robert Willim. Lund: Etnologiska institutionen, Lunds universitet.

Lakoff, George & Johnson, Mark 1980: *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.

Levi, Ragnar 2000: *Medical Journalism. Exposing Fact, Fiction, Fraud.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Lilliequist, Marianne 2000: *Våp, bitchor och moderliga män. Kvinnligt och manligt i såpoperornas värld.* Umeå: Boréa.

Linderman, Alf 1996: *The Reception of Religious Television. Social Semeiology Applied to an Empirical Case Study.* Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

Lundin, Susanne 1997: *Guldägget. Föräldraskap i biomedicinens tid.* Lund: Historiska Media.

Martin, Emily 1994: *Flexible Bodies. The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS.* Boston. Beacon Press.

Marvin, C. 1988: *When Old Technologies were New. Thinking about Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swartz, Jackie 1998: *Är massvaccination mot barnsjukdomar nödvändig?* Järna: Antroposofiska sällskapet.

*The Lancet* 2004: A statement by the editors of The Lancet. http://image.thelancet.com/extras/statement20Feb2004web.pdf (accessed 29 January 2007).

Wakefield A.J., Murch S.H., Anthony A., 1998: Ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis, and pervasive developmental disorder in children. *The Lancet* 1998; 351: 637–641.

# Complex Communities

## Homeless Greenlanders in Copenhagen

By Signe Boeskov and Nanna Folke Olsen

The social system in Denmark has for many years been aware of socially exposed Greenlanders as a highly marginalized group. The group is part of the cityscape in the big Danish towns and in the social landscape, not just because of social problems such as homelessness and substance abuse, but also because of the ethnic markers with which the people in the group are associated.

Denmark and Greenland today share 300 years of (colonial) history, making up a single Commonwealth of the Realm, and much besides. Whereas Greenland in the minds of many Danes is a beautiful place inhabited by exotic hunters, the current image of Greenlanders in Denmark is often negative. This is despite the fact that the vast majority of Greenlanders in Denmark manage so well and are so thoroughly integrated in Danish society that most Danes virtually do not notice them. The image that many Danes have of Greenlanders in Denmark is largely based on the small but very visible part of the Greenlandic population in Denmark, which is the focus of this article, namely, the socially exposed and homeless Greenlanders. There are many notions among Danes (and Greenlanders) as to why some Greenlanders in Denmark are socially exposed. One of the most widespread interpretations is that development in Greenland has been too rapid since the Second World War: that the hearts and souls of the Greenlandic people were overlooked, and that the price now being paid for this over-hasty development is a country and people in crisis (Thisted 2002:93). These and other ideas about a link between culture (Greenlandic culture), a historical process, and social vulnerability contribute to demarcating a group of Greenlanders among the homeless, so that they are viewed as a compact group who are perceived as something different from other homeless people, whose homelessness, as we will argue, is regarded in large measure as being socially conditioned.

For many homeless Greenlanders, "Greenlandicness" plays an important role in everyday life, partly because an ethnic identification can give access to a community with other homeless Greenlanders. Also, "Greenlandicness" is central in relation to the way in which social workers and others connected to the Danish social system perceive the homeless Greenlanders, which again helps to shape the measures of social support offered to them.

In the following we shall therefore examine how ethnic identification affects the everyday life of the homeless and their strategies *vis-à-vis* homelessness, and how the identification is instrumental in shaping the framework in which homeless Greenlanders can act in Danish society. First we give a brief presentation of the study on which this article is based. Then comes an insider's perspective on some of the crucial ways in which ethnic identification is relevant to the everyday life of the individual homeless person. This is followed by a description of the significance that this perception of homeless Greenlanders has for the way in which they are treated by the social system and the measures they are offered by the public authorities.

### Background

The following article is a reflection on some of the results described in Danish in a report entitled "Small steps – big changes: A study of homelessness among Greenlanders in Copenhagen". The report is the result of a study conducted by the Centre for Cultural Analysis on behalf of the municipality of Copenhagen in the period September 2005 to January 2006.[1] The background to the study was that the municipal authorities in Copenhagen wanted an

examination of the presumption that socially exposed and homeless Greenlanders do not take advantage of the existing measures for the homeless to the same extent as other groups of homeless.

As a result, the Centre for Cultural Analysis produced a description of life among socially exposed and homeless Greenlanders in Copenhagen, revealing the patterns in their use of accommodation offered by the social services, and with a number of recommendations. The study was both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative part consisted of 51 questionnaires completed by professional social workers, dealing with the Greenlandic clients; it elicited factual data such as age, gender, place of birth, current housing situation, etc. The qualitative part consisted of semi-structured interviews with 33 informants, of whom 20 were professional social workers involved in both municipal and private projects), and 13 were socially exposed and currently or formerly homeless Greenlanders. This article is mainly based on the results of the qualitative study.

## Homelessness and Ethnicity

The group that was the subject of the study was defined as: *actually and functionally homeless people who identify themselves and/or are identified as belonging to the Greenlandic group.* This is thus a definition with two central concepts: (1) homelessness and (2) "Greenlandicness".

Homeless is defined in section 94 of the Danish Social Services Act as persons who have special social problems, who do not have a home of their own or cannot maintain themselves in their own home, and who need to be provided with accommodation and measures of activating support, care, and subsequent help. Homelessness is thus described both as an external circumstance, the lack of a place to live, and as a personal state, that one is unable to have and/or maintain oneself in a home (Fabricius *et al.* 2005:158). On a more theoretical level, homelessness and categorizations in connection with homelessness are not value-neutral or unambiguous, but constructions in time and place (Caswell & Schultz 2001:14). This means that the homeless must be regarded not as a uniform group of people, but as a complex and composite group with different problems, and what applies to many in the group does not necessarily apply to everyone.

To demarcate the concept of homelessness, Tobias Børner of the Danish National Institute of Social Research has developed a number of ideal types, categories of homeless that span a continuum reflecting the "degree" of homelessness. In the case of the homeless Greenlanders, it was found that most could be placed in the categories that, in Børner's terminology, denote individuals at the "heavy" end, namely, *those without a home* (people who do not have access to a permanent residence), *those in temporary shelters* (people referred to shelters provided by the public authorities), and *hidden homeless.* The last category in particular was relevant, since it was the experience of Copenhagen Municipality that a larger proportion of the Greenlandic group lived in this form of homelessness. *Hidden homelessness* denotes: "People who do not have access to a permanent residence, and who therefore spend the nights with others on a temporary basis, but who do not use institutions established for the homeless, and whose situation is unknown to the public authorities" (Børner 1997:16). Hidden homelessness is by its very nature difficult to document, especially in the form of quantitative data, and since a great deal of the research on so-

cially vulnerable people is based on reports from shelters and the like, relatively little is known about this group (Caswell & Schultz 2001:48). Many Greenlanders thus belong to a group with homelessness problems that can be both especially "heavy" and difficult to document.

As this article will describe, homeless people with a Greenlandic background are perceived by social workers to a large extent as a uniform group, *homeless Greenlanders*, whose homelessness – in their eyes – is closely connected to their "Greenlandicness". A key factor in the analysis is therefore the perception of this Greenlandicness. When do people "belong" to this group and when do they not? In recent research ethnicity and ethnic identity are regarded as something basically relational and constituted through social processes, rather than something innate (Baumann 1999:59). Ethnicity is thus viewed as something you do rather than something you have. In the present analysis a definition of "Greenlandicness" will proceed from Fredrik Barth's classical description of ethnicity as membership of an ethnic group that depends on identification and self-identification, and where it is continuous social border-drawing processes rather than cultural content that is significant in the formation of ethnic groups (Barth 1996:175). In other words, the starting point is to ask who are the people who identify themselves as Greenlanders, and also are defined as Greenlanders by others, for instance, representatives of the social system, and in what social processes the identification takes place. This identification is, however, as described by Hylland Eriksen, both imperative and situational, both enforced and free, and with elements of both destiny and choice (Eriksen 2006:136). The homeless Greenlanders, or other Greenlanders in Denmark for that matter, cannot freely choose to retain or abandon their identification as Greenlanders. Whether they wish it or not, partly as a consequence of their physical appearance, they are in large measure identified as Greenlanders both in the social system and among other homeless Greenlanders.

With this outlook, the focus is thus on the continuous acts of boundary drawing that shape what people themselves perceive as ethnic, and ethnic markers such as language used by homeless people and social workers alike to demarcate who in their eyes is "Greenlandic" and who is not. This is done in constant negotiation processes, and ethnicity is thus also perceived in accordance with Gerd Baumann's description as something which is constantly being challenged and which is situational and contextual (Baumann 1999:58). As will be described later, the group of homeless Greenlanders is far from being homogeneous, and the meaning of "Greenlandicness" is continuously challenged among the homeless themselves and in the encounter with the Danish social system. Ethnicity is thus expressed here as something relational and as something that is created in the encounter with others, rather than an innate property of the specific group (Eriksen (1993) in Baumann 1999:59). Barth, among others, describes how membership of an ethnic group must simultaneously be understood as something which others must recognize and relate to, and which the individual perceives as binding (Barth 1994:175). As we shall see in the following, membership of the Greenlandic group of homeless is perceived to a great extent as binding, just as it is of crucial significance for the way in which, for instance, social workers treat members of this particular group.

The "group" of homeless Greenlanders should thus be sought somewhere in the area

between homelessness and Greenlandicness. It is a composite group, where boundary-drawing processes and ethnification processes play a crucial part both for the individual's relationship to other homeless Greenlanders and in relation to other groups. Homelessness among Greenlanders in Denmark takes many different forms and must be viewed as a fluid process. It is thus a group in continuous change on several levels. It is not a permanent unit but an unstable *ad hoc* community, with people slipping in and out, and the content is always changing over time and dependent on the eyes that see it.

If this article nevertheless considers homeless Greenlanders as a group, it is partly because some features of the life as homeless are the same for many of them, and partly because the idea of a community between homeless Greenlanders in Denmark has proved to be an important notion both among the homeless themselves and in the perception of the professional social workers dealing with them. And this notion of a special community in the group has in many ways influenced the possibilities and limitations of the individual homeless Greenlander.

## Material and Demarcation

The part of the study that serves as the basis for this article consists of interviews with people working professionally with homeless Greenlanders, and with people from the group itself. In the former case the main aim of the interviews was to arrive at a description of the Greenlandic group's homelessness and the practice in relation to housing and offers of accommodation from a professional point of view. In addition, the intention was to understand the logic behind the practice of the


Man and woman from the context of socially exposed Greenlanders in Copenhagen. Photo: Jasper Carlberg 2006.

professional environment in dealing with the group, and thus behind the system's encounters with and expectations of the group. In the latter case the main objective was to arrive at an insider's perspective by gaining insight into the individual's own understanding of the situation, the perception of a good home, and – not least of all – personal experiences of housing problems. The interviews with the homeless Greenlanders were analysed in terms of the ethnological concept of *the good life* and, deriving from this, a concept of *the good home*. The idea of the good life is the ideological side of an everyday practice, which people try to realize in concrete everyday actions, and in the study we worked on the assumption that, since there are qualitative differences between different persons' versions and perceptions of the good life, there is thus also a difference in the conditions that must exist if a person is to regard them as a suitable framework for achieving the good life. In this study the good home is thus viewed as the kind of housing that at a particular point in time is considered by the individual to be the best framework for a good life.

The material on which the article is based was thus originally generated for the purposes of the study described above, and hence aimed at a qualitative investigation of some of the patterns in the life of this specific group which can be said to be significant for their situation as homeless. The demarcation of the study and the methodological selection (for example, of informants) reflects this purpose, and is thus focused on collecting information about the lives of homeless Greenlanders which could be provided by those who work professionally with the group and especially by representatives of the group itself. This means, for example, that comparable data have not been systematically collected at the same time about socially exposed and homeless people outside the group. This has the consequence that the study and the article cannot suffice as a background for comparative analyses of the homeless in Denmark in general, for comparisons with other ethnically defined groups of homeless in Denmark, or with groups of homeless people in other countries with a similar colonial background. Where it has seemed relevant, however, we have brought in the results of other studies on socially exposed and homeless people, in order to put things in perspective.

The focus and the material also rule out, to some extent, the possibility of defining unambiguously which patterns and conditions can be regarded as exclusive to the group of socially exposed and homeless Greenlanders in Denmark, and which ones must be understood as generally applying to more groups or to socially exposed people in general. Although this perspective would be interesting, it has not been the main aim of either the study or the article. Rather, the intention has been to obtain a qualitatively based description of this group's life, as it is currently lived in Denmark, and particularly of the patterns that can be regarded as crucial for the conditions of homeless Greenlanders.

## "Community Above All"

Unemployment, substance abuse, and general social problems are everyday conditions for most homeless Greenlanders. These are problems that they share with many homeless people in Denmark. Other specific problems such as language difficulties and inadequate knowledge of the Danish social system are problems that members of the Greenlandic group of homeless share with (other) immigrants and refugees in the homeless environment (Järvinen 2004:18ff.). In relation to these

problems too, the homeless Greenlanders are thus somewhere in between the general and the specific.

Among professional social workers in Denmark, however, there is a notion that the Greenlanders in Denmark manage their homelessness in a different way from other homeless people (Danes or immigrants), and that "being a Greenlander" further exacerbates homelessness: "It is not a matter of other problems with Greenlanders, but problems that are more difficult to solve when you're a Greenlander" (Bøggild & Find: 2003:8). Our material confirms that certain patterns in the practice of many of these Greenlanders are distinctive, demarcating socially exposed Greenlanders from other socially vulnerable people.

One of the patterns that emerges most clearly in connection with the Greenlandic group is the continuous orientation towards community with others who are perceived as Greenlanders. This community is created by drawing a clear dividing line against other homeless people (Danes or immigrants), and by assembling around ethnic markers such as language. An expression of this is that many of the homeless Greenlanders seek each other's company, in their choice of everyday activities and places to hang out, and not least in their use of accommodation measures and welfare benefits. Social workers who offer places in housing projects find that individual Greenlanders bring others with them, or are attracted by the accommodation because other Greenlanders use it. The Greenlandic clients thus often come in small groups or to meet each other, and in most circumstances they seek each other's company. The orientation towards community can be so important that many of the homeless Greenlanders, for example, find it difficult to adjust to forms of housing where they are expected to live alone, and they instead seek housing where it is possible to have community with other Greenlanders. Being able to be a part of the network can thus, for some homeless Greenlanders, mean more than, say, having access to a shelter where this community is not possible.

The idea of the community is also seen in that way homeless Greenlanders often move around in groups of varying size – as a rule in specific squares where they can be sure of meeting each other. Greenlandic social vulnerability in Denmark is thereby particularly visible and is therefore often associated with the assembled group that most inhabitants of large Danish towns witness from time to time. Conversely, the orientation towards community also means that most socially exposed Greenlanders have access to a large network of like-minded people. As a result, they generally have some place where they can spend their time indoors, and in many cases can spend the night with individuals in the group who have some form of housing. A large share of the group is thus less visible to the social system than other socially exposed people, because the network allows them, at least for a period, to cope without any contact with the social system.

Communities of different kinds are not uncommon among the homeless in general. Caswell and Schultz point out that most "street people"[2] tend to be seen in groups, meeting in squares and parks, and often functioning as networks (Caswell & Schultz 2001:206). The distinctive feature of the Greenlandic community is thus not that it is a community, but that it is a social community partly based on and understood in terms of ethnic identification, and that, according to professional social workers, it plays a greater part in the context of homeless Greenlanders than of other homeless people.

A group in Christianshavns Torv in Copenhagen. Photo: Jasper Carlberg 2006.

A well-known perspective in ethnicity research is the idea of the construction of ethnicity and identification with a particular ethnic group as a part of the competition for resources. This perspective has some explanatory power in connection with the genesis of some ethnic groups or in the strengthening of internal cohesion in connection with occupational specialization or political influence and power. Ascribing significance to ethnicity and strengthening the links between an ethnic group's members can therefore be regarded as part of an overall strategy for survival (Eriksen 1998:61ff.).

Identification with an ethnic group is thus also in some ways crucial for many of the homeless Greenlanders in Denmark and the manner in which they pursue their existence as homeless. This identification can be understood from the perspective of survival strategy, in that different practices in the group sustain the continued demarcation of the group, strengthening the idea of an internal community, and function in large measure as a resource for the individual's chances of surviving in social vulnerability and homelessness. Identifying with the group of Greenlanders and being accepted as belonging to it, can thus improve the individual's resources, but can also, as we shall see, act as a limitation.

## Complex Communities

Even if the community surrounding the homeless Greenlander is described as strong both by the homeless themselves and by social workers, it must be regarded as a complex community with subgroups and discontinuities, and as a fluid community where ethnic identifications are situational and contextual. It is thus not meaningful to speak of the community as a homogeneous entity. There are several communities which are interlinked and occasionally broken up. The study shows, for example, that not all the socially exposed

who identify themselves or are identified by others as Greenlanders (for instance, based on descent and language), are interested in participating in the community at all. Others are oriented towards community both with other Greenlanders and with non-Greenlanders; this often applies to Greenlandic women who socialize with Danish men. The overwhelming majority, however, prefer to be in a group that is defined by themselves as Greenlandic.

The ethnic issue in Greenland, which is chiefly a matter of a contrast between Danish and Greenlandic ethnicity, has been described by the Danish anthropologist Bo Wagner Sørensen as crucial for Greenlandic society in general and for the individual in particular. Not all the inhabitants of the country can automatically style themselves "Greenlanders". The concrete criteria for belonging to this ethnic group are complex, but certain patterns emerge, according to Sørensen:

> The ordinary Greenlandic population, however, seems to attach crucial significance to the place of birth for the status of Greenlander. Children of mixed marriages born in Greenland are counted by most people as Greenlanders, albeit not always unconditionally, since Greenlandic language and "mentality" are sometimes required as an extra condition. [...]. The blood criterion seems essential. Calling oneself a Greenlander seems to be perceived as a right that some people have naturally, while others with a more dubious background can try to earn it (Sørensen 1993:35).

A similar demarcation of the group can be found among homeless Greenlanders in Denmark. Not all those who might be interested can immediately become part of the community. The rather indefinable criterion of blood seems to make itself felt here too, since the pattern is that those who belong to the community with the status of Greenlanders are all "of Greenlandic blood". A person's physical appearance – looking Greenlandic or Danish – thus seems to be decisive, since there are no people in the group who are identified through their appearance as being (exclusively) of Danish descent. Ethnic identity, in other words, is understood here as something primordial and innate, as a property with which one is born rather than as a product of choices and identifications.

At the same time, there are other criteria which, as Sørensen also discusses, seem to play a part for the group's identification of its members. Language is particularly important here. Social workers who are in daily contact with the group observe how Greenlandic descent is not enough for some individuals to become a part of the community, if they do not speak the language. Communication in the community takes place in Greenlandic, which thus decides who is counted as part of it, and in particular helps to emphasize the community – both for those who belong to it and for those who view it from the sideline. When socially exposed Greenlanders, for example, come together at a day centre and speak Greenlandic, according to social workers it has the effect that others are excluded, if not directly then indirectly. This excludes those who are of Greenlandic origin but cannot speak the language:

> Greenlanders who grew up in Denmark and do not speak the Greenlandic language, and who are not a part of the [Greenlandic] community find it a little difficult, because they are attracted in one way or another to the community but they cannot gain admission. If you don't have what it takes, you run the risk of being pushed out. It's rather cold not to be a part of this (Worker at a day centre).

The group of homeless Greenlanders thus functions, as Hylland Eriksen puts is, as "an inverted refrigerator". To generate warmth on the inside, the community almost auto-

matically creates cold on the outside (Eriksen 2005:59). Identification and self-identification as a Greenlander thus do not always coincide, and, as the quotation illustrates, this can entail serious problems for the individual.

We are thus dealing with a group that in large measure assembles around the idea of an ethnically based community where markers such as descent and language demarcate the group in relation to other socially exposed people. It must be described, however, as a highly complex "community", and even if a large proportion of the socially exposed Greenlanders perceive themselves as a united group, the sense of community can easily change character depending on the relation and the situation. It is thus a fellowship with internal hierarchies and alliances, subgroups, old grudges and conflicts. There are differences in status between individuals in the group, which can be connected to factors such as geographical origin, gender, language, seniority, resources, alliances, family relations, past, education, or something completely different.

Inside the group there is thus continuous demarcation and subdivision into smaller groups, as the convergent ethnic markers fade into the background to give way to other organizing principles which can be difficult for an outsider to detect. One of the most obvious subgroups among the Greenlanders, however, is connected to geography and language. One often sees that people from Eastern Greenland keep to themselves or are defined out of the greater community, partly because their language differs significantly from that of Western Greenland, but also because being an Eastern Greenlander brings lower status than being from Western Greenland. In a group demarcated on the basis of language and other ethnic markers, there is thus a further demarcation of a smaller group as Eastern Greenlanders. Once again, ethnic identification must be regarded as complex.

In addition to the fact that different language and geographical origin can be instrumental in breaking up the cohesion, there are certain forms of behaviour that can give people a low place in the hierarchy and ultimately disqualify them from participating in the community. This applies, for example, to those who abuse hard drugs. It is emphasized time and again in the interviews with the homeless Greenlanders that they do not wish to have any contact with abusers of hard drugs. We thus see that behaviour – in this case the use of drugs – can, as it were, outdo ethnicity. A person's behaviour and problems can step into the foreground and push ethnic identification into the background.

Another form of behaviour that is disliked in the broad group is prostitution – in the sense of Greenlandic women who pick up men in the street to offer sex for payment. This definition excludes Greenlandic women who do not walk the streets but in a prostitution-like manner receive beer and/or hash in return for sleeping with the men who supply them. The latter is accepted in the group, whereas the former is usually not. Once again we see how membership of the Greenlandic group is challenged by a specific behaviour that is not considered acceptable in the group. Ethnic criteria are thus not sufficient conditions for inclusion in the Greenlandic group, and even if an individual can be said to satisfy criteria such as descent and language, certain forms of behaviour can disqualify a person from belonging to the group.

## Binding Communities

As described above, ethnic communities, according to Barth, are perceived as bind-

ing, and most of the homeless Greenlanders belong to a system for the exchange of resources and services, which functions within the framework of the conditions that come with homelessness. The environment of homeless Greenlanders contains a variety of binding communities, with a high degree of reciprocity, as is recognizable from classical anthropological theories of gift-giving.

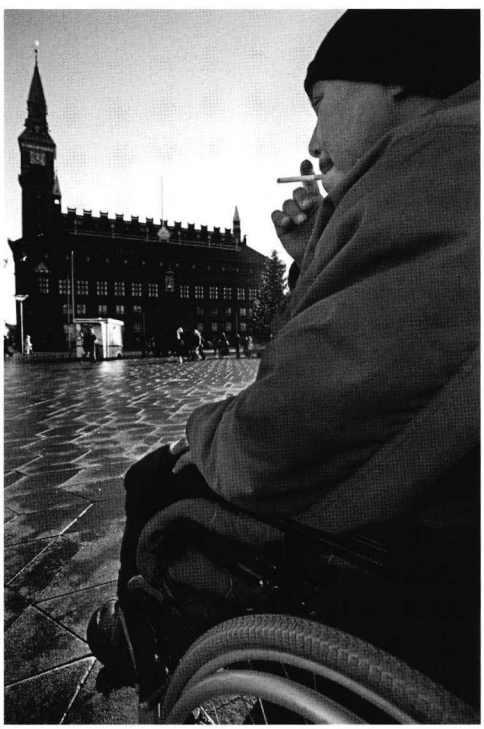
> They look after each other [...] If a Greenlander is lying on the other side of the street, the others make sure to help him, whereas a Dane would be left to lie there (Worker at a day centre).

Apart from situations like that described above, many Greenlanders also feel obliged to share things like money, food, beer, and hash. The resources of the individual are thus, to a large extent, the resources of the group. The home is also included in this reciprocal obligation, and if you have a flat of your own or a place in a shelter, you try to share it with those in need by offering homeless Greenlanders a place to spend the night on the couch or the like.

The custom of "couch sleeping", like the classical gift, does not require an immediate gift in return and it does not have a set price. Instead, a favour in return is expected on a later occasion. The exchange of gifts thus helps to strengthen social integration in the group of Greenlanders. Naturally, the hospitality has an immediate positive effect for the individual, but in the long run it can have negative costs both for the owner of the couch and for the person who sleeps on it. It creates unequal power relations (indebtedness) and insecurity because of lack of control over one's own situation. For women in particular, the situation of being indebted to a male couch owner can often be found problematic. As for the insecurity of not knowing whether one has a place to sleep for the night, this is felt equally by both sexes. A homeless Greenlandic man describes the uncertain feeling of being a couch sleeper as follows:

> It's the insecurity that preys on you the whole time when you have to live with other people. What's it like at home? What are they saying now? Will I be chucked out? And must I walk the streets again throughout the whole long night?" (Man, aged about 40).

The fact that couch sleeping is often felt by many to be the best and the only option, paradoxically, is due to the deficient contact with the social system, which in turn is due to the individual's ability to manage fairly well without help from the system, thanks to the network.



Asser lives on the street and spends a lot of his time, as in the picture, at Rådhuspladsen in Copenhagen. Photo: Jasper Carlberg 2006.

Showing hospitality is not always compatible with the forms in which a person lives. Opening one's home – whether it is a flat or a place in a shelter – to other Greenlanders who are homeless often has the consequence that one is thrown out on account of the noise and trouble. Several of the informants said that they sometimes find it very problematic for their personal situation to give shelter and help to other homeless people, but that they feel an obligation they can hardly avoid. One informant in the study, a woman aged 54, says that, now that she has a home of her own, she does not want her guests to bring along acquaintances. She nevertheless finds it difficult to say no: "It's very difficult. It is for me. I can't say no if somebody asks. Not as long as I can help." This sense of obligation is due in many cases to the fact that a person has received such favours in the past and therefore feels indebted. Regardless of the personal antecedents, however, there is a mutual expectation to share resources with others in the community. This resource sharing consolidates a Greenlandic community in the sense that one cannot in the long run be a part of the group without contributing in this way. Refusing to share is thus ultimately the same as refusing to take part in a community with other homeless Greenlanders.

The reciprocal ethnic identification as a Greenlander thus gives a number of individuals among the homeless in Denmark immediate access to a strong network. This network functions like a safety net and a survival strategy in a harsh existence, since the network in a strained situation can provide the basic necessities such as a roof over one's head, food and drink, stimulants to enjoy, and in particular the important social interaction. Identifying oneself as a Greenlander is often what makes everyday life tolerable, in a highly concrete sense, for a homeless Greenlander.

These obligations, especially in the long term, also have a number of negative consequences for the individual. The reciprocal exchange of services and resources can lead to unequal relations of power, for example, between men and women or between those who have a home and those who sleep on couches. For many people this can give a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity, for instance, through not having a roof over one's head except through someone else's charity.

For homeless Greenlanders who have managed to improve their situation, on their own or with the help of the system – for example, by getting treatment for drug addiction or getting a flat or a place in a shelter – the obligation to other homeless Greenlanders can also have the effect of holding the person back. Being a part of a community obliges a person to share resources, and a flat can be lost again if the neighbours complain about noise, parties, and fights. Substance abuse can easily be resumed if socializing with others usually involves drinking beer and smoking hash. And, understandably, it can be difficult for a person to see the point of breaking with the old network, for instance to get treatment for drug addiction or to improve one's housing situation, if the only reward is to be left all by oneself in a new flat, without any network or contacts with others. As we saw in the quotation from a woman who has acquired a flat of her own, she would prefer not to have to give houseroom to a community of addicts, but finds it very difficult to say no. There is thus a continuous balancing act between the possibility of marking boundaries in relation to old addict friends and the risk of being excluded from one's network.

Another field that homeless Greenlanders in Denmark must tackle more or less con-

tinuously is the encounter with – or perhaps more correctly the relationship to – Danish society, often in the form of social workers. As we shall describe below, Greenlanders, whether homeless or not, have a special status in Denmark in relation to other minorities. This has a profound effect on the field of homelessness, and it is of great significance for the homeless Greenlanders' everyday life and opportunities.

### Socially or Culturally Conditioned?

The mutual obligations and boundaries drawn between people who are desired and undesired in the group of Greenlanders thus contribute to maintaining a community between homeless Greenlanders in Denmark. As described above, the formation of groups is also a relational process, and group formation among homeless Greenlanders also takes place in relation to the surrounding society, and can be partly imperative, i.e., with a degree of coercion. It could be claimed – somewhat simplistically – that the group of homeless Greenlanders only becomes *homeless Greenlanders* in relation to the surrounding, mainly Danish, society, often represented by the Danish social system.

In the group of social workers – with and without a Greenlandic background – who work with homeless Greenlanders, there is, as mentioned earlier, a perception that homeless Greenlanders differ qualitatively from other groups of homeless, and that their situation is generally worse than that of other groups. They also often raise the closely related question: Why do some Greenlanders in Denmark become homeless? And why are they particularly socially vulnerable?[3] Part of the explanation that the social workers themselves give is that the homeless Greenlanders, by virtue of their Danish citizenship, do not receive the support and help (e.g. as regards language) that is offered to other (linguistic) minorities, and therefore find it difficult to navigate in the social system. This increases the risk that socially exposed Greenlanders will become "invisible" to the system, which does not have the resources to capture this group. On a more general level, however, we can discern two different understandings of Greenlandic homelessness. Roughly speaking, the discussion is between two extremes, one of which represents an understanding of the group's problems in terms of social background, comparable to other socially marginalized groups, while at the other extreme the group's problems are regarded as being more specifically linked to their special cultural background – problems that can be understood as being specifically Greenlandic.

With the cultural understanding, social vulnerability is depicted as being connected to Greenlandic culture and identity, in the sense that there is a particular cultural imbalance in the "Greenlandicness" of the homeless which is the reason for the homelessness and the social degradation. "Something has gone wrong within their culture", and the focus is therefore on repairing what has been spoiled – in this case a cultural identity – which is expected to lead to a change in the social situation. A close link is thus discerned between culture and social problems. With a more socially conditioned understanding the focus instead is on (general) social problems such as addiction and childhood traumas as reasons for homelessness.[4]

The outlook chosen is of great significance for the solutions and measures implemented on behalf of the group – and it can also be detected in them. There are examples of measures aimed directly at the homeless Greenlanders, based on the Greenlanders as a cultural group.

In these cases a prominent place is given to activities such as (traditional) Greenlandic crafts, cooking, and kayak making as ways to get the Greenlanders out of homelessness. The idea behind this is that pursuing traditional Greenlandic activities will give the homeless a number of skills that can ultimately give them pride and self-esteem within a Greenlandic context and in a Greenlandic (non-homeless) setting. The point is that they will master "Greenlandicness", and that it will give them the strength to get out of their homelessness and into a different social network.

This application of cultural explanatory models to social problems, according to Kirsten Thisted, is widespread in relation to Greenland and Greenlanders (Thisted 2002). Where the emphasis in a Danish context would instead be on social psychology and/or psychiatric approaches – for example, in relation to murder or suicide – primarily based on the individual, the Greenlandic social problems are explained as a reflection of something larger and more fundamental than the individual.

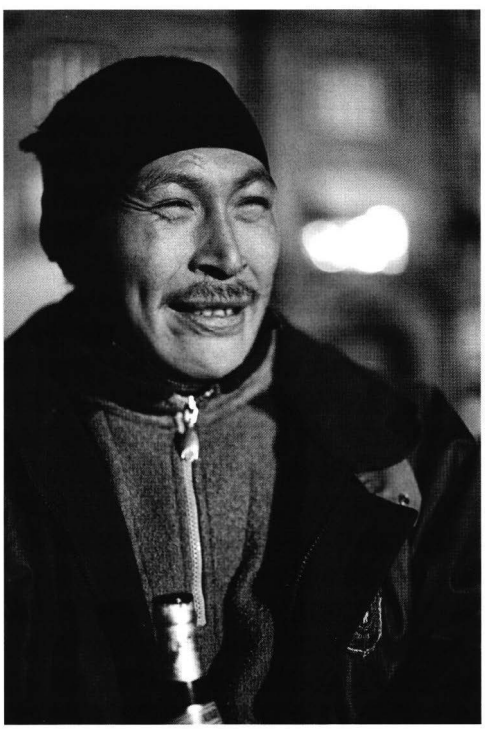
The negative side of these cultural efforts, however, is that there is simultaneously a reification of Greenlandic culture (it is equated with kayaks and skins), and a retention of an essentialized version of a Greenlandic cultural identity based on elements from a traditional Greenlandic past, as materialized in making kayaks and sewing skins. Greenlandic cultural identity is thus not envisaged as a changing entity in constant development and on a par with modern society, but rather as traditional, unchanging, and firmly anchored in the past. This is a perception of culture as something one has and is a member of, rather than something one does and which is constantly being changed and maintained (Baumann 1999:84). Greenlandic identity is seen as irreconcilable with modernity. At the same time, it reinforces the "alterity" that distinguishes the homeless Greenlanders – in the eyes of the social system – from other homeless people in Denmark.

Other measures involve a larger share of activities that are not necessarily associated with Greenlandic culture and therefore are not culturally motivated, such as doing cycle repairs, gardening, or selling the homeless magazine, *hus forbi*. These activities are intended to give the homeless a number of skills that are of immediate use in society, and chiefly to make them feel that they are productive and valuable. They proceed from social problems and seek to improve social skills. No distinction is made here between different ethnic groups; the aim is to use "ethnically neutral" activities to treat all homeless people equally in this respect.

There are thus basically two possibilities for homeless Greenlanders as regards the measures they are offered in the social system. They can either take part in activities where they are treated in the same way as other homeless people, or they can take part in activities where their differentness is underlined through specifically "Greenlandic" activities. Here we find ourselves in what Thomas Hylland Eriksen describes as one of the central problems of multiculturalism, namely, the right to be equal versus the right to be different (Eriksen 2006:164ff.). Here we shall not discuss how reasonable it is to regard Danish society as multicultural, but merely say that in relation to homeless Greenlanders, this problem comes into play.

In the case of the culturally based measures for the homeless, a platform is created from where the homeless Greenlanders can build up and express the cultural identity they are expected to have, which means having the opportunity to overcome the social problems

caused by the "spoiled" cultural identity. The difference, and the obviously different treatment (corresponding "culturally specific" measures are not even contemplated for homeless Pakistani, Turkish, or Somalian people), is imagined as a path to equality. The socially oriented measures, in contrast, proceed from a universalist way of thinking. The homeless are regarded primarily in terms of their social situation as homeless, rather than as a cultural issue. The instruments to help homelessness are thereby equal for everyone, even though there are certain problems that may be especially relevant to certain groups, including the Greenlanders.



Peter lives on the street. Here he is photographed in Rådhuspladsen in Copenhagen. Photo: Jasper Carlberg 2006.

## Conclusion

Homeless Greenlanders in Denmark are a group that must be regarded as one among many other groups of homeless and socially exposed people in Denmark. They typically share a number of characteristics, such as addiction problems, with the rest of the "heavy" part of the homeless, and many homeless Greenlanders also have a series of problems in common with (other) homeless immigrants, including a poor knowledge of the Danish social system and language difficulties. If it is nevertheless meaningful to speak of homeless Greenlanders as something special, it has to do with the fact that they are distinguished from other groups by some patterns in the way they handle their homelessness and their strategies in everyday life, and that as Greenlanders they have a special status in the Danish system in various respects.

Homeless Greenlanders in Denmark navigate in a complex landscape. For many of them, being together with other homeless Greenlanders is crucial. In this social interaction they differ from other groups of homeless via ethnic markers such as language. For the individual homeless Greenlander, identification and self-identification as a member of the ethnic group are of great significance, since in many cases this gives access to shared resources, it allows mixing with people who are perceived as like-minded, and it gives them a safety net when it comes to housing. Yet it is a complex community, in which the "Greenlandicness" is constantly being challenged by things like behaviour (e.g. prostitution or drug abuse), but also by internal groupings and hierarchies based on factors such as origin (East or West Greenland). The community is also situational, and can lose its significance, for example, if a person gets a flat of his own and thus gets out of homelessness. When

viewed against this background, it is not so much a distinct community as several different and constantly changing Greenlandic communities.

Identification with the group of homeless Greenlanders can thus give opportunities to the individual, but it also brings limitations. As we have seen, it can give access to a series of resources, but it can simultaneously help to "conceal" homelessness, because in many cases a person does not need to be in contact with the social system to manage through the day – and the night. Couch sleeping is one of the crucial aspects here, but this widespread practice can also be a serious personal drawback in reality, for the couch sleeper and the couch owner alike. The practice of couch sleeping is one of the fields where the identification with the group of homeless Greenlanders is felt to be an obligation. If one has been granted the favour, one is expected to offer help some other time. The prevalent exchange of resources and services that helps to strengthen the group internally keeps a hold on the individual, who constantly feels obliged to the others in the network and to a large extent must choose either to contribute to the group or to cut himself off from it.

In addition, the situation of homeless Greenlanders is influenced by the relationship to a Danish social system where homelessness to a certain extent is linked to culture when it comes to this group. Among other things, it is in their relation to the Danish system that the group of homeless Greenlanders is created, in other words, homelessness among the members of the group is associated with a cultural "content". This idea of a link between culture and homelessness affects not only the way in which Greenlandic homelessness, with its causes and effects, is perceived in the system, but thereby also the measures and solutions that are implemented for homeless Greenlanders. This is both in the sense that specially "Greenlandic" activities are "designed" for homeless Greenlanders, and that there are day centres which have been opened specifically for this group and which in practice are only open to them. The ethnic (self-)identification – the fact of being a "Greenlander" – thus gives these homeless people access to certain measures which in scope and character give this particular group a form of positive discrimination in relation to other groups. At the same time, however, it can be objected that these solutions help to reproduce a fixed and static image of Greenlandic culture and the individual Greenlander's range of possible actions, which does not necessarily increase the chances of the homeless to change their situation.

This linking of ethnicity/culture and social problems/solutions seems at a quick glance to be specific to the group of homeless Greenlanders in Denmark, whereas the linkage of ethnicity with criminal behaviour is particularly familiar in the Danish public sphere, especially when it comes to minorities with a Muslim background. Furthermore, it is difficult – particularly at a time with a strong focus on integration problems – to imagine a comparable focus on strengthening the cultural identity of other ethnic minority groups. It is often argued that the opposite strategy should be applied, in the expectation of being able to ease the integration of minorities into Danish society. As regards this tendency it is obvious that Greenlanders in general have a different status from other ethnic minorities in Denmark. It is difficult to imagine a culturally based action on behalf of homeless Danes similar to that implemented for the Greenlanders. Would homeless Danes be taught folk dancing? Or how to build cabins

for allotment gardens? Or how to cook roast pork? With respect to homeless Danes there is not the same idea that "something has gone wrong within their culture". Against this background it is obvious that homeless Greenlanders are demarcated and regarded as a qualitatively different group.

The demarcation of the group on the basis of ethnic identification is thus of great significance for homeless Greenlanders in Denmark, and this meaning is ascribed and maintained both by the group itself and by the social system. The perception of ethnic affiliation thus helps in concrete ways to shape the framework for everyday life for this group, and is instrumental in singling out the group as different from other groups of homeless. Relating to this almost indissoluble linkage between "Greenlandicness" and homelessness is thus a major part of the challenge for future work on behalf of homeless Greenlanders in Denmark.

*Signe Boeskov*
Cand.mag., ph.d.-stipendiat
Institut for Historie og Områdestudier
Århus Universitet
Nordre Ringgade 1
DK-8000 Århus C
e-mail hissib@hum.au.dk

*Nanna Folke Olsen*
Cand.mag., museumsinspektør
Svendborg Museum
Grubbemøllevej 13
DK-5700 Svendborg
e-mail nanna@svendborgmuseum.dk

Translation: Alan Crozier

## Notes

1 The study and the report (Boeskov & Olsen 2006) are by the two authors of this article, working at the Centre for Cultural Analysis, Copenhagen University. The report was commissioned by Copenhagen Municipality in collaboration with the National Board of Social Services, and was one of a series of initiatives implemented as a result of a white book about socially exposed Greenlanders in Denmark that appeared in 2003.

2 Street people are described as: "People who spend the night in places that are not intended for the purpose" (Børner 1997:8). There are numerous examples of street people in the Greenlandic group.

3 There is widespread discussion as to whether the Greenlanders who become homeless in Denmark were already homeless in Greenland, in other words, before they arrived in Denmark, or if the downward social movement started in their encounter with Denmark. The reasons for the group's homelessness have not been in focus in the study, but there is evidence to suggest that for the group of Greenlanders who come to Denmark and become homeless, there were already social problems in Greenland, which in many cases are exacerbated on arrival in Denmark. Greenlanders are Danish citizens and can therefore travel freely in and out of Denmark and receive social benefits on the same terms as other citizens, and it is therefore not possible to investigate this more closely with our data. In this connection it is worth mentioning that homeless Greenlanders can also be born and grow up in Denmark or have lived in Denmark for a long time before they became homeless. Homelessness, as we encountered it in the study, is thus not exclusively associated with migration.

4 The latter problem is not unknown in a cultural understanding, where traumatization in childhood is linked to a perception of a generally bad social situation in Greenland, which in turn is often associated with the development of Greenlandic society and its "loss of culture", as described earlier.

## References

Barth, Fredrik 1996: *Manifestasjon og prosess.* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Baumann, Gerd 1999: *The Multicultural Riddle.* New York & London: Routledge.

Boeskov, Signe & Olsen, Nanna Folke 2006: *Små skridt – store forandringer – En undersøgelse af hjemløshed i gruppen af grønlændere i København.* Copenhagen: Center for Kulturanalyse.

Bøggild, Lotte & Find, Karina 2003: *Fremtidige ind-*

*satsområder overfor socialt udsatte grønlændere i Danmark*. Copenhagen: Socialt Udviklingscenter, SUS.

Børner, Tobias 1997: *Hjemløshed: begreber, typer, tal og metoder*. Arbejdsnotat SFI. Copenhagen.

Caswell, Dorte & Schultz, Ida 2001: *Folket på gaden – om posefolket og gadepraktikken*. Socialpædagogisk Bibliotek. Copenhagen: Gyldendal Uddannelse.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland 1998: *Etnicitet och nationalism*. Nora: Nya Doxa.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland 2006: *Rødder og fødder. Identitet i en foranderlig tid*. Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter.

Fabricius, Nina *et al.* 2005: *Fra hjemløshed til fast bolig. Samarbejde og metoder i arbejdet med hjemløse*. Copenhagen: Socialforskningsinstituttet.

Järvinen, Margaretha 2004: *Hjemløse flygtninge og indvandrere*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Sørensen, Bo Wagner 1993: Bevægelser mellem Grønland og Danmark. Etnicitet, følelser og rationalitet i migrationen. *Antropologi* 28. Copenhagen.

Thisted, Kirsten 2002: Grønlandske relationer – om grønlandsk etnicitet i dansk/grønlandsk diskurs. In *Transkulturel psykiatri*, ed. Francisco Alberdi *et al.* Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

# The Student Boiler Suit and Long John Drinking

## Dressing and Undressing on the Journey towards Authenticity

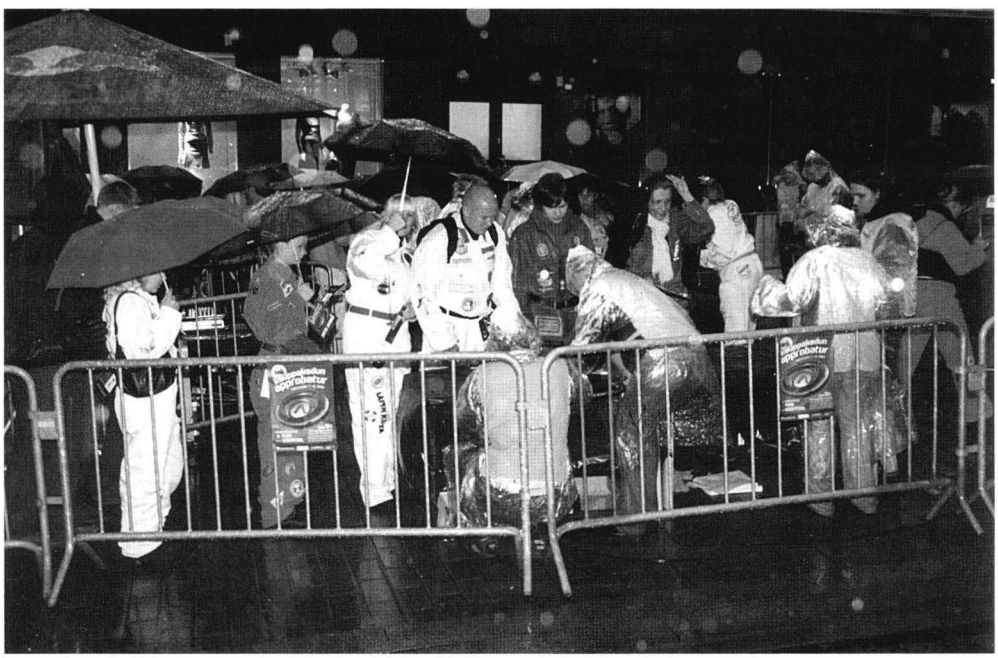
By Bo Lönnqvist

Each year at the beginning of October, a student devised nuisance known as "Kauppakadun Approbatur" can be seen and experienced in the centre of the city of Jyväskylä. It is a phenomenon that according to tradition started in the 1970s as a so-called "inside thing", among a hundred or so students that gathered to acquaint themselves with the restaurants in the city. However, the custom has expanded to a one night event that involves 2 000 and even up to 3 000 students. The ethnology students, upon whose documentation, analysis and interpretation this text is based, therefore describe the event as a ritual and an instance of counter culture.

The development of the event is as follows:

Kauppakadun Approbatur took off in the 1970s and established itself as a traditional student festivity in the 1980s. Nowadays, the Approbatur is a well-organised event that is both commercial and admissions-based. The participants pay a 10-euro fee as well as for the beverages purchased in the various bars. The 10-euro fee includes the pass, which is stamped for every drink that is bought (be it non-alcoholic or alcoholic) and a bracelet, which allows admission to the main celebrations at the end of the evening. The objective of the exercise is that the participants drink a specific amount of drinks in the bars on Kauppakatu to gain an approbatur in course credits. The following year the student can complete his cum laude studies and proceed from year to year towards a doctoral degree. The amount of drinks naturally increases in accordance with course requirements. An approbatur is the equivalent of 10 measures of alcohol for men and 8 for women, while the doctoral degree requires 19 and 17 measures respectively.

There is a strong sense of playfulness to the festivity, although its constituent parts are closely associated with the university study system as its serious counterpoint. Central goals are the consumption of alcohol and inebriation. Alcohol has thus taken the place of



Assembly and distribution of the certificates for the beer festival on Kauppakatu in Jyväskylä, 10 October 2004. Photo: Ilkka Kuhanen.

The group leader announces the last start. The last team must carry out all the tasks that the preceding teams have carried out such as shouting, sqatting, hugging etc. Photo: Ilkka Kuhanen.

knowledge acquired by study. There is a clear streak of competitiveness to the proceedings as the phrase "drink somewhat more proficiently than others" belies. The participants also compare their achievements throughout the evening. The women can likewise square up to the men since an "accomplished female drinker is a tough lad or ladette".

The starting times of the competitors are marked on tickets and indicate when the participants should arrive at the centre of the town compass. There tickets and ID papers will be checked, after which the participants will be let into the starting area. In this fenced-off area, bracelets will be handed out to the participants in the starting pen as well as the diplomas that are marked after each successfully consumed drink. The gate of the fenced-off area is opened after the countdown is completed and the students are let out to rush towards the examination points. They have five hours time to complete their degree, the doctoral candidates six hours. During this period, the diplomas are marked with the requisite amount of stamps needed for each degree, which are earned by consuming spirits, cider, beer, or soft drinks at the designated Appro restaurants. The last stamp is marked at a special, final examination point where the "examiner" marks the tasks and approves the exam.

The students compare the structure of the playful festivity with the everyday routine of the curriculum and study system.

"Kauppakaudun Approbatur" makes use of terms that are familiar from student life. The restaurants are examination halls, the drinks are set books and the exams are marked by the examiner. The restaurants prepare special "Appro drinks". The Approbatur has characteristics reminiscent of the initiation rite, as the form of the celebrations is more or less stable with its established practices the same from year to year. The participants comprise a relatively homogeneous group whose motives an external group will find hard to discern. However, the essential distinction to

the initiation rite is that the Approbatur does not change the social position or status of the participant. The next morning when one wakes up hungover one can find the doctoral diploma on the floor amid vomit. Despite the completion of a degree, the satisfaction of the festivity is intrinsic and devoid of other goals and ends. It can be compared to play as it likewise sanctions mischief and letting off steam.

The Approbatur, for instance, differs by virtue of this social constancy from the "Fuksiaiset", which is clearly a rite of initiation as the first year students are donned in bin bags and "become" socially approved students in the eyes of the older students, and thus gain the right to put on the boiler suit. In this kind of schema Kauppakadun Approbatur could be described as follows: "a kind of mature ritual in which the students congregate in order to celebrate their collective status. The festivity is a culmination of the process of social cohesion among Finnish students during the autumn term, the end of a specific growth curve, in which the "Fuksiaiset" tradition emphasises liminal space through initiation rites."

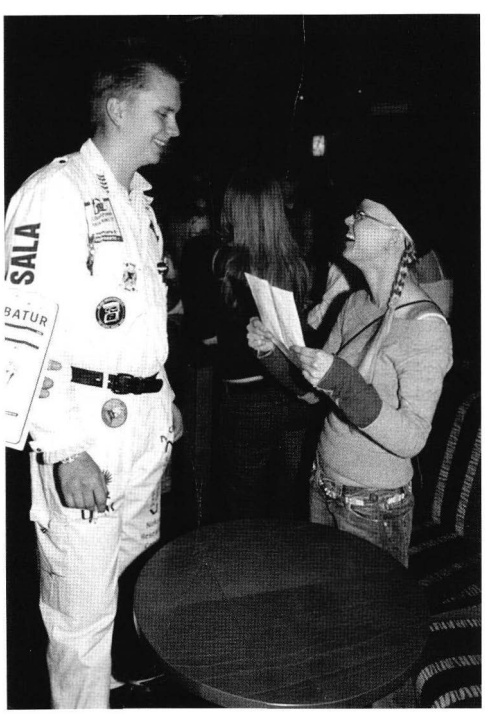
Students mention the boiler suit as the most central external sign of the Approbatur celebrations. The fact that the boiler suit accentuates the unity and group identity of the students and differentiates them clearly from the rest of the population is mentioned in most papers on the subject.

Herein lies one of the most interesting semantic fields concerning this student dress, i.e. that the most everyday article of clothing, the boiler suit, which was originally a protective suit used by workers at sites and became a designed professional garment at the end of the 50s, has been chosen as festive dress.


The mass kick-off towards the pubs and bars of the city. Photo: Ilkka Kuhanen.

The choice of the boiler suit exposes the most visible paradox of the festivity, i.e. the significance of an inverted culture, whose message might be that this is the summit of what we can achieve through the elevation of the dirty professional garment and alcohol. The boiler suit signifies that something meaningful is happening although nothing actually happens other than that the homogeneous mass of boiler suits moves drunkenly onwards.

However, the degree of appreciation for the boiler suit differs from that of a mere work garment, which lacks a sense of ritualised performance and heightened representation. In addition, outer appearance is altered by make-up and wigs. The latter is perhaps a new element. The rucksack and plastic bag full of beer known as "pussikalja" complete the ensemble. The beverage certificates are stamped at the bars and checked later at specially designated points where the participant receives a boiler suit patch if he or she succeeds in amassing the requisite number of stamps. These gatherings are therefore known as "boiler suit parties":



The stamped certificate and completed degrees on proud display. Photo: Ilkka Kuhanen.

In addition to alcohol, the essential part of the event is naturally the boiler suit. Virtually every participant is dressed in the markings of his or her student body or subject department. Those without boiler suits are nowhere to be seen. The centre of town is packed for one evening and night as the group of people clad in boiler suits roam from bar to bar. The boiler suit signifies that one belongs to the category of students. For many the boiler suit seems to give a licence to do whatever they want. People shake loose from the constraints of the everyday and become so-called "boiler suit clowns". As boiler suit clowns, they then have the perceived right to urinate in the middle of a pedestrian street.

However, the boiler suits do not merely comprise a single unified group. Each department or subject department has its own boiler suit. The colour of the boiler suit as well as the print on the boiler suit tells us where the person in question studies and at which university. Thus, smaller groups according to study subject are formed among the greater mass of students. There can be substantial prejudice and stereotypical attitudes in relation to each other among the various groups. This might even cause a few fights during the course of the evening.

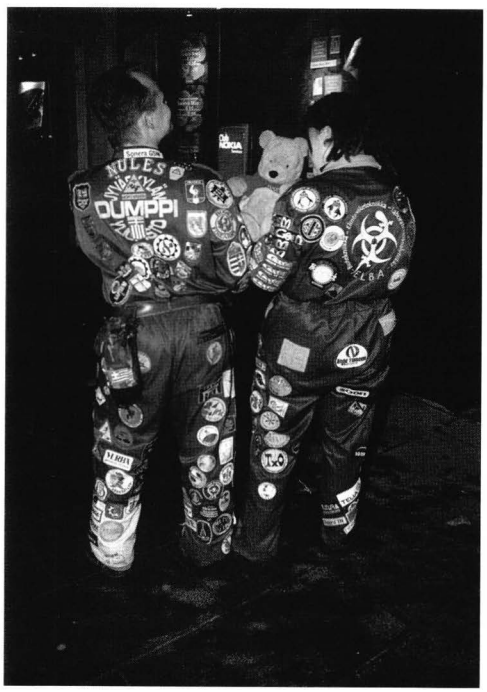
Several interviewees and interpreters of their own culture emphasise the significance of the boiler suits in the fortification of student identity, as "the boiler suit is a ritual garment that symbolises that the students are as one. Furthermore, the various colours generate a number of sub-identities." Thus, at the same time as the boiler suit vigorously strengthens group identity it never loses sight of individuality, precisely because of the outfits in various colours and unique boiler suit patches. The boiler suits negate other "classical" differences such as social class, gender, age, language

and regional origin. The tiny codes attached to the boiler suits can remain undetected to the external observer:

Those who wish to delve deeper into the world of the boiler suits can look at the various colours and the sewn patches. One can ponder what each colour and marking symbolises or whether they have any special significance? They could be seen as a sign of collectivity or a sense of togetherness. This could also entail the exclusion of others. Is the significance of the markings a question of form or just status? Other issues could include all of the writing on the boiler suits including advertisements and dedications. One could also ponder the significance of boiler suits per se. This professional garment was originally protective wear. Is it protection against others or oneself? There is an ongoing process of identification and sexuality for instance can be seen to "vanish"' into the seams of the boiler suit. And what significance can be attached to the girls' rucksacks?

According to another analysis, boiler suits can be seen "as a kind of parody of the smart, clean suits worn by civil servants, military uniform or even the work overalls of labourers". In any case, the visual image is important as the student must be identified as a student. The absurdity and parodying of the group image is accentuated further by the various patches, which are comparable to badges of honour and medals.

By donning the subject department boiler suit one generates an "us and others" form of identification. Putting on the boiler suit is the same as saying to oneself : "I am a student. I must therefore behave like a student." Thus, the student ponders tradition and imagines how a student is supposed to behave. The bottle has perhaps already been handed over to the next generation. The donning of the boiler suit can also be seen as a kind of introductory education in one's future profession as students in the same




The colours and inscriptions on the boiler suits show which student body the students belongs to, while the patches are trophies amassed in conjunction with the beer festival as well as other student festivities and events. Winnie the Pooh is along for the ride as a mascot. Photo: Ilkka Kuhanen.

field will often discuss study matters, which in turn unite previously unfamiliar people with each other. Belonging to a group strengthens identity and a sense of togetherness.

The shared dress, i.e. the boiler suit, is an extremely potent symbol of belonging to this group. The boiler suit can be donned especially at these kinds of happenings. The patches on the suits have their own significance as they tell us where and when the student in question has partied and of other relevant experiences. The boiler suit is supposed to be worn out and full of various scribblings as it is then a testimony to an active student life. The colours and logos of the boiler suit denote field of study and educational institution, but also merge into the wider whole of the boiler suits.

We can therefore state that the situation and context offer the semantic framework in which the boiler suit exists. The everyday garment gains a momentary attraction divorced from the everyday, which nonetheless requires a user situation with activities that are saturated with additional meanings.

A great sense of togetherness prevails among the boiler suited students during the evening. The different coloured boiler suits attract interest as students mingle with ten or even a hundred like-minded "comrades in arms". However, students seem to get along the best with those who are dressed in near identical boiler suits. Identification with the group that comprises one's immediate field of study is even stronger than identification with a mere fellow student. Complete strangers act as if they were best friends, when they are dressed in the same outfit on a night like this. This liminal space could be summed up by the phrase "then I really felt alive". In this case, this is true, since as one reminisces about student days, these kind of events are probably the first that are brought to mind. "During the Appro I experienced the deepest essence of student life."

## The Power of Transformation

As the festive dress for a night, the student boiler suit reveals something about the mechanisms of moving from the everyday to the festive and particularly by means of everyday attributes. The boiler suit is thus simultaneously quotidian and festive. It is open and loose in form, which in turn allows the possibility of "jumping" into the suit, being donned in the suit and crawling out of one's shell at will. The donning of the suit is an instance of momentary experimentation, which always includes the possibility of return. Nothing has actually happened, although one is seemingly living life to the full.

This quality is not foreign to ritual and it is not fanciful to compare the boiler suits and their ever-expanding patches of meaning with the shamanic outfits in Siberia. Accompanied by drumming and dance these also serve as a means of inducing a trancelike state, while the patterns on the outfits, images of spirit gods, metal and leather amulets, as well as trinkets are in their richest forms signs of the proficiency and wisdom of the shaman. After all, these were the gifts of grateful patients (Lönnqvist 1985). The attraction of a swift transformation of identity can be viewed, as it has been traditionally, as an essential feature of rituals, carnivals and other forms of counterculture. It is a disrobing of power supported by parody, absurdity, play, childishness and drunkenness.

In the European culture of nobility, a ritualised everyday was realised through outdoor excursions, park structures, pleasure houses, artificial islands, temples and fabulous caves, which all formed an extension of indoor spaces into a kind of timeless realm.

The force of culture lies in the possibility of transformation and mutation, features that were entirely absent in the practical and sensible world of peasant culture (Lönnqvist 1988).

However, that which is original in the Approbatur phenomenon is that the adage

"getting away from the everyday" is achieved by dressing and concealing oneself in the everyday, i.e. the negation of the everyday is achieved by the inherent force of the everyday. This "getting away" corresponds to the modern person's yearning for a fluid identity. This happens in the guise of a night of consumption and limitless drinking, while the negation of official university power is attained by an inverse structure; knowledge is replaced by drink and drunkenness by wisdom.

The following example shows that there are even more effective ways of getting away from the everyday and releasing creative potential. It will come as no surprise that this example is also drawn from the world of student life.

## The Secret of Long John Drinking

If it is the case that memories and the function of the suit as a collective worldview and cosmos are associated with the garment, then the suit is also a ready-to-wear outfit with the patches added on as a gradually expanding accessory. Long john drinking on the other hand is based on a complete negation of clothing. It is a cultural form of disrobement in which the man also negates himself.

According to a student glossary from 2003, it is defined thus:

Long john drinking a commonly used term for drunkenness and moderate inebriation – term refers to relaxed drinking in front of the TV clad in underwear. Booze is consumed alone in a rather melancholy frame of mind. Optional dress includes boxer shorts, a t-shirt or alternatively a sleeveless "wife-beater shirt". Then again, you don't really need to dress up for "long john drinking". If none of your friends wants to go out to the bar, you can always get plastered and indulge in some "long john drinking". An embarrassingly curtailed attempt at painting the town red can be turned into a raucous knees-up. The underwear can be substituted with another piece of clothing, which likewise does not bear up to close scrutiny (old track bottoms, a bathrobe, a towel, greasy hair, pyjamas etc). The phenomenon is extremely masculine and has more to do with the quality of the situation than any specific attire.


The "memories of the festival" that are written on the boiler suit form an essential part of this party culture. Note the rucksack for storage of beer. Photo: Ilkka Kuhanen.

In comparison with the aforementioned Approbatur event, the mechanism is the inverse. In this case, the situation is closed to outsiders as the man is in a pathetic state and strips down to his underwear. There is another everyday lurking beneath the surface of the regular everyday. This state can be achieved by leaving all decorum that can be seen as normal behind.

Long john drinking is the antithesis of the actual party or celebrations. The main idea is to drink at one's leisure- sometimes you can perform the act alone, sometimes in company, but this is far rarer as long

john drinking is most commonly carried out alone. However, it is essential that long john drinking is associated with a safe and familiar social environment. My own view is that the dress code must always be underwear if the definition of long john drinking is to be met properly.

An essential feature of long john drinking is most certainly its private and elusive nature. It is usually tied to an unpleasant phase in life or ennui. However, long john drinking can also be practised in company, but usually only among a small coterie of close friends, at the most 2–3 persons. This is due precisely to the fact that the reason for drinking may be specific and will therefore only be shared among close friends. The classic way of indulging in "long john drinking" is alone at home, with an everyday shirt and long johns as attire. However, sometimes the practitioner might need a friend with whom he can share his predicament. He might than call his friend and say something along the lines of "Look, let's do some long john drinking".

Long john drinking can also have an unexpected quality. Sometimes a male might not notice that he has indulged in the practice until the following day. In this case, the conversation goes something like this: "I think I did a long john number yesterday."

Long john drinking has a kind of therapeutic quality. It serves as a counterpoint to the community's demands vis-à-vis social gatherings, which are often associated with expensive clothing, ostentatious displays in restaurants and exaggerated socializing.

In my opinion long john drinking has more to do with Finnish melancholy than social entertainment.

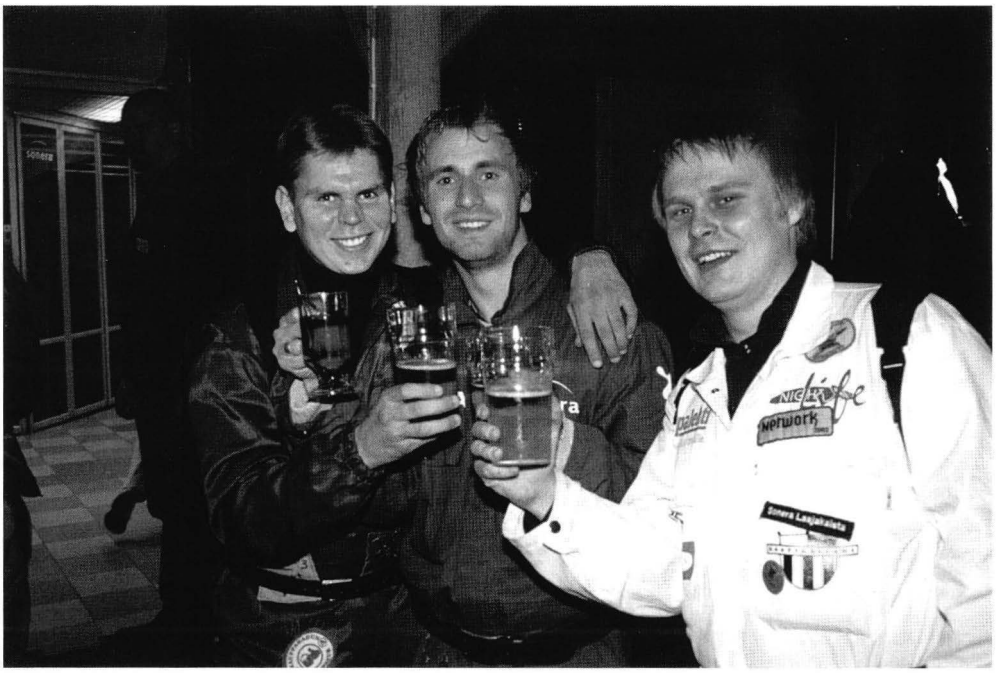
Erkka Pehkonen's ethnological interpretation complements the descriptions of the students above:

The designation of the term "long john drinking" is interesting. I think there's a kind of dual meaning at play. To begin with, it's derogatory, as if it was seen as some kind of problem and must be approached in that manner. Long johns were the underwear your dad wore and often found in the bottom of his Christmas stocking. They often had a seventies style psychedelic pattern and were made of terry cloth. They were also slightly worn out with traces and colourings originating from body fluids. They were often worn by men who lounged in front of the TV watching sports. They are so banal as to be a source of amusement. The reason why solitary drinking is called long john drinking is that it is associated with shame and contemptibility. It represents a stance towards the banality of masculinity and feelings of loneliness in a negated form, i.e. that which an outsider would term self-pity. When a Finn says that he did some long john drinking, he is in fact declaring himself in control of the situation. Daddy is not running into the woods, administering a beating or talking. The long johns represent the robe of shame for those who have already made their decision. They are the coat of arms of the drunken lunatic. Besides being the aesthetic synonym of shame and the above-mentioned problem of masculinity, the long johns also have an intimate significance. At home, one can be dressed as one likes. There is nothing untoward about this. Underwear is an expression of the naked human's personal space. This includes contempt for the social nature of dressing.

## Freedom – Authenticity

The characteristic, which connects the phenomena of the student boiler suit and long john drinking, is that they both serve as a kind of protest against a status-led, consumerist society. As a student ritual, the former protest is directed towards accumulated knowledge, i.e. the doctoral degree, while the latter is a protest against festive/formal dressing. The boiler suit and underwear respectively serve as instruments of protest signifying the very impossibility of luxury. However, the consumption of alcohol forms the central content in both these phenomena. One drinks for the sake of drinking and no return gift is required, or if it does, it instantly loses its value after the event.

From an anthropological perspective, there are classic examples of so-called excessive consumption such as the Kula phenomenon found among the Trobriand islands in Melanesia, in which the excessive showering of gifts upon strangers has unforeseen and often




A pint of beer after a job well done. Photo: Ilkka Kuhanen.

crazy consequences (Hirschberg 1999). This has been seen as a primal form of luxury with its attendant intent to spend lavishly (cf. Lipovetsky & Roux 2003). During long john drinking all fashionable dress and luxury is stripped of meaning through the act of undressing, and what is left is something invisible, anonymous, unaesthetic, as well as formless. It is a kind of annihilation of the whole concept of dress. Social status is replaced by the freedom of inebriation. In a sense, the boiler suit also negates the modern cult of personality and individualism by emphasizing collectivity and strengthening group identity. However, the boiler suit also succeeds in marking the status of the individual in the form of patches sewn or pinned on to the boiler suits. The patches form a trophy-like collection that serves as a validation of the student's personality and irreplaceable self-esteem.

On the other hand, "Kauppakadun Approbatur" also negates modern individuality, personal image and the need to attain a status that emphasises and privileges standing out from the masses, i.e. a state in which the individual celebrates a private spree of consumption by purchasing brand clothing such as Calvin Klein and Björn Borg underwear. The message behind the patches on the boiler suits is also in this sense inverted. The patches and insignia are acceptable within the indivisible marriage of collectivity and individuality. Long john drinking is a consumptive feast stripped bear of all the attributes of a feast.

We can therefore ask ourselves whether the phenomena described above can be seen as yet unformed movements that meet the needs of collectivity and individualism, which occur when a Western person bored of all the trappings of status seeks both freedom and

authenticity. The processes of undressing and dressing offer a momentary reprieve from the shackles of everyday life.

As an organised and public form of celebration, it is possible to describe Kauppakadun Approbatur. However, Ilkka Kuhanen who has observed and documented the Approbatur maintains the following about long john drinking:

Long john drinking is a secret ritual that occurs beneath the surface. If pictures were taken during the act, it would ruin the functionality and power of the ritual. It would be like a badly recited spell. This is a similar phenomenon to the belief that taking a picture will rob one of one's soul. If pictures were taken it would be doubtful if anyone would indulge in long john drinking.

*Bo Lönnqvist*
PhD, professor emeritus (Jyväskylä)
Unionsgatan 45 B 30
00170 Helsingfors, Finland
bo.lonnqvist@netsonic.fi

Translation: Jason O'Neil

## References

Hirschberg, Walter (Begr.) 1999: *Wörterbuch der Völkerkunde. Grundlegend überarbeitete und erweiterte Neuausgabe.* Berlin: Reimer. – Kula, Potlatch.

Lipovetsky, Gilles & Roux, Elyette 2003: *Le luxe éternel. De l'âge du sacré au temps des marques.* Paris: Gallimard.

Lönnqvist, Bo 1985: Schamandräkter i Sibirien. Former och funktioner, ålder och ursprung. *Finskt Museum* 1985, pp. 81–94.

Lönnqvist, Bo 1988: Den ritualiserade vardagen. Herrgårdsliv på Ratula gods i Artsjö kring sekelskiftet 1900. *Finskt Museum* 1988, pp. 101–142. – Ritualization of Daily Life. Life of the Gentry at Ratula Manor in Artsjö (Finnish Artjärvi) around 1900. *Ethnologia Europaea* 1988, pp. 93–116.

Lönnqvist, Bo 2005: Kauppakadun approbatur – eräs opiskelijatapahtuma oppimisen välineenä. Polkuja etnologian menetelmiin, toim. Pirjo Korkiakangas, Pia Olsson, Helena Ruotsala. Ethnos ry. *Ethnos* – toimite 11. Helsinki, pp. 265–277.

Vesala, Antti 2000–2001: Alushousuhumala (i.e. kalsarikänni) prosessina. Parts 1–3. *Tosine, Jyväskylän yliopiston historianopiskelijoiden ainejärjestön pää-äänenkannattaja* 2/2000, 1/2001, 2/2001.

*Unpublished references*

A revised and expanded version of a lecture that was held at the Is the Everyday Ordinary and Quotidian? (Onko arki tavallista ja jokapäiväistä?) symposium organised by Ethnos ry. on 10 March 2004.

Material pertaining to Kauppakadun Approbatur was produced as student assignments in conjunction with an introductory course in ethnology on 13 October 2003. There were 46 responses in total of which 35 dealt with the Kauppakadun Approbatur event on 9 October 2003. The students were mostly born 1980–1984 with a few being born in the 1970s. Descriptions No. 1-13. The photo documentation was carried out by student Ilkka Kuhanen on 7 October 2004.

Lately several articles on Finnish student life in the mid-1960s have been featured in the daily Helsingin Sanomat and these include for instance Peter Rehnström's 'Haalariasussa lounas Aleksilla' (5 May 2005) and Timo Johansson's 'Teekkareilla haalareita jo 1960-luvulla' (8 May 2005).

The long john material was compiled by student Ilkka Kuhanen. It contains 11 descriptions of the phenomenon.

Erkka Pehkonen: Kalsarikänni. - Määritelmä ja analyysi. Manuscript 4 December 2003.

# "The Land and the Sky will Persist"

## The Finnish Farmer's Relationship to Nature in Constituting Continuity in the EU Transition Stage

By Leena Hangasmaa

The situation of a Finnish farmer in March 2007: The fields are asleep under the cover of the shining spring snow, and there is one month left to fill in the forms for EU farming subsidies. The new programme phase has started at the beginning of this year and the subsidies policy has changed considerably. Criteria for environmental subsidies, for example, have been made considerably stricter. The post has brought to farmers an over 30-page booklet called 'Farming methods and environmental criteria', which contains complementary criteria for environmental subsidies, an addition to the 160-page subsidies guide booklet and to the 60-page booklet of instructions on filling in the forms. The farmer needs to engage in environmental planning, maintenance of biological and landscape diversity, take care of protective strips, field banks and crop protection, participate in training, and dispose washing water in an appropriate manner... (Hakuopas 2006:66). In addition to the protection of water systems, the increasing risks of animal diseases have to be taken into consideration in environmental protection. Last year the avian flu made headlines, a few years ago the BSE disease was on focus, before that it was the foot-and-mouth disease. Animal diseases seem to have become a permanent nuisance, at least in the scale of the EU. Chairman Esa Härmälä of the Finnish Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK) (2006: 4–5) also calls for responsible agricultural production, its necessity being emphasized by animal diseases and the food crises. In his message he also wants to direct farmers' attention at the uncertain future of the above-mentioned environmental programmes, the maintenance of the diversity of forest ecosystems, the contradictions in efficient production, as well as the importance of maintaining the cultural landscape. The farmer has numerous responsibilities in relation to his environment: how does he or she experience these responsibilities?

This article thus aims to discuss the relationship of the Finnish farmer to nature and to his environment. Environment in this case includes the farmer's home and the surrounding landscape, the land, the forest, the animals and any surrounding natural forces. What kinds of meanings does a farmer, making a living in the countryside, endow to them? There is much discussion on the effects of the farmer's actions on the land, but what is the land's significance to the farmer? Anthony Giddens (1995:115) suggests that tradition has a privileged relation to space: tradition is always attached to the framework of origins and its significant places. How does the farmer draw boundaries between the familiar and the strange through tradition? How does he comprehend time? If land and landscape become something greater than earth and trees, how do they become the basic pillars of a farmer's life, endowed with significant values?

Forest, rural environment and the rural landscape are today at the heart of various value discussions. The nature and character of agriculture are also in transition. One possible approach to the examination of this transition and the current discussion is through the concepts of productivist and post-productivist agriculture. Productivist management of agriculture means an emphasis on the national or supranational perspective, the economic dimensions of agricultural production and the maximising of food production, in other words, on efficient agricultural production. In the discourse of post-productivist politics, environmental protection, extensive production and rural diversity are in focus (Jokinen 2005:48). In European research of rural sociology, a discussion on highly comprehensive

interpretation of change has taken place through these concepts: a transition from productivist to post-productivist period is seen to be taking place (e.g. Wilson & Rigg 2003; Marsden 2003). The new EU agricultural policy, introduced in Finland in 2006, has been seen as a concrete manifestation of this transition. The guiding principle of the renewed policy is the complete discontinuing of the link between subsidies and production, as well as the cutting of agricultural subsidies and the use of these resources in other forms of rural development. The monitoring of the use of subsidies will also be tightened. (http://europa.eu/generalreport/fi/2005/rg67.htm#fn5; 1.12.2006 12.15.)

According to Pekka Jokinen (2005:49), this change of policy includes a slide away from, or even giving way of productivist rationality, and thus a re-negotiation of the relationship between agriculture, environment and society: agriculture should be able to react to the demands of citizen-consumers in terms of quality of the environment, animal rights and food safety. This multi-faceted and comprehensive conception of agricultural policy is according to Jokinen an alternative to the earlier production-oriented agricultural policy. As Jokinen notes, "the development of the countryside would thus be based on many new kinds of activities, with the common nominator of a reformulation of the use of resources between agriculture and other activities of the countryside" (Ibid.).

The concept of post-productivist agriculture has been a controversial one, however. According to Jokinen (2005: 49), there are those who believe that the concept is unsuitable for depicting changes in agriculture and that European agricultural policy is effectively not generating a new, less productive kind of agriculture. (e.g. Evans *et al.* 2002). At a glance it seems probable that the two interpretations are realized in parallel in the Finnish countryside. At the same time as the EU agricultural policy expects that a farmer produce food with an effective and productive manner, the farmer is on the other hand facing demands and expectations in line with the post-productivist view: in addition to effective and economic production, the farmer should take into consideration elements including the general well-being of the countryside, diversity, environmental values, landscape, etc. Two kinds of policy and value system are being simultaneously promoted in the countryside. How do farmers experience such a conflict of expectations, of being efficient and economically profitable as well as being ecological and respecting diversity at the same time?

Sirkka-Liisa Ranta draws attention to a similar division from a slightly different angle. She notes that the way we experience our environment is affected by how familiar or foreign it is. For an inhabitant, environment usually signifies livelihood or domicile, not only landscape or recreational activities. Landscape is an area of operation, not a mere visual object or place of transition. This is why the relation of an inhabitant to his or her environment is more functional than that of an external observer. For the inhabitant, the farmer, important factors include security, functionality, economy and cleanliness. Experts, tourists and environmentalists view places more through their character, harmony, distinctiveness and permanence (Ranta 1999: 293, 296). This leads to the question of what kind of a relationship does the farmer have to nature conservation, or what does he/she think it is?

This article is based on my licentiate thesis called *Maa, tila ja talous – EU-suomalaisen*

*maanviljelijän jatkuvuuden luomisen prosessit muutoksen ajassa* (Hangasmaa 2003) ('Land, space and economy – The Finnish EU farmer's processes for constituting continuity during a period of transition'). My research focused on the means available to Finnish farmers to create continuity for their profession during and after the period of significant changes brought by Finland's joining in the EU. In Finland, agriculture is being practiced further north than anywhere else in the EU, and further historical reasons, farm sizes are also exceptionally small. These special characteristics of Finnish agriculture mean that as Finland over ten years ago joined the Union, Finnish farmers were faced with particularly extensive problems, and the number of farmers in Finland has decreased sharply, at the same time as production has remained at its previous level. In other words, this means that those farmers who have continued in their profession have increased their farm sizes and the amount of their daily labour. The focus of my licentiate research, therefore, was how these same farmers found their profession meaningful in economically and politically changing circumstances.

Based on my material, I outlined five strategies for constituting continuity that have their effect on the mental level but become concrete in the everyday lives and the work of the farmers. These factors turned out so strong that they carry the farmer's professional identity across political or economic changes. The strategies include family and agrarian history, the social relations of the countryside, the intrinsic value of work, the necessity of food production and its societal implications, and, as one of the most important, the farmer's relationship to the environment and nature.

This article is thus focused on the meanings conferred by the farmers themselves on their environment, and their experiences in the conflicting situation of productive and post-productive agriculture. Whether the views of farmers are in line with sustainable development falls outside my current project. My purpose is to introduce the farmers' own views in relation to environmental issues. In the processes of constituting continuity that emerged in my licentiate research the different strategies are also intertwined, and I will therefore also refer to the farmer's relationship to time, which is an inseparable part of his or her relationship to nature, due to the seasonal cycle.

The material of my licentiate thesis was, in addition to the observation material, formed by the thematic interviews of nine farmers and altogether 28 writings by 23 different farmers. The informants were born between 1952 and 1977, represented numerous production branches and lived in different parts of Finland. I will directly quote eleven of the informants in this article.

## Place and Time – Preservation and Change

### *Aesthetic values of the environment*

In perceiving their relationship to the environment, farmers usually first referred to its aesthetic values; they saw that the surrounding landscape and its changes along with the seasons were a significant mental resource:

> The countryside is spring when the wedge of cranes turns a blue veneer and when the red Valmets fill the fields. The countryside is summer when cow dung drying in the field makes you emotional. The countryside is autumn when swallows measure travel fever under their wings. Countryside is winter when you see the whole starry sky and the aurora borealis on a frosty night, and the moon looks like a plump udder. N14
>
> L: So what is the best thing about being a farmer?

H: Well I think it is the landscape when it changes with the season, that's it. When you look through the big door of your workplace out there to the field in the morning when the sun rises, it is great then, when the pastures are covered in mist. Maybe it's that this is in my opinion a beautiful place, that's it. M2

Juha Vettenniemi has studied the relationship of farmers to their environment in the transition to EU and also found that among the most crucial values of farmers in relation to their environment are aesthetic ones. According to Vettenniemi, aesthetic values include the beauty of the surrounding landscape and the purity of the countryside (2000: 21-22). Tiina Silvasti (1996: 48) has marked this same thing, and she points out that farmers, women in particular, draw strength from the purity, beauty and peace of the surrounding countryside. A farmer works in the same landscape from day to day and spends a lot of time outdoors. Small events in nature give meaning to everyday life and act as a resource.

Happiness is a relative concept and I guess it only comes for a small moment at a time. But it is difficult for me to imagine better moments in life than the ones I've had here. It's the early bird song just a minute before the sowing tractor starts up, the patter of rain against the dryer's roof when the last load is already in, or the March wind on the pile of wood. M7

### *Time cycles and home shaped by them*

We have this tradition, and on the other hand it's a way to look into the future, too. All the time. The life of us farmers is this kind of a cycle rather than the straight and linear sort, that's what one could imagine it like. We have the cycle of the year, we have the rhythm of the week, the rhythm of the year, and it shapes a lot the way you think and what you consider important and what you are aiming at and how you act. N1

The environmental relationship of farmers is closely tied to their ideas on time and the circulation of generations at the farm. The concept of time for farmers is different from what urban people are used to, since the farmer cannot only live in the present moment and the present day. The time perspective includes many other things, too, than the current situation, and a curve of continuity is drawn from the past into the future. According to Juha Kuisma (1992:10) farmers have an ethical relationship to time. Kuisma writes that a farmer does not 'save', 'consume' and 'kill' time, but has to assign every task its proper time. Economically, time, for the farmer, is not a variable, like in industrial production. Work has to be carried out in due time, when the weather allows. Kuisma also stresses two different factors in how farmers view time with the future in mind, the Heideggerian idea of 'sorge' or concern over tomorrow, and cross-generational continuity. According to Kuisma, the farmer discounts differently from other occupations, where present time is considered more valuable than the future: the farmer plans things forward in linear circles.

In other words, farmers in this modern period still embrace features of a cyclical conception of time, their lives being rhythmed by seasonal cycles and positions of the sun. The modernisation of the peasant culture has often been viewed in very one-dimensional forms, as a transition from cyclical to a linear, metrical and mechanic conception of time, which emphasized progress and which can be precisely and chronologically measured (Silvasti 2001:95). The cyclical and linear conceptions of time never exclude each other, however, and they should not, according to Nina Sääskilahti, be considered as divisive markers of traditional and modern cultures. Sääskilahti discusses whether a linear mode of thinking could be culturally acknowledged, whereas the cyclical mode of thinking could be unacknowledged in the contemporary

The marks of the labour of generations are seen in the domestic landscape of the farmer: the courtyard of the home farm of informant M2 in 1929 (above) and 2002.

society. (Sääskilahti 2000: 84; see also Sappinen 2000:35)

As Juha Kuisma notes (1992: 10), the farmer nevertheless *plans* things in *linear circles*. It would thus seem that farmers simultaneously acknowledge time in cyclical and linear terms. The cyclical conception of time has remained culturally acknowledged throughout generations, and has as inherited knowledge passed on from generation to generation throughout centuries. This nevertheless does not exclude the mode of thought marked by present time, progress, change and development, but offers a perspective for examining change and development and for positioning one's own life situation accordingly. The traditional and modern modes of thought are thus realized simultaneously and are mutually supportive, not exclusive.

The farmer plans his or her life one agenda period at a time, living his or her daily life according to the rhythm of daily, weekly and annual routines, which increases faith in this daily labour and the planning of life, by examining the different periods of family and farming hundreds of years backwards and forwards. The acknowledgement of the losses and difficulties of past generations, the responsibility over the future and the will to do one's work between these to the best of one's ability explains the modern farmer's relationship to the EU and the changes and difficulties it has brought with it. It is a way of dealing with the changing situation (comp. Uusitalo 1999: 204).

The acknowledgement of the cycle of years and seasons and working according to their rhythm brings with it a particular understanding of tradition. Working on the same farm in the midst of seasonal cycles in a changing landscape from one year to the next ties the farmer to his or her home place. The specificity of this place is often shaped by tradition, old buildings, roads and pieces marked by the past, but new buildings or their groupings can also give specific meaning to the inhabitant of a place. The characteristics of a place are also determined by its location and the surrounding nature (Ranta 1999: 281). The chain of generations is concretized to the farmer every day in the domestic landscape, in the fields cleared by ancestors and the buildings they raised. Tiina Silvasti notes (1996: 27) that farmers have an uninterrupted connection with the work of their ancestors through the cleared land and the built courtyard in particular.

According to Juha Kuisma (1992:8), the relationship to land is the most important relationship of the farmer. When the physical and biological land is endowed with cultural meanings, it becomes, as Kuisma puts it, a symbol for something bigger: the farmer's relationship to the world (Ibid.). Though Kuisma's formulation might have a pompous ring to it, it is not without foundation. The farmer gives values to the land, and they largely explain his or her way of life and the will to secure its continuity. Kuisma continues that according to peasant ideals, land does not belong to the individual, to the person who at the moment it registered as its owner, but it belongs to the past and future generations. Fundamentally, the human being belongs to the land, not vice versa. This was also the perception of my informants, and some of them even gave the land sacred values. They felt they had a connection to the land, and that it gave them concrete strength as they stood by their fields or in the forest (comp. Kaunisto 2001, 12–13). Tiina Silvasti also mentions that the forest especially in the minds of farmers can be seen even as a church, a psychiatrist or a friend (1996:48).

I have to say this, that there is a connection. It's both to the forest and the field, and I do feel I get strength from just walking along the side of the field or in the forest, it doesn't really matter which. I may on purpose sit on a rock or on the root of a tree and I feel that there are currents of power running, that I kind of get something. --- This is what they teach you in the farming business studies, that its one factor of production, if you think like this, but I feel it's even closer. Its something else than production, a factor in production or money or work, it's the nature that's something more even, it's a little sacred. M1

In addition to the land, some farmers feel they have a connection to nature in general. The only organic producer of the farmers interviewed felt the strongest connection to nature, finding her whole structure of thought attached to landscape and nature.

My childhood friends have been rock, water, yard, forest, forest paths, sand, grains of sand, all the things like these, different plants, sky. I've lived in the nature. I've never noticed it before I was an adult. Just recently. That all the structures of my thought are attached to the landscape, the natural surroundings. You notice it when you can't explain something to another person, whose thoughts are in something else, who has lived in the city and to whom landscape doesn't mean something like a means for thinking. — That man is a part of nature in that sense. N1

Farmers thus bring more values than just productivity or economy to the way they perceive their domicile, the land or nature in general. Domestic land and landscape are inseparable from the farming tradition of the family. Anthony Giddens (1995:115) points out that tradition are always attached to the framework of origins and significant places. Through traditional images intertwining with the environment, the home environment is endowed with strong and emotional meanings. The farmer's feeling of belonging to one's home place consisted of memories and images of the past, experiences in the present and ideas of the future. The relationship to land, formed through this kind of conception of time, was the founding pillar of a farmer's identity and carried him/her through periods of change. As the world changes, the land remains constant and, most importantly, stays in the family. It is important to attend to the landscape and the environment in such ways that they both remain aesthetic and offer future generations a possibility to continue the tradition of farming.

## Cooperation with Nature and Animals

Even though not every farmer who participated in my research felt such a strong connection with nature, they all stressed *cooperation* with nature. When talking about nature and earth and the land all the interviewed spent by far the most time on talking about cooperation with nature and how they felt they were at the mercy of nature.

It is brilliant to be on the spring field in the earth dust and once again feel the miracle of growth. In the autumn the scent of mature corn makes you feel proud: We have together with nature produced this harvest. N5

L: Do you feel you're somehow cooperating with nature?

A: Yes, absolutely. That's what this work is. That your wages, kind of, come depending on how much water came down and how often it was sunny in the summer. N5

Operating together with nature awakens pride in the farmer; he or she has done his part so that nature has yielded a good harvest. Cooperation with a force bigger than oneself gives the farmer satisfaction. Cooperation with nature is also seen humbly, as one's own income is dependent on nature and weather. The farmer is fully at the mercy of nature (comp. Ruotsala 2002: 277; Lappalainen 1998: 332).

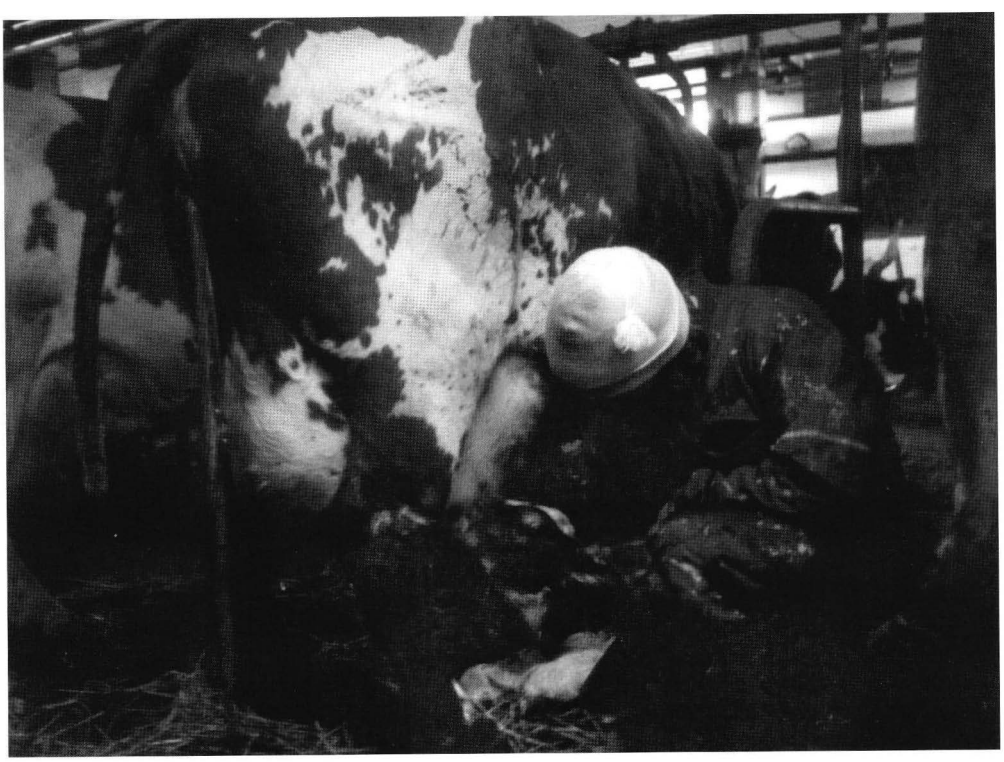
L: Do you feel you're cooperating with nature?

O: I do, yes. And you are at the mercy of nature in this profession. Not that, its not like if it starts raining when you're making hay that it will, that you will not get all that upset about it, though you get annoyed always, but its very natural, things like that. M3

And then this work is as much being at the mercy of nature as anything can be. That this one was a good year, like it rained and we got a lot of fodder and grain, but the summer before was awful. We run out of water in the wells, it's never happened, fire trucks brought water, so the animals could drink. We didn't get more silage than a handful, a truck from Kainuu brought us fodder last winter, and we slaughtered as many animals as we had the heart to put on the slaughter truck. We were buying grain, buying everything, and what's left after that is just work and a bad mood. N2

Veikko Anttila asserts (1974: 12) that in the transition stage of agriculture one hundred years ago, technology gave farmers power over nature. Though technology has since taken giant leaps, the present-day farmer would still seem to be dependent on natural forces, and live at their mercy. Based on my material, one cannot say that any technology would have made farmers think they are masters over nature.

Juha Kuisma writes that in farming the outlook on nature is characterised by use and usability. It is a question of interaction between man and nature, where both can sometimes surprise each other. The farmer cultivating the land is according to Kuisma extremely aware of how nature can never be completely mastered and tamed. Land can only be cultivated by conforming to it. Cultivation self-evidently implies a prohibition of over-



Cooperating with animals: teaching a newborn calf to suck milk.

exploitation: the use of biological resources has to be sustainable (Kuisma 1992: 245-247; Härmälä 2006:4).

This same attitude applies to animals in animal farms. They are first and foremost for production, and since one's own well-being depends on theirs, one wants to treat them accordingly. However the relationship to animals is not solely characterised by production. When working with living creatures, you cannot think with reason alone. As the farmer might work with the same animals for years, he will learn to know their personalities and habits.

L: You deal with animals, are they your colleagues or are they production?

O: They are colleagues in a way and they have to be, so that a production animal is treated well so that it grows and produces. So that I guess it is more like a colleague than some object. They do, like we lost this small calf a couple of weeks ago just after birth, it was handicapped or crippled or something, that it did bring a tear to your eye when you then realized it can't work. --- That you cannot too much, when you produce meat, bring in your emotions, that you have to give them up or you cannot be in this profession. M3

L: What about animals, are they your colleagues?

M: They are, absolutely. I apologize to a cow if I hurt it, though I can sometimes order them harshly, when I'm in a bad mood, so I kind of see them as partners. But you have to keep it clear in your head that when you have to reduce them, you cannot give in too much to your feelings, that it always comes to that. - - -. They are especially partners these animals too.

L: So if you have to give up a good cow, is it a hard thing?

M: It is a hard thing, yes. I just gave up this one that gave fifty tonnes, which was the first cow calf that was born here, it had been only a month or two less here on this hill than us, and well it did feel bad. And then I said to the man from the slaughterhouse that if there's one that milks a hundred tonnes, then production and feelings are even, if it milks a hundred thousand litres of milk in its life, that one you won't take, it will be put into the grave with a stone on the side. M1

The farmer's relationship to animals is thus a responsible and nurturing one, as one's income is completely responsible for the animals' well being. Nurture is in other words explained by economic perspectives. The situation is the same as with the farmer's relationship to nature. The surprises of a living environment, the birth of new life every year, growth and death in nature, the life cycle of animals and the furthering of all these events also gives great satisfaction and pride to the farmer.

And its one reason for happiness, when you help a new calf to the world and the mother is licking clean her newborn, how important you feel when you give the calf its first meal from the teat bucket. N3

Farming brings on something great. It is difficult to describe what's on your mind when you on a summer's night stop by the field and look at the herd of cows and calves happily grazing on the field. You smell the grass, the cornfield is waving and from the sauna chimney comes the smell of smoke from birch wood. Then your heart is full of gratitude and wonder: what good have I done to deserve all this? - - - The same kind of feeling of happiness comes after spring sowing and making pastures and when after harvesting you look at the full storages. Then you know you did something right, though sometimes nature shows its nastier side. N10

## To Cultivate and Preserve – the Juxtapositions of Nature Conservation

*Responsibility versus economy*

Juha Vettenniemi calls the farmer's relationship to nature as 'purpose rational' and the values affecting it, in order of priority, are economic, personal, aesthetic and environmental values. According to Vettenniemi, farmers have appropriated an entrepreneurial

image, where economic rationality is a central characteristic. In one's work one takes into account other values as well, if it is economically possible (Vettenniemi 2000:23).

The fact that the farmer is responsible for the land and the animals to past and future generations, and has to also secure his or her own income, automatically brings a will to protect them, too. The new environmental regulations of the EU are supported, since the environmental measures are subsidised. It seems, like Vettenniemi stressed above, that economic thinking, in addition to responsibility, largely guides farmers' relationship to nature conservation. Farmers are willing to protect the environment to the extent where it is financially profitable to them, or the measures do not harm their business.

It is important that you follow the situation with nutrients in the field and of course it is important that nothing extra leaks to the water systems. The extra, it has been bought with money from Kemira the nitrogen that you put in the field, so you need not put any in the river. And then in cultivation technique there are things that are very important, they are. Of course we are within this environmental subsidies program, so that this automatically brings things that have to be in order, protective strips and the direction of sowing and such things matter. And especially these environmental things are emphasized as we live here just next to the more densely populated area. N5

L: What do you think of environmental regulations?

O: Well of course up to a limit it is good that you protect nature, but not going too far, so that the farmer is not burdened with it. You feel that you can't even smell shit anymore, that it is going too far. It is of course all right that the water systems would not euthropicate too much and the farmers should do what they can to prevent such a burden there. M3

At the moment, as the environmental subsidies are being renewed, MTK's Esa Härmälä (2006:5) sees that the danger lies in making the regulations so strict that the farmers cannot or will not commit themselves to them with the offered levels of compensation. Economic values in proportion to the increase in the amount of work may at some point surpass environmental values.

Mikko Kumpulainen, who has studied the long-term changes in the relationships to nature in Finnish farms (1999) has also reached similar conclusions and summarized this attitude appropriately in the name of his doctoral thesis, according to which the farmer operates 'between land and economy'. This situation also shows in my material. Farmers are content with following the environmental guidelines recommended by the EU in hope of additional subsidies, but if for instance their own forest falls under the Natura 2000 environmental program this is considered an injustice, since it does not offer extensive enough compensation.

L: What do you think of the new environmental regulations?

H: They are right. They are right but there's of course the thing that, well, traditionally, if you think of the traditional Finnish farmer, he's been quite negative in his relationship to these environmental protection things, but of course now with the EU it has some importance how naturally you cultivate things. And if you go out and build some kind of a heritage biotope out there, you get even from that empty patch, where you don't even have to graze anything, this extra bonus, more money from the same area. But well I don't know whether I would like if they would find some rare plant from our forests, so you could not log the forest at all anymore, well I would accept it but it would feel like my possibilities would narrow down.

L: If they had made half of your forests some Natura area?

H: I would not feel it was right because there would be no compensation.

L: What do you think of nature conservation?

H: Well, which entrepreneur would feel that rewarded by this environmental protection stuff, maybe

someone in tourism. But at least in farming it is not a joy to agriculture, this environmental cause. But of course it is right. A farmer could not cultivate that land for long if it was ruined. The farmer who pretty much works on the conditions of nature and forest business, for example, the forest does not produce if it is raped. So it all goes hand in hand. But often the ideas of conservationists and farmers on what to do with land and forest are quite different. M2

Besides economic values, the opposition of 'excessive' nature conservation measures can be explained by the personal values of the farmer, which according to Juha Vettenniemi are the right to ownership and management, the right of participation and the significance of locality (2000: 21). As Juha Kuisma noted, the most important relationship of a farmer is his or her relationship to land (1992:8). If an outside party comes and dictates the farmer what he or she is to do with the land cleared and cultivated by his or her family, which has furthermore been given to him to take care of, the farmer considers this an insult. Farmers feel that they are considered stupid, when authorities come and tell them how to do their work (Vettenniemi 2000: 22). Regulations and supervision are seen as a sign of mistrust:

So these things (environmental regulations) are right, but what comes with this EU supervision culture of ours is that you always have to prove that you have done the right thing. And this is a strange idea to this kind of traditional agriculture and the farmer's mindset. A farmer has traditionally been honest and reliable. That we have, we for example use very little pesticides, and we have had years when we have not used them at all. That we have had many such ways of doing things for a long time already. N4

The farmer thus feels that his or her values have been offended through the supervision of environmental regulations, especially since these regulations come from outsiders. Therefore nature conservation measures, which in principle are supported by the farmer, are often accepted grudgingly. The meddling of outsiders with the land that has been passed on in the farmer's family and that has been given sacred values and that is the source of the farmer's income, does not get understanding from the farmer (comp. Veintie 2002: 78-79; Silvasti 2001:257).

*Nature versus culture*

Conflicts between farmers, experts and conservationists are often caused by differences in opinion on what nature is and what, on the other hand, is culture, and how their mutual relationship should be dealt with. Environment and nature are thus culturally constructed concepts, and different groups of people use them in different ways, based on one's origin and tradition. According to Anthony Giddens, in the modern period 'nature' has been seen as the opposite of urbanity: it means the same thing as 'countryside' and has often connotations of a pastoral idyll. "Nature" means something that is in pristine rest, independent of human activity (Giddens 1995: 109-110). This way of paralleling pristine nature with countryside thus represents the modern urban perspective. Giddens, too, admits, however, that in some sense this picture is completely wrong; the countryside is man-made, subjugated nature (Ibid.). The ideas on what the countryside finally is, tend to clash.

As I already noted in my introduction, quoting Sirkka-Liisa Ranta (1999:293), the way farmers experience their environment is influenced by its familiarity or strangeness; the relationship of an inhabitant to his or her environment is more functional than that of an external observer. Helena Ruotsala (2002: 325-326) also discusses the different ways to experience the environment through local or outsider's eyes. According to Ruotsala, a

human being always sees his or her environment through a cultural filter. A landscape's significance is determined first and foremost by personal experience and knowledge, and the cultural models of experiencing, evaluating and interpreting one's living environment, adopted in growing up. Juha Kuisma writes that unlike the conservationist, the farmer does not idealize an untamed, non-populated wilderness. He or she lives off the land and feeds the rest of the population with its products, so the ethical and aesthetic ideal of the farmer is an inhabited and cultivated nature, the mosaic of a cultural landscape. Culture is cultivation and cultivation is culture (Kuisma 1992:8). Ari Lappalainen (1998: 308) agrees, and says that nature for the rural population is a partner, which can have even mystical characteristics, and landscape is a landscape of production. The ideas on nature of the urban population differ from farmers' in that for the urban dweller, nature is on the one hand stripped of its mystique and subjected to efficient usage, but, on the other, it is re-mystified and seen as a detached source of experiences and a site for recreational activities.

In natural sciences, nature and culture are two different things, and this difference is highlighted. According to Helena Ruotsala, this division is at the heart of the objections to the Natura 2000 program: the aim of the Natura 2000 program was to increase biodiversity on scientific grounds. The program did not take into consideration the fact that landscape and vegetation are the result of interaction between nature, man and cattle farming. Pristine natural landscape is thus according to Ruotsala a completely fictive concept, the question is of culture and cultural landscape (Ruotsala 2002: 360-361). Jan-Magnus Jansson also highlights the traditional conceptions of the opposition between culture and nature. Traditionally it is thought that nature is wild and free, and culture is man-made, 'artificial' compared to nature. (Jansson 1992:17; see also Kiuru 2000:296.) The same division has also been dominant in our folkloristic research: nature has been seen as the grounds for building culture (Kiuru 2000: 297). From this perspective, nature and countryside have to be protected from culture, whereas from the farmer's perspective, nature and culture are intertwined. The farmer has never drawn a clear line between culture and nature, but these two form a unified whole in his thinking, and it is not practical to separate the two (comp. Ruotsala 2002:360).

*The value of locality*

According to Juha Kuisma, keeping a farm is in the countryside's vernacular same as inhabiting a place. The notion of place comprises the boundary between inside and outside in the sense that the inhabitant of the place identifies with the inside of the place. The inside connotates belonging, security and protection. (Kuisma 1992:9). The border between self and others, familiar and strange drawn from family background as suggested by Anthony Giddens shows in the relationship to the regulations given from 'above', as well as to their supervisors. Juha Vettenniemi has also marked this: the value of locality embraced by farmers is highlighted especially in the management of environmental conservation (2000: 22). The farmer's relationship to nature, to its protection and to the rules for doing this makes him or her root even more firmly to his or her home place. The essential feature of locality is, as Bo Lönnqvist notes, the repeated occupation of time and space by cultivating it, talking about it and by fighting for it (2002:122). By contemplating their relationship to their environment and by defending their views against 'excessive' nature conservation, farmers thus

constantly form and deepen their connection to their home place and landscape, and use it as one means to examine the significance of their profession.

Maarit Sireni (2006:3) writes that place can no longer be seen as a dimension with romantic and nostalgic connotations of permanence, stagnation and remaining. Instead, notes Sireni, time and mobility rise to an important role in the examination how place or places are experienced. Based on my material, this assertion seems slightly one-sided. In the life of the farmer, a modern but at the same time traditional way of thinking seems to be dominant: a place for the farmer is a given dimension, which is endowed with ideas of permanence and remaining, but this perception is not coloured by a nostalgic or romantic outlook, but is firmly aware of the present, everyday life. In accordance with Sireni's ideas, the farmer's experience of place is characterized by time and mobility, but instead of a mere dynamic rush forward, time is cyclical and movement is just as much backwards as progress into the future.

## "The Land and the Sky will Persist" – Environment as an Indicator of Continuity

And the other thing is that nature, countryside, agriculture, these are basic things, which I think are really valuable. I have always experienced this profession as very valuable and important. - - - and this thing that will this farm continue or will these fields remain alive and the forests keep doing well here, this kind of responsible relationship to nature - - - that this is what I find so great about all this: work with nature and on the condi-

The "miracle of growth" in every day life gives strength to the farmer and reminds him or her of continuity.

tions of nature and in this specific landscape, in the home place. N1

All in all, the farmer's relationship to his or her land, the surrounding landscape and nature is thus diversified. The aesthetic values of the work environment and working with living material brings one's everyday life reasons for joy and forms a great source of strength. Nature's cycle and renewal, following "the miracle of growth", symbolize for many a triumph over difficulties (Silvasti 1996:49).

In addition, many farmers feel they have a connection to the land and the landscape in getting concrete strength as they walk by their fields. The domestic landscape and home also in a very concrete way bind the farmer to past generations; the heritage of the family is concretised in the cleared fields and the farm buildings. The responsibility to the past and future generations also characterises the farmer's relationship to his environment; "the land is borrowed from your children" and must thus be well taken care of. The farmer feels he or she has a responsible relationship to nature in his/her family's land, and the protection of nature thus means management and cultivation by sustainable principles. Therefore demands coming from the outside, on the conservation of nature with other principles, seem strange.

For the farmer, these persisting principles are included in productive agriculture. The principles of efficient production and profitability, introduced during a period of over fifty years, have now been adopted and they also dictate attitudes towards nature conservation: it has to follow the principles of economy and profitability. Relationship to nature conservation is also determined by the personal values suggested by Juha Vettenniemi: rights of ownership and management, right of participation and the significance of the local (2000:21.) The post-productive mindset, foregrounding general well-being, diversity, ecological and landscape values over economic efficiency, seems foreign and external. The aesthetic and other similar values are someone else's, not the farmer's. Together with the change of policy where subsidies are directed to the farmer's other activities, the post-productivist view of agriculture as something else than production of food confuses farmers.

In addition to the considerations of productivity, the farmer's relationship to his or her environment is determined by the traditional, rustic way of thinking, and tradition actualised in the period of change. Boundaries between the familiar and the strange are drawn through tradition, and in a period of transition conscious comprehension of connections in the present is strengthened by repeating appropriate elements of the past. In this sense tradition can be considered as functional history, which in a sense justifies current modes of living and adapting to change. Already in the 1970s, tradition was in ethnology understood as a permanent condition, which joins the past and the present and opens possibilities for the future; tradition was and is one aspect of cultural continuity. As the political situation changes, farmers create seek to continue tradition by turning to and highlighting the different phases of the family in their home environment, at the mercy of natural forces (Giddens 1995: 115; Niemelä 1979: 9, 88–90). Farmers like to emphasize how they are at the mercy of nature the same way people were hundreds of years ago; harvest and livelihood are still determined by weather conditions. The exceptional draughts experienced during the couple of recent summers have been a concrete reminder of this. The power of

nature in determining a farmer's success is still respected.

The farmer feels he or she is first and foremost cooperating with nature and animals, and gets great satisfaction from this cooperation when it succeeds. Cooperation and the cycle of life in nature, the births and deaths of animals that can be examined through them, also every day show the farmer the values of continuity and permanence.

> For me colours are terribly important, the colours of nature and the change and continuity that is in nature's landscape. It teaches so much about life, teaches you to understand that this life is both and. It is both changing and permanent. And these kinds of very obvious things, I think it is interesting how much nature can tell about life. That man is a part of nature in this sense. N1

> The land and the sky are two things that persist. The land and the sky give a farmer and her urban cousin bread now and in the future. N3

Thus the environment entails other values, too, to the farmer than the purpose rational relationship to environment introduced by Juha Vettenniemi. Economy largely determines the relationship to nature, since this is where livelihood comes from, but there are other factors as well. The cyclical nature of the farmer's conception of time stems from the cycle of nature, and the respect of the family and the success of the future generations are all reflected in the environment and return to its cultivation. Working in the familiar home landscape is important to the farmer, and through taking care of this the farmer outlines his or her relationship to the surrounding world. In the changing situation brought by the EU "the land and the sky will persist". In the world of the farmer, the constant and permanent natural cycle and the birth of new life again and again in the landscape moulded by past generations turn out more stable than political upheavals.

Thus in March 2007 the farmer obediently checks the boxes of subsidies application forms and commits him to farming practices that are in accordance with environmental regulations, posts the papers by the end of April and starts his spring work. He breaths the smell of the earth, sows the field his grandfather cleared, and hopes for favourable growth from nature. And remembers to leave protective strips to his fields (M2).

*Leena Hangasmaa*
Ph. Lic.
Vehmaskyläntie 3
FIN-50100 Mikkeli
e-mail: lehangas@jyu.fi

Translation: Anne Karhio

## References

Interviews and writings, held by the writer.
Informants quoted in this article
N1 Female farmer, Miehikkälä, South-East Finland
N2 Female farmer, Iitti, South-East Finland
N3 Female farmer, Suodenniemi, South-west Finland
N4 Female farmer, Tammela, South Finland
N5 Female farmer, Anjalankoski, South-East Finland
N10 Female farmer, Kiuruvesi, East Finland
N14 Female farmer, Nurmes, East Finland
M1 Male farmer, Hirvensalmi, East Finland
M2 Male farmer, Mikkeli, East Finland
M3 Male farmer, Pertunmaa, East Finland
M7 Male farmer, Laitila, South-West Finland
Hangasmaa, Leena 2003: Maa, tila ja talous - Eusuomalaisen maanviljelijän jatkuvuuden luomisen prosessit muutoksen ajassa. Licentiate's thesis in ethnology. University of Jyväskylä: Department of History and Ethnology.
Niemelä, Seppo 1979: Perinne etnologian oppisanana ja tutkimuskohteena. Selvitys perinteen käsitteestä ja sen käytöstä etnologisessa kirjallisuudessa. Master's thesis in ethnology. University of Jyväskylä: Department of Ethnology.
http://europa.eu/generalreport/fi/2005/rg67.htm#fn5

## Literature


Anttila, Veikko 1974: *Talonpojasta tuottajaksi.* Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä.

Evans, Nick, Morris, Carol & Winter, Michael 2002: Conceptualising agriculture: A critique of post-productivism as the new orthodoxy. *Progress in Human Geography* 26(3), pp. 313–332.

Giddens, Anthony 1995: Elämää jälkitraditionaalisessa yhteiskunnassa. In Beck, Ulrich, Giddens, Anthony & Lash, Scott: *Nykyajan jäljillä, refleksiivinen modernisaatio.* pp. 83–152. Suom. Leevi Lehto. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Hakuopas 2006. Helsinki: Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö.

Härmälä, Esa 2006: Hyvien tuotantotapojen merkitys korostuu - puheenjohtajan puheenvuoro. In *MTK-Viesti* 2/2006 pp. 4–5. Helsinki: MTK.

Jansson, Jan-Magnus 1992: Kulttuurin ja luonnon arvot. In Kuisma, Juha (ed.): *Maaseutu Euroopan kulttuurievoluutiossa.* Seminaari Majvikissä Kirkkonummella 15.5.1991 pp. 17–21. Raahe: MTK ja Talonpoikaiskulttuurisäätiö.

Jokinen, Pekka 2005: Sosiaalinen kestävyys ja ympäristöpolitiikka maaseudun kehityksessä. *Maaseudun uusi aika* 2/2005 pp. 466 –52. Vaasa: Maaseudun uusi aika -yhdistys.

Kaunisto, Katri 2001: "The Freedom is the Best Thing" - Forest Professionals' Life Values in Changing Society. *Ethnologia Fennica, Finnish Studies in Ethnology* 2001, vol. 29 pp. 5–15. Helsinki: Ethnos r.y.

Kiuru, Elina 2000: Puu. In Lönnqvist, Bo (ed.): *56 Arjen säikeet-- aikakuvia arkielämään, sivilisaatioon ja kansankulttuuriin* pp. 295–310. Jyväskylä: Atena kustannus oy.

Kuisma, Juha 1992: Talonpojan etiikka. In Kuisma, Juha (ed.): *Maaseutu Euroopan kulttuurievoluutiossa.* Seminaari Majvikissä Kirkkonummella 15.5.1991 pp. 7–12. Raahe: MTK ja Talonpoikaiskulttuurisäätiö.

Kumpulainen, Mikko 1999: Maan ja talouden välissä. Viisi kertomusta suomalaisen maatilan luontosuhteen muutoksesta. *Joensuun yliopiston maantieteen laitoksen julkaisuja* no. 5. Joensuu: Joensuun ylipoiston maantieteen laitos.

Lappalainen, Ari 1998: Kalastuskulttuuri muuttuvassa yhteiskunnassa. Etnologinen analyysi kalastuskulttuurin muuttumisesta Pohjois-Karjalan Höytiäisellä 1890-luvulta 1990-luvulle. *Kalastusmuseoyhdistyksen julkaisuja* 13. Vammala: Kalastusmuseoyhdistys r.y.

Lönnqvist, Bo 2002: Myytti harmonisesta paikallisuudesta. In Junkala, Pekka & Määttä, Jari (eds.): *Paikallisuuden juuret ja versot – jatkuvuuksia Judinsalon maalaismaisemassa* pp.119–124. Jyväskylä: Atena Kustannus oy.

Marsden, Terry 2003: *The Condition of Rural Sustainability.* Assen: Royal Van Gorcum.

Ranta, Sirkka-Liisa 1999: Kirkonkylä Päijänteen kainalossa. Kuhmoisten keskustaajaman muutos 1900-luvulla. *Kansatieteellinen arkisto* 44. Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys.

Ruotsala, Helena 2002: Muuttuvat palkiset. Elo, työ ja ympäristö Kittilän Kyrön paliskunnassa ja Kuolan Luujärven poronhoitokollektiiveissa vuosina 1930–1995. *Kansatieteellinen arkisto 49.* Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys.

Sappinen, Eero 2000: Arkielämän murros 1960- ja 1970-luvuilla. Tutkimus suomalaisen työväestön elämäntavoista ja niiden paikallisista raumalaisista piirteistä. *Kansatieteellinen arkisto 46.* Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys.

Silvasti, Tiina 1996: Viljelijöiden ajatukset ja tunteet maatalouden murroksessa 1995. *Tutkimus viljelijöiden kokemista painetekijöistä ja käyttämistä selviytymismenetelmistä.* Espoo: Maatalousyrittäjien eläkelaitos.

Silvasti, Tiina 2001: *Talonpojan elämä – tutkimus elämäntapaa jäsentävistä kulttuurisista malleista.* Helsinki: SKS.

Sireni, Maarit 2006: Liikkeellä, kiinni paikassa. *Maaseudun uusi aika – maaseutututkimuksen ja -politiikan aikakauslehti* no. 1/2006 pp. 3–4. Mikkeli: Maaseudun uusi aika -yhdistys.

Sääskilahti, Nina 2000: Muistamisen intohimo. In Lönnqvist, Bo (ed.): *Arjen säikeet – aikakuvia arkielämään, sivilisaatioon ja kansankulttuuriin* pp.73–91. Jyväskylä: Atena.

Uusitalo, Eeva 1999: Empirian ja teorian välimaastossa: mitä etnologi tekee? In Lönnqvist, Bo, Kiuru, Elina & Uusitalo, Eeva (eds.): *Kulttuurin muuttuvat kasvot, johdatusta etnologiatieteisiin* pp. 203–218. Tietolipas 155. Helsinki: SKS.

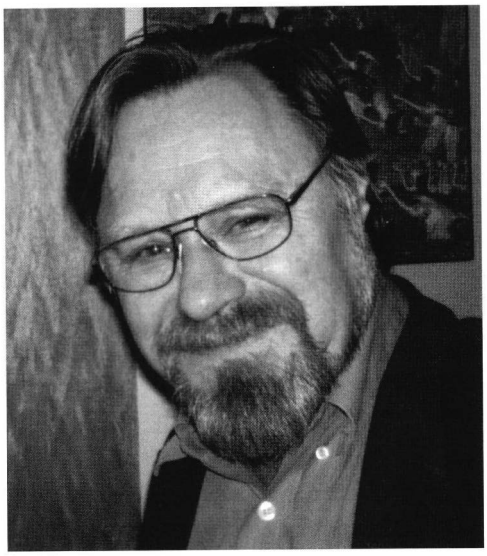
Veintie, Tuija 2002: Tikkoja ja ihmisiä. In Junkala, Pekka & Määttä, Jari (eds.): *Paikallisuuden juuret ja versot - jatkuvuuksia Judinsalon maalaismaisemassa* pp. 68–82. Jyväskylä: Atena Kustannus oy.

Vettenniemi, Juha 2000: Maanviljelijöiden ymp4ristösuhde EU-jäsenyyden murroksessa. *Maaseudun uusi aika – maaseutututkimuksen ja -politiikan aikakauslehti* no. 2/2000 pp. 20–26. Mikkeli: Maaseudun uusi aika -yhdistys.

Viljeflytapa ja Ympäristöehdot 2006: Täydentävät ehdot. Helsinki: Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö.

Wilson, Geoff & Rigg, Jonathan 2003: "Post-productivist" agriculture regimes and the South: discordant concepts? *Progress in Human Geography* 27(6), pp. 681–707.

## Reimund Kvideland 1935–2006



Reimund Kvideland died suddenly and unexpectedly on June 6, 2006, as he was waiting for his bus to go to his emeritus office at the University of Bergen. He was born in Høyland, Southwest Norway. Following studies and graduate work at the University of Oslo, he was appointed lecturer in folkloristics at the University of Bergen in 1966 and came to play a leading role in establishing his field as a new discipline at this young university, where he later became professor of folkloristics.

From his early student days and throughout his career, Kvideland's research profile grew out of Nordic and international scholarly networks in which he was a part and to which he was a generous contributor. In his research, he focused his attention on child lore, folk tales, folk songs and singing, and he was concerned with problematics of oral repertoire analysis. In the area of child lore, he paid special attention to the tradition of story telling, a relatively unknown theme in comparison with traditions of play, and he emphasized the role that story telling plays in children's acquisition of various forms of competence. He contributed to the area of folksongs and singing in many ways, including his efforts to show the merits of song as a domain for research within a broadly based study of cultural expression. He also was instrumental in making the hand-written collections of song texts a relevant object for research. Kvideland's last major contribution (2004) to his field was as co-editor with Brynjulf Alve and Astrid Nora Ressem of Olea Crøger's collection of song materials from Telemark in the 1840s and 1850s, *Lilja bære blomster i enge: Folkeminneoppskrift frå Telemark i 1840–50-åra*. This is perhaps one of the most important Norwegian collections of traditional texts since the appearance of Asbjørnsen's and Moe's collections.

Besides teaching, documentation and archival knowledge and skills were the main professional concerns of Reimund Kvideland. Seeking new strategies for the folkloristic archives of his department in Bergen, he built goal-directed collections of tradition materials, including documentation of contemporary tradition, and he devoted much effort toward making Norwegian folkloristic and ethnological studies visible through national as well as international bibliographies, as in *Internationale volkskundliche Bibliographie*.

Kvideland served as director of the Nordic Institute of Folklore, in Turku, Finland, 1991–1997. To him, this was a privilege and a challenge as his goal was to strengthen the Nordic profile of the institute, to make the institute reflect the rich theoretical and methodological scope of Nordic folkloristics, and also to include younger scholars more firmly in the cooperative effort.

Kvideland's international profile made him a key figure in a number of world organizations. He served as president of Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore (SIEF) 1986–1990, president of International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) 1989–1995, and member of the board of Folklore Fellows. He served on editorial boards of several national and international periodicals, and he established and was editor of the periodical *Tradisjon* 1971–1995.

Reimund Kvideland's knowledge and experience were an invaluable resource for students and colleagues – and a great source of inspiration for researchers in many countries world-wide. The scholarly study of popular folk culture has suffered a great loss with his death.

*Bente Gullveig Alver, Bergen*

## Phebe Fjellström 1924–2007

In *Ethnologia Scandinavica* 1982, Gösta Berg gave a detailed presentation of Phebe Fjellström, then recently appointed professor of ethnology at Umeå University. In that position she had reached the ultimate goal of her scholarly career, occupying the first chair of the subject in Umeå until her retirement in 1990.

Phebe Fjellström was born in Norrland, and in a readable essay she has described how she grew up in a merchant's family. The majority of her scholarly works concerned the Arctic cultural sphere. Her academic education in Uppsala included archaeology, history, art history, and ethnology, subjects that were useful for her dissertation on Sámi silver, *Lapskt silver: Studier över en föremålsgrupp och dess ställning inom lapskt kulturliv* (1962). In this extremely thorough work she developed Sigfrid Svensson's hypotheses about the origin of Sámi silver among the silversmiths in the towns of northern Germany, Norwegian, and northern Sweden, whose products the Sámi used for capital investment.

From having mainly studied artefacts, Phebe Fjellström was increasingly influenced to do ethnological research on society. Her second major work, *Samernas samhälle i tradition och nutid* (1985), deals with Sámi society past and present, based on more than 25 special studies of her own. It is a comprehensive, virtually encyclopaedic work with new angles, including folklore and diet. Phebe was one of those ethnologists who emphasized aspects of cultural ecology and skilfully balanced prehistoric, historical, and modern times. Here she had a valued collaborator in Harald Hvarfner, custodian of antiquities in Luleå, later governor of the Nordic Museum, and she also worked with Finnish scholars on large-scale cross-border projects. While she did not live long enough to publish and comment on the extensive Nensén material on Sámi culture, she was able to witness the completion of a commentary on Linnaeus' journey in Lapland, to which she herself contributed. She wrote many articles for *Norrlandsencyklopedin* and she enjoyed her participation in the Norrland Academy. She regularly communicated ideas and reflections from her desk to the general public in the newspaper *Västerbottenskuriren*.

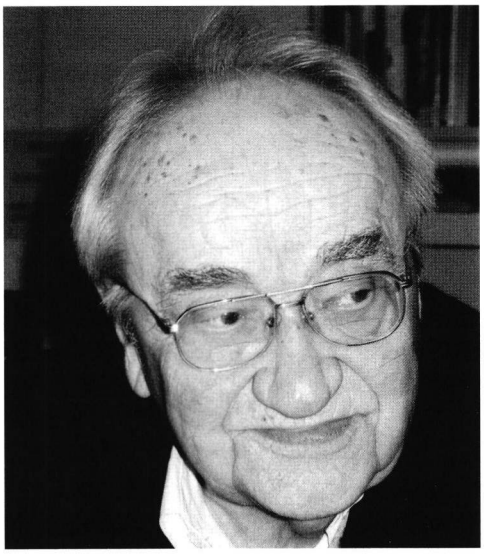
Phebe Fjellström entered a completely different research field when she visited California in 1967–68 together with her husband, senior physician Karl Erik Fjellström. This resulted in *Swedish-American Colonization in the San Joaquin Valley in California* (1970), based on her own fieldwork. It deals with topics such as the concept of "the frontier" and the Hispanic subculture in California.

In Uppsala the resistance to the integration of ethnology and folkloristics was particularly tough, but Phebe supported the integration line during several terms as acting professor. A year occupying the rotating Landberg professorship at Gothenburg University and cooperation with understanding colleagues there was probably one of the best in Phebe's life. In Umeå she had to struggle hard to build up a new department and also encountered resistance from a younger generation of feministically oriented researchers. A letter to me in February 1989 shows that she did not lack self-knowledge. She says, "my naturally dominant temperament has probably become far too dominant", but she also quotes a doctoral student who writes: "Of course Phebe was the boss, but she always helps us, she cares about us. We must remember that."

After retirement from her professorship in 1990, Phebe Fjellström enjoyed many good years of research in Uppsala. There the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy was a meeting place, as was her hospitable home. Phebe was a colourful, energetic, and thus unforgettable colleague and personality.

*Nils-Arvid Bringéus, Lund*

## Ilmar Talve 1919–2007



Ilmar Talve, professor emeritus of ethnology at the University of Turku, died aged 88 in Turku on 21 April 2007. He was born of Estonian parents in the Ingrian village of Mga on 17 January 1919. After schooling in Tapa, North Estonia, he later studied in Tartu. In 1942 he graduated with a degree in ethnology. He had been working for only a year at the Estonian National Museum when he volunteered for the Finnish army and in Infantry Regiment 200 took part in the big battle on the Carelian Isthmus in June 1944. After the truce between Finland and the USSR he returned to Estonia but then escaped via Germany to Sweden. Before that he had already twice tried to escape from Estonia to Sweden by ship.

After the war he continued his ethnological studies under the supervision of Sigurd Erixon in Stockholm. His doctoral thesis was about the sauna (*Bastu och torkhus i Nordeuropa*, 1960). A year before that, however, he had moved to Turku, Finland, where he first was lecturer in Estonian at the University of Turku. Since his dissertation he also acted as professor of ethnology in the newly-established department and was formally nominated in 1962.

Talve made the Department of Ethnology into a sizeable research, teaching and archive unit with an international reputation and a modern profile. Alongside the agrarian paradigm that had dominated Finnish ethnology there emerged a school of cultural research focusing on the industrial population and urban studies. Yet the country people were not forgotten, since rural change was always one of the topics studied in Turku. Talve also did research into food economy, cultural borders and regions, customs, buildings, villages, the folk culture of the Baltic-Finnish peoples, and comparative European ethnology. His major work on Finnish folk culture (*Suomen kansankulttuuri*) was published in 1979. Its abridged English version *Finnish Folk Culture* came in 1997 and the Hungarian translation *A Finn népkultura* in 2000.

Ilmar Talve's scholarly production was abundant and many-sided. Beside it he found time to publish fiction as well. A novel published in both Estonian and Swedish *Maja lumes* (The House in Snow 1952) or *Huset i snön* (1964) may be mentioned. Before that he wrote a picaresque novel based on his wartime experiences, *Juhansoni resid* (Juhanson's trips, 1959).

Talve continued to write both scholarship and fiction long after his retirement in 1986. In addition he published his autobiography in Estonia. He abridged these three volumes into one in Finnish, *Kolme kotimaata* (Three homelands, 2004) (see review in this year's issue). The last large-scale book by Talve, and a new area of expertise for him, was his general survey of Estonian cultural history in the 800-page *Eesti kultuurilugu* (2004).

Talve was an internationally appreciated scholar. At the University of Turku he was a respected and well-liked teacher and a colourful personality, whose sarcastic humour was well-known. He used to say that he never would return to Estonia as long as dictatorship prevailed there. He saw Estonia again shortly after independence in October 1991, and after that he visited the country at least once a year. Yet he felt happy living in Turku and never planned to move to Estonia. We ethnologists in Turku deeply miss Ilmar Talve, but we feel grateful that we were able to have him among us for so long.

*Pekka Leimu, Turku*

# New Dissertations

## Parenthood, Place, Identity

*Hilde Danielsen,* Med barn i byen. Foreldreskap, plass og identitet. Institutt for kulturstudier og kunsthistorie, seksjon for kulturvitenskap, Universitetet i Bergen 2006. 287 pp. Diss. ISBN 82-308-0178-9.

■ Hilde Danielsen's doctoral dissertation is a qualitative study of how parents living in the centre of the Norwegian city of Bergen reflect on their everyday life together with the children. A crucial aspect of the study is how parents organize childhood in relation to time, place, and social relations to the home and the neighbourhood, and how they either shield or expose the children to different sides of city life. The author says that the choice of a home also means choosing how children grow up and are formed, or as she puts it: "Choosing where to live when one has children thus means choosing childhood." The aim of the dissertation is to study how the centre of the city is shaped and mobilized as a place for childhood and family life, by parents who choose this as a place to live. The most important theoretical tools in the analysis are different perspectives on place and identity, which leads to the questions: Who do you want to be and become? How do you want your children to be?

In the introduction Danielsen describes the relationship between people and places as a running theme of the book. She also outlines her perceptions of the concept of place, which she thinks is both spatial and social. She views the concept as an identity-creating process in people's everyday lives, with central elements being mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Place also helps to construct who belongs and who is regarded as deviating.

Danielsen then continues by describing the context in which the dissertation is set. Both the concrete place and more general processes of centralization and urbanization are an important background for understanding the way the informants reason, according to Danielsen. The reader is therefore given an overall description of Bergen and general facts about the city. With the focus on children and families, Danielsen also describes Norwegian centralization and urbanization from the 1950s onwards. Here she refers to studies from different perspectives, such as political intentions, education, and economy. Her own contribution to this research is to highlight parents' own reflections and to analyse these from the perspectives of cultural studies.

Danielsen goes on to sum up some research fields that are crucial for the dissertation. One is domicile and removal, in other words, studies of demographic flows and the characteristics of the people who move. She also discusses research on gentrification, which is understood as a process whereby traditional working-class neighbourhoods are transformed when the middle class moves in. Gentrification research has inspired her a great deal when analysing the material in the dissertation, she writes. Another research field described is parenthood and childhood. Here Danielsen positions herself as a constructivist like other scholars in this field, such as the ethnologist Helene Brembeck. Childhood and parenthood are thus perceived as cultural constructions which are interrelated and which partly create each other. In this context Danielsen refers to theorists of modernity like Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck. She also refers to the psychologist Agnes Andenæs, who, according to Danielsen, believes that the organization of everyday life can be interpreted as a form of care. Danielsen's contribution here is to study the shaping of ideals attached to the relationship between parenthood, childhood, and place, on the basis of the parents' reflections.

After this Danielsen considers the field of childhood and place. She argues that the bonds between these come about in interaction between different societal discourses, the position of parents and children in relation to these discourses, and the physical and material aspects of the space around the family. This is followed by a history of earlier research on the topic. It is also important to do research on childhood in places other than the city centre in order to understand childhood in the city, Danielsen says. Norwegian research on this subject has a tendency to focus on either one or the other.

The next research field described is the local environment and the community, with a history of the local community as a field of study. A number of other scholars are cited: Billy Ehn and Orvar Löfgren, Anne Louise Gjesdal Christensen, Marit Ekne Ruud *et al.* A central element of this account is that the phase of life affects the needs, wishes, and expectations that a person has. Urban life and the city is the next field to be described, and here too a number of researchers are referred to. The last research field discussed by Danielsen is the local and the global, homogeneity and distinctiveness. Among other things, she presents

Noel Castree's answer to the question how places in the future can be distinguished in a world of globalization. Briefly, his answer can be summed up as follows: the geographical difference remains, globalization has not resulted in homogeneous places and uniform processes, the processes are handled differently, most social relations are not global, and different places are drawn into globalization processes in different ways.

Thus far I have summarized the introduction to the dissertation. In chapter two Danielsen describes her theoretical perspectives and central concepts. She begins, however, by describing research traditions, chiefly cultural analysis and concepts such as discourse and reflexivity. She also gets theoretical inspiration from human geography, which she says has a great deal in common with cultural analysis. In addition, she outlines the history of concepts such as locality, essence, and construction.

The author also discusses different ways of approaching a particular concept. One possibility is to adopt a descriptive approach, which regards a place as a stage set. She goes on to describe a phenomenological outlook, which defines place as an essential part of human existence. Social constructivism is more concerned with the particular quality of places, as an expression of social processes. Danielsen adopts this perspective but she also draws on the other two ways of understanding place: the descriptive approach is prominent when she describes the character of areas, the constructivist approach dominates throughout the dissertation, while the phenomenological perspective serves as a source of inspiration.

Another important theoretical aim is to create a concept of place that says something about complexity, since the creation of place can be both exclusive and inclusive. Danielsen also uses the concept of normative geography, where place helps to construct who belongs and who is different. Here it is essential to apply a power perspective based on the question of who has the power to define. The term "place myth" is used as an aid to understanding the relationship the parents have to the home and childhood.

The most important conclusion of this exploration of theories is that both places and identities are fluid and that they are often constructed through contrasts with what they are not. Moreover, both places and identities are about drawing boundaries.

Danielsen's theoretical positioning functions as analytical inspiration and provides the foundation for her choice of method.

Danielsen works with qualitative interviews. She has interviewed 13 pairs of parents, and thus her intention is not to arrive at quantitatively based conclusions. She chose to interview the parents in pairs because she was interested in how they construct their "Us". The absolute selection criterion was that the informants should live near the centre of Bergen. Moreover, she wanted to achieve variation in housing practices and experiences. The selection methods varied too; Danielsen herself contacted some of the people, while others volunteered to take part. The selection was limited to families in which two adults of different sex live together with children, at least one of whom is aged six to ten. Most of the interviews lasted for over two hours and were held in the informants' homes. To find out what ideas exist in the public context about living with children in the city, Danielsen used media sources, such as various newspapers.

After this long introduction it is time to describe the results presented in the dissertation, beginning with everyday life in relation to the perception of time. Here Danielsen makes a distinction between slow and active time. At the start of the chapter she asks questions such as: What pictures do the parents create of the city centre in relation to time? What ideals emerge? She then considers aspects such as the organization of time in everyday life, practical things as a question of values, economy of time in everyday life, calm and activity, the organization of activities, sacrosanct holidays. This is related at the end of the chapter to aspects such as development, security, and leisure. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusions.

This arrangement of the chapters is consistent throughout the dissertation, and in the next chapter too, which is about local social spaces, she asks some questions at the beginning. Among other things, Danielsen looks for answers about the ideals and practices that the parents communicate when they talk about locally based social spaces, and what the parents want the neighbourhood and the immediate environment to be like. This is followed by a discussion of parenthood and neighbourhood, parenthood as a starting point for social relations and social relations around the children. She also discusses ideals such as the life between the houses, and the local environment as an important part of the construction of the city as an urban idyll. She describes how the cramped physical space in the centre can lead to a struggle for space. Another perspective she discusses is the choice of communities, and practices concerning them.

The next chapter is about the values and dimensions associated with positive diversity and how it affects the children. The author discusses this from different perspectives, for example, diversity as a stage set and drug addicts as a symbol of diversity and tolerance. Furthermore, diversity can be regarded as a tool for individuality, but it can also be seen as a power concept, since there can be a hierarchy of differences based on different logics. There are also limits to diversity, as discussed in chapter seven. Finally, in chapter eight, the important conclusions of the dissertation are summed up.

Danielsen's dissertation has many strengths. One of these is the well thought-out disposition, which makes it easy for the reader to follow the thread, despite the fact that the dissertation focuses on parents and children in the city from several perspectives, and with intersectional theory. Danielsen herself brings up the problem of the disposition, but as a reader I feel that she has succeeded very well in the arrangement of the book. Moreover, I appreciate the short summaries the author provides at the end of each chapter, since they clarify the content and tie up a sack that risks overflowing because of the wealth of perspectives. However, there are some repetitions in the text, which spoils the reading somewhat. It is an advantage that Danielsen uses plenty of quotations in her presentation, since they bring the empirical material to life. In addition, it makes it easier to follow the analytical threads. Another strength is the conclusions of the dissertation, which make suggestions for fruitful future discussions and research.

*Anette Löfström, Uppsala*

## An Extinct Tradition of Joiks

*Ola Graff,* "Om kjæresten min vil jeg joike". Undersøkelser over en utdødd sjøsamisk joiketradisjon. Davvi Girji, 2004. 281 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss. ISBN 82-7374-522-8.

■ In the mid-1970s a friend gave Ola Graff a cassette with field recordings of songs and joiks from Snefjord, near the North Cape. This was unexpected; until then scholars, after fruitless collection attempts, had assumed that the Coastal Sámi joik tradition in western Finnmark had died out at the end of the nineteenth century. A dozen years later Graff began intensive work in the area to document and contextualize all that could be found. It turned out that the practice of joik had ceased to be productive after the Second World War, but through his fieldwork he was able to document 18 joiks (plus recollections of a few others) and stories about the joiks and the people who performed them. This material is the foundation for Graff's doctoral dissertation from 2002, which is presented here in edited form.

It is thus a corpus of joiks which deal with, and were used in, the local context, that is, in Snefjord and the surrounding countryside in Måsøy municipality, which was long wholly dominated by sedentary Sámi who lived by coastal fishing. Although reindeer-herding Sámi from Finnmark visited the area in the summers and in theory could have exerted an influence, the material represents a distinct local tradition – not just as regards the content but also in other formal features: they were all short, the words seemed to be fixed, there was rarely joik without words, the voice was used in a way that resembled Norwegian singing more than North Sámi joik usually does, and some tunes were reminiscent of Norwegian ballad tunes.

After a brief survey of the historical and national political framework – Christianization, Norwegianization, the school system, radio etc. – Graff devotes the major part of the book to a detailed presentation and analysis of each joik: one or more variants are shown in musical notation (and are also available on the Internet), the explicit content of the text is clarified, the structure of the melody and the text is examined, and the author discusses the use, origin, and users of the joik. It is interesting that several of the joiks mock people's shortcomings or personal characteristics, and were not performed in the presence of the subject, unless the intention was to tease that person. Other joiks, by contrast, build on a tender relationship or are said to have been composed during a period of courtship. In subsequent chapters Graff discusses on a more general level how the joik functioned in the community in terms of this character of portraying individuals. He also discusses music and text in general, comparing the Snefjord tradition with earlier research on Sámi music. In the discussion of musical parameters he stresses, among other things, the formulaic structure and the distinct sense of form. The influence of "Norwegian" music, that is, the general European cultural tradition of melody based on functional harmony and cadences, is discussed in terms of musical bilingualism – although the tune was changed there remained the formulaic structure and the referential function of the joik. Despite changes

on the surface, the fundamental structure was perceived as remaining intact, Graff concludes. In the analysis of linguistic structure Graff pays special attention to the fixed texts and how several of them adopt runo meter, use alliteration, internal rhyme and end rhyme – things not previously associated with Sámi tradition. Here Graff goes further and argues that these features may have had a broader foundation, for example, by analysing how Sirma's version of Guldnasaš recorded in 1674 follows runo meter and uses the stylistic features listed above. He also opens the door for a reassessment of Anders Fjellner's "The Courtship of the Son of the Sun", which is not unreasonable on the basis of recent discussions of epic tradition in folkloristics – Graff does not refer to this, but it could have given extra support to his argument.

A petty detail in this context is that *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* is called "the new Groove" in several places. Groove stands for a rhythmic pattern in Afro-American music, while George Grove was an English music lover who wrote the first edition of this standard reference work.

All in all, this is an interesting and thought-provoking book that ought to stimulate discussion of Sámi music. It deserves praise for the good contextualization of the joiks in the community that was achieved by the fieldwork, and for the general questions that Graff formulates.

*Alf Arvidsson, Umeå*

## Music for Pensioners

*Sverker Hyltén-Cavallius,* Minnets spelrum. Om musik och pensionärskap. Gidlunds förlag, Hedemora 2005. 313 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss. ISBN 91-7844-701-1.

■ This is not an easy book. Even after a second read there are still numerous passages that remain obscure to the reader. At the same time, it is packed with learning and an abundance of ideas and astute observations.

It is rare, for example, to see such well thought-out and crystal-clear summaries of thinkers such as Michel de Certeau and Jacques Derrida, who are introduced in chapter 1. This is splendid work, testifying to a thorough grasp of theory.

Nor is there any doubt that the author is incredibly well read and has a detailed knowledge of literature in the sociology of music and research in ethnology and anthropology in Sweden and abroad. He knows both the classics and the latest works.

The author also deserves praise for skilfully balancing the more musicological problems – with their technical terminology that is often difficult for the layman – and his ethnological fieldwork. He takes great pains here, to ensure that even those with no great knowledge of music will be able to understand the examples and the technical musical details.

Despite all this, it is a book that never comes to fruition. This is due to two main problems. Firstly, it is never quite clear what the author is trying to achieve. It would have helped if we had been told from the start what exactly is the question to which the author seeks an answer. This classical academic virtue is not fulfilled by the author, so the focus all through the dissertation is uncertain, with the consequence that the conclusion is vague and blurred. It is not particularly informative to read that the aim of the dissertation is "to broaden and deepen the understanding of how music can be part of and interact with the shaping of social categories and groups". This aim is far too imprecise. A sharper focus would have worked wonders.

The other problem is that the author is trying to juggle with too many balls. He wants to achieve too much at once from a heterogeneous collection of material. I would have liked to see a more detailed discussion of the possibilities offered by the different types of material. As it is, we jump from one topic to the next, introduced to one idea after the other. As a rule these ideas are interesting and thought-provoking, but they are not brought together.

On the other hand, there is a great deal of sense in many of the basic ideas running through the book, for example, the one outlined in the introduction, that the author wanted to rectify the marginalized status of old people in research on musical life in Sweden. The use of music by young people seems to be well illuminated, whereas studies of music culture in old age are conspicuous by their absence. The author therefore wishes to examine this and fill a gap. This is a laudable goal, and the reader looks forward to finding out more about this. By the end of the book we have indeed learned more after having been in different parts of Sweden – specifically in places like Stockholm, Västerås, and an industrial town in southern Sweden with the camouflaged name of Sälgtuna, and having toured commercial music, caring institutions, and musical life in associations. On the way we have become acquainted with the entrepreneurs of

music for the elderly, the organizations and artists, for example in eldercare. We have also – in chapter 5 about "the soundtrack of a generation", which is the most successful in the book – visited a study group for music listening, where we for once get close to living actors and their preferences.

So it is all the more vexatious that the author reaches some strange conclusions, for example, that it is reprehensible that the music offered to the elderly, which they seemingly want to hear too, is Swedish and dates back to the era of the People's Home, that is, the time before rock music. The author makes a great deal of the fact that there is no classical music, jazz, rock, non-Swedish ethnic music etc., but that the old people have to "content themselves" with artists like Snoddas, Sickan Carlsson, and Bo Larsson. What else could we expect? Håkan Hellström or Gudibrallan or ska – or flamenco performed on the kora by a weird group of red-haired immigrants? Things go badly wrong on p. 226, where the author tells, with ill-concealed irony, how he was handed a sheet of A5 paper with the lyrics of *Ljuvliga ungdom* ("Pleasant youth"), which is designated the "national anthem" of the pensioners' movement. The author seems to believe that this is part of the Swedish "treasury of song". Yet the song is Finnish – *Kultainen nuoruus* – and is very popular in Finland, with a tune by Kullervo Linna. It was not recorded in Swedish until 1981, with lyrics by Lars Huldén and sung by Arja Saijonmaa, both from Finland. Why is this ignored? Is it due to ignorance, or is the culture of Finland not considered sufficiently ethnic or exotic? This would have been an opportunity to show an openness to something non-Swedish. And the Finns are a rather large immigrant group ...

The massive criticism throughout the book seems elitist and intolerant. We notice already in chapter 2, which is about the music at a television recording for the elderly at Skansen, an ironic distance to both the audience and the artists. And this continues all through the book, with peculiar moralizing about bad taste and ignorance. As if it were the task of cultural analysis to pronounce on the quality of the cultural manifestations and phenomena under study. As a cultural analyst one must show solidarity even with things that you personally think are bad taste.

The result is a sad outcome of a study of an extremely relevant and interesting topic, which could have been much more nuanced, much more astute, and much more empathetic towards the people involved. The author's obvious talents, his wide reading, and his extensive research are not on a par with the poor end result, which shows an irksome know-all tendency. No one expects a cultural scientist to share the actors' perceptions, but it is not enough to describe the actors from an external, schoolmasterly perspective. What really makes a difference is what the actors themselves think and do. In relation to the object of study, it is the task of the cultural analyst to be a sensitive cultural relativist. This does not mean that one cannot have a political and moral involvement in the theme and the problem, but it is an academic virtue to keep the two apart.

*Niels Kayser Nielsen, Aarhus*

## Museums and Environmental Education

*Kirsi Hänninen*, Visiosta toimintaan: museoiden ympäristökasvatus sosiokulttuurisena jatkumona, säätelymekanismina ja innovatiivisena viestintänä. Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities 57. Jyväskylä 2006. 278 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss. ISBN 951-39-2512-9.

■ The attitude of Finland's museums to environmental education is the theme of Kirsi Hänninen's doctoral dissertation in ethnology, written in Finnish and submitted to Jyväskylä University in September 2006.

According to the Austrian museologist Friedrich Waidacher, Finland has the largest number of museums per capita in Europe. Finland's development into an independent state has its roots in a strong national romantic movement, expressed through art and culture in the elite sphere, and among the people through the youth movement and the local history associations. The concepts of nature and culture were shared by everyone. Artists emphasized the beauty of the country's rugged scenery, and the local history movement praised the ancestors' courage and strength when it came to surviving in their harsh reality. Political metaphors used the opposites of nature and culture, for example, through the image of "Finland's maiden" threatened or attacked by the eagle, the symbol of the Russian tsar.

But development proceeded, with innovations like dynamite and atomic power giving people the ability to adapt the natural environment to suit their requirements. As a result, the opposition between nature and culture has been increasingly erased, and today the situation is almost the reverse. For the young urban generation and decision makers in Brussels who have

never needed to fear a wolf, for instance, it is easy to make decisions about protecting predators. In Finland too, the government has taken measures to promote the youngest citizens' environmental awareness and their knowledge of nature. In Finland roughly half of the museums work with cultural history, about 20% with art, 6% (or 18 museums) are categorized as museums of natural history. Since the museums are mostly publicly owned, it is natural that the authorities channel their measures for environmental education via them. There is a tradition on which to build, since both environmental science and local knowledge were already on the old primary school curriculum.

In the preface to the dissertation Hänninen observes that the museums' environmental education does not just mean teaching the visitors. The museum employees also have to grow with the task. As a researcher she can be regarded as an environmentalist. The most important sources of inspiration for her dissertation are the anthropologist Kay Milton's environmental studies and the ethnologist Veikko Anttila's studies of innovation. Hänninen is mainly interested in environmental issues. In her licentiate thesis she studied environmental matters in relation to "the narrative of progress" and she has also treated similar themes in shorter articles. Her broad knowledge and profound commitment to nature are also evident from the newly constructed permanent exhibition at the Central Finland Museum of Natural History, a division of Jyväskylä University Museum. Here she has produced the script for the exhibition and taken part in the work in various ways. The exhibition presents the natural heritage of Central Finland from Precambrian times to 21st-century environments with the wounds and traces left by human beings.

In Finland studies of environmental education have hitherto been conducted at master's level in the field of education. Hänninen's dissertation about the museums of cultural and natural history relate to environmental education are of societal relevance partly because she follows up the effects that official measures have had on the museums' activities, and indirectly shows how the cultural and natural environment in our conceptual world are merging into an endangered whole that requires public protection.

The dissertation is interdisciplinary and has a basically positivist tone. To elucidate the questions from different angles, she works with multiple strategies (the method known as triangulation). Her most important tools, the three concepts of socio-cultural continuity, regulating mechanism, and innovative communication, are established in chapter 2, but she does not apply them until much later in the text as a result of an explanatory derivation process, even though the concepts are already mentioned in the title of the book.

She works in stages and with different kinds of material. She concentrates the problem in three questions:

1) Why is environmental education relevant in the museums? She mainly answers that question on the basis of literature and archival material about legislation, the museums' regulations, strategies, and activity plans.
2) How do museum employees regard environmental education? To answer this question she first constructed a questionnaire which was completed by 93 museum employees and then went on to interview a selection of them.
3) The third question seeks to arrive at a model for the concepts of socio-cultural regulating mechanism and innovative communication. To answer it she uses all her material.

As she points out: "My theory contains two opposing points of view, from which I have framed the questions of my research: is environmental education a socio-cultural continuum or innovative communication? The hypothesis and its antithesis permit the detection and analysis of continuity and change" (p. 238).

One of the most interesting parts of the book is the description of how environmental interest emerged in Finland and was influenced by various international conferences, and how a national cultural-heritage project, "Finland's Oak", strengthened environmental interest in the Finnish museum world. The project was run from 1998 to 2004 by the National Board of Antiquities, the National Board of Education, and the Ministry of the Environment. The name has associations with the giant oak mentioned in the Kalevala and thus with the history and identity of the Finnish people.

In a section that is thought-provoking for museum workers she presents ten museums that exemplify different stages of intensity and awareness in environmental education. She plots their positions on the scale she created with the aid of her three main concepts, and for her penetrating analyses she uses the museums' strategies, plans, and project descriptions, along with statements by individual museum employees. Environmental education also concerns decision makers. Those who are familiar with the local cultural

environment make better decisions. The museums act in an advisory capacity and the environmental centres as executive bodies. Cooperation between different bodies, for example, for inventories of buildings, lead people to start structuring the landscape on the basis of their knowledge of it, and this no doubt strengthens the identity. As an example of an area with a powerful regional identity the author mentions Kainuu, where the local identity construction takes place democratically, as the inhabitants discuss the distinctive character of their area and take part in different projects. On page 141 the authors cites an informant: "It's as if we, sort of, create the future identity together, which researchers and museum workers will then assess in fifty years – what the process of change might have led to."

When the author presents her results she observes on page 183: "An employee in a county museum thinks that the point of environmental education is to teach that a good environment consists of many different layers. An expert assesses the environment on the basis of qualitative criteria, so that he or she can pass on well-founded knowledge about the environment. In the assessment the expert creates a moral message by adopting a stance on the issue of what a good environment is."

In the conclusion she notes that environmentalism has influenced legislation, strengthened the museums' socio-cultural role, and refreshed environmental education by increasing environmental awareness among museum employees.

Communication is an important matter in the museum world. Kirsi Hänninen focuses on the museum as a sender of messages. Her analysis of the concept of environmental education and how museum staff relate to it shows the relevance of the questions, and illuminates the time from the 1960s on in the museum world, a time whose history is not yet written.

*Solveig Sjöberg-Pietarinen, Åbo*

## Today's Gene News

*Malin Ideland*, Dagens gennyheter. Hur massmedier berättar om genetik och genteknik. Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2002. 224 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss. ISBN 91-89116-39-9.

■ A multidisciplinary and cross-departmental research project entitled "Genetics, Gene Technology and Everyday Ethics" commenced in Lund in the 1990s. One of the participants was Ph.D. student Malin Ideland, who later defended her doctoral thesis entitled "Today's Gene News. The mass media's narrative about genetics and gene technology". Her thesis looks at the public debate on genetics and gene technology, the arena for which is the mass media.

The very cover of the thesis is suggestive of its content. A newspaper clipping from *Dagens Gennyheter* is resting on a bed of sheep's wool, perhaps even genuine Dolly wool? The clipping is a story written by Malin Ideland herself and consequently helps introduce her dual identity of journalist and scholar. The fact that the she has a foot in both camps may have cleared her vision in relation to some aspects, but made her blind to others. This theme would have benefited from further discussion.

Ideland maintains her focus on the reader throughout this thesis, which is linguistically eloquent, perhaps even bordering on the seductive from time to time. The glossary of genetic explanations which is attached as an Appendix is very helpful to readers who are not entirely *au fait* with genetics.

The thesis is also a contribution to the body of media research within the discipline of ethnology. It has a production perspective in that it focuses on the producers of media narratives and how they shape the media content. Ideland analyses the situations in which media narratives are produced. Newspaper headlines, television programmes etc. are subjected to narrative analysis, and aspects of their linguistic presentation, such as the journalists' choice of metaphors, have been given special attention. Key analytical concepts are interdiscursivity, intertextuality, metaphor and symbol. The media narratives have been approached from a constructivist perspective, i.e. ideas, narratives and actions are considered as products of their cultural context.

In the preamble, world-famous Dolly sets the scene. The news that a single cell from an adult sheep carries the potential to create an identical copy of a living creature was a message that many latched on to in the 1990s. Previously, films and fiction had described gene technology as something threatening. When Dolly appeared, she may well have been perceived as a threat, but she was also associated, perhaps just as much, with a type of good, warm, soft cloning. The author demonstrates how the media converted scientific, biological concepts into everyday language, and how Dolly was transformed into a symbol of the future and a symbol of hope.

Ideland draws from a wide body of material, and her objective has been to map a specific terrain rather than to present an overall totality. This so-called *multi-sited ethnography*, to use George Marcus's words, involves looking at different topics in a number of different empirical spaces. The material was collected in Sweden during the second half of the 1990s, and it includes clippings from morning and evening papers, television and radio programmes, and interviews with science journalists, and with the media professionals who produced a specific television feature on genetics. Furthermore, questionnaires were distributed to members of the Swedish Association of Medical Journalists. While I was reading, these questionnaires prompted my curiosity. It was difficult to establish why Ideland felt they were important, how they had been drawn up and by whom, what questions were asked and why so few responses were returned. Ideland has also conducted qualitative research interviews with geneticists and representatives of NHR, the National Association of the Neurologically Disabled, and she has recorded her observational participation at press conferences and television broadcasts. Ideland has chosen to refrain from anonymizing her informants, partly because they are people in the public eye whose identity it would be hard to conceal. However, it might have been interesting to include a few reflections on the restrictions imposed by this choice: are there any?

In chapter 2, the reader is introduced to the field of journalism, within which a number of different discourses are fighting for domination with respect to the nature of high-quality journalism and the best approach to science. The reader is introduced to the main players, the science journalists, and the author points to the ideals and routines that control science journalism. These ideals are almost exclusively focused on *providing information* and on *educating* the readers, and in an interesting and important part of her thesis Ideland demonstrates how this results in a largely uncritical approach to gene technology.

I am concerned that the journalists are identified by no more than their names and occupation. Even if George Marcus emphasizes that it is not the objective of *multi-sited ethnography* to provide a holistic presentation, I would have preferred a wider contextualization. Ideland herself points out that she has chosen to exclude factors such as the journalists' social group, their political and religious affiliation and their age, although these factors may well have influenced their responses. I would have thought that political and religious affiliation, in particular, would be important to a study concerned with problems associated with gene technology, and I miss an explanation of what has motivated this omission.

In chapter 3, "The faces of genetics", we move beyond the field of journalism. This chapter discusses the different strategies employed by the representatives of a disability organisation (NHR), and by geneticists, in creating media stories, and looks into the practical ways in which these groups affect the media's descriptions of gene research. We are introduced to the representatives of the disability organization through their work on four public information films about three different neurological disabilities. These films were shown on Swedish television in order to raise funds for the organisation. The author demonstrates how people who suffer from a neurological condition will personify the disease – give the disease a face – thus generating awareness of what it is like to live with that particular disease. The geneticists, on the other hand, are reduced to mere explainers of disease in these films. People who suffer from a neurological condition, and their relatives, become metonyms for *awareness* of the disease, while the geneticists become metonyms for *explanation* of the disease.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 focus on three different metaphor systems. Chapter 4, "An inner body community", discusses explanatory metaphors. Here, Ideland analyses how journalists explain genetics and gene technology through what she refers to as community metaphors. Community metaphors are not necessarily as charged as other metaphors, and are often invisible. They are used to explain the significance of genes and the scientific processes, and are not intended to stir emotions. The chapter seeks to demonstrate that the invisible metaphors nevertheless affect the direction of the genetics debate.

The first invisible metaphor is found in the anthromorphization of biology and genetics. Ideland points out that while the community is being biologized, genes are portrayed as individuals, in that they are referred to as social, loving entities of a specific gender, that think and act, and have a history as well as family affiliations. Genes are personified, resulting in a specific public perception of gene research.

The second invisible metaphor is the well used *machine metaphor*. The body is compared to a machine, an idea taken from the world of technology and engineering. In the 1990s, machine metaphors were taken from the world of computers; programming

and re-programming became the set way of talking about gene technology. This is a troubled metaphor, thanks to its inevitable toning down of the hereditary aspects linked to the susceptibility and predictability of computer programs, genes and individuals. The third invisible metaphor is the map. The map can be seen as part of the disciplining process to which the hereditary aspects are made subject, says Ideland.

Chapter 5, "From cave man to cyborg", analyses time metaphors, which are visible and more charged than the community metaphors. In this chapter, Ideland looks at how gene research is portrayed in relation to an envisaged past or future. The metaphors presented are *The Past*, *Yesterday, Tomorrow* and *The Future*. The metaphor of *The past* is most often found in texts which discuss issues surrounding sexuality and masculinity/femininity, in which Stone Age Man is often described as happier than people of today will ever be. Ideland demonstrates how this predestined ideal exists in parallel with society's demands for feasibility, agility and flexibility. *Yesterday* is not at all as desirable as *The past*. For *Yesterday* is all about the genetic research conducted in the inter-war period. A dominant part of this picture is the frightening notion that gene technology may be misused by scientists and the authorities. However, *Tomorrow* already looks a little brighter. For *Tomorrow* may well bring a cure for the diseases we suffer from today. We may find the solution to cancer, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, Parkinson's or whatever it might be. Yet, at the same time *Tomorrow* is worrying in that we envisage a society which discriminates against the weak and infirm. *The Future* is the last in the series of time metaphors. *The Future* is far from bright. For we have no control over it, the way we have over *Tomorrow*. *The Future* is frightening and offers few positive visions. Ideland shows how the media make use of these time metaphors to instil positive perceptions of gene technology, provided we are talking about solving the cancer problem – that's when the *Tomorrow* metaphor is brought into play. If we are talking about pre-implantation techniques however, the *Yesterday* metaphor is introduced with its negative associations of yesterday's racial purity theories.

In chapter 6, "In the borderland between fact and fiction", the author looks at the part played by fiction in the production of knowledge and perceptions of genetics. Ideland shows us the intertextual relationships that exist between news stories, film and fiction. She demonstrates how fiction is used to put genetics into a familiar context, and we see how science is being used to lend credibility to films and novels.

The thesis has a double finale, providing a summary of the various perspectives discussed under the heading of "Mergers" in the final chapter, while the postscript headed "Goodbye Dolly?" asks how long Dolly will remain a symbol of the future within a field of research which is changing at breakneck speed.

My main objection to Ideland's work is my desire for greater precision in the presentation of various concepts. One example is the concept of myth, of which we never quite learn the author's understanding. In many ways, the concept of myth is similar to the concept of culture, which scholars use to express a variety of different meanings, although some may even say it is devoid of meaning. In this context, it would be useful to provide the reader with a definition of the concepts. Another example is "pure knowledge" (e.g. p. 24), which easily triggers unfortunate associations. Does this refer to "objective knowledge", or perhaps "factual knowledge"?

To some extent, key concepts such as "narrative" and "narrating" (*berättelse* and *berättandet*) have been presented in a way that may cause confusion. The literature on this subject is vast and complicated, and accommodates a variety of different approaches. Without the provision of proper explanations, it is therefore at times unclear what the author means by "narrative" and the process of "narrating", how the relationship between the two levels is handled, and whether they are considered empirical categories or are restricted to an analytic level.

Richard Bauman's pair of concepts, *narrative event* and *narrated event,* is handled in much the same way. In this instance, Ideland chooses to rephrase *narrative event* to *narration event*. Although the difference between *narration event* and *narrative event* is purely grammatical, it is nevertheless unclear to the reader what has prompted the author to change the phraseology.

In general, Malin Ideland's thesis is well written and interesting, and it reflects important work. Based on a wide body of material the author gets to grip with a field – gene technology – at which other cultural scholars have only just started looking. Her discussions are based on highly consistent media analyses in a thesis which adds valuable knowledge to cultural research. However, the thesis would have benefited from somewhat clearer and more explicit explanations of some of the concepts used.

*Tove Ingebjørg Fjell, Bergen*

## A Folkloristic Study of Child Identity

*Bjørg Kjær,* Børn og barndom på fritidshjem. Et folkloristisk studie af fortolkning og forhandling om barnlig identitet. Learning Lab Denmark & Göteborgs universitet 2005. 230 pp. English summary. Diss. ISBN 87-7684-035-2.

■ The aim of the dissertation is to examine how children relate to childhood in day-care institutions. The empirical focus is a field study in an after-school play scheme with children aged five to ten, the approach is folkloristic with a heavy influence from the so-called new research on children. She did her fieldwork in the 1990s and her aim was to study everyday life in day-care institutions.

The dissertation is marked by thoughtfulness. Structure, headings and conclusions are solid. This is a dissertation of the kind we will see fewer of in the future because of the changes in the academic field. It bears clear signs that the researcher has been working with the issues for a long time and that she has dealt with different sorts of problems related to her theme. Kjær refers to 19 different texts she has written herself between 1988 and 2004. She is planted in the research field of Nordic cultural childhood and youth, which is visible in her way of writing, the reference list and in her thanks in the preface.

Kjær asks what happens when children produce childhood and thereby stage and thematize childhood (p. 11). She has an ambition to see children as both the exotic other and as humans like other humans, and she wants to focus both on what is different and on what unites children and grown-ups. The way she chooses her words shows that she writes in the ambivalence between understanding children as actors in their own lives and the limits for their actions.

She outlines the theoretical background for the study in some detail in her three opening chapters. She places her study in relation to three different research traditions: children's folklore, studies of children's own play culture, and sociological/anthropological child research. Her fourth chapter concerns field, method, fieldwork and textuality. She here also provides a brief historical account of fieldwork of this type and considers ethical issues. She chooses to ask and discuss profound questions in these opening chapters, so the analysis based on her empirical findings does not start until page 89. For the readers familiar with the research traditions she inscribes herself into, this may be boring, but on the other hand her discussions are good introductions to relevant debates.

The dissertation has four analytical chapters. The first of them, "Life in institutions – that's the way it is", describes the recreational institution as a ritual arena, this is a logical start also introducing the concrete frame of the study. She concludes the chapter by stating that ritualization has adopted new shapes. In the next chapters she analyses the empirical data from three different perspectives. "Pedagogy seen from below" treats children's view of the professionals working in the institution. The next chapter "Bermuda Triangle – or three steps to success?", shows how gender, age and ethnicity are traded and negotiated in the making of the children's identities. In the next chapter, "Twinkle, twinkle – I'm a star", Kjær analyses the specific aesthetics created through the institutionalized child. She examines the concept of childish and the ways this quality is managed and aestheticized. In the eighth chapter, "Bim, bam, busse – I have a habitus". she discusses ways and genres creating childishness. She distinguishes between three processes of recognition creating childish qualities. The social dimension is aimed at distribution of power and the children's position in the group. The aesthetic dimension is aimed at showing their mastery and ability to manifest themselves through their application of the childish genres. The value-dimension is aimed at the children's close and friendly relations with each other, and is benchmarked according to the children's ability to establish equality and empathy. Taken together, Kjær states, these three dimensions of recognition comprise the three aspects of a "childish rhetoric", with the three aspects corresponding to the classic concepts of ethos, logos and pathos. In her conclusion she focuses on children as others in both an ethnographical and a philosophical way.

I agree with her quest in her concluding remarks where she calls for studying different hierarchies constituting children's identities and negotiations. The idea of the competent child can overshadow ways of studying power relations regarding children.

The dissertation is ambitious, the author has a lot on her mind and she is willing to position herself with respect to a broad spectrum of fields and perspectives. There is always a risk that the threads are too many or too loose or that the researcher's main points get lost in the analytical complexity. Of course Kjær cannot answer all the questions she raises, and some of them may seem unnecessary in this particular

context, for instance giving a brief account of the history of childhood on page 169 – this could have been done in the general introduction. The number of concepts, the explanation of them and of the different perspectives she uses throughout the text may seem too many, and sometimes unnecessary for the points she wants to stress. She also could have included other perspectives, for instance in her analysis of gender and ethnicity. But one cannot do everything in one dissertation, and Kjær has done what she says to her reader that she wants to do, namely to explore how children relate to the category of childhood in a particular setting. Her strength, as with many folklorists and ethnologists, lies in her detailed analysis of concrete situations and the way she connects these to larges issues. The resulting dissertation is a rich, broad text with a direction, and the analytical explorations are rich, creative and fun to read.

*Hilde Danielsen, Bergen*

## The Spearhead of Gender Equality

*Marie Nordberg*, Jämställdhetens spjutspets? Manliga arbetstagare i kvinnoyrken, jämställdhet, maskulinitet, femininitet och heteronormativitet. Arkipelag, Göteborg 2005. 382 pp. Diss. ISBN 91-85838-67-5.

■ Owing to their choice of occupation, men working in traditionally female professions have been regarded as more equality-directed than male workers in other fields. Furthermore, male workers have been considered as ideals for a new modern masculinity in addition to their role as antipodes to their female colleagues. However, these assumptions are not as straightforward as they might seem at first sight, and thus it is no wonder that gender equality has aroused the increasing interest of scientists in different fields during the last two decades in particular. Which norms and conceptions of masculinity dominate in non-traditional occupations? How do these discourses prevent or support gender equality? This set of problems, along with several other questions, constitutes the main topic of Marie Nordberg's dissertation, "The Spearhead of Gender Equality? Male Workers in Non-traditional Occupations, Gender Equality, Masculinity, Femininity and Heteronormativity".

Marie Nordberg, researcher in the Department of Ethnology at the University of Gothenburg, offers an analysis and discussion of the Swedish equality discourse, as well as the variations of male workers' gender formations in three non-traditional occupations. Despite gender equality policies and state feminism, Sweden still has one of the most gender segregated labour markets in Europe, and Nordberg's dissertation offers remarkable points to the discussion as to why this is the case. The aim of the dissertation is to investigate what discourses are repeated and fused to the gender equality discourse in three different, non-traditional occupations. Nordberg's material consists of thirty-one interviews with men and women working as preschool teachers, nurses and hairdressers. She also observed thirteen male workers at eleven different workplaces from four to five days each, in addition to observations of the preschool teachers at two meetings in a network of male preschool teachers. The empirical sources were collected between the years 1996 and 1999. Political policy documents and media material such as movies and newspaper articles concerning men in non-traditional occupations are included in the study as well. By using ethnography, interviews and a translocal perspective Nordberg shows that discourses flow between situations.

The dissertation is divided into eight large chapters, each bringing the reader closer to the answers to the questions raised at the beginning of the book. In the introduction, Nordberg clarifies the theoretical standpoint the study is based on. Starting with the Gramscian concept of hegemony, followed by a presentation of the theory of discourse by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and the gender theory of Judith Butler, Nordberg creates a theoretical framework of her own. The introductory chapter also includes an interesting problematization of the model of hegemonic masculinity in Connell. The author is in agreement with Connell concerning his idea that the practice of certain norms of masculinity legitimizes an overall male dominance in society, but she argues for the existence of more than one hegemonic ideal of masculinity.

The second chapter offers an analytic genealogy of the Swedish gender equality discourse, as well as the Swedish gender equality project, which derives from a heteronormative discourse normalising the family of two full-time workers. A presentation of different discourses on masculinity throughout the past few decades is also found in this chapter. One of these is "The Velvet Man", a radical gender transgressor associated with left-wing politics. In relation to this the author also describes three different meanings

of gender equality, one being a discourse that was hegemonic in the 1970s, concerning the outlook on gender equality as similarity, with men and women being encouraged to transgress gender borders. The second discourse singles out gender equality as a special concern for women, where the gender order is highlighted and men are constructed as an obstacle. This discourse was articulated in the eighties, whereas the third one, concerning gender equality as positive and non-hierarchical otherness creating different perspectives on workplaces, became dominant from the nineties onwards. These gender equality discourses and masculinity concepts lead up to the analytical tools used in the subsequent chapters.

In chapter three the male workers are represented and the analysis is directed at the workers and practices in the workplaces. The occupations are discussed separately and the emphasis is on how the gender equality discourse is intertwined with different masculinity concepts. For example, two discourses of the male role model are articulated in the nursery. One of them highlights male preschool teachers as male models that are supposed to bring traditional masculinity to the nursery and thereby act as an opposite to the women workers. The other highlights the male workers in the nursery as models for gender transgression.

The following chapter focuses on gender segregation and the performative effects of essentializing gender discourse by focusing on the similarities observed between the respective positions that were created for male and female workers. Workplaces with both men and women tended to show a division of labour following gender lines, linked to heteronormative understandings.

The fifth chapter deals with the sexualized bodies of the male workers. The heteronorms positioned the male workers in certain work tasks, such as the male nurses of the surgery ward that declined to care for the intimate hygiene of female patients. For some of the male nurses physical touching of the sexual organ of male patients was associated with homosexuality. The norms also eroticized male individuals touching female breasts, and as a result several male nurses did not assist with breastfeeding. Among the hairdressers the male employees were both hetero- and homosexualized; due to their chose of trade they were positioned as homosexuals, but they were also regarded as heterosexuals in the interactions with the female customers.

Chapter six consists of the shifting identifications of the respondents during the interviews. Interestingly enough, the male workers often masculinized their occupational choice in the narratives by linking the work to masculine domains. The male workers compared themselves to an ideal hegemonic masculinity concept. The chapter leads the author to question the premise that men always distance themselves from femininity, and she presents a model of four identifications.

In the next chapter gender and sexuality as performed in the male preschool network is discussed. Then male preschool teacher's network studied was founded as a gender equality project by the employers and the preschool teacher educators. It was shown that the male workers were highlighting gender and the male person as a category, and by bringing the male workers together gender identifications were exaggerated. In this chapter the author is also justified in comparing Judith Butler's conception of change to Robert Connell's.

What, then, is the conclusion of the dissertation? The last chapter of the book is entitled "A Utopian Vanguard of Gender Equality?", in which the findings are brought together and discussed. Two hegemonic discourses and male positions are found, one being the stereotypical masculinity in Connell, the other being what the author denominates "Reflexive Masculinity", a position considered neutral and purged of the traditional prejudice. In this chapter it is also argued that the most gender-equal relations and gender transgression could be found among the hairdressers, which is the occupation least focused on in the Swedish equality project. Surprisingly enough, the emphasis put on male day-care staff and nurses seems to have caused the gender line to consolidate rather than undermine. The conclusion of the dissertation is hence that gender equality is not a simple question of enlightenment and progress since some of the equality policies studied proved to have contradictory consequences.

In my opinion the study offers an insight into the discourses that are repeated and fused to the gender equality discourse, just as the author has intended. A truly remarkable feature, from my point of view, is that the dissertation not only contributes to studies done in the fields of gender equality, masculinity, femininity and heteronormativity, but thanks to its translocal perspective also emphasizes on the flow of discourses between different situations. Nordberg's

dissertation provides fascinating perspectives on the results of the Swedish equality project, which opens up for new angles in the gender equality debate. This book truly is a welcome contribution to gender equality research, while it also provides interesting reading for anyone, since the discussions in the book affect us all, in one way or another, as we are living in gendered societies.

*Maria Johansson, Åbo*

## Ambivalent Experiences and Ambiguous Stories

*Susanne Nylund Skog*, Ambivalenta upplevelser och mångtydiga berättelser. En etnologisk studie av barnfödande. Josk Media 2002. 250 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss. ISBN 91-631-3704-6.

■ What can birth stories reveal about female experiences and conditions? Susanne Nylund Skog's dissertation, with a title meaning "Ambivalent Experiences and Ambiguous Stories", aims at analysing narratives about childbirth in a gender perspective, combined with a particular focus on the relation between experience and narrative. How are such experiences delineated and which experiences can be told? When has it been possible to tell birth stories? How is birth described in different genres, for example in archive material and in the tales of professional midwives? The dissertation starts with two opposite but also related ideological fields, the natural childbirth movement and medical science, both major ideologies in Swedish maternity care during the 1990s.

The author's most important theoretical framework concerns the processes whereby experience is transformed into narrative performance, with an emphasis on how the narrative conventions are used to impart message and intention. This theoretical perspective is combined with a focus on performance. The narrative event is where the story, meaning and interpretations of experience take place. Nylund Skog applies Katherine G. Young's theory of provinces of meaning, with the concepts taleworld, storyrealm and realm of conversation, to explore how narrator and audience together move between different provinces (Young 1987). One of the objectives is to identify and separate the story's intention from the narrator's intention with telling the story. Both narrative and performance theories are combined with gender perspective. The author explores the ways in which gender both shapes and creates the experiences that are expressed in the narratives as well as giving form to the performance.

The dissertation is based on several types of material: interviews, participant observation in prenatal courses, printed matter from magazines and newspapers as well as material from folklore archives. The main categories under scrutiny are letters to Nordiska Museet from the 1960s concerning birth experiences from the 1920s, personal experience stories of a midwife from her work with women in labour told to parents-to-be in prenatal classes, and personal experience stories from women giving birth in Sweden in the 1990s (all urban, middle-class and in their thirties).

The first analytical chapter, "Femininities and strategic silences", uses the archive material in an analysis that gives us food for thought. The author has with her focus on the relation between silence and speech in the analysis of her main informant's letter about birth experiences, gained insight into what is possible and impossible to express at a specific moment in time. The interpretation of the written stories from the 1960s adds historical depth to the topic, and Nylund Skog interprets the narratives in terms of femininity and class.

The following two chapters are based on material from prenatal and parental education classes in Sweden during the 1990s. The chapters called "Irrational women and engaged men" and "Lust and heterosexuality" illuminate in an excellent way how certain forms of femininity are created in relation to certain forms of masculinity. One of Nylund Skog's key informants, the midwife Irene, tells her personal experience stories about women and couples giving birth with a specific purpose in mind. Her audience, parents-to-be, were to be enlightened, calmed, encouraged and motivated, and the midwife's versions focused on gender differences as complementary. The analysis of how Irene's stories and performance interact shows how heterosexual norms portray the woman as irrational and intuitive while masculinity is described as active and responsible. Skog also shows us how the sexualization of the birth process, i.e. ideas of birth and sexual lust as related, that was widespread through reference books in the 1990s, goes hand in hand with the glorification of the nuclear family and the idealization of giving birth as an important part of female identity.

While the two chapters mentioned above analyse

birth stories told by an eye witness and found in birth reference books, the author bases the three following chapters on personal experiences communicated orally through conversational interviews. Chapter 6, "Observation and intuition", focuses on the conflict between the medical expertise on the one hand and the narrator's intuitive experience of labour as it emerges through her story on the other hand. This dichotomy reflects basic dualisms of culture/nature and male/female. The study moves further, into questions concerning means and willingness to tell your story. Is there a story to tell? (Chapter 7; "Reluctant tellers and (un)available experiences"). A woman and a man reluctantly tell of the birth of their son, and Nylund Skog points to several characteristic traits both in the conventions the couple refuse to adjust to, and in the process through which the first attempt to talk about their experience slowly takes shape.

The ideology of natural birth is a recurrent theme in the dissertation, more or less explicit. In the last analytical chapter called "Power struggles and bodily excesses", this is a main issue. We are presented with two birth stories from the informant Lena, the first characterised as disillusioned narrative marked by anger and resignation towards the acts of medical authorities, the second a success story, where the informant identifies with certain female qualities. The narrator tells her stories with evident references to the idealized template. Nylund Skog manages in her analysis to illuminate how the narrator first fails in her attempt to meet the expectations surrounding natural birth, and how in her next birth story she presents herself as a vigorous subject and sums up the experience by characterizing herself as good, strong and feminine.

Susanne Nylund Skog's dissertation deals with the complicated and fascinating relationship between experience, narratives and narrative events, and this theoretical approach works well together with the stories at hand. The focus on the narrative situation as the story's anchor shows us how central this social event is to the shaping of the experience. Simultaneously Nylund Skog is able to show how narrating itself also has the potential to change the initial social situation. Her analytical perspective also includes questions about what is left out, only slightly touched upon, or "rewritten", and the author points to the function of meta-linguistic traits when it comes to drawing such lines/marking such boundaries.

Another strength of this academic thesis which deserves attention is its way of bringing together the close reading of individual stories with both a gender and an institutional perspective (in the sense of prenatal and parental education arranged by the Swedish government). The norms of biomedical science and the natural birth movement regulate the framework deciding which experiences are possible to tell and the kinds of femininity that are desirable, and the author succeeds in illuminating how these premises are used and discussed in the individual personal experience stories. This thorough piece of work is hereby recommended as stimulating reading for several different groups of readers, including scholars fascinated by language at play, researchers concerned with questions of gendered worlds, to mention only a few.

*Gry Heggli, Bergen*

## Manifesting a Duchy

*Mikkel Venborg Pedersen,* Hertuger. At synes og at være i Augustenborg, 1700–1850. Museum Tusculanums Forlag, Copenhagen 2005. 297 pp. Ill. Diss. ISBN 87-635-0191-0.

■ This book is a Danish version of a dissertation written in English and submitted for the degree of Ph.D. at Copenhagen University in December 1999. The difference is that the author has omitted the large methodological and conceptual apparatus included in the original version, perhaps with a view to reaching a wider readership. The book is thus for the most part a presentation of material, held together by certain pivotal concepts. Despite this somewhat fragmentary form, the main idea is put across, namely an elucidation of the manifestations of the aristocracy in the duchy of Augustenborg, in the border zone of Schleswig-Holstein between Denmark and Germany, during a period of about 150 years. The example is well chosen, partly in that the culture of the European nobility throughout history has existed between different fields of political loyalty, and partly because it displays certain general features in structure and mentality, of which examples from Germany are particularly well known. The study thus has a general scope, and the concepts that the author has chosen as key words for his interpretation are crucial. He has had access to a rich body of archival material (the County Archives in Aabenraa and Schleswig), besides printed works produced by the ducal family, which

are viewed as "self-descriptive" manifestations and models of a world-view. The major part of the book is based on this.

Other central themes of the book are symbols, rituals, and ceremonies. Under the influence of both recent and earlier history of civilization and mentalities, cultural history and micro history (*Annales*, Otto Brunner, Elias, Muir, Burke, Turner) and American anthropology and human geography, the author chooses concepts such as honour, inheritance, marriage, power and powerlessness, world-view, dynasty, family, house, and individual to study aristocratic performance in the cultural landscape formed by the castle, the court, and the village.

The author proceeds from the assumption that one can understand the actions of a family in a certain time by analysing the structure of symbol-making, ritualized behaviour, and the materialization of the family and its estate. Culture is perceived as a created framework which the author sees and intuitively reconstructs. How was the symbolic meaning of being a duke, an aristocrat, a nobleman manifested? How is culture created as compensation for losses of various kinds? In this case it concerns the ambivalent position of a ducal family in both political and economic terms: close relations to the royal house of Denmark, but without power and with steadily reduced wealth. The "noble mentality" was then increasingly displayed in symbolic power. The author's Geertz-inspired method involves a close-up reading of details in the documents, searching for underlying structures, "diagnosing symptoms", and thereby presenting a model for hermeneutic interpretation of a fundamentally historical-political phenomenon.

The reader can follow this analytical process in detail, and the author opens new angles on matters such as wealth and power, on the significance of tradition and time, on the individual and the family, on socialization and thus how the cultural capital of the elite is shaped (George Marcus). We are given detailed descriptions of upbringing and day-to-day life on the estate – how masters and men lived, the confrontations between them, duties and work routines, the titles and wages of the employees – all as examples of the formality and the preservation of social hierarchies for the 500–600 people in the community. The author's intention to reveal structures is achieved by describing conflicts. Space and time are filled with the rich content of the documents. Objects such as portraits, palaces, kitchens, and parks are indicators of cultural values. Meals are interpreted in terms of hierarchy, symmetry, and demonstrations of splendour. But the organization that emerges is also a "scene for the direct manifestation of status" in the duchy of Augustenborg.

The author's dual perspective, which involves telling empirical cultural history and simultaneously presenting a conceptual interpretative model for cultural analysis, causes familiar problems of demarcation throughout. Another difficulty is that the detailed presentation of the material steers the themes of the book in a highly concrete and descriptive direction, while well-found structural concepts disappear. This applies, for example, to allegory, modernity, world order, and "the world turned upside down". One of the most interesting theorists is Abner Cohen with his study from 1974 of "the two-dimensional man", about power and symbolism. In the chapter on "Ceremonies and feasts", which is one of the most important in the book, the author uses the concept of performance (structure, time, audience), but does not further develop it. The function of the ceremonies is said to be to give social stability and thus maintain power and confirm the world order. The examples concern horse racing, the duchess's birthday, silver weddings, and confirmation. This is supplemented with a chapter about the cultural landscape, chiefly the park, but also hunting and its decline as a ducal privilege. The choice of these themes can be justified methodologically (the material is copious), but the value of the actual study as a model lies in the historical explanations, not on the level of experimental interpretation. The book is full of ideas but does not develop any concepts. On the other hand, the author tackles the problems of structure and change in a very elegant way.

The theoretical implications exemplified in the book are presented as the text proceeds. In the last chapter, "The sun of the principality", the author sums up his analyses and also sheds light on the decline of the noble family and the estate society, which began during the wars of 1848–1851. It would have been interesting to see whether this also applied to other elite cultures at the same time. The author's perspective is not comparative, however. How a specific culture created a strategy for a position "in between" is nevertheless lucidly demonstrated. What can be transferred to other times and places is beyond the scope of this book. The firm foundation of the material in local history requires a difficult balance between well-known historical community studies and new

anthropological approaches to aristocracy and elite culture. Nordic ethnology has long considered that these phenomena do not belong to its domains. As a pioneer, Mikkel Venborg Pedersen is both interesting and full of stimulating ideas; as a museum man he has the ability to empathize with the object of his study and write about it in a captivating way. Unfortunately, the illustrations in the book show only buildings. The publishers could have given us more varied pictures to support the good argumentation.
*Bo Lönnqvist, Helsingfors*

## Swedish House Painters

*Eva Silvén,* Bekänna Färg. Modernitet, maskulinitet, professionalitet. Nordiska Museets Förlag, Stockholm 2004. 243 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss. ISBN 91-7108-493-2.

■ The Swedish ethnologist Eva Silvén's doctoral dissertation from 2004 is an interesting contribution to both Swedish and Nordic masculinity studies. The dissertation proceeds from a year's fieldwork in 1993 among a group of Swedish house painters during their work of renovating a school in the Stockholm area. In addition to subjecting this to discourse analysis, she also gives insight into the painting trade. There are two related levels here: first she describes different tendencies in the Swedish painting trade, and in addition she emphasizes how ideals from these trends are expressed and practised among a group of male painters. The analysis is particularly focused on how discourses connected with the categories of *modernity, masculinity*, and *professionalism* are articulated through the men's practices at work.

Silvén begins by presenting the central theoretical concepts in the dissertation. Bourdieu's theory of *social fields* is used to describe the Swedish painting trade (which includes professional painters, unions, paint and material producers, architects, amateurs etc.). She also uses the concept of *discourse*, with reference to Foucault, to highlight the conflicting ideals in this field, and how they also function as normative systems of thought. A shared feature of the discourses examined here is that they are all related to changes in society during modernity, and thus also to the painting profession.

Discourses in the painting trade which stress either *integration, separation*, or *reconstruction* in relation to past ideals, shaped by the transient character of modernity, create different positions and staging possibilities for painters as practitioners. The discourse is considered from a Foucauldian viewpoint as something that shapes the objects it talks about. Silvén also uses Judith Butler's concept of *performativity*. This post-structuralist understanding of the relationship between person and discourse is important for showing how the field of painting is articulated on a concrete level among the painters. With this approach to gender, the dissertation thus rejects the view that masculinity is an essence of men. Gender is something that people do, not what they are.

In chapter 2, on the conditions in which painters work, we are shown the Swedish painting trade as a *social field*, and how this lays the foundation for the work of painting in our time. Here she shows how unstable this field is, and how the different ideals in the business are related in different ways to changes in society. Whereas the painting profession at the start of the twentieth century emphasized continuity, in the 1950s it became important to define oneself in contrast to the past, based on a requirement for efficiency and professionalism. In the 1970s there was a reaction to this, and a need developed to go back to something more authentic. The description of the social field functions as an analytical backdrop for the later chapters which show how these discourses are articulated through social practices. In chapters 3 to 8 the dissertation focuses more specifically on the fieldwork at Enskede School outside Stockholm. Here Silvén examines the roles the painters play; their rhythm and movements when they paint, the performance of the profession as a choreographed dance, how the profession as such is explicitly gendered as masculine, and how the painters' practice functions as a central element in the constitution of the painters as a group in contrast to other positions. Through these chapters, the author develops and activates the analysis of the social fields described in chapter 2. In the last chapter of the dissertation she brings the painters' discourse right up to our own time.

The painters' practice of their profession is consistently regarded as the staging of specific roles. In chapter 4, "A Professional Choreography", we see how dividing lines are drawn between the different actors in the painting field, and it is perhaps in this chapter that the post-structuralist idea is seen best. The focus of the analyses in this chapter is the masculine body. The painter's body and his tools – the equipment and surroundings are described in great detail in the dis-

sertation – work in symbiosis. Tools are used as props in what Silvén calls a kind of choreographed form of staged practice. These practices give rise to distinctions from other painters; for example, by stressing the importance of the spackling and grounding that must be done before the actual painting can start, a boundary is drawn between amateurs and decoration painters who do not give the same priority to this. By staging themselves in specific ways, they stand out as professionals. They play what Silvén calls a *discourse of separation*, in which the performance of *masculinity* and *professionalism* is linked to an expectation of the efficiency of the painting trade.

Silvén emphasizes the aesthetic side of the painters' practice; to reveal how the work can be regarded as a performance on a stage, she draws a parallel between work and dance: "Even if the painters themselves perhaps would not compare their work with dancing, it is not unusual for outside observers to describe skilled work in terms of ballet or choreography". In other words, the work is viewed as a kind of performance based on a script, in this case related to the discourses of the painting trade. With the radio as accompaniment (chapter 8 shows how important the sound of the radio is in this environment) it is almost as if the painters are really on a stage. As when Judith Butler insists that "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender", Silvén insists that the work here should be understood in terms of the performance of specific conventions connected to a profession. It is on this level that "the material, bodily, and aesthetic practice merges and *performatively* creates the prevailing or desired norm".

In chapter 6, on the gender of painting, Silvén considers how the painters' practices produce and reproduce certain constructions of masculinity. Through the dominant homosocial relations in this overwhelmingly male setting, a specific form of masculinity remains almost invisible as a normative construction: the masculinity of the white heterosexual man! Here she uses the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" formulated by Robert Connell, to show how a specific form of masculinity maintains its dominant and authoritative status, by functioning as an ideal image for men and women. In this work environment the norm, according to Silvén, is a Swedish white man aged between twenty and fifty. This does not become visible as a norm until a female decoration painter starts working at the same place; she has a different language from the male house painters, a different attitude to painting, different kinds of equipment, etc. This is a challenge to the prevailing normality of the masculinity construction. An example of this is the way the house painters' equipment is contrasted with the smaller and daintier brushes and paint boxes of the decoration painter. The painters' tubs of spackle and paint suddenly seem "grotesquely large!"

By basing herself on Butler's understanding of gender and masculinity as performatives, Silvén is following the line of other Swedish dissertations in ethnology in recent years. I am thinking of Bo Nilsson's *Maskulinitet* (1999) and Marie Nordberg's *Jämställdhetens spjutspets?* (2005). Unlike the studies by Nilsson and Nordberg, this dissertation does not discuss post-structuralist theory in as much detail, although the actual idea of masculinity as staging runs right through the dissertation. Silvén's book gives a fascinating insight into Swedish painters and their performance of specific discourses, and the author is able in large measure to alternate between the large and the small. Through Silvén's appropriate language and her sense for nuances, as a reader I am left with a powerful impression both of the setting and of the individuals presented. The dissertation is written in a personal style, and occasional episodes stand out in relief against the rest of the text. For me it is this ability to stay close to the empirical reality that is the strength of the dissertation, since no attempt is made to get into grand theoretical discussions. I appreciate the way the Swedish ethnological study of masculinity uses post-structuralist theory to show how masculinity is staged in specific contexts.

*Fredrik Langeland, Bergen*

## Living with a Finnish Background in Sweden

*Marja Ågren,* Är du finsk, eller...? En etnologisk studie om att växa upp och leva med finsk bakgrund i Sverige. Bokförlaget Arkipelag, Göteborg 2006. 297 pp. English summary. Diss. ISBN 91-85838-71-3.

■ In this dissertation Marja Ågren studies a group of second-generation Finnish immigrants in Gothenburg, children of immigrants with a background in northern Finland.

The parents have moved from this rural part of Finland, for example, the Salla district, to a big city in Sweden. Ågren gives a thick description of the circumstances that made it necessary for people to

move in the 1950s and later. When peace was concluded with the Soviet Union, large areas of land were ceded, including the Salla district and Karelia. The post-war years were chaotic. A total of over 400,000 Finnish citizens had to be relocated in the country. Lapland was particularly hard hit because yet another war had to be fought to drive out the German troops stationed in northern Finland. It was necessary to evacuate the civilian population, either to Sweden or to Österbotten on the west coast of Finland. The Germans used scorched-earth tactics, burning everything of value as they retreated. Those who were evacuated could not bring many of their possessions. Ågren describes this vividly:

"Since it was not possible to take along more than a few things, it often meant that people, when they lost their houses on evacuation, also lost furniture, textiles, clothes, kitchen utensils, tools, bedclothes, books, photographs, and toys. With them, memories of life before the war also disappeared, things that children and grandchildren could have inherited, objects to which stories could be linked" (p. 107).

When people later returned to their homes, after the withdrawal of the Germans, it was no easy matter to start the reconstruction. While the internal wounds had to heal, people also had to try to create a future in the devastated Finland. The whole country was being restructured. Many people moved west – to Sweden – to find work and a livelihood. The contrast between the free countryside of northern Finland and the urban factories was great. Two maps appended to the book make it easier to see where the two centres of the narrative are located, and to understand the differences for those who moved from the Finnish "wilderness" to the big maritime and industrial city of Gothenburg. Ågren's study shows the great contrasts between both the outer and the inner landscapes. The capital that the Finnish immigrants brought with them to Sweden was work. This work wore down the body and later caused injuries. It was in the glorification of work that the children grew up in the suburbs of Gothenburg. Many of them could go to school in "Finnish" classes and were thus able to retain their language fairly well. Education was the route that led most of them to jobs that were less strenuous than their parents' work, but some "stayed behind".

Contacts with Finland were reduced to holiday visits, and the parents' dream of being able to move back to the land of their birth mostly had to be abandoned.

A central question for these second-generation Finns is: what am I – Finnish or Swedish? Ågren has a very interesting discussion of the position of the Finnish immigrants *vis-à-vis* other immigrants. When a second-generation Finn is told, "You're just Finnish", what does it mean?

"It is a choice between either being able to prove that one is 'racified enough' to be ascribed a 'pan-ethnic consciousness', and thus belong to a collective of immigrants; or 'Finnish enough' to gain access to the community of Finns in Sweden; or 'Swedish enough' to be included in 'Swedishness'?" (p. 236).

They were born in Sweden and speak the language, but the sense of belonging varies. Many take their "Finnishness" for granted, and there is also a worry that it will gradually disappear. Others view Finnishness as a plus that adds spice to life. Being able to have one's Finnishness inside one is a good description of how the individual can feel, and this can suffice for many second-generation immigrants. Those who have Swedish partners find it difficult to retain their language in everyday life. Ågren nicely brings out the significance of language for the individual and the sense of "who am I?" Yet, as she shows, the "home language" one speaks as an immigrant does not develop in the same way as in the homeland. The informants in her study have discovered that their (and their parents') Finnish is archaic compared with the Finnish spoken in Finland today. They nevertheless take pleasure in being able to speak their own language. Ågren also shows that these young people have something else in life which gives them a position of their own in Sweden. It is no longer a matter of finding one's way back, but rather "becoming aware of the personal and collective components one has to play with" (p. 181).

One of the informants says: "I am different because I am what I am, not because I come from Finland." When Ågren asks, "Are you Finnish or ...?" (which is the title of the book) the answer is, "Second-generation Finns are both Swedish and Finnish. Both elements are important for understanding who one is."

Ågren's dissertation is written in a fluent, captivating language. As a result, anyone interested in questions of immigration and identity will enjoy the book and also derive great benefit from the many good pointers to current literature on the topic.

*Rauni Janser, Ystad*

# Book Reviews

## Festivity as a Mirror of the Times

*"Slipp tradisjonene fri – de er våre!" Fest og fellesskap i endring.* Bente Gullveig Alver & Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred (eds.). Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, Uppsala 2005. 180 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-85352-61-6.

■ Festivity is a time and place which reveals who we are in relation to others. It formulates people's identity and individuality, but does so in relation to the community that festivity constitutes. Each age creates its own celebrations, and changes in festive patterns tell something about the age we live in. Festivities can be described as a mirror of the times, an example of which is the way that new family constellations create new festive traditions. But they are not just festive; they can reflect not only harmony and solidarity but also conflict. By studying festivity we also study everyday culture, according to the two editors of this volume. People alternate between different social arenas and different networks, family, friends, colleagues, and classmates, which are built up, made visible, and confirmed in the festivity. In older times, feasts were arranged to a predictable pattern, whereas parties today are more likely to combine predictability and surprises. It is obvious in several ways that alcohol is an important festive constituent, used to get people in the right mood and to mark something that differs from everyday life. It takes both time and cultural competence to arrange a celebration, which in turn has generated a special professionalized market, where event arrangers sell cultural entertainment, catering, and social status.

This book is the result of collaboration between Norwegian, Danish, and Icelandic scholars within the Nordic Network for Folklore (NNF). An article from Sweden has been added to the collection. An introduction deals with the theoretical framework of festivity. Here, with ample references, Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred provides the reader with knowledge of how festive customs have changed during modernity. She cites both what well-known folklorists have written about how rituals take on their form, how scholars like Huizinga argue that we are a playing species, what theorists of modernity like Zygmunt Bauman have said about modernity as such, and what sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu and Gerhard Schulze have written respectively about taste and experience.

Each chapter in the volume then considers a different festive context. Naturally, it has not been possible for the editors to include every kind of festivity. The focus is on major festivals of the life cycle and Christmas. In ten articles, folklorists, ethnologists, and historians describe birthday celebrations, young people's festive traditions, wedding rituals and Christmas customs, and festivals as a market commodity.

The article that has given the book its title – "Let traditions loose, it's a party!" – is Birgitte Rørbye's study of how traditions are changed by being liberated. She describes how a group of young Danes get to know each other and create a new community in the form of a theme party at a folk high school in autumn 1997. A new world of identity negotiations takes shape in the guise of an old tradition. It starts with a scene where 80 youngsters dressed in black gather round a coffin. Candles and traditional floral decorations enhance the atmosphere of the event, until the coffin is opened and turns out to be filled with beer. An event begins, but what kind of event? It's a theme party, by which the young people mean a party where people are dressed as heroes, comic-strip figures, celebrities, or vampires. In the case of the funeral it was the global event of Princess Diana's funeral that was reflected. The theme party took place a week or so after the burial of the princess in September 1997. In the world of the theme party a mournful funeral becomes a merry party, without forgetting the sad content of a traditional funeral. When we today act as tradition bearers, we do so as users and negotiators of traditions, according to Rørbye. The yardstick that existed in the collectivity of traditional society no longer exists, she observes, but she adds that it never really did and that traditions have always been adapted to the world in which they take place. Traditions have also been used as a means to include people in communities or to exclude them. In the case of the funeral party, the aim was to give a group of young people from a great many different backgrounds a sense of community in the new college environment. Joking and role play give an opportunity to throw off quotidian obligations. The festive occasion creates a shared event worth remembering and retelling. Rørbye sums up her study by noting that tradition is developed and challenged among tradition-bearing tradition breakers, in a world where festivals of the life cycle such as weddings and funerals can be staged as experiences that create community by

alternating between a pre-modern and a late-modern world, between traditional and modern.

Starting with the Swedish film *Masjävlar*, Nils-Arvid Bringéus shows the ability of celebrations to reveal and clarify social relations in all their triviality and complexity. He analyses the births, marriages, and deaths pages of newspapers and what the notices there say about people's attitudes to round-number birthdays. The tradition of celebrating these birthdays came to Sweden from Germany in the twentieth century. Originally they were reserved for men in the upper classes. We are told, for example, that a man in the 1940s who wished to maintain his honour was expected to receive a leather briefcase and a wood-cased barometer for his 50th birthday. A change can be discerned towards the end of the century, when the celebration of round-number birthdays decreased. A study of notices in the papers shows that some people announced an open house, when callers were welcome to come and congratulate them, while others requested no callers because they would be away.

Bente Gullveig Alver analyses how the celebration of registered partnership highlights central features in late-modern festive culture through the way in which they stage identity negotiations, hierarchies of values, and contexts of meaning. Many of the ritual elements in these festivities come from traditional wedding celebrations. A new festivity takes its form from an old tradition, and can therefore also say something about processes of change in celebrations.

Else Marie Kofoed gives a historical account of how wedding celebrations in Denmark have changed in pace with social change. She describes how the rituals reflect changes in the view of marriage and sexuality.

To sum up, this collection of articles is a welcome addition to the folkloristic study of ritual and to ethnological research on how people use and change traditions. It is the editors' ambition that the volume will be used in teaching, and I can certainly recommend it for this purpose.

*Birgitta Svensson, Stockholm*

## Contributions to the Study of Revivals

*Revival and Communication. Studies in the History of Scandinavian Revivals 1700–2000.* Arne Bugge Amundsen (ed.). Bibliotheca historico-ecclesiastica Lundensis 49. Lunds Universitets Kyrkohistoria Arkiv, Lund 2007. 172 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-89515-14-5.

■ At the start of my research career more than 30 years ago, church history was my main subject and revival movements and the history of missions were a particular interest of mine. I took part in several conferences where the traditional Nordic revival movements were discussed and debated. At that time a great deal of research remained to be done on how our Nordic countries have dealt with popular religious revivals from the eighteenth century to the present day. It is interesting now to read this book, where I see that the study of revivals has advanced and that there is a network called NORDVECK monitoring the field of study and keeping it alive. The book contains papers presented at a conference in Isegran, Norway, in August 2003.

What I observe from reading the book is that the concept of revival has been broadened considerably. Apart from articles about traditional revival movements there are also some dealing with the image of Christian rock music, the media sensation about the *Ecce Homo* exhibition and the statements by the Uppsala archbishop on the subject, and a discussion of the look of gravestones in western Sweden and eastern Norway.

The book begins with a long section where the editor Arne Bugge Amundsen makes a laudable attempt to bring the somewhat disparate articles together by speaking of the relationship between revival and communication. It is true that every revival – and other revivals for that matter – is dependent on some form of communication. It has been said that the spread of Protestantism was entirely dependent on the art of printing, and well into the twentieth century revivals were in large measure carried by newspapers, books, and pamphlets. This is well elucidated by Arne Bugge Amundsen's own paper about the revival around Hans Nielsen Hauge at the start of the nineteenth century in Norway and by Cecilia Wejryd in her article about the movement around Erik Jansson in Sweden in the 1840s. Slightly later, perhaps in the middle of the twentieth century, radio and television arrived as conveyors of revival messages, and in modern times it is the Internet that counts. This

whole history is partly illuminated in the book, but no cohesive research on the communication side of the revivals and other religious movements has been written yet, as far as I know. There is scope here for a major project.

Daniel Lindmark's article on northern revivals and "spiritual contagion" is a good example of how the authorities tried to explain phenomena such as ecstasy, enthusiasm, and the preaching illness in the "scientific" terminology of the day. While the church for many centuries mainly viewed such phenomena in spiritual terms, that is, regarding them as instilled by either God or the devil, in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment there was a change to trying to find "medical", one could perhaps say scientific explanations. Later the explanatory models became purely psychological, and today they are once again drifting back to more biological explanations. Some of these changes in scientific paradigm are described in a very interesting way in Lindmark's paper. Once again there is good potential here for a historical analysis of how people have tried to explain the actions of prophets/prophetesses and various somnambulists over the centuries.

Sölve Anderzén writes in his article about "mission schools" in Lappmarken. It was quite simply a question of how to do mission work and simultaneously raise the educational level of the people in the northern regions. This too describes interesting aspects of the channels of education in such contexts. Condemning the methods used then on the basis of present-day conditions is wrong in many ways.

Knut E. Larsen's paper is about the history of Danish research on revivals. He makes the general observation that revivals, especially the free-church movements, have been sparsely studied in Denmark. This is an important contribution to the history of research.

Music and spirituality is a theme that has appeared in recent years. Here Hans Andreasson describes two different ways in which free-church communities in Sweden have related to rock music, especially Christian rock music. The Pentecostalists have a more open and accepting attitude, while the Covenant Church of Sweden was more critical, wanting to judge the music according to religious and aesthetic criteria. What one can perhaps wonder about here is whether the response of the denominations is aimed at the music itself or at the religious identity within the communion. This could have been explored in more depth. The relationship of the churches and revivals to music is an important research field where a great deal still remains to be done. It would be good if a musicologist and a church historian combined their efforts in a large-scale project where these matters could be analysed and described. This also has a great deal to do with how ideals are communicated. And here the study should include not only the major Christian revivals but also New Age movements outside Christianity.

Katarina Lewis's article about "Ecce Homo" and the statements by the archbishop, and Anders Gustavsson's paper on the appearance of gravestones are interesting but extremely brief. Graves are a large and important research field where a great deal of work could still be done.

It is praiseworthy that these studies are now presented in English, although some of the texts could have done with more careful correction. The articles are rather disparate but nevertheless bring out important aspects of research on revivals. As I have shown, they give rise to questions that ought to be tackled by new and broader research projects. Interdisciplinary approaches are crucial for the success of such research.

*Nils G. Holm, Åbo*

## Nordic Scholars Studying Ritual as Field and Process

*Ritualer. Kulturhistoriske studier.* Arne Bugge Amundsen, Bjarne Hodne & Ane Ohrvik (eds.). Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 2006. 242 pp. Ill. ISBN-13: 978-82-15-00858-5. ISBN-10: 82-15-00858-5.

*Genre and Ritual. The Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals.* Eyolf Østrem, Mette Birkedal Bruun, Nils Holger Petersen & Jens Fleischer (eds.). Museum Tusculanum Press, Copenhagen 2005. 336 pp. Special issue of the journal *Transfiguration.* ISBN 87-635-0241-0.

■ The question of ritual may very well be one of the more intriguing research fields open to cultural history and cultural analysis, as is also evident from two new books with a Nordic emphasis. Since the first one is written mostly from the point of view of folkloristics and ethnology and the second one is more concerned with an "energy field" positioned somewhere between the sacred and the artistic, the focus in this review will be on the Norwegian book. That does not mean that the Danish one is of lesser significance as a

contribution to ritual studies, simply that the general orientation of *Ethnologia Scandinavica* in this case dictates my main interest in this review.

Ritual and ritualization obviously have something to do with at least the following aspects: firstly there must be a performance, actions, something must be happening in the real world, so to speak, in order for something to be called a ritual. The action must be understood by someone to involve ritualistic elements, i.e. elements connoting symbolical power, power to transcend or maintain some stasis, position, virtuality. The ritual action must be interpreted by someone (person or group) and the interpretation must be balanced by some other, larger group in order to obtain validity, and thereby power. Secondly ritual/ritualization must have a connection to memory, cultural memory of some kind. Ritual seems to be about some kind of (collective, communal) remembering or recollection, conscious or subconscious. The temporal aspect of ritual connects it, as Arne Bugge Amundsen clearly shows in his introduction, to questions of now, yesterday and tomorrow, that is, to some form of chronological construction.

The main theoretical move in Arne Bugge Amundsen's introduction to the Norwegian volume on the cultural historical studies of rituals is, following anthropologists Falk Moore and Barbara Myerhoff, and also ritual scholar Catherine Bell, an expansion of the ritual concept into domains of contemporary, mass-mediated society, such as sports and music. The other, theoretically even more important move in Amundsen's text is a break-up of a concept, ritual, which in his view has come to be seen as too static. As Amundsen states, much classic ritual theory has concentrated its efforts on identifying form, structure and function, i.e. religious actions which had a certain form and structure and which filled certain social and cultural functions could be understood as rituals. This move on Amundsen's part then involves opening up that static concept by defining ritual as a process and also as a field. It should be noted that the concept of field, which I use in this review and which is adopted in the two anthologies under discussion here is, as indicated by Steven Connor, related to a growing concern with fields as an analytical concept, rather than forms, fields thus extending from physics, across social theory, biology, literature and so on.

As Amundsen goes on to underline, intertextual elements introduced into ritual studies lead to a new conception of ritual/ritualization. The introduction of intertextual elements means that it is no longer simply texts but also actions which can cite each other and thus bind together different times and places. Following Bell, Amundsen then sees rituals as a field of praxis, i.e. a complex entity of action and symbol, working both synchronically and diachronically. While forms or structures could make a ritual analysis self-confirming – one sees rituals where one decides that they are to be seen – studies of ritualization in his view become more open to variation, complexity and change around collective religious actions.

Another central point Amundsen makes in his introduction concerns the empirical basis of ritual studies. The secular turn in ritual scholarship has opened new possibilities also for cultural historians to put forward new strategies for an understanding of the empirical. Amundsen speaks about the empirical fields under scrutiny in the book and notes that they resemble the classical fields of cultural-historical study: life festivals (birthday, courtship, marriage, death and burial) and annual festivals (Easter, Halloween, Holocaust Day). The new position here is the use of ritual/ritualization as an analytical tool (something which the old school of ritual studies failed to do, in his opinion). This approach means that new analytical dimensions are made possible concerning old source material and that old perspectives can be introduced in new empirical surroundings, he writes.

So far so good, but the question remaining to be answered is the tricky one of what will constitute the empirical grounding of these partly new and partly old ritual studies which Amundsen advocates here. To answer this question one can look e.g. into the new Danish book, which offers a couple of concepts which might be useful at this point, namely the concepts of foreground(ing) and background(ing). As Nils Holger Petersen notes in his introduction, drawing on Paul Ricœur and André LaCocque, the concept of foreground – as opposed to background or context – of a text or an event "may simply mean to look at that utterance as a 'reply', to put it into dialogue with the text or event which is then – by some reader or some interpretative community – taken (in that instance) as part of the 'background' of the one that is read as a response." So, if I understand the line of thought here correctly, there is a constant switch between foreground and background, as the background to one event or action becomes the foreground to another, and so on. Petersen goes on to emphasize that his conception implies no hierarchy between

foreground and background. They may switch places for all readers and for the same reader from one situation to another. He concludes this discussion on foregrounds and backgrounds by saying that what is of interest in the context of the Copenhagen Centre project is not primarily a definition of "ritual" *per se*, but a definition of ritual which makes it possible to discuss artworks taking part in the foreground of rituals and rituals as part of the foreground or background of artworks.

In another text Petersen, with the help of colleague Eyolf Østrem, gives an example of how the foreground/background concepts can be used in an analysis of a Dylan *hoot night* (a chat room of Bob Dylan aficionados doing their own versions of Dylan songs) on one hand and medieval representational church ceremonies on the other, with each one functioning as the foreground of the other. Although Petersen's text is rather short and tentative, I think it could serve as a blueprint for this kind of approach to the interpretation of traditions from different eras, something otherwise easily deemed anachronistic. Incidentally, Østrem is an expert on Bob Dylan and he manages an extensive Dylan site on the Internet. In the *Genre and Ritual* volume he offers a lengthy and quite well-informed analysis of the ritual of a Bob Dylan concert.

An important clue to the line of thinking here is offered in another key text in *Genre and Ritual*, Claus Clüver's meditation on genres, in which he refers to Clifford C. Flanigan's analysis from 1984 of the *Fleury Playbook*, a collection of medieval Latin music dramas. The novelty of Flanigan's approach was, according to Clüver, the shift of focus from the text itself to context and to an examination of the function of the anthology in question. The emphasis was on one hand on the reader of the anthology as a constructor of a new genre, and on the other on performance aspects, the texts functioning as multi-dramas, multimedia texts, as Clüver calls them.

A further clarification as to the way in which these two volumes on ritual look at the nature of their enterprise might be useful. Where Amundsen stresses the empirical grounding of the Norwegian book on rituals (which incidentally, and quite paradoxically, is never contextualized as to its own grounding, why it was undertaken in the first place!) Petersen underlines the Copenhagen volume's character as a study of narratives. By combining the two concepts of genre and ritual the Copenhagen Centre, according to Petersen, wants to explore and discuss the construction of basic historical narratives in the line of thought put forward by Hayden White in his use of the concept of meta-history. Emphasis is put on the idea that no single "super-narrative" can be arrived at. This approach does not preclude other constructions, Petersen writes, but rather tries to form a polyphonic web of narratives, the end result of which should then be called cultural history, tying together elements of Medieval Latin religious devotional culture with later and even contemporary cultural performative practices.

Moving now to the individual texts in *Ritualer*, Bjarne Hodne is concerned in his essay with the question of Norwegian peasant weddings seen as popular rituals. Hodne shows with the help of some quantitative data taken from three different parts of Norway how a conception held by leading Norwegian folklorists of yesteryear, namely that the life ritual of (peasant) weddings in this case coincides with a seasonal ritual, resulting in these big weddings being held at a certain time in summer suitable in the farmers' calendar, is actually a false conception. The data given by Hodne taken from various folkloristic archives indicate that the tradition and ritual of peasant wedding was quite dispersed through the whole year. So the idea of peasant weddings held dear by folklorists in older times does not accord with facts but functions as a myth central to the nationalizing process of Norway, in which scholars of folklore were transformed into social engineers. What happens is a confluence of so-called scholarly findings and studies of tradition, cultural continuity and ethnic specificity forming an important cornerstone in the construction of Norwegian national culture. Popular tradition, scholarship and nation building became interlocked through the meta-theory of romantic nationalism with its roots in views central to the Romantic Movement about the identity of the nation. In this kind of identity build-up the class of peasants played a decisive role.

As Hodne makes clear, elements in these wedding rituals becomes ideologized, not by the actors themselves but by the scholars subsequently establishing this kind of connection. The conclusion drawn by Hodne is that the scientific character of this kind of science is undermined. Only by self-reflexive scholarship based on accurate source material can mythologizing tendencies of this kind be avoided.

In Amundsen's text about the Danish ritual debate/

strife in the years of the Reformation movement in Northern Europe around 1530 a fascinating glimpse of different ways of looking at questions of tradition, cultural revolutions, the value of views and practices held central to the Christian, in this case the Catholic church, is put under extreme pressure by the cultural revolution put forward by church reformers like Martin Luther. Amundsen's case concerns the question of ritual praxis of a particular Danish city, Malmö (today in Sweden), and the discussion or quarrel between two Danish monks (both originally members of the Carmelite order), one (Poul Helgesen) siding with the Catholic tradition and the other (Peder Laurensen) moving along with the Reformation side. Helgesen was, Amundsen notes, in his time known by the nick name "Vändkappan" (turncoat), because of his temporally divergent conceptions of Lutheranism. In the early phase of the Reformation he was interested in the Lutheran texts and even held lectures on them, but became later a staunch defender of the Catholic Church. Interestingly enough, it is this person and the idea of continuity, tradition that are central in this text, more than the thought of a break with the past, cultural zero-making, to use a concept introduced by Gösta Arvastson in quite another cultural and temporal surrounding, late modernity and post-modernity. The revolutionary ideal of Laurensen is more of a necessary corollary and counterpoint to Amundsen's account of the views held dear by the traditionalist Helgesen. The central question in Amundsen's article is about the conception of time, of differentiating between yesterday, now and tomorrow in the debate about ritual (the value of the Catholic Mass). Amundsen's conclusion about the two different views on the value of old ceremonies and traditions is that both Helgesen and Pedersen tried to understand what made a certain type of actions important. Both discuss the relationship between variation and stability, between continuity and change, between freedom and obligation. In Amundsen's view the voice of the future in Malmö, Peder Laurensen, is the voice of a relativist in the field of rituals, whilst Poul Helgesen with his negative view of the Reformation as a form of barbarism, is the voice of yesterday.

In Ørnulf Hodne's text about the rituals of Easter in Norway from the Middle Ages to the present day, the conception of the problem of change and continuity is read as a dichotomy between ecclesiastical and folk religious rituals. What Hodne convincingly shows is that central aspects of this duality of Easter ritualization involves continuity, both church practices and popular religiosity, and (generally in a late-modern discussion about "the vanishing" importance of Easter ceremonies) a failure to note the depth of these traditions viewed as a whole. Hodne concludes his investigation of these rituals by making it clear that there are ideological aspects involved in the negligence of "the other side" of the Easter tradition field. The result is – on paper – that neither the historians of the churches' history nor the folklorists and cultural scholars concentrating on popular rituals are able to see the continuity and breadth of Easter celebration in Norway. Instead the view has been an illusion of Easter as a ritual on the wane, when actually this Christian *rite de passage* has a broad, popular base with varying forms of expression both inside and outside the church, but, Hodne concludes, with the biblical Easter message as a stable and tradition-preserving foundation.

Kari Telste's case study tells of a wedding held in the city of Bergen in the 1870s in a fascinating tale of fraud, cultural obligation, gender and the power of ceremonies. This is a case of a marriage swindler claiming to be of Swedish origin and with a wealthy background in the Swedish countryside who takes advantage of a young Norwegian girl in rural Sunnhordaland in Western Norway. The swindle became a court case in the Norwegian High Court in 1877. It concerned a man who had swindled not just this girl but several young women in Western Norway. What Telste does in her exemplary study is that she works her way through the individual case as a kind of micro-history à la Carlo Ginzburg, Natalie Zemon Davis and others, with close reading of the documents in the case, and at the same time contextualizing what could be described as the social structure of a mainly rural Norway in the early years of industrialization and urbanization, which in this case is shown to have important repercussions for the use of traditional rituals such as the ceremonies of betrothal, promise of marriage and wedding between man and woman. What Telste shows is an intricate web of dependence, which is sewn around the swindled young woman, who by bending to the wooer's will, is an easy target for the swindler. For the wedding ceremony to be held she travels with him to the city of Bergen where a false wedding is held, without the probing eyes of her own neighbourhood observing the proceedings. The bride or swindled bride is actually caught between two divergent worlds, the traditional world of the Norwegian countryside with peasant

weddings in which "everybody knows one another" and the new, more anonymous – and possibly romantic – conception of marriage spreading in Norway. It is precisely by playing out these two modes of behaviour, honour, conduct, obligations, which Telste shows is both a matter of words and of bodily action, that the impostor is able to operate.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of the study is the construction of a web of influences without many words being said. The emphasis here is on bodily movement, positioning, gestures, but also power, the magic of the promise of marriage which in this cultural and historical situation worked in favour of the male. There was indeed a transaction performed in which the word of the male proponent was exchanged for the body of the female. Ideally in this kind of society the exchange of promises of marriage was an action with binding power woven into a social network of family, household, kin and neighbours. But what happens in Norway in the 1870s in this form of engagement, as the case shows, is a question of a cultural sea change, of privatization and individualization. The net effect is precisely the fading power of the ritual actions concerning the process of marriage in a traditional society.

In Bjarne Rogan's text "Traveller Chic", subtitled "A cultural-historical view of tourism, ritual and expressivity", an interesting package of cultural analysis is offered in which three (or four, the fourth being a critical evaluation of the late-modern backpacker phenomenon by Rogan's colleague Thomas Hylland Eriksen) quite different outlooks on the historical travel/tourism continuum are described and evaluated. It should be noted that Rogan's analysis, fine as it is, just like Amundsen's paper on the church reformation in Malmö in the 1530s, is not actually a paper on ritual *per se*, but a cultural-historical analysis of phenomena which have marked ritualistic overtones. What Rogan is able to show is, by way of contrast, how the symbolic relevance of travel has been historically transformed in various ways. An especially interesting notion is the cultural critique which can be said to flow both to and fro various ways of travelling, some forms of which Rogan deals with here. The travel narrative of French encyclopaedist and philosopher Denis Diderot to Holland in the 1770s is in itself an intense critique of a kind of travel which precedes it, in which astonishment, surprise and a sense of the exotic play an important role. Instead the journey to Holland is for Diderot an exercise in control, overview (with an eerie resemblance to Foucault's famous Panopticon). Diderot's movement is always from the top down, from the highest point in the region out to its fringes, from centre to periphery, with a decidedly visual emphasis to the undertakings, and with careful studies conducted in advance at home, so that the possibilities for learning about the new country or landscape are maximized. Knowledge and a totalizing overview are then the guiding lights of this kind of travelling exercise and ritual.

Rogan then contrasts this viewpoint with a romantic one, exemplified by another French traveller, or perhaps an early tourist, Armand de Tréverret, who is a pioneer in what could be called an early form of mass tourism, travelling by train, ship and occasionally horse and carriage through Scandinavia with a small group of fellow travellers in the autumn of 1892. The romantic traveller of Tréverret's type, just like Diderot, is interested in the visual aspects of travel, but from an altogether different angle, experiencing the sublime nature and largely ignoring the culture of the areas traversed through. For this romantic traveller the voyage is a *rite de passage* of sorts with a cathartic effect on him in the confrontation with nature.

The third mode of travel that Rogan deals with is today's rage among Western youth, backpacking. Curiously enough, Rogan leads the reader through this context by way of two critical, if contrasting (one from the inside and the other from the outside), descriptions of this kind of travel, which he describes as the search for a personal experience. The two sources for his evaluation of backpacking are the writer Alex Garland and his novel *The Beach* (1997), and the anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen with his highly critical view of backpacking. I find it slightly embarrassing that Rogan offers a cultural critique of this kind of travel via another scholar, Eriksen, who describes this new form of mass movement as directly abrasive to him. Rogan, citing Eriksen, is especially critical of something which could be called the Lonely Planet or Rough Guide syndrome, that is, travel guides for mainly (but not only, I would add) backpackers, with detailed information of the most intimate kind, from some of the most exotic and faraway places on earth. In my view Rogan's analysis is in danger of politicizing this travel mode to the extent that the narrative becomes almost parodic: "One is informed about the latest price changes and gets to know details about a particular café, restaurant and the host him/herself, here you can find information about dishes to avoid

and which toilets are the worst"). The comical aspect of the modern anti-tourism has something to do with how someone who is looking for authenticity and individualism ends up as part of a mass movement. All right, the point is made clearly, but where Rogan's analysis falters a bit is in his failure to contextualize the youth culture of e.g. coolness (being both individualistic and collective) or in a larger frame of reference, the whole cultural situation of globalization/various globalizing scapes which we today have to deal with whether we are romantic travellers, scholars or just ordinary citizens trying to come to grips with a reality with is largely mass-mediated, prefabricated and semiotically overcrowded.

The next essay in this quite diverse collection is Ane Ohrvik's study of a new ritual in Norway, but also in many other Western European countries, the celebration of Halloween. The paper is more specifically an ethnographic investigation of the cultural entrepreneuring of an American stationed in Norway, and his development into an expert ("broker") in all things Halloween, or "Hallowiin!" as Ohrvik calls it in the title of her text. The keywords here seem to be questions of cultural competence, how to obtain it, use it, let it become a part of one's habitus and "brand". Being an American in Norway, Paul Walker, the central character of the text, as a worker in a temporarily slumping Norwegian oil business, sees a new field of interest and possible business opening up in the "void" created by what could be described as a field of expectance of something wild and spectacular following "the cultural imperialism" of American popular culture generally and celebrations/artefacts dealing with Halloween especially. It is in this specific cultural and historical situation Walker establishes his own position as the leading authority in Norway on all things Halloween, which Ohrvik describes mainly chronologically. The text is an interesting read, but perhaps questions about e.g. the speed and force with which the new tradition established itself in Norway could have been addressed even more distinctly by making comparisons on the spread and depth of Halloween celebrations in other European countries. An almost inevitable backlash in the form of critique from conservative forces in Norway on the disrupting and even "evil" character of Halloween is seen through the lens of Walker's verbal and factual (he increased the variety of costumes and props in his boutique in Oslo in order to counter the critique) "defence" of (his conception) of the festival. Again, some examples from other countries such as the other Nordic ones would have been helpful here.

Next up is Erika Ravne Scott with a cultural-analytical text on the ritual of birthday parties among children, which she deftly dissects by showing how the cultural competence inherited in the Norwegian cultural commons, so to speak, can be seen in a new light by looking at this ritual from the point of view of those new or foreign to the tradition. By studying how immigrants from e.g. Muslim countries handle a custom unknown in their countries of origin she shows a couple of interesting things. One of the main questions from the new Norwegians' point of view is a constant negotiation between the need to adapt to the new society and the need to stay relatively close to their own traditions and views held important in those cultures. This means an adaptation and acceptance of various ingredients in the ritual, but not necessary imitating the ritual as a whole. On the other hand, she can show, by contrasting the new and the old Norwegians' traditions in this respect, how this kind of cultural behaviour, what she calls ritual competence, works mainly through "hidden" social conventions. The children are being constantly socialized into a cultural praxis which can be related both to the family's own tradition and to birthday parties as a cultural phenomenon. The dramaturgical nature of this kind of enterprise is also stressed, with key terms such as ludic, praxis, direction, social happening, order and chaos being adopted here.

In the next essay the same type of ritual or rite analytical mode as in the previous text is used, but the subject matter of the study is quite different from Ravne Scott's. Kyrre Kverndokk offers an analytical reading of the Swedish Memorial Day for the victims of Holocaust. Just as with Halloween in Norway this is a new ritual, which has established itself in the last few years, and not only in Sweden but in several other countries (including my home country, Finland). But the interesting thing is that Sweden, with very little personal experience of Holocaust and even of the war itself, is here making an international impact through what could be described as a vanguard position in a global effort against racism and fascism. The father of the whole idea of a Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January) is former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson. What is especially fascinating in Kverndokk's ethnographically oriented analysis is that he convincingly shows the reader how the Holocaust remembrance ritual operates in another register and

temporal domain than the one associated with politics and with the day-to-day running of things. What is at stake here, according to Kverndokk, is a view of the Holocaust as a mythical phenomenon, which of course has nothing to do with the debate on Holocaust denial. Instead the rituals and ceremonies held on this day all over Sweden, at national and regional, even local level, are rituals which also point towards the future, or perhaps rather to an altogether different conception of temporality, a mythical, achronic temporality, and function as spearheads against intolerance, xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, and as torch bearers for democracy, humanity and tolerance. Interestingly enough, Kverndokk is also able to show how the regional and local ceremonies especially – at least when one looks at the newspaper coverage of these ceremonies – are much more a part of that level of publicity than those offered by the national newspapers on the national ceremony.

The final text in the volume deals, in a sympathetic, low-key way, with a phenomenon which also has wide cultural significance, although it operates mostly in an unofficial and rather unstructured way, but not wholly without structure, namely what could be called ritual markers at sudden death in our time. The writer, Anders Gustavsson, shows how there are at least two distinct forms of memorials in our days. The older of these traditions is the one centred on disasters at sea, concerning fishing communities in e.g. the Swedish coastal regions. Those kinds of remembrances and ritualizations, often involving the raising of a monument to the victims of the sea, seem to engage the whole communities in these coastal areas and are totally intergenerational.

On the other hand memorials of instant death on the roads and highways, often involving young victims are, as Gustavsson shows, more informal and ad hoc by nature. There is also, he notes, a sense of unease between those mourning a friend and the intruding camera lenses of newspaper photographers and other people interested in the events taking place. Gustavsson gives a heartfelt and sincere description of these two types of modern-day communal grieving. What might be seen as a slight disadvantage in the text is, I think, a lack of analytical tools with which to deal with these important, but difficult questions. Gustavsson refers several times to the use of flowers, candles and other props at the site of the accidents as instances of a general religiosity and profane meanings, also for new religious practices (especially in this conjunction with the application of angel symbols on the sites). Labelling that kind of angel symbolism neo-religious is a way of describing these rituals and the meanings they convey which of course is quite legitimate, but they could, I think, have been dealt with also by applying other types of analytical tools, e.g. concepts or metaphors such as fluidity, expressivity or informal religiosity in order to gain a more fine-grained understanding of what kind of symbolic manoeuvres take place here.

*Sven-Erik Klinkmann, Vasa*

## Placing Out Children in Norway

*Astri Andresen,* Hender små. Bortsetting av barn i Norge 1900–1950. Fagbokforlaget, Bergen 2006. 250 pp. Ill. ISBN 82-450-0449-9.

■ There are issues that every age must take a stance on. One concerns how to bring up children who are orphans or whose parents for one reason or another cannot take care of their children or are not considered capable of doing so. Should the children live with relatives, be placed with unknown foster-parents or in an institution? More questions are raised: Who should pay? Are public measures necessary to correct structural defects? What counts as individual problems?

Foster-homes have had their advocates, institutions have had theirs, and even though foster-homes in general have been viewed as being best for children, there have also been periods with a strong faith in institutions. But the discussion has also concerned which children are suitable for one or the other form of care. In general, however, foster-homes and institutions have mostly complemented each other and children have moved from one to the other, not just between these placements and their biological parents.

There is now a fascinating and well-written book about the placement of children in Norway. The title means "Small Hands: Placement of Children in Norway 1900–1950" and the author is Astri Andresen, who has done research on this topic for many years. Here we can follow children in foster-homes, institutions, and adoptive families in discussion and practice during the first half of the 20th century, what the choice of placement and solutions can say about the view of children's worth, about childhood and family, and who had the power to decide over childhood. The study is nationwide in scope but takes

conditions in Bergen as a concrete example. Much of the "placing out policy" was shaped at local level, but the solutions chosen for children with Bergen connections were still a part of the policy and the discussion carried on at the national level. Norwegian child circulation was likewise part of a debate and decisions on similar issues in many other Western European countries at this time.

The study is based on a large amount of source material from both public authorities and private institutions. Institutional documents play a central part in the study. Andresen shows how important it is to look at the implementation of laws and decisions, and a close reading of documents can reveal things not previously noticed. Even small details may have been significant for children's everyday life.

Andresen also mentions that the discarding of material from public archives and the lack of material from institutions sometimes makes this kind of study problematic. This applies particularly to private children's homes which were not obliged to save their documents.

This books starts around 1900, when the early welfare state began to emerge, and the first Nordic legislation on child welfare was introduced. The conditions in which children grew up, not just their schooling, became a public concern although compulsory public schooling also contributed to this change by making children visible. In Norway this new legislation included the 1896 Act on the Treatment of Neglected Children, laws about foster-children, and Castberg's children's laws from 1915, which were very radical by European standards, and also compared with Sweden, as regards children born out of wedlock. These children were entitled to be maintained by the father, to inherit from him, and to bear his name. The first Norwegian Adoption Act was passed in 1917, the same year as the first in Sweden.

Even before this, children had been taken into care by the authorities and placed in foster-homes and institutions, but new legislation and new regulations established a system in which the public authorities played a much greater role in these matters than before. Andersen describes it as "a new system of placing out". The book is about the children who were placed by the authorities involved: the poor relief board, the health authorities, and the children's welfare board. The authorities were governed by different regulations, which also affected how problems were perceived and which solutions were chosen. The children's welfare board focused on order, morality, and observance of the law, while the health council stressed cleanliness and hygiene. For the poor relief board economic considerations were most important. The study nuances our picture of how the care of children was assessed and organized, showing that differences can also be linked to the authority that was responsible. Alongside these public placements there were also private solutions which had by no means lost in significance. The time when municipal welfare had its breakthrough was also a period when philanthropy was very active. Gradually, however, public authorities assumed greater responsibility and also assumed a larger share of the expenses for social child welfare, partly through financial support for private institutions and by taking over the economic responsibility for former private placements.

Different solutions existed at the same time, and where children were placed in practice – in foster-homes, children's homes, or otherwise – did not always correspond to the prevailing ideology. Practice was steered by other factors, and in the field of child welfare there were both private and municipal/state actors of great significance. Andresen can nevertheless show that there is a time aspect in the placements and that the public solutions were influenced by the prevailing ideal of childhood. Foster-homes, which have a long historical tradition, were used throughout the period. But the criticism of foster-homes at the start of the 20th century led to a growing interest in children's homes, which became more popular between the wars. Children's homes would replace both bad foster-homes and bad biological homes. The poor relief board in particular placed many children in institutions, and the number in foster-homes in Bergen fell. But the data on where children were placed indicate that there were other changes in the view of where children ought to be. Fostered children were increasingly placed with relatives, above all grandmothers, which suggests a changed attitude to the child's own family and where it belonged. One factor that may have been significant was that the city needed manpower, according to Andresen. The children's welfare board, which was also a municipal authority that placed children, was more doubtful about institutional placement. The children's homes were often in or near Bergen, and the board preferred children to be placed as far away from their parents as possible.

After the Second World War children's homes were no longer perceived as a suitable environment

for children. Andresen argues that the change came not just because the institutions did not meet the expectations, but also that a new view of how and where children should grew up started to dominate. Around 1900 the focus had been on children's survival; in the inter-war years it was on the content of childhood. The new ideal of childhood stressed the importance of the private home: a child needed a home and a mother. Public investments in family allowance and other forms of social insurance simultaneously increased the potential of poor families to take care of their children. What was perceived by the authorities as a bad home could also get help to become better without the children having to be removed. It could also be mentioned that the expansion of public child care made it possible for single parents to work and still live with their children. In Sweden around 1940 the mother's work was still the most common reason for the institutional placement of children whose mothers were not married.

But around 1950 the home could also be a foster-home or an adoptive home. Adoptions had been possible since 1917, although the law had been modified. The real upswing for adoptions, however, did not come until after the Second World War, as part of the changed ideal of childhood, according to Andresen. There were public measures to facilitate adoptions. The author describes adoptions as a solution to many problems: the problems of single mothers with child care and married women's problems in fulfilling the maternal role expected of them. Adoption also solved a moral problem: it was not considered good for a child to grow up with an unmarried mother. Andresen draws attention to another aspect that may have led more parents to hand over their children for adoption, namely, the increased demands on parenthood. She thinks that many poor women may have found it impossible to arrange a life for their children according to the prevailing idea of a good childhood, even though the conditions for looking after children gradually became better. This is an interesting question which can hopefully be developed elsewhere.

Both age and gender influenced which children were taken into care, and especially where and how they were placed. Boys seem to have been in least demand and most exposed. When foster-home activity was criticized in the post-war years for lack of control, girls were placed in foster-homes in Bergen, where the poor relief board had better supervision over them. Boys, on the other hand, were sent to foster-homes in the countryside, where there was less control.

Andresen also shows that private children's homes were significant for the children placed by the public authorities. There were, for example, several private homes for girls. The municipalities had to arrange institutions for children that the philanthropists did not want to take care of.

Sometimes children were moved against the parents' will; in other cases the parents themselves looked for help. The choice of which children to put in placement and in what form was connected both to public and private resources and to social structures and cultural norms. Coercion and voluntariness could be found in all parts of the placement process.

Attitudes were also significant for how the regulations were utilized. It was not just a matter of financial resources but also of the outlook on children and childhood. There were opportunities for control, children could be moved, and the way in which individual persons acted could be very significant. Inspections of foster-homes, for example, could change both the view of childhood and the life that children lived. But Andresen also shows that the economic framework influenced how often foster-homes were visited and that shortage of staff was one of the problems of the children's homes.

It is clear from the chapters dealing with foster-children that there were a variety of reasons for taking in foster-children, as previous research has also shown. The text does not give any unambiguous answers as to whether children were integrated in the foster-family or not. There are examples here of foster-children who were exploited for hard work, but also of warm relations between foster-children and foster-parents which, according to Andresen, sometimes aroused surprise among the authorities. The American sociologist Viviana Zelizer, in her book *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (1985), which is one of Andresen's sources of inspiration, claims that in the USA there was a change in the view of children during the 1920s, which meant that it was no longer legitimate to state that children could be economically valuable for a family; on the other hand, they were ascribed a powerful emotional value. The Norwegian evidence does not reflect the same change: here it was felt to be self-evident that children worked, and there was no explicit opposition between being useful and being loved.

One aspect which otherwise rarely receives any attention, but which Andresen mentions, is how the

children were accepted by the local community. Foster-children came not only to a family but also to a school, a district, or a community. There were neighbours, teachers, and other children who encountered the new children. Teachers in general do not seem to have taken any action when it came to abuses that were discovered later. Urban children who came to foster-homes in Bergen seem to have been better integrated than those who were placed in rural settings. The latter ran the risk of being rejected and perhaps did not feel at home. In the material from the 1940s, however, there are signs of exclusion in the city too. This now concerned children whose fathers were German. Andresen also points out that people who showed Nazi sympathies during the war could not be considered as foster-parents after the war. Social child welfare also had a national duty.

Growing up in an institution often seems to have been a negative experience. Andresen uses a recent study of the work of the Bergen children's home after the Second World War, which discovered terrible conditions with sexual and physical abuse. This commission material applies to a time that is actually outside the period Andresen is writing about, but her study also includes source material from the first half of the 20th century. The institutions built on two traditions, a disciplining tradition and a tradition of care; the former was strong, according to Andresen. But she also points out that there were differences between institutions.

An interesting question that Andresen poses in this context is whether the work of post-war children's homes was based on a tradition that can be traced back to the early 20th century and whether it agreed more with the contemporary view of childhood than would be the case after the Second World War, when the view of children and childhood in the children's homes retained an older attitude while major changes were taking place outside the institutional world. Perhaps one could also ponder on whether it was not just a matter of structures surviving but also a reinforcement of negative features as a way to protect against change.

When it comes to the criticism levelled at foster-homes, the main issue was the lack of supervision and control, and children's homes were held up as an alternative. But the children's homes were hardly ever inspected. The institution itself may have been perceived as sufficient by the authorities. It was assumed that control would be exerted by the board, who were also often the founders. From my own research on girls' homes in Stockholm 1870–1920, I know that many of the employees had some form of training. It is not clear from Andresen's study whether this was also the case in Bergen, but a factor like this could of course have meant that inspection was not considered necessary. The children were thought to be in good hands. The same probably applied to the duties of the board members. People who sat on this type of boards often belonged to the middle class and had a certain position in society, which may have been sufficient for the authorities. One group, however, regularly came to the institutions without really belonging there, namely, doctors. But no doctors seem to have blown the whistle on problems or declared that the children were treated badly, although there were both children and relatives at the time who complained about conditions. Doctors are a group who often had access to institutions that were closed to others; their role in the practice of social child welfare is a field where more research is needed.

Disciplining, not least through a schedule, is one of the features of the institutional upbringing that Andresen stresses. She claims that there was no great difference between reformatory schools and ordinary children's homes, but the two examples presented in the book nevertheless differ in several respects from each other. Perhaps there is also reason to problematize the institutions' schedules. Perhaps the possibility of departing from the schedule is one of the factors that distinguishes growing up in a family from life in an institution. Another factor that Andresen mentions but does not develop, perhaps because of her source material, is the collective: always belonging to a group.

A comparison with Swedish material that I myself have studied shows that there are many similarities between Norwegian and Swedish children's homes: for example, the timetabled, often secluded life, the negative view of the children's parents, and the fact that the institutions were in large measure dependent on the children's labour. The management of the institution and the children's education were two sides of the same coin. But it is also clear that children's homes could differ in various respects. In Bergen the female philanthropists would not accept girls born out of wedlock. At the girls' homes in Stockholm at the same time there were no such restrictions. Just as in Norway, in Sweden it seems to have been the boys who suffered most from physical punishment.

The authorities had great power over the childhood of those in their care. Andresen has only exceptional examples showing that children could decide upon something in their own lives: there are occasional notes of children who chose to stay on in foster-homes even though the parents wanted them home, and children who ran away, thus demonstrating what they wanted. There was also opposition from adults about having to consider children: it would send the wrong signals to them. But the parents could not decide very much either. Some parents who had handed over their children had reckoned on being able to look after them later, but this could not be taken for granted. There was a difference between the municipal authorities. The poor relief board was more inclined to give the children back to the parents than the children's welfare board was. This, however, may also have been connected to the costs.

When should public authorities intervene in families and in what way? These are among the eternal questions to which there are no simple answers. It is remarkable that many children who were badly treated in their homes also suffered bad treatment in the foster-homes and institutions where they were placed by the authorities. It was the removal of the children from their parents that was considered the most important factor, while the inadequate control reflects the outlook on poor children and their worth. Andresen says that the public authorities did not assume power but let others exert it, private institutions and individuals.

This is a book that grips the reader. The evidence presented and the author's many reflections make it stick in the mind as one continues to ponder on these issues. The book is about a time several decades ago, and there have been major changes. Some of the structural defects which led to children being placed outside their own homes no longer exist today. But our time also has its structural defects and individual problems that authorities, children, and parents must handle. The questions are still the same: What is a good childhood? How, where, and with whom should children grow up? How should responsibility be divided between parents and society? The answers have changed to some extent; whether this is also true of the power is perhaps a more open question, as is the control of how children placed in institutions and foster-homes perceive their situation. Research shows that there are still serious defects.

*Ingrid Söderlind, Stockholm*

## Limits of Cultural Heritage

*Kulturarvens gränser. Komparativa perspektiv.* Peter Aronsson, Bjarne Hodne, Birgitta Skarin Frykman & John Odemark (eds.). Arkipelag, Göteborg 2005. 227 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-85838-69-1.

■ Cultural heritage is a relatively new term, which is studied and administered by a large number of disciplines and institutions. Cultural heritage, like the concept of culture, has both a narrow sense concerned with high culture and education, including only canonical works, objects, and places, and a broader, potentially all-embracing sense that includes all human experience.

A research group at the University of Oslo has worked with the concept of cultural heritage since 2003. Several articles from this collaborative venture have already been published in *Tidsskrift for kulturforskning*, and this collection contains 12 articles. What they have in common is a desire to explore cultural-heritage phenomena, the concept itself, interest in the cultural heritage, and not least of all the limits to the cultural heritage. Basically, it is about the history of the cultural-heritage discourse and its function in identity politics.

Bjarne Hodne and John Ødemark have written the introduction, which takes the project description as its starting point. The stated aim is not just to analyse the cultural heritage in the form of artefacts, places, and traditions, but also the very constitution of the field in the light of cultural history. Considerations of theory and research policy are presented here, and we see that the project not only seeks to explore different places and phenomena, which are defined as cultural heritage, but also has the ambition to tackle fundamental theoretical problems that the new interest in the cultural heritage gives rise to. This applies, for example, to the idea that canonical objects and traditions can create collective identity, that is, that the cultural heritage is significant for identity politics. They thus write that there is a common foundation for all the articles, in that they approach the study from three angles: (1) chronotope, which is about how identity and historical narrative are linked together; (2) representation of the cultural heritage; (3) cultural-political reflection on how cultural heritage means power. There is then a presentation of the project participants, only two of whom have contributed articles to this volume. Consequently, it is not fully clear what the relationship is between the project and

the authors here, and why the sub-projects described in the introduction are not represented in this book.

The next two articles serve as an extension of the introduction, since they also introduce the background to the project. First Peter Aronsson discusses the concept of cultural heritage in relation to two terms that used to be common, "use of history" and "culture of history". In addition he presents some of the articles in the volume. Birgitta Skarin Frykman then gives us a glimpse of her own research career and connects it to some of the ideas that led to the genesis of the project. She is particularly concerned with comparison as a method and an analytical strategy. For Skarin Frykman, with reference to Nils-Arvid Bringéus, ethnology is by definition a comparative science, and she does not try to conceal that she thinks this is the direction in which ethnology should be moving. Another of "the classical virtues" that she advocates is the open eye to cultural differences. It is therefore important to ask all the time: Whose cultural heritage?

The subsequent articles explore the limits of cultural heritage in terms of such different topics as immaterial cultural heritage in the form of knowledge (Kerstin Lökken, Eva Mark), urban narratives (Saohinaz-Amal Naguib, Ulrike Spring), the cultural heritage of industrial culture (Annika Alzén), museums and cultural-heritage sites (Magdalena Hillström, Carina Johansson), the concept of folk/people at folk high schools (Lina Midholm), and the interest in cultural heritage as a cultural phenomenon – as an object for cultural analysis (Otto Krogseth).

All the articles contribute, each in its own way, to shed light on an aspect of the concept of cultural heritage. The articles vary from those which give the impression of having been written as short seminar papers, to those which are in-depth case studies in a field where the author has great knowledge, but sometimes has difficulty linking this knowledge – except on a rhetorical level – to the problems posed by the project about the concept of cultural heritage. For anyone working with any of the topics treated here, however, there will certainly be inspiration to derive. We are not told whether the project is closed, but as a whole the volume seems most like a collection of working papers revised for publication, a kind of mid-term report in a long process. There are many approaches and inspiring analyses, but as a whole the collection seems diffuse and does not reflect a concerted project. We are taken all the way to the boundaries of cultural heritage, with the serious risk of losing all connection with the concept of cultural heritage. We may only hope that there will be yet another publication which will deal in a more purposeful manner with the fascinating problems outlined in the project description.

*Lene Otto, Copenhagen*

## Carl Wilhelm von Sydow as a Folklorist

*Nils-Arvid Bringéus,* Carl Wilhelm von Sydow som folklorist. Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi 94. Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, Uppsala 2006. 281 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-85352-65-9.

■ Nils-Arvid Bringéus, one of the nestors of Swedish ethnology, has published a book on another grand old man within Swedish academia, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow. According to the introduction, the reason for this work is that Bringéus cannot be sure that young scholars in folklore studies and ethnology know who von Sydow was. The book fits well into the recent wave of scholarly interest in research history and cultural heritage politics. It is not a pure biography, for it is divided into four parts, one on von Sydow's life and his academic career, one on his relationship to society, yet another one on his students, colleagues, and networks, and the last on his scholarly achievements in the discipline of folklore studies. In this way the book is not merely a biographical study of one of the most influential Swedish folklorists, but is also a survey of the prevailing ideas in Swedish university politics in the faculty of arts, and, moreover, it demonstrates the breadth and the history of folklore studies and of ethnology in Sweden during the twentieth century. Bringéus was lucky enough to use a lot of von Sydow's letters to his wife and to his colleagues in Sweden and abroad, a circumstance that makes the book personal, sometimes even with an intimate flavour.

Carl Wilhelm von Sydow was born in Småland, Sweden, in 1878, the son of a nobleman. However, due to his father's economic problems he was raised in his aunt's house. He attended school in Växjö and he studied in Lund. He was a curious student, so he had a wide education with subjects from several disciplines. This broad knowledge made him suitable as a private tutor and a teacher in several folk high schools. In this way he earned the money needed for

a university education. Alongside his studies there, he worked as a librarian, an amanuensis and a clerk. As a *docent* he gave lectures on folklore matters in both Lund and Uppsala. Mostly he was connected to colleagues in aesthetics and literature. When he was over 60 years old he was, at long last, appointed professor in Lund. He died in 1952. Since then there has been no professor of pure folklore scholarship in Sweden. Instead folklore studies are hidden within the discipline of ethnology.

The biography leaves its readers with the image of a man of struggle and with an idea of a man whose life was hard. His childhood health was not good, his first wife died early, he had no regular and steady work, which made him complain that he could not support his family in a decent way; his dream of a professor's chair as a folklorist was extremely difficult to realize, and he was a man of principle to such an extent that he offended many colleagues and even friends. For many years he tried to convince the university authorities that the study of folklore needed a professorial chair and that the discipline was independent, but he spoke to deaf ears. Finally, the chair was established during the time of Nazism in Germany. Von Sydow himself admired Hitler but he was never convinced of Nazism; on the contrary, he was extremely harsh towards his colleagues in Germany who let themselves be influenced by Nazi ideas. The fact that he did not receive his professorship until a time when nationalism was emphasized might have been hard to take for von Sydow. Being a man who believed in frankness and honesty, he even stated that he could not accept scholarship and serious researchers as *ancillae civitatis*. At that time, i.e., the 1930s and 1940s, folklore studies and corresponding disciplines were often the maidens of the state. In Bringéus's book this strict character of von Sydow is counterbalanced by mentions of his interest in dancing and his participation in students' pranks, for instance in the Kroppkakeorden (the order of potato dumplings with chopped pork). In an essay, von Sydow's son, Max von Sydow, describes his warm relationship to his father when, on picnics, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow taught his son about nature. He was interested in botany, which can also be recognized in his idea of folklore taxonomy. Max von Sydow's description shows us a loving father fully aware of all the wonderful things in life and nature, a man who fully knew that university intrigues were not more important than all the positive everyday miracles around us all.

Carl Wilhelm von Sydow was an intellectual giant. He had a great many connections to other Nordic folklorists, especially to H. F. Feilberg in Denmark, and to folklorists in Germany before the Nazi era. But most important was his cooperation with Séamus Ó Duilearga in Ireland. The two folklorists influenced each other mutually. Von Sydow's knowledge of Gaelic and matters of Irish culture was outstanding. He actively contributed to the foundation of several scholarly and non-scholarly societies and associations in the field of folklore. Among others, I would mention the Nordic Institute of Folktales, the plans for which date from the beginning of the 1930s. It was founded in 1949 but it stopped in 1952 due to the lack of resources. However, in 1959, after the death of von Sydow, it was resurrected as the Nordic Institute of Folklore which, after some years as the Nordic Network of Folklore, was closed in 2001. On the one hand, this example shows von Sydow's goal-oriented stubbornness, on the other it demonstrates his typical capability to realize future needs. Von Sydow published journals, he gave lectures inside and outside the university, he was an excellent speaker and a hard-working fieldworker, archivist, and researcher. However, interviews were not used in his time. Fieldwork meant questionnaires sent to local informants. Bringéus shows how von Sydow in several cases was the introducer of new ideas into Swedish – and international – folklore. He was the first one to make use of the historic-geographical method in Swedish folklore studies. At that time he was interested in origin and diffusion. Mapping was an important means of analysing folklore. In this way he created the concept of oicotypes. He started as a comparativist, but he was utterly determined when he underlined how important it was to have enough material from many different places in historical and recent times before drawing comparative conclusions. However, he did not stick to this methodological perspective. Von Sydow was well acquainted with "real" rural life, a fact that made him aware of the need for social and psychological angles of approach. Therefore in many respects, he was a forerunner in Nordic folklore scholarship. Precisely the psychological perspective was very fruitful for his students and it led to several important investigations on the core of von Sydowian folklore studies, namely, the folk way of thinking ("folkets sätt att tänka"). The individual angle was central in his way of doing

folklore research; he realized that folklore was a product of individual creation regulated by societal opinion. His main fields of research were *märchen*, customs, folk belief, riddles and – in order to really understand the texts he was interpreting – contextual information including both aristocratic and urban folklore, and indecent tradition. He is still respected for his taxonomy of folklore genres; the categories of memorates (*memorat*) and fictions (*fikt*) were especially fruitful concepts for coming colleagues' analysis of folklore texts.

This book is generously illustrated by photographs also from private archives. I enjoyed reading about the students that von Sydow raised in folklore studies for they were my inspiring teachers. Their portraits reminded me of many a good lecture or captivating article. The book ends with a bibliography of von Sydow's production, a list of references and an index.

*Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, Åbo*

## Memoirs of Industrial Communities

*Bruksliv. Från Warkaus till Högfors 1919–1968.* Minnen av C. J. Cedercreutz. Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland. Helsingfors 2005. 181 pp. Ill. ISBN 951-583-116-4.

■ This book consists of recollections and remembrances concerning lifestyle and traditions from a world now long gone in various industrial communities in Finland from the 1910s to the 1960s.

Our guide is the engineer Baron Carl Johan Cedercreutz, who wrote down his memoirs in 1980–90. His life story can be described as a journey where the destinations are the numerous industrial communities where he and his family came to live and work.

"I experienced my first industrial community as a four-year-old child in 1919 and I left my last one as the director fifty years later, with a rather different perspective on things," Cedercreutz sums up in the foreword.

His story is a cultural history seen from the perspective of the salaried staff and their families, and it reflects their point of view, their parties and social amusements, habits and open air activities. But it also turns out to be a careful description of the environment, nature, gardens, villas etc. in the industrial communities. It is a fascinating story with an amazing wealth of detail, whether the subject is a newly bought car or a specific tradition.

Carl Johan Cedercreutz got to know some Swedish industrial communities as well. During the Second World War he received orders for service in Sweden, where his task was to perform quality control of material to be delivered to Finland. His work included ten Swedish industrial communities, of which Kohlswa in Västmanland has a chapter of its own in the book.

After a while the reader realizes that this story does not contain any information about the industry itself, no figures, no investment plans or production results. That is rather a relief, actually. That kind of information is available elsewhere and Cedercreutz declares in the foreword that his ambition has been to paint a picture of the everyday life in an industrial community from his personal experience.

Per Schybergson has written an introductory biography and he is also responsible for a historical description of every industrial community where Cedercreutz lived and worked.

In the final chapter his children recall their experience and memories of their father.

The book is generously illustrated with photographs and documents, mainly from the collections of the Cedercreutz family.

*Göran Hedlund, Lund*

## Narratives of Illness

*Georg Drakos,* Berättelsen i sjukdomens värld. Att leva med hiv/aids som anhörig i Sverige och Grekland. Brutus Östlings bokförlag Symposion, Stockholm/Stehag 2005. 240 pp. ISBN 91-7139-718-3.

■ Narratives and narrative method are lauded as the humanistic contribution to research on illness and health. This is a method that makes it possible to bring the patient's perspective and experiences into the practice of health professionals, when it comes to health promotion and the prevention and treatment of disease. This method must of course be constantly refined and reconsidered in cultural research. Georg Drakos's study may be viewed as a stage in this process. He seeks to understand what it feels like to live with AIDS, for people with the disease and those close to them. The disease is both a bodily and a cultural experience, which it is possible sometimes to put into words, but in other situations cannot be captured verbally. Instead it is the silence

that "tells" the attentive fieldworker how the disease is experienced.

Being secretive and silent is a culturally conditioned way to handle disease. So too is openness and verbalization. In this study we get the impression that the first strategy dominates in Greek culture, while the other strategy prevails in Sweden. This is supported by quotations from interviews, or pieces of narratives that Drakos has collected during fieldwork in these two countries. Drakos hints that there are cultural differences as regards how much the "Freudian discourse", with its desire for confession, has affected the two cultures. This could be the explanation why patients, next-of-kin, and professionals alike place great emphasis on openness in Sweden (and the rest of North-west Europe). Here it is taken for granted that the openness in itself has a therapeutic effect, whereas silence about disease and suffering is almost pathological and guilt-inducing for the patient. In Greece it is much more widespread both in society and in the family to hush up a disease like AIDS. It is not possible to measure what silence or openness does to the sick person, or whether the suffering is felt to be heavier or lighter, but the analyses in this book confirm at least that although the experience of illness is physical, bodily experiences are shaped by culture.

The book is thus an interesting contribution to the continued reflection on the possibilities and limitations of the narrative method. Drakos has a good eye both for the cultural narratives (and myths) about diseases and for the more biographical, existential narratives. Both types come about in social interaction and, as narratives, they help to create cultural meaning. The book is full of narratives about how this process takes place, and the comparative perspective gives the analysis yet another dimension. What readers may miss is some theoretical exposition of how we should understand the relationship between a culture's "grand narratives" and biographical narratives.

*Lene Otto, Copenhagen*

## Textiles as Cultural History

*Agnes Geijer*, Ur textilkonstens historia, Gidlunds förlag, Hedemora & Agnes Geijers fond för nordisk textilforskning 2006. 4th ed. 473 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-7844-706-2.

■ This book on the history of textile art is mainly about woven fabrics. The author, Agnes Geijer, 1898–1989, was known as the leading Nordic textile historian, and she manages well here in her aim of following a line of development with the conditions for the art of weaving as the main theme, while simultaneously showing a broader history of development. Moreover, the book contains informative chapters about how textiles are preserved in different circumstances and a survey of research on the history of textiles. If one has any interest at all in history and cultural history, there is good reason to take an interest in textiles as well, as Geijer demonstrates with examples of how textiles have been among the most sought-after objects in global trade and thus communicated stylistic influences and served as models in a wide range of arts and crafts. Since the first edition appeared in 1972, the book has virtually become an icon in textile research, and it has acquired especially great significance since it was the first study to place the surviving Nordic textiles in a historical European context.

It is obvious that the author knows her subject in both theory and practice and therefore also dares to question interpretations that have become generally accepted. Otherwise it happens too often that books about textiles are written by people who either do not have a clear picture of what concrete textile manufacture involves, or (even more often) by people who focus on the practice but have no great interest in, or knowledge of, concepts and terminology. The fact that textiles do not survive well, and that archaeological finds of textiles require a great deal of the excavator, is no doubt one explanation why research has focused on products made of other materials. But perhaps it is also something of a women's issue that textiles have not been considered really scientific, and many textile samples have been collected in order to provide models for new works of handicraft rather than as research material. Geijer's book clearly aims to provide a foundation for those who want to *analyse* textiles rather than those who wish to know how concrete textile work was done, and the author carefully goes through terms and designations, including not only Swedish but also German, French, and English names for important tools and products in the text. Moreover, there are detailed chapters on material types, implements used in the making of textiles, and the various types of woven fabrics. Different materials in relation to different climates give an extra dimension to the properties of textile raw materials as presented in many books, but Geijer goes even further and shows how certain tools go

together with the predominance of different materials or special climate-related needs rather than simply explaining them away as (just) more or less primitive. The book is perfect in offering supplementary backgrounds and contexts for phenomena and techniques with which the reader may already be familiar, and it serves as an important counterweight to the many popular works, without scholarly ambitions, that are available on the subject.

Despite this, I sometimes have the feeling that Geijer knows almost too much. She brings in details or exceptions in such quantities that it can be difficult to follow the thread. This makes the book more like a reference work to be consulted when needed rather than a cover-to-cover reading experience. Readers who do not have a basic idea of how to set up a loom and weave on it should perhaps acquaint themselves with the basics of the subject in some other source before they start reading this. In its function as a (basic) textbook I feel that it could gain from the addition of summaries, or marking certain passages as "supplementary reading". Geijer has a captivating and personal style, and I think that the book could reach a wider circle of readers and simultaneously contribute even more to achieving uniformity in textile terminology.

It is good that this new edition takes into consideration the fact that things have happened in textile research and other relevant branches of scholarship in the last thirty years, and that a reference list with recent works has been added. This gives the book an opportunity, as Geijer wanted, to help interested readers find their way to further international literature. I think that the book, besides having the list of terms with page references, could also have a separate list of the foreign terms that are presented here and there in the text.

A positive innovation in relation to the earlier editions is the colour photographs that supplement Geijer's black and white pictures. The colour pictures nevertheless lose a great deal of their potential function in that they are not integrated with the text as Geijer's original ones are, with their own number references in the text and with page references as part of the captions. As it is now, it demands some effort on the part of the reader to place the pictures in their proper context, and I get the feeling that the editors of this edition have perhaps shown unnecessarily great respect for the original book, being too cautious about really integrating the additions that have been made.

*Maria Ekqvist, Åbo*

## Young in the Fifties

*Kerstin Gunnemark*, Ung på 50-talet. Om förälskelser, mode och boende i en brytningstid. Bilda Förlag, Falköping 2006. 253 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-574-7767-1.

■ Rock'n'roll, stiff underskirts, kidney-shaped tables, and standard lamps with three-coloured shades. For young people today, the 1950s have become a distant decade from which to borrow amusing and crazy things and mix them with present-day music and design. Since the 1990s a retro wave has helped to make this formerly rather anonymous and boring decade between the Second World War and the colourful sixties interesting in several ways. The era is now regarded as a significant watershed between tradition and modernity and a time when the welfare state was materialized for the majority of the population in Sweden. The reason for this reinterpretation of the decade is the difference in time between then and now. In retrospect the decade has also been assigned quality values, even though it also meant cold war, nuclear tests, and limited opportunity for development. Those who were young back then are thoughtful pensioners today, who look back on the time when women entered the labour market in earnest, when television made its entry into the home, and growing prosperity enabled increased consumption. The ethnologist Kerstin Gunnemark has written a book about this process, based on collected memoirs. The overall aim of the book is to convey the commitment and the narrative joy in the stories she retells. And it must be said that she has succeeded to the full!

The background to the book is a competition held in 2005 by a publisher, Bilda Förlag, and the National Organization of Pensioners, PRO, where "ordinary" people were encouraged to write about their 1950s in the form of personal experiences and memories, and about the phenomena of the time in retrospect. The call was answered by 100 women and 39 men from all of Sweden, born between 1916 and 1942. The length of the entries varied between two and twenty pages. Some of the contributors took part in writing groups, while others wrote individual pieces. The invitation to the competition gave the authors some key words as suggestions of both content and method. The aim was to get those who were young in the 1950s to write about youth as a special phase of life, about the home, family life, fashion, pleasures, love, travels, etc. To assist them in starting the recollection process, the writers were asked in the invitation to use material

objects, settings, and photographs as inspiration.

The book is arranged in thematic sections, separated by timelines from the years 1950–59 showing major and minor events in the world and in Sweden, and by Gunnemark's ethnological commentary linking the narratives. The themes are: optimism about the future, fashion, entertainment and community, journeys of discovery, love, and the typical home of the era. Finally the book has three chapters on method and theory, where Kerstin Gunnemark presents broader reflections on autobiographical narratives, material culture, and museum practice, against the background of specific memoirs. The book ends with the winning entry in the competition, which grippingly sums up the characteristics of the whole era. The book is illustrated with the writers' own black and white photographs, as well as characteristic advertisements, book illustrations, and newspaper pages from the fifties, which help to give a flavour of the time.

The main aim of the book, naturally, is to present the writers' stories of their own youth, with both mundane everyday happenings and untypical events interwoven. The strict thematic arrangement of the contributions works well. Reading them makes one want to know more about the individual autobiographies, because they are so wonderfully well written, fresh, and precise, an effect that is probably due to the fact that the best entries have been selected with a firm hand by the editor. The selection is based on the principle that the memoirs should include descriptions of events and materiality, things or places with a personal touch. In this respect the narratives fulfil several purposes: they are contributions to a larger narrative about changes in Sweden in the last fifty years, about planners' optimism and the People's Home. They also tell about the new opportunities for the individual in the form of education, city life, and charter tours. Innovations play a significant part in the narratives, for example, new materials such as man-made fabrics and plastics and new consumer goods such as cars.

Naturally, structural changes do not follow a neat chronological division into decades, which leads Gunnemark to suggest that it is particularly the time from 1955 to 1965 that was characterized by economic development and optimism. The early 1950s were still grey post-war years, with everyday commodities, housing, and jobs in short supply. Diseases such as tuberculosis and polio were rife, and the contributions tell of invalidity and death. For the young people the housing shortage, the big families, and the low wages set narrow limits for personal development and private life. The new opportunities therefore came as a liberating contrast to the traditional, static everyday life and as a clash between generations. In the 1950s youth became a metaphor for change and optimism.

In the chapter about the 1950s as "the giant of the retro wave" Gunnemark has some interesting thoughts about the changing interest that different eras can arouse. Why is this particular decade held in such favour by people of different ages? The rhetoric of the 1970s and 1980s distanced itself from the 1950s as a backward, uncritical, and monotonous decade. In today's late modern perspective, when the welfare state is on the retreat, there is a renewed interest in the decade and its material culture. Heavy-handed renovation of blocks of flats, for example, has removed the qualities that architects and designers built into housing, and people's eyes are being opened to the qualities that are in danger of disappearing. The focus has changed to more sensitive restorations, which also consider the planning ideas behind the building. There has been a growing interest in the architects, urban planners, and designers who shaped modernity. The idiom has a new appeal to the younger generations – the grandchildren of the contributors.

The difference in the approach to materiality is an important point in the book. Not everything from then is fashionable today. There has been a sorting process, so that specially selected objects, such as items of furniture, household utensils, and knick-knacks, are valued today as modern antiques. The American influence of the 1950s is likewise still popular in the form of rock music, cars, and domestic appliances. The memoir writers give good insight into the difference between then and now. The possibility to acquire things had a completely different meaning from today. People saved money for a long time, for example, to buy a pair of nylon stockings, a portable gramophone, or even a moped, and the joy of expectation was enormous. When the possibility was finally within reach, what you bought preferably had to be new. Many of the memoirs are about such surprising pleasures, writes a woman about the marvellous experience of new yarn in several colours arriving for the school knitting class: "For me there is a clear recollection marking the new time that was coming." Whereas everything had been grey, a world of new opportunities was opened!

For young people today things do not necessarily have to be new – on the contrary, it is good if they are used and have a history. Things are mixed freely. Gunnemark has examined the coexistence between old and new and interviewed young people about how objects from the past are incorporated in a completely new context.

In the 1950s it became old-fashioned to look back and consider objects as milestones in one's life history. This distanced relationship to materiality in all its forms became a matter of course, and it was also possible to practise it in everyday life to a greater extent. "Buy and throw away" became a positive slogan, but a message that did not totally catch on. The writers also reflect on the fact that they ought not to be emotionally attached to their possessions, but many express their understanding for their parents' hard toil and the utility value of the objects.

Gunnemark expounds the fruitful perspective that objects are not only dumb materiality, but alliances between individuals and things – or *actants* (a term taken from Bruno Latour's actor-network theory) – that are part of a network. People do not always have power over things, but materiality does not rule the individual either, and the network must be studied situationally. By studying individual situations one can observe the interaction between both actants. Whereas research on material culture during the 1990s was based on a consumer perspective, this perspective allows us to see a dynamic interaction between people, things, and settings. One might perhaps have envisaged that this angle could have been used to ask critical questions about the concept of modernity, which the book circles around and uses as an explanation for processes of change through time. The network perspective nuances the relationship between people and things and shows that there are great differences in the use and significance of things, as the individual memoirs here demonstrate.

Gunnemark has previously written about everyday life in the 1950s and cultural-heritage processes, including her book on the history of the suburb of Kortedala and the construction of an apartment museum in a block of flats. With empathy and insight she has helped to give a voice to an overlooked group who witnessed in their long lives the build-up of the welfare state, and who experienced the great pleasure that many people felt about improvements in the form of full employment, education, and a flat of one's own with both a bathroom and central heating. This large group are reflect here on the changes.

From a Danish perspective one may wonder about differences between the two countries, that the 1950s wave seems to have come much later in Sweden than in Denmark, and that in Sweden it was evidently the interest in design that focused on the 1950s as a special era of cultural and historical interest. In Copenhagen the first exhibition at the Workers' Museum about the working-class family in the 1950s was a very popular attraction already in the early 1980s, and it generated countless publications and television programmes. I could not say whether it was a matter of nostalgic feelings or a scholarly interest in analysing cultural and economic changes, but at least the human-memory perspective was then brought forward in time, and the museums' role as outstanding interpreters of recent cultural history was firmly established. And the design of the period still exercises a fascination, now accompanied by 1970s and 1980s retro.

Gunnemark not only has the role of messenger across generation boundaries. With this book she has managed a tricky task, namely, to produce a book which has broad appeal and is simultaneously interesting for researchers and museum workers. Firstly, the memoirs are so well written and full of good observations that it gives great pleasure to read them. Secondly, Gunnemark's thematic editing and commentary are beneficial. We avoid ending up in the nostalgic trap with descriptions of the carefree and cosy 1950s as the main message. The final chapters give a thorough analysis of the special potential of the memoir genre for reflection on an era that is so close and yet so far away, where personal memoirs and phenomena from the time are interwoven. These theoretical-methodological chapters are organically linked to the memoirs, but they also make a general contribution to the study of memoirs and objects. The book is well written, with a simple structure and good illustrations. Both interested general readers and specialists will benefit from reading it, and the book can thus be warmly recommended.

*Lykke L. Pedersen, Copenhagen*

## You Are What You're Named?

*Charlotte Hagström*, Man är vad man heter. Namn och identitet. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2006. 187 pp. ISBN 91-7203-758-X.

■ "What's in a name?" Names can, and sometimes most definitely *should*, be seen as the neutral identity

markers that this popular question suggests they are. But in social reality, personal names are powerful symbols, and food for expanded modern identities. Names and name statistics reflect the cultural climate and the spirit of an age, according to ethnologist Charlotte Hagström. In her book, the title of which means "You are What You're Named: Name and Identity", she provides an enthusiastic and thorough examination of contemporary conceptions of personal names and naming in postmodern societies.

The author seeks to explore what names mean for the bearer, for the ones who give them and for the ones who see or hear them, with the emphasis on the latter. "What names mean" does not refer to meaning in the etymological sense of the word, as etymology is seldom stressed when people reason about the subject. Hagström's primary interest is the individual's experience of his or her own name and the names of others. Our preferences, she claims, are to a certain extent formed by personal experience, but to a considerable extent they are formed by culturally shared preconceptions. A central task is thus to make visible the hidden structures behind what we normally think of as our plain and simple taste and likings in names. The study attempts to disclose these structures through the stories and reflections of the informants, but as the author herself states, delving deeper into the cultural discourses as such would exceed the scope of this project.

Empirically, the thesis is built on 11 qualitative interviews, replies to about 90 questionnaires from the Folk Life Archive of Lund, Sweden, Internet chat sites and the press. The questionnaires were answered by the Folk Life Archive's regular informants; they are mainly women, most of them born before 1950, and few are of immigrant background. To balance the material, the eleven interviewed informants are under 35 years of age. Informants of immigrant background were reached via interviews and websites. In addition, the author draws on an extensive body of empirical material from other studies, including her own previous studies on the subject and on other topics, such as parenthood and ideas of gender. Throughout the study, she also frequently presents stories of other practices elsewhere in the world, thereby providing a varied perspective on naming in Sweden.

Names are cultural universals, something we can all relate to one way or another, and a popular subject of conversation, newspaper articles, and much non-academic literature. Nevertheless, when personal names have been scientifically approached, it has traditionally been as part of research on something else. When names *have* been the main objective of a thesis, the core of interest has most often been quantitative, etymological and/or purely historical. Somewhat of a historical perspective is however expedient in any study of this kind. Here this perspective is consecutively intertwined with the qualitative material, rather than being subject to a separate, systematic presentation.

In premodern societies, the primary function of personal names was to define the individual as member of a collective unit. The selection of names was limited, the same names were used for generation after generation and choice was not part of the matter. Similarly, there was no question of an identity that exceeded name, family and place. The change towards seeing personal names as objects of choice has historically ran parallel run with the development of an expanded concept of identity. An incipient dissolution of the traditional naming practice was generated by influences from abroad. As a rule, the new names travelled through royalty, aristocracy and the higher social classes before they reached the broad masses and the door was gradually opened to a democratic market of cultural symbols. But neither then nor now are the choices we make independent of the culture from which they arise. Hagström shows how the self-declared middle class of today has countless aspects to consider and potential pitfalls to avoid in the process of deciding names for their children. Personal associations with other bearers of the names in question are often explicitly emphasized, as are collective associations to national celebrities. But by far the most interesting factor tackled in the study is the subtle, less articulated, collective connotations for which we have no obvious explanation.

A central question in the book is why so many children are given the same name in spite of the wealth of names to choose from. The sudden flourishing of the name Wilma in Sweden can serve as an example. Seemingly, the case of Wilma is easily explained, as the popularity of the name arose after it was introduced to Swedish viewers through the popular television series *Skärgårdsdoktorn* ("Archipelago Doctor") some ten years ago. The series has no doubt contributed to the revival of the names, Hagström says, but not in the sense that the parents of all Wilmas necessarily are fans of the series, or have even seen it. The name becomes conceivable in our minds by the mere

virtue of becoming fashionable in the right arenas of culture. Furthermore, the name in question is visually and aurally in tune with the other names that rule the current statistics. It belongs to a group of names which were in common use around 1900, along with many of the other most popular names in Sweden today, such as Emma, Sara, Emil and Gustav. Between then and now, these names have generally been little used. Very few names are statistically stable, and according to Hagström they tend to run in cycles of three or four generations. We are shown how certain names are perceived as "outdated" when associated with the "wrong" generation: with parents, teachers and other authorities. However, as the bearers of these names gradually die out, we are reintroduced to the names in new contexts, which in turn liberate them from their previous unfortunate connotations.

Globalization has set its mark on naming statistics in Western countries, as these have become highly synchronized compared with a few decades ago. On top of these statistics lie both characteristically national names and names that have become more "international". Also, variants of the same international names are represented in the statistics of the different countries, such as Julia/Julie, Sarah/Sara and Mathias/Matias/Matthew. Many parents are preoccupied with choosing names that are internationally usable, but at the same time there exists a consensus that they should have no direct connotations to a specific other country (unless the name is "legitimized", due to e.g. blood ties to the country in question).

A group of names which is frequently referred to by the informants and examined thoroughly in the study are the English names in Scandinavia. Before 1800 English names were almost exclusively seen in finer families of Anglo-Saxon breed. As workers from the lower classes started to name their children after their landlords, employers etc., English names and hybrid variants spread throughout the people. The general popularity of English names accelerated in the years after 1930, with the global broadcasting of the American entertainment industry. One of the groups of names which characterized the period was the diminutive variant of different celebrities' names, such as Ronny, Tommy and Johnny. Today these are among the first mentioned when the informants list names they consider to be the most stigmatized and the least suitable. They are almost consistently referred to as "low-class" and "white trash", and the informants see them as evidence of poor judgement, ignorance of history and lack of perspective. The "Y-syndrome" has become somewhat of a linguistic institution, and these names are to a lesser degree given to little children today.

Hagström's informants agree that stigmatizing "innocent" name bearers is highly unfair, but at the same time they admit that this kind of prejudice is very hard to avoid – and that they too, consciously or unconsciously, categorize in this way. The Swedish historian of ideas Ronny Ambjörnsson has a name which few associate with a professorship. Ambjörnsson was born in the mid-1930s, and describes how his name for his parents above all was as a symbol of the new, prosperous era, of modernity and optimism; "It belonged to the new culture, the new medium, the new country: America!" (p. 60). Hagström shows how today's reasoning about names generally demonstrates attitudes that are very different from those described by Ambjörnsson. Many of the informants use words like tradition, continuity and roots when they speak of what they value in a name. But rather than copying the premodern naming pattern, they emphasize aesthetics and associations when the family tree is being explored. A vital rule amongst many of the informants interviewed in the book is not to pretend to be something that you are not. To choose an English name without having any kinship connection to English-speaking countries whatsoever is explicitly considered by many to be insensitive and infantile.

The heated debates on different Internet chat forums also reflect the widespread notion that names should not be misleading with regard to the bearer's background. The discussions may seemingly start out as light conversation about aesthetic preferences, but the underlying symbolic value of names and name categories becomes explosively visible especially when debaters with different preferences join the discussion. These may, for example, have chosen the name of a famous pop star for their child, and are characterized as "immature" by the others. One person writes that names seen as proof of immaturity by some debaters might just as well be seen as sign of fantasy and lust for life. This opinion is in tune with the view described above by Ambjörnsson, and displays a fundamentally different approach to the question of choosing personal names than the ones generally seen in the material.

Other websites are more explicitly politically

motivated, like *The Afrocentric Experience*, which exhorts all blacks to "take back their African name". Historically, one of the methods of oppressing the African slaves was to deprive them of their names. The idea was that one who has no name is nobody. A black American denies her origin by carrying an American name, according to the creators of the website. The change to an African name is a powerful political statement, and a clear signal of awareness of history and recognition of one's "true" identity. The notion that the name should mirror one's "true" identity is also articulated by many of the adoptees interviewed by Hagström. These approach the name issue very differently, but the idea of a "right name" is frequently demonstrated. Many carry their birth name in addition to the name they were given after the adoption, and are content that their names reflect what they see as the dualism of their identity. But "the right name" is generally equal to the name the adoptee was given in her birth land, and along with the general preoccupation with roots seen in the material, Hagström sees this view in context with the high focus on biology in our time.

This is by no means a heavily theoretic book, nor is it meant to be. By way of introduction, the author draws eclectically on theories of postmodern identity and globalization, such as those of Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Manuel Castells. These make a good foundation for the popular ideas and practices presented, and give grounds for reflexive handling of somewhat worn-out terms like culture and identity. Furthermore, Hagström successfully draws on the theories of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to illuminate her material. Personal names were not a variable in Bourdieu's social analyses in the 1970s, but they may well have been so. The extent to which the parents in the material strive not to be associated with the wrong social group with regard to names, is in itself proof that Bourdieu's theories of capital and social fields are applicable to the subject. Also, Hagström demonstrates that when a name previously seen as sign of high cultural capital "degrades" down into society, the distinction is perceived as changed, and the executive groups must thus constantly adopt other names to restore the balance. The author finds that the informants from the middle classes are especially preoccupied with choosing what they consider to be "neutral", classless names, in an attempt to avoid the question of categories altogether.

A strong repugnance towards crossing name categories is displayed in the material, and attempts to challenge the hierarchy of names are rarely seen in contemporary naming practice. The silent consensus of existing rules demonstrates that we recognize, and thereby help to uphold, the distinction. However, examples of systematic transgression of these boundaries are of course seen. The travellers known in Sweden as *tattare* has a long tradition of using "noble", aristocratic names, which is in distinct contrast to their marginalized place in society. Hagström claims that the travellers have indeed been conscious of the symbolic power of the names, and she regards their naming practice as a way of actively shaping and handling their own identity. It seems obvious that the author, with her revelations of common prejudices also has had a wish to challenge stigmatization based on name. She shows how frequent *questioning* of one's name by some can be perceived as questioning of the bearer, and how it can have a damaging effect on the self-esteem of the person in question. Whether it be through stories of well-educated immigrants who remain involuntarily unemployed until they change their name to a Swedish one, or through reference to the high number of "social class 3" names in the employee lists of Swedish universities, Hagström's wish to balance our conceptions is lucid.

The extensive use of informant quotations in the study gives a vivid and reader-friendly impression, and the many recognizable examples of popular ideas about names contribute to making the book entertaining and often humorous. The angle of the book is very personal, and the author frequently brings in experiences from her own life to illustrate and supplement, but also to balance, her findings. This again contributes to the popular and non-theoretical impression and it may be argued that the use of personal experiences compromises the academic value of the text. But since the subject of names in Western European societies tends to generate reflections based on notions, feelings, connotations and associations rather than strict rational reasoning, it invites a somewhat playful and less academically rigid approach. It is my opinion that a reflexive use of the personal perspective is a valuable, if not necessary, resource in any thesis where the author herself is a part of the culture or discourse examined.

There seems to be little doubt that names are strong cultural symbols, that they both unite and divide, and that they are seen as powerful markers of social boundaries. But is the assertion of the title true?

Are we what we are named, "are" we our names? According to Hagström, we can safely assume that a person's name is a vital part of his or her identity. And, for the very same reason, we should be very careful in assuming that the name can tell us who the bearer is.

*Liv Nybø, Bergen*

## Making Christmas Again

*Nu gör vi jul igen.* Charlotte Hagström, Marlene Hugoson & Annika Nordström (eds.). Institutet för språk och folkminnen, Göteborg i samarbete med Folklivsarkivet, Lund 2006. 237 pp. Ill. ISBN 10:91-7229-035-8.

■ Countless books have been published about Christmas, written by both professional ethnologists and amateurs. The present day is rarely subject to serious examination in this abundance of books about Christmas. They are mostly about the old days, the origin, the roots of the customs. The radical change undergone by Christmas during the twentieth century has not been illuminated in detail.

It is therefore gratifying that many different institutions in Sweden have joined in a project with present-day Christmas as the main theme. The institutions have collected their research material in different ways, through questionnaires, appeals in schools, interviews, photographing and filming, participant observation, by collecting newspaper cuttings, studying advertisements, the Internet, e-mail, or other published material, or quite simply by sharing their own memories and experiences.

Today the central aspect of Christmas celebrations is personal identity and personal history. This is a relatively new feature. Around 1900 people celebrating Christmas looked for what was newest, the most modern, trendy, and luxurious props, food, and festive arrangements. It is not only at Christmas that the self is central; identity pervades other holidays as well. Yet there is a difference. At Christmas it is one's own position as part of a family and a kin group that is evaluated, both by oneself and by others. At New Year or Midsummer, however, it is the individual as a social being that is made visible, i.e., the focus then is on how one has succeeded in creating social networks outside the circle in which one grew up.

Everyone must take up some stance on Christmas. Ethnologists likewise have to relate to Christmas, both professionally when they have to answer questions in the media, and privately when they make their own Christmas. The fresh and captivating quality of this book is that, when the authors reflect on their research material, they do not distance themselves but empathize with it based on their own experience. It is not always possible to know which conclusions are grounded in research material and which are grounded in the authors' own analytical observations in the society of which they themselves are part and which they influence.

The book has 52 contributors, and it cannot have been an easy task for the editors to achieve a uniform book with so many authors. The book consists of 25 articles of 3–8 pages and 17 brief reflections on the Christmas that surrounds us all in December. In places the contributions feel more like newspaper pieces than academic reports, and many of them would fit well in the culture pages of the daily press. Yet this does not make the book any less interesting or profound. On the contrary, it makes the book itself into a document of how today's Christmas is viewed (through the eyes of ethnologists).

The book is not, cannot be, and does not seek to be all-embracing. Most of the articles are well written, with many interesting observations. They cover topics such as Christmas markets, wish lists, Christmas music, food, advertising, decorations, outdoor Christmas lights, and Christmas at workplaces. Some articles describe Christmas from a wholly personal angle, for example, the chef/ethnologist Håkan Jönsson's description of Christmas time in the kitchen at the Grand Hotel, and Susanne Idivuoma's story of a Sámi woman's view of Christmas. It would have been good to see an article about what Christmas is like for the homeless or people in a hospital or service house, but I understand that there cannot be people out documenting everywhere in Sweden on Christmas Eve, for that is when ethnologists are celebrating their own private Christmas. It is pleasing that a group with a different outlook on life from the majority population, namely, the Ásatrú neopagans, have their Christmas celebrations described in the book.

Many articles deal with immigrants' views of Christmas, whether they take part in or reject the Swedish Christmas. Immigrants likewise seek their identity in food and festive rituals, but as Ann Pettersson and Anna Ulfstrand point out, their attitude to the Swedish traditions is quite different from that of Swedes. Participation in the Swedish Christmas

is for them a matter of innovation, curiosity, and the future. Another typical feature for our time is that many immigrants say that they do not want to celebrate Christmas because they are not Christians, while far from all Swedes (and not all the people of Finland either) know that Christmas is celebrated in memory of the birth of Jesus. Even on this side of the Gulf of Bothnia, studies show that many people believe that we celebrate Christmas to be kind to each other, to be good, and to achieve peace on earth.

Swedes are keen to try new things, for example, going away at Christmas. Eva Wolf, however, points out that the Christmas trip need not mean something new: travelling with one's family means moving the familiar customs from home to an exotic setting. The holiday is also a good time to nourish family relationships and friendships. This underlines my own perception, based on studies of how young people celebrate Christmas, namely, that it is not really the home that is the central thing at Christmas, but human relations in the home and in the family; human relations can be moved without any radical change to the content.

Holidays and their traditions represent continuity in our culture, whereas in our everyday lives we look forward and think about progress and development. The great interest shown by the general public in history is therefore focused in large measure on the major annual festivals. We are surrounded by popular accounts of the history of holidays, to the extent that even ethnologists find it impossible to write about modern-day festive traditions without historical digressions. The history of festive customs becomes a description of an uncomplicated straight line leading back to an origin thousands of years ago, and with a few stops on the way we reach our own time, but without the customs being associated with changes in society. In this book too, some of the authors occasionally fall into that trap. Often the historical explanations are relevant and justified, but at times they could easily have been omitted, for example, Håkan Liby's historical references about Father Christmas costumes and Eva Knut's comments on Lucia.

I am sceptical about the inclusion of an article about private celebrations of Nobel Day in a book about Christmas. Not everything that happens during Advent is a Christmas tradition, and the awarding of the Nobel Prizes has nothing to do with Christmas. I also wonder whether the tsunami should have been considered in this book. Although it happened while this project was in progress documenting Christmas, and although the disaster left its mark everywhere in society, a natural disaster is not connected to Christmas; it was an exceptional event which happened to occur in the Christmas season.

The book is a very welcome addition to the genre of Christmas books. Present-day Christmas is finally documented and analysed as part of large-scale project. The book has beautiful photographs, an attractive layout, and is written in such a way that anyone can read it. It is a book that will make all Scandinavians nod with recognition at some point. Perhaps it can also give comfort or ideas if Christmas planning seems difficult. At the same time, the book gives valuable new knowledge about the way people think.

*Anne Bergman, Helsingfors (Helsinki)*

## Manor Houses and Labourers' Cottages

*Mats Hellspong, Karin Lindvall, Nicole Pergament, Angela Rundquist*, Herrgårdsromantik och statarelände. En studie av ideologi, kulturarv och historieanvändning. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2004. 350 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-7203-629-X.

■ It is above all the *image* of the Swedish manor house that has been the subject of penetrating studies in an ambitious ethnological research project, "Herrgårdsromantik och statarelände". It deals with the extremes of manor-house romanticism and the misery in which estate labourers lived. How have our modern ideas of the manor house been constructed? Is there some recurrent language of norms, values, and conceptions? What clichés do we nourish about the manor house and the wretched conditions of the labourers? Have the constructions of the manor house and its workforce changed through time, and is there any reality behind the stereotypes?

The ethnologists Mats Hellspong and Angela Rundquist have analysed relevant sources such as memoirs, literary works, and films – all connected with manor houses. A contemporary commercial and cultural phenomenon, the *manor-house hunt*, has been studied in historical perspective.

A social dimension of what we usually associate with sophisticated manor-house life is its relation to servants and farm workers. During the first half of the twentieth century above all the large group of *statare*, the labourers who were paid in kind. This

system was widespread in Södermanland and Skåne. Controversies between the gentry and the labourers are illuminated through the well-known conflicts in Södra Möre near Kalmar in 1929–1931. An analysis of the strikes by labourers supplements the picture of these socially charged settings. Ivar Lo Johansson's novels are of course an interesting literary source to study, in that he and Moa Martinson are the authors who have in large measure shaped our image of the *statare*.

In a closing chapter Nicole Pergament describes our "late-modern images of the manor house" and Karin Lindvall surveys the themes presented in the volume and analyses the stereotypes that we find in today's manor-house tourism.

What are the interesting findings of the research project? Let us begin with Rundquist's study of the memoirs. The reason often stated for writing memoirs is that it was important to remember, to pass on the family's cultural and historical heritage to coming generations. The authors wrote for their children and grandchildren. The manor house was also a *place of memory* of the kind described by the historian Pierre Nora. Memoir authors had access to a wealth of material, since the manor house was a concentrated historical setting. Rundquist presents numerous themes from some fifty memoirs and autobiographies. Some of the most common are family history and its link to the property, often with emphasis on the role of stewardship: the owner is a link in a long chain of people who have held the estate in trust for the next generation. Descriptions of the household and its servants – faithful old retainers lauded in patriarchal spirit – are a characteristic of this genre. Another important part of the account is the physical description of buildings, parks and gardens, avenues, and the landscape.

What we see above all in the memoirs is a positive sense of continuity and tradition, while it is also obvious that there has been change and modernization. The manor houses stood for innovation, especially as regards technical and material things, such as combine harvesters, tractors, and cars. The tension between *tradition* and *modernity* is an interesting analytical clue to an understanding of what the memoir authors wanted to describe and place in relation to their own lives.

Novels about manor houses have the same recurrent theme – the tension between tradition and modernity. Some forty works in this genre, which has mostly been viewed as popular entertainment or pulp fiction, are examined by Rundquist in another chapter. Her aim is to answer questions such as: How is the fiction related to reality, to history and the future? What images and narratives are highlighted? What is the gender perspective?

Since the study covers a large number of novels, the picture that Rundquist constructs is of course complex, but certain general observations can be made. In many respects the genre is for children and young girls, and the manor house between the wars is depicted as a "stereotyped idyll". Although social changes made themselves felt, the manor house was a romantic, secluded environment, protected from reality by almost impregnable walls. It was against this background of beautiful buildings, parks, and avenues of lime trees that the dramatic events took place. The leading character enjoys a happy and relatively carefree childhood in this "stationary paradise". Through time, however, the genre also developed novels where the manor house was problematized, with the contrast between rural and urban life to complicate things. There are also several literary works portraying the manor house as a traumatic place to live and grow up in – a striking example is the work of Louis De Geer, who describes growing up in an atmosphere of discipline, bullying, and lack of contact.

From the forties onwards, it seems as if change became a more noticeable feature in the novels. Ideas of modernity and the welfare state grew stronger in the public debate, and this affected novels about manor houses. This is evident in Martha Sandwall-Bergström's highly popular series about "Kulla-Gulla" (1946–1951). Rundquist points out that the author has her 1940s glasses on when she describes the manor houses as miserable, repressive, and socially unjust. In her choice of perspectives Sandwall-Bergström shows a great deal in common with the proletarian novelists, especially those who wrote about the landless labourers. Sandwall-Bergström's descriptions are relatively complex. The values of the young heroines vacillate between traditionalism and modernism. In many respects the manor houses were diametrically opposed to the new ideals of the People's Home, while even these conservative settings were paradoxically influenced by new thinking in the countryside.

Angela Rundquist's reading and interpretation of memoirs, autobiographies, and novels adds new dimensions to the cultural study of manor houses. From having hitherto been described relatively

superficially, as bearers of the art and culture of the elite, these places of memory are now analysed for their real function and significance. An important result is a deeper understanding of the formative capacity of the settings, both socially for groups and psychologically for individuals. Writing about manor houses can also be associated with basic needs of identification in time and place and in terms of tradition and modernity.

Mats Hellspong devotes one of his essays to the manor-house motif in Swedish film. He asks such questions as: How is the manor presented as a stage? What are the most common stereotypes? How are class antagonisms between the owner and the employees handled? One of Hellspong's premises is that "even the most idiotic and clichéd manor-house film is a kind of commentary on the place of the nobility, the upper class, and the manor in twentieth-century society and can be analysed as such".

What can be regarded as "manor-house film" is of course debatable. Hellspong has chosen a generous definition, and his study comprises no less than 130 films produced between 1916 and 1987, besides television series.

The overall theme reflected in the films is the manor house at the transition from tradition to modernity. This is also the stage for plots involving birth, marriage, and inheritance. We find the same kind of clichés as in the memoirs and novels. The loyal servants are portrayed in the same stereotyped way. A major finding of Hellspong's study is that most of the films trivialize their themes. This is not surprising, since it can be seen as a way to avoid the inherent social and psychological problems of the manor-house setting. There are exceptions, where the film makers have tried to expose a more profound social and existential problematic. Some examples are the television series *Godnatt jord* (the documentary based on Ivar Lo Johansson's epic about the *statare*) and Jiri Tirl's film *Pistolen*. According to Hellspong, the latter was the only example of a film that took the aristocratic ideals seriously and did not plea for manor-house life to adapt to modern society. Hellspong notes that the film can be seen as a "chivalrous defence of a long-since doomed lifestyle". The film ends, interestingly, with an existential touch, where the leading character, the countess, takes her own life with an old family heirloom, a pistol.

The *manor-house hunt* is a tradition going back a long way. It has previously been studied by Danish ethnologists such as Palle Ove Christiansen and Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, who – like Clifford Geertz – view hunting as a staged drama in which the historical traditions play a crucial part. The hunt is associated with a number of symbolic activities and rituals. Dress, weapons, and other equipment play an important part in the hunting tradition.

Angela Rundquist discusses how the hunt exposes the historical consciousness of the groups who indulge in it. The great symbolic value of hunting is obvious as soon as you enter a manor house; the hall is often decorated with hunting trophies. Exclusive hunting is hedged with rituals intended only for the initiated. Rundquist describes it as "an arena where tradition and modernity have merged and old and new elites present themselves". That is the most important function of hunting today, apart from the fact that it also contributes to the economy of the manor and the gourmet profile the house has a restaurant. The role of women in this lies in the social and cultural sphere. They ensure that the hunt as a complete concept goes off in the best possible way, so that even the linen and the dinner service are shown off. Hunting today can very well be combined with various forms of conferencing and tourism.

Royal hunts and the stories about them are almost mythological in their exclusiveness. Even today certain groups, such as business executives and other influential people, indulge in high-status hunting. This has also become a new economic niche for owners of manor houses, and the hunting is also exploited in coffee-table magazines about hunting and country life. Those who wish to take part have to be loaded not only with economic, social, and cultural capital, but also dressed in well-worn clothes of the right brand.

Mats Hellspong's chapter about the rhetoric of labourers' strikes answers questions about how the image of the manor house and its owner was shaped by those involved in three famous strikes: in Råbelöv in 1907, the harvest strike in Uppland in 1925, and the strike in Södra Möre in 1929–1931. Also interesting is the question of the almost ritual forms taken by the strikes. The patriarchal character was evident in the actions of the Kennedy family on the estate of Råbelöv in Skåne. The countess personally visited the strikers and tried to make them go back to work. Equally clear is the rhetorical counter-move by the strikers when the heart-wrenching evictions were publicly exposed in Skåne. The conflicts in Södra Möre are also best known for the spectacular evictions.

The strike in Uppland led to reactions in the form of strike-breaking and a "save the harvest" campaign. Hellspong combines an analysis of the social dimension of the actual events and the rhetoric, making this a rounded and fascinating essay. It is not just a matter of a construction and image of the phenomenon, a kind of ethereal fiction. The social and historical realities are emphasized in a salutary way.

Karin Lindvall devotes a chapter to the manor house as a tourist attraction and the images created and displayed for the purpose. The long, almost timeless, history of the manor house is a very important dimension for today's tourist. Beautiful buildings with parks and gardens, historic monuments, ghost stories, and romantic ruins sell the manor house. Lindvall also goes back in time and observes that the historical dimensions of national romanticism were crucial at the start of the last century. When the Swedish Tourist Association was founded, it was aimed at groups with cultural interests, e.g. schoolteachers. Manors and palaces were a part of the cultural heritage that they were expected to visit. Later, in the early days of the welfare state, the manor house was still viewed as cultural heritage, but other social dimensions were woven into the picture. The present-day tourist who visits manor houses and museum sites is often served a whole concept. At Julita in Södermanland (an estate owned by the Nordiska Museet) the concept consists of the main building, park, garden, herb garden, a gene bank for apples, a mini-farm for the children, etc.

What life is like for the people inhabiting the manor-house landscape today is the theme of Nicole Pergament's article. From a more general picture of the changed function of the manor house (i.e. from an agricultural production unit to a place where usually only the manor house itself with its park and garden is managed by the owner, while the lands and crofts are leased out), the searchlight is then pointed at some concrete examples. Through interviews she studies images of manor-house life as it is articulated today, of different groups who inhabit the crofts and farms on the state. Pergament seeks to communicate and analyse the images created *inside* the manor-house settings.

One of her findings is that the people who are "new" to the manor house have a much more unproblematic attitude to the manor house, its history and social environment. They enjoy living in a place where everything breathes history and culture. The impressive avenue leading to the main building is "super", and they identify with the manor house. Those who have laboured on the estate identify more with the parish and the surroundings. They wish to distance themselves from the old-fashioned patriarchal system, a relationship which the new "crofters" (frequently online or travelling) do not need to confront.

Here too there is a discussion of the heritage of the early welfare state and the breakdown of the patriarchal system. Olof Kleen, retired owner of Valinge, makes the interesting, but not surprising, observation in an interview that even if the conservatives and social democrats had different routes, they still had the same destination – the People's Home. The aim was not "to preserve the old society of the four Estates! For that was eliminated at the turn of the century and just afterwards," says Kleen, seeking to appear like a modern democrat. In retrospect the bygone times may seem like this to some people, but not all would agree, neither in the past when the struggle for better conditions was acute, nor today, when the people in the *corps de logis* are a financially strong and privileged elite.

As a whole, this volume is rich in content and well composed, with good documentation and illustrations giving added information. The images and stereotypes of the manor house are clear and recognizable, and the same can be said about the labourers' conditions. The link between the clichés and the reality is not explored in the same depth in all the essays, but this is not always the aim. Time and again, however, the reader feels a need to relate to a more profound understanding of the images of both the manor house and the labourer's cottage, not just a superficial study. The concepts of modernity and tradition could also have been problematized, as regards the actions of both the gentry and the labourers. What did it mean to be traditional? What did it mean to act in a modern way? This ethnological contribution to research on estates above all gives a new perspective on how the image of the manor house was socio-culturally constructed during the twentieth century.

*Kerstin Sundberg, Lund*

## Slaves to Their Passions

*Peter Henningsen*, I sansernas vold. Bondekultur og kultursammenstød i enevældens Danmark. Vols. 1 and 2. Landbohistorisk Selskab & Københavns stadsarkiv, Copenhagen 2006. 1,104 pp. Ill. English summary. ISBN 87-7526-200-2.

■ How can one describe the temperament and inclinations of the peasantry in pre-modern times in Denmark? Were the Danish peasants heavy, lethargic, obedient, stubborn, stupid and lazy, as a writer in a Danish and Norwegian economic journal wrote in 1764? What about the peasants of Funen, Zealand and Jutland, were they different? These questions are raised by the Danish ethnologist and historian Peter Henningsen, in his thorough study of agrarian conditions and peasant culture in Denmark. The study is published in two volumes that are also excellently illustrated with interesting images and texts.

Henningsen's main topic is to discuss and interpret how the Danish peasantry was seen and culturally portrayed in Denmark during the early modern era, through the agrarian reforms, and their aftermath during the nineteenth century. Obviously it is the continual negative view of the Danish peasantry as being dumb, illiterate, lazy, drunk, disobedient, stubborn and so forth, that is scrutinized in this study. It should also be noted that the peasantry is defined in a broad sense to cover different groups of people who lived and worked in the countryside, living mainly off the products and incomes of agriculture.

Agrarian production was the basis of Denmark's economy during the period. However, it seems that the people who actually worked on the land were dismissed and rejected by so many groups of the Danish population. How could that be? People in power of the state administration, the aristocracy, the burghers, learned people such as priests and parish clerks, all seemed to share basically the same attitude towards the peasantry. Naturally, there are some exceptions to the phenomenon, but they seem only to confirm the general observation of the inferior peasant. How can this phenomenon be explained and interpreted? It is stimulating to reflect on the question of the background to this pejorative view of the peasantry.

Henningsen gves voice to the cultural historian Robert Darnton's idea that most important thing for the professional historian – or the discipline of history – is not to educate and to increase our knowledge, but to give and discuss perspectives. Today class- and gender-perspectives and theories are common when the historian works with what is called intersectional theoretical methodology. This means that the historian must explore, explain and interpret from different perspectives guided by various theoretical approaches. In my view, analysis and interpretations should still be solidly founded in the empirical observations that exist and can be verified. Otherwise it is just a game that academics play. I think Henningsen has accomplished a study that works in both ways, as he presents rich empirical evidence and contributes various interpretative perspectives. In fact, the study offers an enormous amount of knowledge about how the peasantry was seen, at the same time as it conceptualizes and discusses interpretations of those images of the peasantry. We are also given copious knowledge about conditions in different Danish regions: Zealand, Funen with Tåsinge, Lolland, Falster, Møn, Ærø, Læsø, Langeland and eastern and western parts of Jutland. We are provided with general knowledge of Danish society in terms of social structure and hierarchical systems such as the four estates, and the function of the more sophisticated gradation of positions in the official and public state. These descriptions work as explorative contexts. The descriptions also seem to verify that the Danish peasantry basically had to stay at the bottom layer of society. Climbing the social ladder was nearly impossible and raising the important "cultural capital" was even more out of the question for a peasant during those times and societal conditions.

From the start I found the title of the study provocative: "Slaves of Their Passions". Is this a suitable and proper characterization? What message does it send? My reading of Henningsen's study says that it more or less shows the rationality of the peasantry's living and acting. Taking the circumstances for their acts, whether it is the hard-to-cultivate soil on the heaths of Jutland, or the brutal rule of a "stuck-up" burgher, a new "aristocrat" and manor owner, the peasants' response seems to me to be rational and not only passionate. It can also be asked whether they always had a chance to respond. In many cases they obviously didn't have any other choice but to endure the brutal punishments and so fort. In those cases I would not use the characterization "slavery to their passions". Nevertheless, the challenging title works well, as it promotes critical thoughts and gives a kind of diffuse feeling that maybe something is wrong. This cannot

be the only possible conclusion of a sophisticated cultural analysis of discourses of the Danish peasantry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an era that had such an abundance of innovations, reforms and modern thinking.

The first volume of the study is packed with empirical material that convincingly underpins how people higher up in the hierarchy expressed their negative views of people who were one step lower on the social ladder. There are examples that contrast with this general view but they are not many. From a top-down perspective I don't doubt that Henningsen has made a correct description of the phenomenon, relying on both relevant sources and results of relevant ethnological and historical research.

One problem with a cultural-discourse study of this kind is that the sources are primarily texts written by people who were higher up in the hierarchy. It is sources that probably do not reflect at all how peasants saw themselves. It should be remembered in the first place that Henningsen's objective is to study the discourse, the attitudes, that were directed and reflected towards the peasantry. Henningsen does not even say that he is searching for some kind of "truth" about how the peasantry was seen. Second, the sources also reflect how the upper layer in society wanted to express their attitudes, to other people in other social layers at the top. All in all, the chosen methodology is relevant but does not help to problematize what is detected. My impression from reading the first volume was that the intricate interpretations ought to be contrasted with other discourses.

In the second volume a variety of voices are heard and a more complex picture is painted as the discussion of physiocracy and the Enlightenment, as well as modernity versus traditions, is touched upon. The differences between Danish regions, e.g. Zealand, Funen and western Jutland, are presented and they also shed light on the diversity in the rural society. During the studied period the pejorative views of the peasantry seem to fade, and as the need for agrarian reforms grows, the importance of improvements for the peasantry is lifted higher on the societal agenda. From the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, it became more common to hear the peasantry described as an honourable and hard-working estate. Enlightened authors described the peasants of Jutland especially as laborious, freedom-loving, independent and thrifty, at the time in contrast to the Zealand peasantry. By drawing on the writings of authors such as Blicher and Aakjær we get an intricate, informed and close feeling of the time and the local conditions that they described in their work. The combination of various sources gives an interesting and extensive image of the scene.

The interpretation of modernity and traditionalism in Danish society, and among the Danish peasantry, can be related to discussion in the international research debate. One problem is that the concept of the peasantry as "traditional" in contrast to groups of people who were both enlightened and modern seems to be too simple. For historians participating in the German Potsdam research team (during the 1990s), and in a Swedish research-project on the subject of modernization and tradition (published in 2004), one issue was to problematize especially the concept of *tradition*. The need for more complex viewpoints, perspectives, on what it meant to be traditional or modern was obvious. Peasants' "addiction" to traditions should not always be seen as a hindrance to modernization. Instead tradition and modernity could go hand in hand; they would be two sides of the same coin. No modernization could be accomplished without taking traditions and people's experiences into account. That was one key concept when peasants' traditionalism was discussed. It would have been very interesting if Henningsen had discussed these aspects of especially the concept of traditionalism among the Danish peasantry. As his study deals with discourses it could have been a track to follow. The ethnologist Palle Ove Christiansen's discussion of the variety of attitudes that he found among the peasantry, for example, at the manor of Giesegaard, on Zealand, can also be developed further.

Another point of view is the critical discussion of different agrarian economic systems. Researchers who participated in manorial studies of the former East German regions stressed the fact that the dichotomy in terms of *Grund-* and *Gutsherrschaft* was overemphasized in older German agrarian research. When searching for socio-cultural patterns and attitudes the Potsdam team found that this oversimplified economic dualistic approach was not of optimal relevance. They did not even use the terms in their discussion of social relationships and patterns in the manorial milieus. This discussion could also have been interesting for Henningsen to relate to, especially as he also has references to these international researchers. Instead, Henningsen, like several other agrarian researchers in both Sweden and Denmark,

continues to use these concepts in their explorative research and as explanatory factors. Researchers are "staring themselves blind" at these handy over-simple analytical categories, and the connection between the basic manorial economic organization and cultural discourses is not developed. An intersectional methodology would be very fruitful for developing research and interpretations on this point. The task could be to focus on a phenomenon, e.g. *agricultural work*, in the countryside from the perspectives of class, gender, culture, and ethnicity, etc.

To sum up and conclude: Henningsen's study is very alluring, thorough, and it clearly shows how the discourse was displayed in Denmark. In a comparative perspective it is also interesting to reflect on the similarities and differences in the Swedish and Danish peasant discourses. From reading the first volume the thought popped up that *the uniqueness of the peasant estate* in Sweden – with its early representation in the estate parliament – also must have meant something fundamental for the general perception of the peasantry in Sweden. My impression is that we do not find this immensely pejorative discourse in the Swedish literature and sources, articulated so extremely explicitly, over and over again, as in the Danish sources. Let this be a starting point for reflections on attitudes to the peasantry in Sweden, in all its complexity, and let us make comparisons. What was similar – what was different?

*Kerstin Sundberg, Lund*

## Festive Meals and Everyday Food

*Festmåltid och vardagsmat.* Föredrag vid ett symposium till Anders Salomonssons minne 3–4 juni 2005. Mats Hellspong (ed.). Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, Uppsala 2006. 148 pp. ISBN 91-85352-64-0.

■ On 26 May 2004, one of the most prominent and popular figures in Swedish ethnology, Professor Anders Salomonsson in Lund, passed away. He was only 58 years old. This book about food culture is published in his memory. And with good reason. Food culture was one of Anders Salomonsson's favourite research fields, and his own contributions here helped to raise Swedish ethnological research on this topic to its high level. Two main elements in this were his dissertation *Gotlandsdricka* from 1979 and the volume he edited in 1987, *Mera än mat*, which opened new paths and pointed the way to new research fields.

It is therefore well-deserved that he is honoured here with a book of high quality, where Mats Hellspong's introductory article gives him all the credit he can rightly expect – without being uncritical. This article may also be seen as a survey of research on food culture in Sweden in the last 25 years, where Anders Salomonsson's contributions are put into their context, as is his significance for the Scanian Gastronomic Academy, described in the article by Sven-Olle R. Olsson.

The book is not structured in sections. On the contrary, articles of a more retrospective and historical character are mixed with essays on present-day food culture and meals. This is probably a wise strategy. The variation makes it reader-friendly, and it gives an opportunity to draw long lines backwards from examples of today's food culture.

Among the historical articles, it is noticeable that the food culture of academia is treated on an equal footing with the analysis of diet in a western Swedish industrial community. Nils-Arvid Bringéus and Jan-Öjvind Swahn – "the giants of learning", as they are called by Mats Hellspong – examine the food customs of the well-off, in articles that are written with gusto and great humour. Swahn's contribution about meals at university celebrations is anything but boring, and Bringéus gives examples of his impressive knowledge about the rhythm of meals in Skåne. Angela Rundquist, in her article "Meals with Class", makes us aware of how much clothes and table manners mean for a successful meal with a large investment of social and cultural capital. She points out that, whereas the father was the fulcrum in the theatrical staging of meals around 1900, today it is the children that are the stars of the show – a thought-provoking viewpoint. It is generally known that Strindberg loved to be in the centre. In Katarina Ek-Nilsson's article we can see how incredibly aware he was of the power balances that are also part of a meal. He describes meals as veritable battlefields, we understand. But we are also informed that, while Strindberg was living in Lund – there is a memorial tablet on the façade of the house where he boarded – he liked to eat pea soup with pork. This presumably passed; he had a well-known tendency to change his stance... Literary descriptions of meals are also the topic of Ingrid Nordström's interesting article.

At the other end of the scale, Birgitta Skarin Frykman examines food and meals in a working-

class community like Jonsered on the outskirts of Gothenburg in the first half of the twentieth century. There was no surplus here to allow any staging, as the crucial thing was the substantial aspect of the food. For the same reason, potatoes played a major part, supplemented with herring. Bread and coffee were fixed ingredients at breakfast. The main rule was that the one who earned the money, and thus brought the food into the house, was also entitled to bigger helpings than the others. This was hard on the women, who had no less responsibility for making ends meet and ensuring a reasonable diet.

Grith Lerche shares her profound knowledge of the history of the Danish *smørrebrød* and makes an interesting comparison with the Swedish *smörgårdsbord*, which has a greater element of fish than the Danish variant, and the Swedish herring is accompanied by hot potatoes while Danish herring is eaten with rye bread. The national is often revealed in such small details. In the Danish/Finland-Swedish home of this reviewer, we have chosen the Swedish alternative, because it tastes better.

In this section of the book one particularly fastens on Helene Brembeck's short but lucid article about the food habits of people who live on their own. Given that one of the purposes of the food situation is social, it is obvious that single culture offers new challenges. The same applies to widowers. Breakfast is easiest to handle, with the morning paper for company. For the other meals a single person has to acquire other routines, including fast food. The link between food and sociability is likewise central in Sören Jansson's fine article about food culture among bus drivers and care staff at an old people's home in Malmö. It is frightening reading. Flexitime, irregular eating habits, and control by authorities have a negative effect on the quality of both food and meals. Too many people are often forced to eat poorly in haste – or in stealth. This leads to feelings of guilt about not being able to live up to the requirements of healthy eating and living. The article is highly thought-provoking, revealing a bomb under all the hot air about healthy food habits. People too often ignore the purely social and structural circumstances surrounding food, as Jansson convincingly shows. It is likewise difficult to foster any meal aesthetic, which is the theme of Ann Helene Bolstad Skjeldbred's excellent little article, when you are a bus driver taking a break in the bus company's staff room.

We can thus observe that we are a long way today from the grandiose concern for the population and its food that was so characteristic of social policy in the Nordic countries in the 1930s. Both Marianne Pipping Ekström and Inger Johanne Lyngø, in their articles from Sweden and Norway respectively, provide useful reading for anyone interested in the social history of "the People's Home". Both articles are of a high standard. The same applies to Richard Tellström's article, which is distinguished by its methodological approach to research on food and meals. It is extremely inspiring and rich in perspectives.

To conclude, this book, although small in size, is well worth reading. There is not one bad article, and the breadth of focus has the effect that many readers should be able to derive inspiration here for further research. I warmly recommend the book. It amply serves its purpose: to remember Anders Salomonsson with pleasure and respect.

*Niels Kayser Nielsen, Aarhus*

## New Museum Studies in Denmark

*Ny dansk museologi*. Bruno Ingemann & Ane Hejlskov Larsen (eds.). Aarhus Universitetsforlag, Århus 2005. 314 pp. Ill. ISBN 87-7934-233-7.

■ The field of Museum Studies, museological education and research is expanding. The development runs parallel to the vast expansion of the entire "museum business" and "heritage industry" in the Western world since the middle of the 1980s. As the illustrious and industrial twentieth century came to its end, we hurried to preserve its remains, to save as much as possible. Whether this preservation and conservation movement had, and has, anything to do with the widely spread dystopias concerning the future is hard to prove, but one wonders if Oswald Spengler's vision of *Untergang des Abendlandes* is not gaining new relevance these days. Is the old Europe musealizing itself?

Anyhow, the need for museum and conservation and heritage professionals, as well as of more profound research in the field, is granted.

Since the end of the 1990s three chairs of museology or heritage studies have been founded in the Nordic countries; at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland and the universities of Umeå and Linköping in Sweden. Courses in museology are also given at the universities of Uppsala, Stockholm, Lund, Gothenburg, Copenhagen, Aarhus, Roskilde, Oslo

and Bergen. As far as pure museum research goes, Denmark is perhaps the best organized. Fifteen Danish researchers who represent a wide range of different disciplines some years ago combined their forces and founded a network of museological research, the product of which is this book: *Ny dansk museologi*. In a typical museological cross-disciplinary manner, these fifteen researchers represent archaeology, art history, ethnology, history, literature, media & communication, pedagogy, psychology, visual studies, etc. This diversity also reflects the fact that museology from a theoretical point of view is still rather weak on its own, and dependent on other disciplines.

The editors want to anchor the book in the concept of "new museology" as formulated by Peter Vergo *et al.* in 1989 – with the aim of establishing museology as a theoretical and critical discipline of the humanities. This reference to Vergo is rather peculiar, since at the time of the publication of Vergo's book in 1989, the "new museology" had already been a lively scientific discourse for 15–20 years, a fact that Vergo *et al.* did not seem to know, but the Danish researchers certainly should have known.

The book is divided into four categories of text: main articles, source texts, "in between" texts and project reports. The themes of the main articles are twofold: on the one hand, a focus on museum history and the history of the preservation movement in Denmark and on the other on exhibition theory and analysis, particularly art exhibitions. The project reports are the result of the research group's museological scrutiny of the museums of the city of Odense. The source texts and the "in between" short texts splendidly complement or support these articles.

There are four main articles dealing with the formation of the museum and preservation institutions in Denmark, covering the history of the Royal Kunstkammer 1650–1825, the institutionalising of the preservation ideology in Oldsakskommissionen in 1807 and a short history of the introduction of the open-air museum idea in Denmark: Bente Gundestrup, "The cabinet of curiosities 1650–1825 and its significance for the formation of the national museum system in Denmark"; Camilla Mordhorst, "The fall of the hybrids: The separation of cultural history from natural history"; Beate Federspiel, "The institutionalization of the idea of preservation in Denmark"; and Mette Skougaard, "Folk culture in museums", the latter being a very brief survey.

Gundestrup's article is an interesting and clarifying, though purely descriptive, survey of the genealogy of the National Museum, based mainly on her own in-depth research beginning with the idea of the *Kunstkammer*. New to me, and fun, is Mordhorst's description of the relations between nature and culture in the "hybrid" objects of the Royal Kunstkammer and their fate when the chamber was split up into specialized, scientific museums at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Federspiel contributes a more conceptual analysis of the preservation movement and the motives of the Danish State to pass national preservation laws at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Here concepts of "national identity" and "national heritage" play a major role, not the least interesting nowadays in Denmark because of the new "National Cultural Canon" that the government has compiled in recent years. The article is an extract of Federspiel's penetrating research on the concept of preservation and its implementations in institutions, law and administration as part of the nation-building project in Denmark.

In between these articles Jan Zahle has written about Danish collections of plaster casts of classic statues and busts – a nineteenth-century undertaking that many educational and museum institutions all over Europe were involved in.

Another group of main articles concentrates on art exhibitions, presenting some strategies and methodology for exhibition analysis, reporting on experimental projects with the visitors, and analysing a renewal of the exhibitions at the Glyptotek in Copenhagen. Traditionally, Museum Studies have never focused much on exhibition analysis – there have been a great many descriptions, but few analyses, at least in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Gitte Lønstrup's "Art, cult and culture: On the rearrangement of the antique collection at the Glyptotek" is an approval of the new principle of exposition which is thematic rather than chronological, and a broader mix of cultural history and art history, thus noting the ambitions of curators to offer visitors something more than the solely aesthetic experience.

Most interesting is perhaps Bruno Ingemann's and Lisa Gjedde's experimental *Vala Project*, trying to answer the question how a visitor creates meaning in, or out of, complex (artistic) works in an exhibition room: "The body in the museum – an experimental investigation of visitors and museum objects and space". Is it possible to understand what really happens between the object and its viewer or

user? Is the experience linked only to how the object has been contextualized, or what else might there be going on when an object is viewed in a museum? For the experiment a few persons were chosen to enter a dark room and deal with a series of films/images on a screen, accompanied by vocal texts and sound. The two researchers were also present, sitting somewhere in the background watching what happened. The analysis concentrates on important questions during a museum visit, such as the movements of the body and other spatial circumstances, distances, the shape and size of the room, standpoints and the visitors' individuality in relation to social interactivity and collective memory. The focus is also on the visual and textual dialogue with the work, as with the co-visitors, and how this affects the experience. This was an interesting experiment.

The third category of texts in this book is also experimental and methodologically interesting. The whole bunch of researchers gathered one day in Odense with an open mind, and visited all the important museums in the city: Odense City Museum, the Art Museum, the writer H. C. Andersen's Childhood Home and so on. Each of them then does an in-depth analysis of what they see and experience, some also making theoretical excursions into questions of research and collecting and modes of display in general. In spite of their individual approach to their objects, the research project (as they note along the way) is characterized by a certain intellectual collective and an establishment of discursive community. This is also evident in the presentations and it makes the result a lot more interesting to read. It is as if the different parts indeed made up a greater analytical whole.

The most interesting of these articles is Hans Dam Christensen's reflections on the concept of "research" in museums and how this is put into practice – that is to say, the relation between research and exhibition. There is this general conception of research in museums, that it usually supports the exhibitions directly in one way or another. But does it really? Christensen notes that there still is an urgent need for reflection, theory and analysis on the premises of research in (and for) exhibitions.

In all, *Ny dansk museologi* is a very welcome contribution to the museological discussion in Scandinavia and hopefully will stimulate further work with a critical scrutiny of the museums and all museum undertakings in society.

*Kerstin Smeds, Umeå*

## The Social History of Dirty Linen

*Ingun Grimstad Klepp*, Skittentøyets kulturhistorie. Hvorfor kvinner vasker klær. Novus forlag, Oslo 2006. 160 pp. Ill. ISBN 82-7099-436-7.

■ Ethnological research today considers issues on a broad scale. Big issues such as ethnicity and identity are one topic of interest, but specific issues like the material patterns in culture are also very common. A characteristic feature, however, is to place human beings and everyday life at the centre of the study.

In this book on "The Cultural History of Dirty Clothes", Ingun Grimstad Klepp has taken up a very common topic that at first sight seems only trivial. Dirty clothes and laundry are significant for the routines of everyday life. This is a very traditional female job that hardly any researcher has paid attention to. Washing dirty linen can, however, be seen in a historical and social context that shows us how attitudes to hygiene, technology and, to a certain amount, the female role has developed through history.

Grimstad Klepp works as research leader at SIFO, the National Institute for Consumer Research, in Norway. She has been working with issues of clothes and dress for many years. Laundry and how housework is divided among men and women is connected with how dress acts in communication between people. Among other things, Grimstad Klepp has taken part in an interdisciplinary project at the University of Oslo that focused on housework as ideology and practice. Her task was to analyse why dirty linen and laundry are still the most female-dominated household chore. The material for the study consists mostly of interviews and questionnaires compiled by the Norwegian Ethnological Survey, NEG. The current book is also a result of the study.

The study covers the period from 1860 to the present, a time of great development. From being one of the poorest countries in Europe, Norway today is one of the richest, a fact that also shows in how textiles and clothes are used. Our present lifestyle is described in questionnaires, whereas the chronicles of Eilert Sund from the 1860's enlightens the historical perspective on hygienic. In the early twentieth century clothes were still a major investment and they were meant to last almost a lifetime. The current way of looking after ones clothes is dominated by washing and ironing. In earlier times washing was not the main job, but mending to make the clothes last as long as possible. The materials differed a lot from those of

the present day. The bedclothes consisted mostly of sheepskins and feather beds, sheets were mainly used in the daytime as furnishing, not in a hygienic sense at night. New materials like cotton and linen, however, increased the need for more frequent washing. Modern furnishing textiles such as curtains and tablecloths also increased the amount of washing.

Many detergents have been used to make the washing as white as possible. Whiteness was a question of prestige; discoloured or stained cloth a sign of failure. Today the main target is to be free from any smell of the body; it goes for both clothes and the body itself. All kinds of odour must be avoided, and because of the increased quantity of clothes is it possible even to change clothes many times a day. The used ones are ready for washing. This has led to a huge quantity of linen categorized as dirty, and despite great technical development, a great deal more washing in the homes. The 1950s was a time for many social changes in society, and housework was also affected by new ergonomic thinking. The development considered technological advances such as washing machines, the organization and planning of laundry, new materials such as paper and plastic. Grimstad Klepp, however, concludes that a change in the great amount of washing nowadays requires a new way of thinking when it comes to habits and routines. Technology itself has not lessened the time required for maintaining a proper wardrobe.

As the task was to investigate why washing is a women's field, there is also room for male perspectives in the study. Here the questionnaires again play an important role as sources about common opinion. In rural areas work has traditionally been divided into female work indoors and male work outside, though women have been more flexible and participated in male domains more frequently than vice versus. Grimstad Klepp reflects upon the principles used as arguments as to why the gender division looks the way it does. She lets the informants describe how the attitude towards homework has changed. Many women write about how the younger generation nowadays share the housework, in contrast to experiences from their own childhood or even their own marriage. Society has changed and today marriage is often preceded by living together for a period, a time when domestic rules are perhaps made up. The ultimate role of women is no longer that of a housewife and one informant mentions how the changes in society in the 1960–1970s affected men and women differently. The women's emancipation took shape whereas men still saw their mother as a model for the ideal wife. It took a little longer for men to accept the new thinking in society.

Laundry is a process that concerns more than the actual washing. It starts with making a decision as to whether the garment needs washing or not and does not end until the clothes are put in the wardrobe in their right places, well ironed and folded. To achieve the best result the washing needs to be sorted; otherwise the clothes can be destroyed if washed at the wrong temperature, and so on. Many women insist on taking care of this process themselves and thereby retain control of clothes, keeping them ready to wear when needed. The belief that men are not up to the washing process is very common. Grimstad Klepp presents different theories as to why it has continued to be such a female-dominated task. Washing can be seen as a gift to the family and loved ones, an action performed out of love or loyalty. This gives her a possibility to gain power over the household. The woman is responsible for the family and the social appearance reflected through dress.

The most interesting chapters in the book deal with questions of cultural and social norms; what is seen as proper or improper behaviour. For example, there are issues of private and public, the role and purity of women, clothes as borders between the body and the surrounding society, and unwritten rules such as not showing your laundry to bypassing neighbours on Sundays. It shows that the theories of the distinguished anthropologist Mary Douglas are still of high priority when it comes to our attitudes about dirt, body and sex. Our behaviour is controlled by issues of taboo and rituals. Although the secretions of the body are natural – sweat, urine, blood etc. – all kinds of smell are shameful and a sign of poverty and mismanagement in our hygienic society. In the end it is the woman's responsibility to maintain cleanliness, for the man as well. According to Grimstad Klepp, however, handing over the responsibility to the men would be the best way to change the norms about washing, clothes and cleanliness.

*Yrsa Lindqvist, Helsinki*

## Experienced Grief

*Britta Lundgren*, Oväntad död – förväntad sorg. En etnologisk studie av sörjandets processer. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2006. 178 pp. ISBN 91-7203-783-0.

■ Britta Lundgren at the University of Umeå has written an interesting book about experiences of grief and about how close relatives cope in the present day with the process of mourning brought about by an unexpected death due to an accident. The book is included in a research project at Umeå entitled "A reconsideration of confidence. Survival after violence, sickness and accident".

The author's source material consists for the most part of in-depth interviews of eight bereaved women some time after their sudden loss of a husband or child. A few short telephone interviews are also included. All these interviews have the moment of the accident as their starting point, and have been anonymized by the use of fictitious names. The informants themselves took contact with the author after having seen newspaper articles and the posters she had put up. No men took contact and the book therefore contains no interviews with men. The author might well have profited by discussing what this can signify for the results of the study.

The author uses the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's analyses of death and immortality in modern society as the point of departure for her theoretical reasoning. She also utilizes other sociological and psychological research literature.

Lundgren gives an account of the various interviews as study-examples of different situations. The first example deals with a twenty-nine-year-old woman known by the fictitious name of Lena. She was left with two small children after her husband was killed in a traffic accident. She was interviewed on two separate occasions. The conversations were marked by obvious feelings of unreality, meaninglessness, outrage and anger. Socially speaking, this woman had, as had many others, been placed outside her previous social circle. She had also found contacts with different authorities, such as insurance companies and banks, to be frustrating. She appealed for more empathy and helpfulness from her surroundings in this extremely vulnerable situation. In the privacy of her own home, she often talked with her children about their father so that they would not forget him.

Two of the other women had suffered the sudden loss of a child. These mothers meant that it was important that the deceased children would not be forgotten by their relatives and friends. They experienced frustration, therefore, when no one would talk about them. One of the mothers criticized the callousness she experienced in connection with the traffic accident on the part of a doctor, the psychologist she consulted and even the firm of undertaker. The mother who had an active faith in God and in the life everlasting seemed to have coped with her grief better than those who lacked such faith. She stated during the interview that "I have children on both sides". With this, she was referring to her belief that her daughter has lived on after death and can therefore later be reunited with her relatives.

A special chapter of the book concerns the reaction of family members at the death of a spouse whose children are grown up. The author has interviewed a woman and her adult daughter; the daughter made notes in her diary during the period of time immediately following the accident. New, informal and richly varied rituals have come to gain importance in such families, such as, for example, the question of how the cremation urn is to be dealt with before it is buried. This particular family carried the urn with them around the neighbourhood and their country cottage.

One chapter deals with mourning as being the closure of a relationship, in that the mourner must break the ties back to what has been in order to continue on with life. Before mourning can be concluded, however, it must first be experienced. While grief is an emotional reaction to a loss, mourning is an operational activity through which one expresses one's grief. This can bring about a breaking of the ties to the deceased and, in this way, a return to new normality. In cases where mourning continues unceasingly, however, it is considered to be abnormal and pathological. Mourners can be assisted in more easily concluding their grief by contacting societal support authorities, such as the church mourning groups exemplified by the author. Here mourners can meet with others who have been and are in the same situation, and speak of their loss and grief. This can contribute to feelings of fellowship instead of the loneliness and isolation which can otherwise easily develop and get out of control. None of the author's informants had, however, participated in any mourning groups. She thus unfortunately has no individualized evidence as to what participation in such groups could have meant to any of these

persons. The author builds her presentation instead on interviews with a deaconess who has led such groups and on literature constituting instruction for mourning groups. The mourners in this study have, however, read such literature on their own, but the author has not discussed with them what these books have meant in their processes of mourning.

Mourning does not only lead to a severance of ties back in time, but also to gaining a new and different relationship to the deceased. This can take the form of, for example, keeping the memory of the deceased alive in a natural manner by means of spoken conversation. A collective memory is thus created that survives the individual life. In such instances, support groups and instructive literature can once again be of help. Biological death does not necessarily lead to a social death; this can instead be postponed for a long period of time. Here the author bases her analysis on the approaches utilized by the sociologists Zygmunt Bauman and Tony Walker. In Bauman's terminology, one can then indicate the rise of collective immortality activities. Websites for grief and mourning on the Internet can be of use in this respect. The author has studied the Internet network *Vimil*, which is a discussion forum for people who fit the category "We who have lost someone in the middle of our lives", with the address www.vimil.nu.

The book's strength lies in the author's conversations with the mourning women. She has obviously been very successful in establishing contacts despite the highly emotional situations that are the starting point for the book. The conversations that the author has held with the interviewed women have undoubtedly filled a therapeutic function for them, even if the author does not discuss this point. From a research-ethical point of view, it is important that interview conversations can have a positive benefit not only for the researcher, but also for the informants who find themselves in a critical situation and for whom the topic is emotionally charged. Such research-ethical viewpoints might well have been emphasized in the book. The author contents herself with noting that some of her informants wept during the interviews or were in a very upset frame of mind.

I would also like to have seen some discussion of the new, present-day rituals about which a great deal of newer literature can be found in Scandinavian cultural science. The author has for the most part conducted the analyses in her book by referring to international research literature in psychology and sociology, whereas references to cultural science are clearly underrepresented.

Despite these criticisms, I would recommend the book to all those working in the cultural sciences, and in other disciplines, who wish to acquaint themselves with how modern processes of grief and mourning for close relatives are expressed and coped with by women in extremely difficult situations of crisis.
*Anders Gustavsson, Oslo*

## Off the Edge

*Off the Edge. Experiments in Cultural Analysis.* Orvar Löfgren and Richard Wilk (eds.). Museum Tusculanum Press, Copenhagen 2006. 164 pp. Ill. ISBN 87-635-0509-6.

■ The terms we use are not simple vehicles of meaning. Everybody knows that, but we often forget or ignore it until the realisation catches us out. The Scottish poet Kenneth White reports his culture shock at discovering on his first visit to Greece many years ago that there people using public transport wait at a *stasis* for their *metaphor* to arrive. Related to *metapherein*, to transmit, or to carry something elsewhere, the Greek term is not a million miles removed from its Latin cousin, *transportare*. Latin permeates European languages to a greater or lesser extent, but few of us will have come across an expression used as a *transport*. And yet, it happens all the time. If the underlying concepts are the same, how and why is it that a term is borrowed from one language in preference to another? Moreover, how and why are some terms reinterpreted, invested with a different set of meanings, in the process of borrowing, and then become used internationally with their new meaning while they baffle young travelling poets who encounter them in their original context? Linguists may have an answer to these questions, which are significant puzzles for cultural analysis.

Orvar Löfgren and Richard Wilk present a collection of 25 short essays, 'experiments in cultural analysis', by an international group of scholars, all playing with concepts, meanings and expressions. In their introduction, the editors cannot resist using the *metaphor* metaphorically, and the volume sustains this playful mode – more or less – throughout. The book, originally published as a double issue of *Ethnologia Europaea. Journal of European Ethnology* 35:1-2 (2005) a year earlier, originated in a symposium

of European ethnologists, anthropologists, sociologists and archaeologists held in 2004, for which the participants were invited 'to invent (or re-invent) an interesting cultural process, a fresh perspective for analyzing some kind of cultural dynamic.' (p. 5). The editors state their aim as being 'to illustrate how different perspectives may enrich cultural analysis and allow a bit of playfulness and experimentation into the process' (ibid.). And the anarchic spirit, thus invoked, blows freely through the pages of this collection.

The book is fairly evenly divided into five themes that, among other things, seek to re-balance the theoretical emphases in cultural analysis: Sensing, Ageing, Moving, Transforming, and Mystifying. Cultural analysis has long – some would argue far too long – been preoccupied with a discourse analysis (what Kenneth White refers to as the dictatorship of discourse) casting just about everything as 'text'. Challenging this preoccupation, the authors in the first section 'Sensing' (Regina Bendix, Güliz Ger, Richard Wilk, Jojada Verrips) explore cultural phenomena that are not readily expressed in words and require a more sensual approach. Contributions under the heading 'Ageing' (Lynn Åkesson, Jonas Frykman, Orvar Löfgren, Elizabeth Shove and Mike Pantzar, Katarina Saltzman) discuss, in a sense, the neglected reverse of our innovation-obsessed civilization – processes of decline, decomposition, or falling out of fashion. The next section, on 'Moving', with its focus on temporal movements that are undetected or disregarded for whatever reason, is particularly fascinating for this reviewer. Using sound as metaphor, Ella Johansson's essay on the Doppler effect offers much food for thought to anyone dealing with heritage and tradition. Every cultural analyst in this age obsessed with the speed of change should spend some time pondering Lars-Eric Jönsson's salutary reminder that slow motion is not *stasis* (and that even *stasis* can change imperceptibly over a long period of time). Sven-Erik Klinkmann offers a new take on the old problem of *Ungleichzeitigkeiten*. Other contributions to this section are by Per-Markku Ristilammi, on 'Stealth', and Kathleen Stewart, on 'Still Life'. Attempts at culturally 'Transforming' our everyday world often have unintended and sometimes contradictory effects, as the contributions by Gösta Arvastson, Russell Belk, Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević, Tom O'Dell, Birgitta Svensson, and Robert Willim show. At various points in this section, the concept, introduced by the German songwriter Reinhard Mey in the 1970s, of the *Nonkonformistenuniform*, kept popping up in the back of this reviewer's mind. Finally, Billy Ehn, Kristofer Hansson, Sarah Holst Kjær, K. Anne Pyburn and Mikkel Venborg Pedersen examine aspects of the irrational and mysterious under the heading of 'Mystifying'.

This is an adventurous and quirky collection. It will rattle those who complacently plough their own little patch of the ethnological field. As the title suggests, it is an experiment that may be regarded as 'off the edge'. Fun and games it surely is, but is it ethnology? The answer depends not least on what we take ethnology to be, and to be about. Some twenty years after 'Writing Culture' (slightly) rocked the establishment in anthropology, the capacity for, and epistemological use of 'objective' descriptions and pure analytical rigour are more questionable than ever before. The editors offer a stimulating collection of experimental ethnography and playful analysis that owes more to Paul Feyerabend than would have been considered good for the discipline even a few years ago. Meant neither as normative prescription nor as a manual for the future, the book suggests alternative ways of looking at culture, as well as alternative aspects of culture to look at, thereby opening up a necessary and, some might argue, long overdue debate. Those who would like to confine European ethnology to the iron cage of scientistic antiquarianism will surely find plenty to fault this volume for. But this reviewer hopes very much that its contributors will join the panels and workshops at the 2008 conference of the *Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore* in their endeavour of 'liberating the ethnological imagination'.

*Ullrich Kockel, Derry*

## Music and People

*Musik och människor. Folkmusik från Kristinestadsnejden.* Marianne Maans (ed.). Publikationer från Finlands svenska folkmusikinstitut, Vasa, 2006. 152 pp. Ill. ISBN 952-9669-25-9. CD included.

■ This book aims to give a glimpse of a fascinating folk music landscape, and can be used for learning this music. At least, that is what Marianne Maans hopes. And yes, it is an interesting collection of music and songs, even if the musical samples sound similar

to what can be heard from other parts of Swedish-speaking Finland, and from Sweden. It is not a unique material in that sense. And the text tells us, at least partly, the same old romantic story that in the old days there was much more music and song on all occasions in our daily life. I still don't believe that.

Although Maans is the compiler of the examples of tunes and songs, Ann-Mari Häggman, who is a well-known researcher in Swedish-Finnish folk music, has written the main text. Marianne Maans is a Swedish-Finnish folk musician not known to me before. So the scholar gives us the background of the music and lyrics, while the practitioner make the selection of tunes and songs, does the notation and produces the CD with 61 samples that is found in the back of the book. That was probably a good way to divide the labour.

This is a book primarily about music and the different occasions when the tunes were played. There are also some glimpses into the dances that were often danced to this music. And it is always interesting to notice that the minuet was a popular dance in every sense, and not a dead high society dance in Swedish-speaking Finland. That is an obvious difference compared with Sweden, where the minuet probably was danced too, but disappeared somehow to give way to the dominance of the polska.

Today questions of gender are on every agenda, except in this book. It seems as if men played all instrumental music and all songs were sung by woman. Perhaps that is the way it was, and if so it is interesting. But without a word about the gender issue in the text, there are brief biographies of more than fifteen male fiddlers and three woman singers.

Despite this criticism, a collection like this is important for at least two reasons. First, it gives the local and national Swedish-Finnish folk music musicians easier access to the archive material, and second it give possibilities to make cross-cultural comparisons concerning the tunes, repertoires and ways of playing the tunes and singing the songs. But nothing in the book is unique; it is rather a good collection of examples.

*Mats Nilsson, Göteborg*

## The Hunger for Harmony

*Lena Martinsson,* Jakten på konsensus. Intersektionalitet och marknadsekonomisk vardag. Liber, Stockholm 2006. 233 pp. ISBN 91-47-07729-8.

■ Are economic forces something one just has to adapt to? Is continuous change and growth an inevitable force? Do we have to think in terms of leaders and followers? And how is normative heterosexuality relevant for interpreting the division of labour in industry?

These are some of the questions Lena Martinsson raises in her new book, the title of which means "The Hunt for Consensus". The book is based on a participatory study in an industrial corporation and on an analysis of the visions of diversity in the corporate world. Martinsson applies intersectional perspectives and shows how certain conditions almost manage to naturalize the prevailing division of labour. Perceptions of gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality and age are combined in different ways, and create unexpected situations and alliances. Through her title, Martinsson reveals that she sees consensus as one of the dominant norms in the corporate world, and she argues that this norm is spoken of in terms of universalism and essentialism.

The main part of the book is devoted to an analysis of a larger company E and its subsidiary company E1. She studies how the different employees think and talk about society and organization, and how they reflect on the motivation for work. She further explores how different groups and individuals oppose the dominant expectations of shared goals and commitments for everyone in the company.

Through the last chapters of the book she sees the discussions at the companies in a wider societal context and analyses the broader influence of the corporate vision of diversity, particularly notions of nation, leadership and democracy.

The first seven chapters of the book describe the construction of and struggles for harmony and community, as well as various confrontations – regarding how to understand economy, work, division of labour, and the processes of this kind of division. The confrontations can be found between leaders and the workers, between women and men, between Swedes and immigrants, between men and machines, and within individuals. Martinsson has done extensive fieldwork in the companies, which gives the reader vivid descriptions of the environment and the ac-

tors. In addition to her own observations and field notes, Martinsson has also interviewed the different groups of employees. The last three chapters of the book are devoted to the analyses of how the vision of diversity is present in the rhetoric of the corporate world. Here she mainly bases her analyses on public texts, speeches and manifestos.

Although Martinsson identifies a wide variety of ways to understand both "work" and "the company" among the management as well as among the workforce, she also focuses on certain dominant norms, such as those of consensus and diversity.

Martinsson finds the rhetorical celebration of diversity to be central both among management and in the more general discourse. To me her analyses of the diversity discourse are the most thrilling parts of the book. She shows how the homage to diversity also seems to be homage to fundamental difference. While both companies and nations claim to want people of different skin colours, different generations and different genders, there also seems to be a widespread notion that skin colour, gender and generation represent fundamental differences between individuals. These fundamental and essential differences can obviously not be isolated from existing power hierarchies.

Among the management, the past is generally looked upon negatively. Martinsson identifies how certain connections are drawn between the different groups and certain values and characteristics. While management is seen to represent progress and the future, the unionized labour is seen to represent conservatism and the past. Interestingly, the machinery is thought not to be flexible enough and also something pointing towards the past. Furthermore, certain tasks are defined as belonging to certain characteristics. The well-paid printing jobs are defined both as manly and as Swedish, and women and immigrant men are thus mostly excluded from this work.

Particularly among the management, Martinsson points out ambivalences and incoherence. While the management stresses that all employers should feel the same responsibility towards the company goals – they are at the same time reproducing difference by constantly looking at and talking about the labour force in terms of "the other". Connected to this is also ambivalence regarding the different roles of leadership. Is the leader a part of a team, or is he the old-fashioned ruler?

The leaders in the company are seen as the true agents, while the main workforce are seen as less autonomous, as objects in the managements attempts at education and explanation. Martinsson argues against the rather hegemonic perception that corporate culture is built from above and then spread out to the rest of the company.

I find it particularly interesting how Martinsson identifies the underlying discourses, so dominant that they are hard to challenge. One of these is the discourse of change. The management take for granted the inevitability of change and simultaneously understand change as synonymous with progress and positive development. Together with this also follows an inevitable belief in personal development, continual learning, and humans striving for change.

Also taken for granted is the privileged position of industrial-capitalist knowledge. The economic forces cannot be argued against. They just are, and the management's interpretation of these forces is seen as the only possible interpretation. If the workers disagree it is only because they do not have enough information and education. If they only had the necessary knowledge – the true knowledge – everyone would agree. The industry would then reach its ultimate level of effectiveness with everyone understanding and working towards the common goal.

Martinsson lifts up notions that are widely taken for granted, and shows how these notions from the corporate world also to some extent can be found on a national and political/bureaucratic level. The same mechanisms that are expected to function in the company are also expected to work on a national level.

I sometimes wish Martinsson had given more room to her informants, and slightly less room for her own speculations. One small example: In the discussion of Stig, pp. 77–78, I would have loved to hear in far more detail Stig's thoughts about going from the printing press to the binding. What did he consider to be the biggest changes, what did he mean when he said that the changes of job also affected his domestic life? Martinsson's speculations on masculinity might be valid, but I would have liked to hear more from Stig, to get a better foundation before interpreting him.

This book could be seen as an exercise in intersectional perspectives. Martinsson has been among the pioneering researchers in introducing these to Scandinavia. In some ways this exercise seems to have positively forced Martinsson to explore connections which might otherwise have been left undone, in other ways it might have limited her creativity. Do the right

ingredients necessarily make the best study?

Martinsson has also written a very personal book. She is extremely present through the study. We get to hear her reflections throughout the process, and she offers more in terms of her questioning reflections than in terms of clear-cut analysis. For the most part, I think this works well. She shares a very realistic tale of a research process, and it is interesting to be forced to recognize her as a central actor all through the book.

Martinsson provides challenges both theoretically and stylistically. She is ambitious and conscientious, and her work always creates something new. *Jakten på konsensus* left me wiser, curious and slightly uncomfortable. It is timely and relevant and should be read by researchers in a wide variety of fields.

*Tone Hellesund, Bergen*

## Ethnological Questionnaires and Interviews

*Kunnskapssamtaler.* Anna Moestue & Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred (eds.). By og Bygd XXXIX, Oslo 2006. 114 pp. Ill. ISBN-13: 978-82-90036-78-7. ISBN-10: 82-90036-78-7.

■ Norsk etnologisk gransking (NEG), the Norwegian ethnological survey, was founded at the Norsk Folkemuseum (the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History) in 1946. In the last thirty years the survey was in different premises and under a different organization from the museum, until they were amalgamated in 2005. This occasion was marked by a theme issue of the journal *By og Bygd*. In five articles, authors from Tromsø Museum, Norsk Folkemuseum, and NEG illuminate and discuss how ethnological documentation and research can be done with the aid of interviews and questionnaires with permanent informants.

In an article which has the same title as the book, "Knowledge Conversations", Marit Anne Hauan points out that ethnological interviews entail a mutual dialogue which gives opportunities for new angles and ideas during fieldwork. The interview is a form of conversation where shared knowledge is developed. Sometimes it is therefore an advantage if the interviewer offers his or her own personal experiences. The interviewer must be flexible and able to interpret the atmosphere and the information while the conversation is in progress. It is important not to become blind through over-familiarity, to find new perspectives on well-known phenomena.

Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred describes the methods of the ethnological questionnaire. NEG's questionnaires are coloured by the close links between folkloristics, ethnology, dialectology, and museum work. In the first decades the questionnaires were supposed to give answers to factual questions for an entire district, but without the informants' personal interpretations. Now the focus is on the informant's own experiences and values. The important thing is not geographical and social representativeness but that the informant is willing and interested enough to share personal matters. It is normally considered that interviews are better than questionnaires as a documentation method. With a questionnaire it can be more difficult to capture associative information. NEG's experience of using permanent informants is that spontaneity is common in the responses, with comments that amplify the subject of the questionnaire. The stable relationship and trust that often develops between NEG's staff and the informants makes it possible to distribute questionnaires on sensitive topics and still get detailed answers. Many of the responses become complete narratives or autobiographies.

In connection with NEG's questionnaire activity, Anne Moestue tells of one of the permanent informants, Mikael, who was born in 1903. He was a shoemaker by trade, and over the years he answered many of NEG's questionnaires. He was able to give a lively account of facts, personal experiences and opinions, and he had a talent for bringing in new aspects. Mikael's narratives also highlight the ethical responsibility in archiving and studying people's personal narratives. Contrary to practice, Mikael is presented with his full name, photographs, and extracts from his texts. Anonymization, according to Moestue, would have meant taking his own words and thoughts away from him.

Ann Bolstad Skjelbred compares the work of constructing two questionnaires on the same theme, issued with 44 years in between. The first questionnaire about pregnancy, birth, and child care was distributed in 1954 to gather historical facts and archaic folk traditions. Norwegian tradition was to be placed in a larger historical and geographical context. In 1998 the study was followed up with a new questionnaire on the same topic but geared to the present day. Now it was important to capture the influence of social changes on personal experiences

and attitudes. A great deal had changed during the intervening years. Having children is now a personal choice, and fathers have acquired a visible role. Totally new subjects such as adoption, abortion, ultrasound examinations, and amniocentesis were introduced to the new questionnaire.

Trond Bjorli discusses ethical, legal, and practical problems in the publication of photographs from the Norsk Folkemuseum collections. The article focuses on the rights of the people in the photographs. This issue often affects museums and archives which take over photo collections. The author describes the Norwegian legislation and reveals that there are many borderline cases in the interpretation of the law. Institutions with photo collections therefore have a great moral responsibility when publishing pictures, and when doing photographic documentation it has become increasingly important to obtain the consent of the subjects as regards the use of the pictures. The captions and the context of publication can also cause offence to the people depicted. Publication of photographs on the Internet has made it trickier to handle pictorial material in a legally correct and ethical way.

The book rounds off with a chapter on how to construct ethnological questionnaires, describing the path from the idea of what you want to know to the archiving of the responses. This is a manual with clear headings which deals with all the points a researcher should consider. The chapter is a useful practical summary of the whole book and its message. The articles are instructive and use good examples to present important aspects of work with interviews and questionnaires. The reader is constantly reminded of the legal and ethical responsibility one has when documenting people's personal lives. The authors show that this should permeate the entire research process. Even though the legislation differs slightly between the Nordic countries, the problems are the same.

*Göran Sjögård, Lund*

## Danish Workers Before and After the Cold War

*Niels Jul Nielsen*, Mellem storpolitik og værkstedsgulv. Den danske arbejder – før, under og efter Den kolde krig. Museum Tusculanums Forlag, Copenhagen 2004. 374 pp. Ill. ISBN 87-7289-862-3.

■ Nielsen's book is number 6 in the series edited by Thomas Højrup, "Stats- og livsformer", and is a result of the project "Life-modes and the Welfare State at a Crossroads", financed by the National Research Council for the Humanities. The title means "Between High Politics and the Shop Floor: The Danish Worker Before, During and After the Cold War", but an alternative title could have been "The Rise and Fall of Social Democracy", at least as I read the book.

First of all, it must be said that Nielsen's book is not particularly accessible. This is not really a criticism. It means that the presentation contains so much material and has so many angles that it is difficult to grasp. The reader is actually recommended to start with chapter 8, "Summary and Theoretical Perspectives". At the same time, it should be said that it is not difficult to follow the main lines, namely, the struggle of two labour movements – the communists and the social democrats – against each other. An important collateral theme is the effect of foreign influences on national Danish politics. This of course concerns the USSR and the USA. Another important theme is the relation between those in control of the movement and those who were controlled inside or outside the movement. Linking two worlds – the shop floor and high politics – is the most important task of the book, Nielsen writes. Since he starts with the 1930s and ends in 2000, it is no small task he has undertaken.

Social democracy pursued a pro-USA policy, and it seems as if the movement sided with the West early on, according to Nielsen. But I would have liked to see an account of the Danes' interest in a Nordic defence pact towards the end of the 1940s. When the Norwegians rejected this idea, the Danes were nevertheless prepared to establish a kind of pact with the Swedes, in other words, Danish social democracy did not meekly submit to the great power in the West. As Nielsen shows, however, Western influence gradually became very strong, and the social democratic party became a mouthpiece of US anti-communism. One consequence of this was that the Danish communist party became the main enemy of social democracy, both on and off the shop floor. Nielsen touches on the function of the concept of democracy in the party-political struggle. On page 126 he portrays the social democratic party as a puppet of the USA. The concept of democracy helps to maintain the socialist illusion "while at the same time it elegantly links social democracy with the incarnation of capitalism *par excellence*: the USA". But the question is how much the orientation to the West meant for the social democratic victory over the communists in the parliamentary election

of 1947, and what role was played by the advance of Soviet communism in Eastern Europe.

Danish communism – like its Swedish counterpart – seemed to be on the way to becoming socially acceptable again in national politics when the workers were reminded once again that communism was not just fair words but also grim acts. What happened when the people tried to revolt could be observed by Danish workers in Berlin, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Nielsen claims that the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 marked the end of Danish communism. "After the events in Hungary, the communists were never again the potential revolutionary factor that they had been until 1956" (p. 270).

Nielsen shows in an interesting way that Danish workers did not simply imitate American imperialism. In local political and union contexts the representatives of communism often enjoyed much greater confidence among the workers than their political mandate justified. The rhetoric of national and global politics had to give way to personal acquaintance in local politics.

One criticism that I cannot refrain from expressing is that Nielsen mostly applies a macro or meso perspective. He is not so often down on the shop floor. The only real exception is chapter 5, "Hot Workers during the Cold War 1949–59". I sometimes wonder how close the author really is to the Danish worker; for example, I react when he talks in one place of "such a relatively insignificant object as a union banner" (p. 55). In the book *Med fanorna för folket* (1991) I describe the making of eight trade union banners in Gothenburg. The banner certainly was not regarded as "insignificant". It often provoked bitter strife.

Nielsen has nevertheless produced a large and interesting work. The parallels in the Danish and Swedish development for the two labour parties are striking. It would therefore have been good to have international comparisons. Perhaps next time.

Finally the illustrations simply must be mentioned. The pictures and their highly informative captions are actually a fascinating book within the book.

*Sven B. Ek, Gothenburg*

## The Calendar in Pre-Christian Scandinavia

*Andreas Nordberg,* Jul, disting och förkyrklig tideräkning. Kalendrar och kalendariska riter i det förkristna Norden. Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi XCI, Uppsala 2006. 169 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-85352-62-4.

■ One of the things that constitutes our culture most of all, although we perhaps do not think about it so much, is time. We all follow timetables that govern our reality in both work and leisure. Just think of the regulating function that the change from normal winter time to summer time has in our modern society. We are all forced to follow the clock, and we slavishly put it back or forward twice a year. We have no choice if we want to function adequately in society. The precision with which we count hours in modern times was unknown in the past. The modern mass media also steer our everyday lives to a great extent when it comes to calculating time.

Many of the things to do with calculating months, years, weeks, and days we learn as children and then take completely for granted. When I teach a course on Man in Culture and bring up the names of the months at the end of the year – October, November, December – not many students can explain them. Anyone who knows a little Latin understands that they mean the eighth, ninth, and tenth months. Yet the months according to present reckoning are the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth. Very few have thought of this discrepancy, which goes back to the fact that in ancient Rome the year began on the first of March.

There are many other interesting phenomena in our calendar, such as the calculation of Easter. If one starts looking for explanations for the structure of the calendar and the rites that accompany special days of the year, one quickly finds a rather complicated and chequered history. Much of it goes back to Christianity and the feast days distributed through the calendar year. The history does not begin there, however; in the pre-Christian era people calculated months and years, and set their feast days, in a somewhat different way. Interestingly, old traditions of chronology survived for a long time in the Nordic countries, probably right up to the start of the twentieth century.

In his new book *Jul, disting och förkyrklig tideräkning* Andreas Nordberg sets himself the task of explaining a great many interesting matters in the time before the introduction of Christianity to Scandinavia. One thing that is clear is that Christianity in its Ro-

man Catholic form also changed the calendar among the early Nordic peoples. The Christian calendar was introduced in the mid-twelfth century. The important thing for the church was that Easter – the greatest Christian holiday – could be placed correctly. Here it followed the practice established at the Council of Nicaea in 325, which meant that Easter followed the first full moon after the spring equinox. As a result, the date of Easter can fluctuate over a period of about a month. This has to do with the old church tradition of trying to harmonize the lunar year and the solar year as much as possible. The interesting thing is that our modern desire for rationalization has not gone so far that we have abandoned this rather complicated way of calculating Easter.

The discrepancy between the 354 days of the lunar year and the 365 days of the solar year has caused many problems. In many cultures the coming of the new moon and the full moon have been perceived as important events to which major festivals were linked. But if you want these festivals which have been determined according to the phases of the moon to fall at roughly the same time during the solar year, then you have to do something. Otherwise there will be a backward shift of 11 days. To reconcile the two calendars it is therefore necessary to insert intercalary years or months. This is evidently what people in ancient Scandinavia did.

It is interesting to read what Nordberg writes about the calculation of the week, of the quarters of the year and various ritual cycles. Here he uses what seems to be every available kind of evidence: literary sources (Icelandic sagas), early church records, Roman history, runic staves, etc. This is fragile material which must be brought together in a relevant way if it is to give results. It is extremely important that Nordberg provides a thorough survey of what the dark time of the year – Yule, which has nothing to do with the Christian celebration of Christmas – meant in ancient Scandinavia. As in many other places, the time of the sun's return was extremely significant. We learn here how the seven-day week was introduced in Scandinavia, and the chronology of months and years. There are interesting expositions of the inclusive and exclusive reckoning of days, for example, during a week. The set expression "in eight days" reflects an inclusive way of counting. The author believes that counting in weeks came very early here in Scandinavia. It may go back as far as the third or fourth century.

Nordberg has done extensive work on the analysis of festive cycles and chronology in ancient Scandinavia. He presents very plausible coordination arguments for ambiguous information about festivals and chronology.

Certain minor repetitions in the text suggest that the chapters were perhaps originally written as independent articles. All in all, the book is richly rewarding and even exciting reading for those who want to know more about the Nordic calendar through the centuries.

*Nils G. Holm, Åbo*

## Cross-Border Neighbours

*Naboliv: Värmland-Hedmark. Arkiven berättar – Arkivene forteller.* Peter Olausson (ed.). Värmlandsarkiv i Karlstad, Karlstad – Statsarkivet i Hamar, 2005. 160 pp. ill. ISBN 91-631-7374-3 and ISBN 82-303-0446-7.

■ The last decade has seen increasing contacts between Swedish archives in Värmland and their Norwegian counterparts across the border in Hedmark. There is a desire to increase the accessibility of the archives with the aid of tuition and research guides. This book was produced to mark the centenary of the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway in 1905. One aim is to present the history of cross-border contacts and to inspire professional and amateur researchers to further study of the topic. The book covers the time from the end of the seventeenth century until around 1930. The emphasis is on the period from 1850 to the start of the twentieth century.

The articles are written by archival officers and university scholars who present their research findings. In alphabetical order they are archive director Alain Droguet, Associate Professor Jan Jörnmark, archivist Thomas Kvarnbratt, archivist Peter Olausson, Professor Ragnar Pedersen, regional state archivist Per-Øivind Sandberg, archive director Berith Sande, head archivist Cæcilie Stang, and university lecturer Martin Stolare. The participating archives are Arkivverket Statsarkivet in Hamar in Norway and the following Swedish archives: Emigrantregistret – Bryggan, Folkrörelsernas Arkiv för Värmland, and Landstingsarkivet, all located in the Archive Centre in Karlstad.

The essays provide insight into the local administration of both countries and the documents left by this.

The Nordic countries have a similar administrative history, yet there are certain differences which a researcher must bear in mind to be able to use the sources in the best possible way. Aspects of source criticism are considered, and we are told how different kinds of documents can complement each other. There are also unused documents that deserve attention.

Articles in the book tell of social contacts and commercial connections that have existed for a long time between the people on either side of the border, which has been established since the thirteenth century. The migrations across the border in the nineteenth century, involving seasonal labourers, tradesmen, merchants, and emigrants of both sexes – were of great economic significance. Necessities of life, capital, new kinds of tools, and other innovations followed them over the border. Several of the authors in the book encourage research which is not confined by the national frontier and considers the important contacts across the border.

The union and its dissolution is a central theme of the book. It is noted that people's everyday routines do not seem to have been affected much by the tense political situation in 1905. The documents of the local authorities and the reports of public officials often lack information about events in national politics. The authors therefore stress the importance of combining different sources. Private notes and letters can tell of personal difficulties, fears of war, and the rumours and stories that flourished. The diary of a Värmland clergyman and the memoirs of a schoolgirl about the threat of war in 1905 are used to describe personal experiences of this kind. The shaping of a national and regional identity is investigated with the aid of the temperance movement in Värmland.

Swedish-Norwegian contacts were important for industry, business, and trade in the nineteenth century. Several Norwegian companies were active in the Swedish forestry and paper industry. It is interesting that Norwegian capital played a major role for Swedish industry in the second half of the nineteenth century. Norway had been favoured by increasing forestry exports since the start of the century. The powerful *odal* law in Norway, however, meant that the forestry companies had difficulties building up large holdings of forest at home. Sweden, by contrast, was ideal for Norwegian entrepreneurs. The ironworks had received large holdings of forest from the state, which could be purchased by Norwegian companies. In Sweden the legal rules made it easier to sell or lease private land which was amalgamated into large holdings.

The break-up of the union was mainly due to economic factors. Swedish interests tried to save the ironworks and prevent Norwegian investments. In addition, Sweden followed the European trend and imposed tariffs. One of the authors states that it was not until the 1990s that the Norwegian interests in Sweden began to recover, and this happened in the same branches of industry as a century before.

In the closing essay there is a cultural analysis of peasant trade in the nineteenth century, the aim being to see whether it is possible to demonstrate any social and cultural solidarity between the people on either side of the border. The author wants to demolish the idea that peasant culture was solely local and lacked broader contacts. It turns out that the trade pursued in the border zone was based on established personal relations, which were necessary to secure a market for the wares.

*Göran Sjögård, Lund*

## A History of Exhibitions

*Lennart Palmqvist,* Utställningsrum. Akantus, Stockholm 2005. 193 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-974830-2-8.

■ It was with high expectations that I opened Lennart Palmqvist's book about the history of exhibitions. Here at last was a monograph that tried to capture the visual staging of art and material culture in historical perspective. This is a praiseworthy task that Palmqvist has set himself, and an enormous one. For with Palmqvist's very broad definition of an exhibition, the history starts in antiquity, and he can find exhibitions everywhere: in both the public and the private space, aimed at everyone or at a private circle of acquaintances. Moreover, there is of course an extremely wide range of exhibition types. In the last 200 years a rough distinction has been made between cultural history, natural history, and art history as the themes of the most important types of public exhibitions. In addition there are of course the epoch-making international exhibitions, which are a special variant. If we go further back in history, however, we find these basic types mixed with each other and blurred into completely different forms of exhibition practice, which also reach far into the private sphere. Capturing them all is thus an inhuman task, and Palmqvist writes in the preface that he has

chiefly studied art exhibitions. With this in mind, the reader can set out on a long journey.

The story begins half a millennium before the Christian era, with the Romans' collections of sculptures, and how these were put on show in both public and private spaces. This is followed by a number of small chapters, describing how sculptures were given new locations and were exhibited in different ways in the Renaissance, the baroque, classicist, and romantic periods, up to the great European revolutions and the coming of art history as an academic discipline, accompanied by new ordering principles.

The individual chapters are built up around well-known examples from museum history. We hear about Hadrian's private exhibition space in his villa in Tivoli (was it an exhibition?), about the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, the Villa Borghese, the Belvedere gallery, the Louvre, Altes Museum, Thorvaldsen's Museum, Crystal Palace, down to the attempts of the avant-garde and fluxus art to break the museum framework. In other words, it is the classical examples that are brought up here, at least when viewed through the eyes of an art historian.

If the purpose of the book was to tell of the staging of works of art in a collecting practice through time, this could have explained the selection of examples, apart from the fact that one would have to define one's concept of art to be able to transfer today's concept of art back in time. Palmqvist, however, has a broader aim. He says that he wants to describe "how the exhibition space came into existence and how it was used as visual communication". If so, the choice of examples seems far too narrow. The cabinets of curiosities (*Kunstkammer* and *Wunderkammer*) set up during the Renaissance in Scandinavia and all over Europe, with their microcosm of strange objects of all kinds, are scarcely mentioned; the same applies to the condensed taxonomical rooms of the eighteenth century, the archetype of which was the cabinet with trays of herbaria. Where is the expanding museum space in the form of the open-air museum and the attempts at international exhibitions to achieve living representations?

There is no doubt that Palmqvist has a comprehensive knowledge of his topic, and that he has set himself an important task, namely, to view exhibitions as a totality of form and content, where the form – that is, the way the objects and works are set up and in what context (in a concrete visual sense as well) – is crucial for the reception of the actual exhibitions.

*Camilla Mordhorst, Copenhagen*

## The Production of Memory

*Memories and Visions. Studies in Folk Culture IV.* Owe Ronström & Ulf Palmenfelt (eds.). Tartu University Press, Tartu 2005. 175 pp. ISBN 9949-11-247-8.

■ Memory and its production have attracted much scholarly attention in recent years, not only in our field of ethnology with its strange and fateful predilection for things past and disappearing. Given that long-standing preoccupation, and the political as well as academic fall-out associated with it, ethnologists have been particularly keen to engage with approaches that see the past as a construct of the present. The fashion for the past has given way to the fashion for the present, and all our perspectives need to be adapted accordingly. Inventing the past is a bit like virtual time-travel when 'the real thing' remains elusive despite advances in contemporary physics. This approach has its own dangers. It is only a small step from talking about observable symbolic processes whereby values considered desirable in the present are being projected into the past in order to ordain them with legitimacy, to asserting that the past has had no real values at all, or none that are worth transmitting to the present, or – the epistemological consequence of a perspective that sees the past entirely as a projection of the present – that we have no way of knowing what the values of the past were since all we can know are our own projections, and interpretations of the same. Much paper has been filled with this persistently fashionable style of self-referential analysis that says much about the authors' capacity to play mental games with themselves but contributes little to our understanding of the world, past or present.

Upon reading the opening sequence of Ove Ronström and Ulf Palmenfelt's collection, this reviewer was slightly circumspect that it might be yet another one of those vacuous texts that currently populate much of the cultural studies, sociology, geography and even anthropology concerned with the past, heritage and tradition. But when in 2003 a group of folklorists from Sweden, Finland and Estonia came together, joined later by a colleague from Lithuania, to discuss memory and its production, the result of their deliberations, as presented in this volume, turned out to be rather more interesting, indeed fascinating in parts, not least because the authors build bridges between memories and visions, the past and the future.

The selection of topics could hardly have been more

diverse for such a small book, and yet the contributions hang together well enough, not least due to an excellent introduction that contextualises the contributions. There are six further chapters. Anne Heimo, writing about the Finnish Civil War, examines how family memories and local history interweave, and highlights the role of 'post-memories', that is, memories of the combination of one's memories of other people's memories with one's reactions to these when retold. How Estonians are dealing with their Soviet past is the subject of Ene Kõresaar's essay, which shows that even grand narratives of the nation are built up from the smallest component, the individual. Owe Ronström, looking at Visby, dissects the triad of memory, traditions and heritage. His juxtaposition of 'tradition' and 'heritage' as interpretive templates is interesting and worth developing, especially at the point where he poses the intriguing question of whether *kulturarv* might be the conceptual *Alter Ego* to late or post-modernity, just what tradition is now widely regarded as having been to modernity.

Staying with Visby as a case study, Carina Johansson illustrates the use of visual images in reshaping the past for present purposes. Lina Būgienė locates contemporary Lithuanian identity with reference to what one might call its 'significant Others', in particular Sweden and the Soviet Union. She does this by examining the Lithuanian cultural weekly *Šiaurės Atėnai* in conjunction with diverse other sources, such as folk legends, travel writing, newspapers and personal recollections. Her account of what is effectively the folklorisation of actual historical events makes fascinating reading and indicates how Lithuanian identity, like that of so many others on the political periphery, is defined primarily negatively, by reference to what Lithuanian culture is not, rather than by what it is. In the final chapter, Tellervo Aarnipuu looks at the re-imaging of historical Turku.

While other reviewers may pick other contributions for highlighting, all the chapters in this book are worth not just reading but pondering for a while. This collection is an example of how theorising the past from the present can be done fruitfully, and with interesting insights. An index would have been useful, even if other short books do not have one. The series is published in English to ensure it can reach the widest possible readership, but if the publishers are aiming at this international market they would be well advised to invest in copy editors with native fluency. There are some passages in the book that would be difficult to disentangle for an Anglophone reader unfamiliar with the languages spoken in the Baltic region, even though they may be perfectly clear to anyone from that region. For research like this to gain the international reception it deserves, a little more careful editing would go a long way.

*Ullrich Kockel, Derry*

## The Mad Human

*Det forrykte menneske. Den psykisk syge i historien.* Edith Mandrup Rønn & Inger Hartby (eds.). Skipperhoved, Ebeltoft. 351 pp. Ill. ISBN 87-89224-78-7.

■ The history of psychiatry is rather well researched as regards the western hemisphere. Western countries generally show small variations. The Swedish, German and Danish history of psychiatry is pretty similar to, say, that of Norway, Belgium or Austria. It is a well-known fact that contacts between countries were intense regarding modern psychiatric history, that is, from the 19th century onwards. Networking and study tours were common even in the early days. Basic ideas about how to treat deviants were widely spread and applied in the asylums of Europe.

Thoughts about this homogeneous history strike me when reading this book, whose title means "The Mad Human: The Mentally Ill in History", edited by the two Danish ethnologists Inger Hartby and Edith Mandrup Rønn. The book deals with Danish conditions. The aim of the book is to focus on the encounter between "the normal" society and deviant individuals 1830–1990. The aim comprises not only the encounter between patient and psychiatry but also society at large. The essays, state the editors, are supposed to deal with either the sufferers' interaction with family, hospital and society or the methods society provided at any given moment to ease the sufferers. The volume claims to consider the patient's situation and the experience of marginalization from a "holistic view". It is arranged according to three themes: The Mentally Ill in History, Mental Hospitals and Prisons, and Biographies of Patients.

In her opening essay Edith Mandrup Rønn seeks to define the difference between the history of psychiatry and cultural history. The former is said to be a branch of the history of sciences. The latter deals with "the relations between the ill and their contexts in culture or society" (18); in other words, the history of psychiatry would not be adequate for

understanding the mentally ill in relation to culture, society or state. I am inclined to agree with Mandrup Rønn but have difficulties with the repeated starting point in the concept of "ill" and "illness". The medical perspective thereby runs a risk of being considered natural and meta-historical. I have a hard time accepting a cultural history that takes the concept of illness, sickness or disease for granted, that does not historicize these concepts themselves.

However, I am convinced that this is not what Mandrup Rønn intends. Instead, she carefully separates essentialist and constructivist views on mental illness. But where does the historian stand? Mandrup Rønn wants to see the patient (patienthood?) as a "statement" in one or more discourses. It is not obvious what she means by that, but I guess it embraces a constructivist perspective. Mandrup Rønn also declares that cultural history deals with "ordinary people" and their lives (30), how they experience and deal with everyday life (33). That is a common and perhaps practical and negotiable definition, but in relation to the rest of the essays it still leaves me wondering about the definition of cultural history.

Verner Beyer Petersen states in his essay that psychiatry was born in the sign of humanism (45). He describes how the asylums were established in an endeavour to make humanity a bit more human. Thus the inhuman was created, which psychiatry was intended to cure. Beyer Petersen also says that the attempt of modern psychiatry to define reason was an important function in the germinating democracies (57). This quest for reason was of course not free from conflicts. Hans T. Møller writes on the Danish and German criticism in late 19th-century psychiatry. This story leads directly to the conflict between the author Amalie Skram and the well-known psychiatrist Knut Pontoppidan, a conflict that generated two novels by Skram about her experiences on the 6th ward at Kommunehospitalet in Copenhagen. Møller believes that the late 19th century was characterized by psychiatric stagnation. It is uncertain whether this not uncommon conclusion comes from the criticism of psychiatry or the failures of its cures. My opinion is that in Sweden as well in Europe this period was dynamic, with many new ideas about psychiatric treatments.

The possibilities of history are dealt with in the following essays. Peter Frandsen gives an introduction to the archives and the picture of the patient that lies in there. Like the following author, Birgit Kirkebæck, he investigates above all the case records. Kirkebæck highlights how the first notes followed the biography of the patient for many years. It is a kind of method of quotation that seems more durable than most psychiatric theories. Another observation is how the narratives of the patient in the case records are transformed into narratives of psychiatry practised on the patient. These narratives are furthermore intended to be read by other psychiatrists only. The dialogue of the case records is not, says Kirkebæck, tied to patient/doctor but to doctor/doctor.

Dan Ersted Møller writes under the slightly odd title "From Confinement to Rehabilitation" on how the "mentally ill" were defined and separated during the 19th century, a process that is described as a gradual recognition of their illness and a process of growing humanity. I am not certain how Ersted Møller relates to this process, if he himself understands the process as a growing humanity or if he only means that the contemporary period understood itself as the peak of humanity. It actually seems as if the former is the case. The criticism against psychiatry, Ersted Møller states, had the result that "science began to investigate new, more humane ways of treatment" (141). Among these humane therapies Ersted Møller counts, for example, shock and coma treatments. Perhaps they were signs of a sort of progress. But were they also a sign of growing humanity? Statements such as that the development of medicines against mental illness "was largely a reaction to a growing criticism against the widespread use of physical constraint such as fixation and confinement" (141), would probably not bear too intense scrutiny.

A few essays are designed as hospital monographs. Maiken Rude Nørup writes about the Middelfart asylum and argues, like Ersted Møller, that the new treatments of the 1930s represented a modernization of psychiatry. Peter Scharff Smith deals with the isolation of prisoners and the discussion of the effects on the isolated individuals' mental health. Aetiological issues like this are discussed in Bjørn Hamre's essay on the definition of the neurasthenic human. Once again Knud Pontoppidan appears as a central figure. Like many of his colleagues, he believes that basically the middle class was affected by the disease. It was furthermore considered closely connected to urban spaces and the industrialized society with its ever increasing tempo. For this specific kind of diagnosis the asylum of Dianalund was built. Egon Petersen writes about his memories from the asylum in Augustenborg. Petersen's essay concludes with a

call for a restoration of the system of asylums. This essay is in many ways worth reading but embodies one problem with this collection: some of the contributors lie too close to their object of research. Are they writing from a position inside psychiatry or outside? Some are, some seem not to be.

The third part of the volume deals with biographies. Inger Hartby writes about matrons of folk high schools. She wants to investigate "the cultural causes that might be the causes of their apparent ill health, in particular regarding mental complaints" (239). With this unfortunate link between cultural causes and mental diseases, Hartby writes about a few cases that, in their connections to the culture of the Danish folk high schools, as far as I can see, do not show any relation that could not be asserted in any other comparable environment.

Hanne Thorup Koudal's essay deals with a human fate that starts in a Danish bourgeois family and ends on the autopsy slab of the asylum in Nykøbing Sjælland. It is about a woman who in the early 20th century lost her mind and had to leave her home and family for a life in psychiatric hospitals. Then, as now, such destinies were a question of not fitting in, of not being able, or allowed, to cope with one's surroundings.

Edith Mandrup Rønn rounds off the volume with one more biography. This one deals with a woman who spent 25 of her 64 years in institutions. Mandrup Rønn gives examples of causes for being marginalized and rejected by the open society. The woman was described as broody and suicidal but also egocentric, erratic and temperamental. Mandrup Rønn also wants to know how such a rejection was experienced by the individual. However, she does not give any detailed answers to that question but notes the need of extensive archives with case records, letters and personal stories.

This question of sources from the past leads to one of the problems with this collection. The basic problem is not the authors' different perspectives but some authors' *judgement* of their sources. What can be said with a certain source as foundation? Which statements in the sources ought to be considered fixated to the past and which may float into our own time maintaining their meanings? I have given examples of concepts like illness, disease, sickness and different diagnoses, and how some of the investigations have not kept a sufficient distance to their sources. Some regard the "mentally ill" as a dated construction; others seem to regard it as a metahistorical construction. On the one hand it cannot be expected that all writers in a collection of essays will hold the same opinion and relate in the same way to the past. But I would have been a happier reader if the contributions, generally speaking, had shown a more unanimous awareness of some of the problems related to fieldwork in the past.

*Lars-Eric Jönsson, Lund*

## Museums and Difficult Matters

*Svåra saker. Ting och berättelser som upprör och berör.* Eva Silvén & Anders Björklund (eds.). Nordiska museets förlag, Stockholm 2006. 264 pp. Ill. English summary. ISBN 91-7108-507-6.

■ What artefacts and stories have museums collected through time? Has there been a tendency to avoid things that are dirty, tabooed, tragic, or politically dangerous? For the museum workers Eva Silvén and Anders Björklund these questions were the introduction to an in-depth study of "difficult objects", a study that comprised four seminars, a mobile exhibition with a field station in a trailer that travelled through Sweden from December 1999 to September 2000, and this book, which sums up the whole enterprise.

The book most resembles an exhibition catalogue, since the major part of it consists of spreads with pictures of individual objects on one page and the stories associated with them on the other. Most of the objects were included in the exhibition. Sixty-six of the Swedish museums' difficult objects have been selected and 37 of the visitors' difficult objects.

It is a broad range of tragic, gruesome, and disturbing stories that parade before us. There are happy pills and lobotomy drills, the wrecked bow visor of the *Estonia*, the porno film *Belinda*, the swastika pennant and the bathroom scale that belonged to an anorectic.

No attempt is made to link the individual objects and their stories. They stand out like the stored-away moments, outstanding events, and profound personal memories that they are. And yet the objects and their stories together give a fantastic glimpse of Swedish contemporary history, because the drama, the horror, and the personal tragedy, just like heroic stories and legends, create powerful narratives by which modern-day people can orient themselves. A major reason for this is that the stories are authentic, and

their authenticity is substantiated by the concrete object that was kept and thus preserved. Like Gertrud's alarm clock, with its light shining through the night, which for her was proof that the sexual abuse she suffered was not a terrible dream but a waking nightmare. The story and the clock from the 1960s left an oppressive feeling in me long after I had closed the book. Or the radioactive earth from Ytterharnäs that Lars and Pia Lundgren dug out of their garden in a desperate attempt to reduce the risk that their children might be contaminated by the fallout from Chernobyl in 1986. Here we can talk in a very concrete sense about a dangerous object, which is problematic to preserve and exhibit.

As these two very different stories and objects show, there are many diverse kinds of difficult and dangerous objects. There are those where the thing itself immediately signals danger, such as the radioactive soil, the lobotomy drill, the hand grenade, and the cranial perforator, a pair of sharp shears used to cut up a dead foetus to save the life of a woman in labour. And then there are the everyday items, such as the alarm clock, the window handles, a mug, a bathroom scale, and a teddy bear, which actually look very reassuring, but the accompanying stories make them into tragic, unpleasant, unmanageable memories. And finally there are the objects that cannot be exhibited at all for ethical reasons, such as the erotic photographs, which are in sealed envelopes, or the skull of Else Nilsdotter, who hanged herself in 1882 after having been sentenced to death for complicity in the murder of her husband.

The style of the book, with the brief stories on each spread, creates a nuanced and complex picture of how things that are difficult to handle can take on many forms and expressions. At the same time, this makes the book easy to read. Curiosity prompts you to continue, because you never know what difficult and surprising object will meet you on the next spread.

The austere style, however, makes it hard to get beyond the small, isolated stories. There are short introductory chapters describing the idea behind the project, the design of the exhibition, and the varied reactions of the visitors, but I wish that the authors themselves had dared to go further with the tricky questions raised by the difficult objects: Why, for example, is it all right to exhibit the bow visor of the *Estonia*, but ethically indefensible to show Else Nilsdotter's century-old skull? Are museums really so bad at preserving tragedies (the old ethnographic collections have hardly anything else), or is it not perhaps in the presentation of the objects – in the exhibitions – that the museums lack the courage to be difficult? And what is to be gained by showing the difficult objects individually, in anecdotal form, rather than tying them together in a chronological course, a narrative, or in explanatory subcategories?

It is as if the authors, with this extremely relevant topic, are content to collect empirical evidence and simply display it. It would have been natural to draw parallels to similar projects. It is obvious that the authors have searched the relevant historical, ethnological, and museological literature on the subject, so why not go into greater depth? It may be that it would have been counter to the popular form of the book, which is aimed at a broad readership. But didn't they feel a desire to put the relevant problems in a larger perspective?

Having said that, my criticisms actually have a positive foundation, namely, that this book on difficult matters has tackled such an interesting topic, and the stories and objects are presented in such an exciting way, that it stimulates my appetite for much more research and discussion.

*Camilla Mordhorst, Copenhagen*

## Norwegian Wood Carving

*Dag Sveen,* Fra folkekunst til nasjonalt kunsthåndverk. Norsk treskjæring 1847–1879. Pax Forlag A/S, Oslo 2004. 291 pp. Ill. ISBN 82-530-2379-0.

■ Wood carving, along with silversmithing, textile craft, and "rosemaling", were the most important and most common techniques in Norwegian folk art during its heyday, which lasted roughly from the eighteenth century to 1830.

Around the mid-nineteenth century, however, there was a growing interest in wood carving among the burghers and officials in the big towns. Enterprising merchants, above all in Christiania, Bergen, and Trondheim, established wood-carving workshops where they employed or engaged skilled carvers. It was important to be able to tell presumptive customers that the items came from a peasant setting and were based on an old tradition of folk art. The customers, however, demanded products of a higher artistic and technical quality than the old rustic works.

Dag Sveen, former professor of art history at the University of Bergen, has studied this wood carving

and the wave of interest in it that flourished in the decades after 1850. In this book he seeks to find out why these works became so popular in the upper bourgeoisie not just in Norway but also in England and Germany. Traditional Norwegian folk art has been treated in many works, but not the period between its heyday and the foundation of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, with its "refinement" of Norwegian folk art to satisfy a more discriminating urban market. The demarcation of Sveen's work to the period 1847–1879 has to do with the fact that the museum had then started its work and assumed public responsibility for the genre.

The successful merchants who devoted themselves to the production and sale of carved products – the most prominent among them was Jean Edmund de Coninck in Christiania – launched them at the international exhibition in London in 1851. Norwegian wood carving was subsequently present at every other major international exhibition in the second half of the nineteenth century. It attracted attention for its high quality, both technical and artistic, compared above all with the Swiss works that were also presented at these exhibitions.

The new interest in wood carving seems to have started in the mid-1840s, when a Trondheim merchant, to meet a demand from customers in Norway and abroad, advertised for works in wood, bone, or metal: knife shafts, spoons, boxes, pipe heads, beer tankards, and the like. But it was only around 1850 that interest began to blossom, when the merchant N. P. Thesen in Christiania announced that he would pay "10 Species" to the "mountain peasant" who could deliver the best-carved and most beautiful snuffbox in wood, and the same sum to the one who delivered the best knife, as regards both the wood carving and the blade. Everything was to have a national touch and the material used for the objects was to be Norwegian.

Items of folk carving had already been sought after as tourist souvenirs in the eighteenth century, but in view of the small amount of tourism at the time there was never any great demand then. In the 1840s the restrictions on trade in peasant products for an urban market were eased, which may perhaps explain the attempt by the Trondheim merchants to launch these items in 1844.

It was in connection with romanticism that folk art attracted attention among the urban bourgeoisie and was actually "born" as folk art, according to Steen. A new market was created for something that was perceived as both folk art and national art. Initially this applied solely to wood carving. This new market, however, made new demands on precision in the carving, with correct rendering of classical ornament, which folk art had previously tended to distort and simplify. The new works often had an "academic" touch that folk art had never had. Unlike traditional folk art, the new wood carving was ascribed a value in that it was made by "peasants", which was used as a sales argument in advertisements and exhibition presentations. The objects were thus also ascribed a value as bearers and communicators of a tradition of form and ornament that was regarded as national. To ensure that these new demands on the carving could be satisfied, the firms that produced and sold the objects held courses for the carvers.

The wood carvers who were first engaged brought with them the folk traditions of various Norwegian regions. The author provides a thorough survey both of the extant material and of the traditional features of the more famous carvers by analysing how different craftsmen executed their pattern carving. He is thus able to attribute some objects to specific named carvers; normally the works are not signed. Telemark and Gudbrandsdalen in particular were core areas for wood carving in traditional folk art, and features from these local traditions can be discerned in the newly made objects.

Steen has also made a careful study of how the objects were presented at the major exhibitions, both international and regional, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Many works won prizes and were highlighted both in catalogues and in newspaper and magazine reports from the exhibitions. Often they were also praised for being better than objects presented by other countries, above all Switzerland and Germany. Through participation in the exhibitions, the carved objects became well-known and sought-after outside Norway.

From its foundation in 1876, the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in Christiania was of great significance for the art of wood carving. The constitution of the museum included the stated aim of promoting design in Norwegian industry and developing opportunities for both producers and consumers to become familiar with characteristic and beautiful products of industrial art in originals or copies. Above all, the aim was to collect industrial objects of Norwegian origin and characteristic of the culture

of the Norwegian people, "Norwegian peasant work from the present day". The objects were to serve as models for manufacturers. This aim was not achieved by traditional folk art. The carved objects that were now collected were therefore newly produced and acquired by the museum especially during the very first years. It was important to build up a collection of examples quickly. Many were purchased but quite a few were donated to the museum. At the same time, it was possible to observe that quality of some of the newly carved items was falling.

In 1879 the museum published the first collection of patterns for wood carving, envisaged as models for the craftsmen; there were also patterns for white embroidery and silversmithing. All the five carvings presented are by one and the same craftsman from Opdal, Ole Olsen Moene, who had also been responsible for the museum's participation in the international exhibition in Paris in 1878. In 1886 the museum started courses in wood carving, and in 1893 the Telemark School of Industrial Art was set up.

In the mid-1850s there was a growing interest in industrial art in Europe, including the "reform movement" in decorative art, with English representatives such as August Pugin, his son Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, and later John Ruskin, William Morris, and others, subsequently known as "the arts and crafts movement". The London exhibition in 1851 had drawn attention to the wretched situation in decorative art, and the movement gained momentum. Increasing industrialization and division of labour got much of the blame for this deterioration and the separation of craft and art. A great deal of the old handicraft was transformed into mass-produced items of poor quality. The establishment of the Museum of Manufactures, later to become the Victoria and Albert Museum, was envisaged as an institution for design education, where the museum, like the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in Christiania a few decades later, would collect objects to use as models in education.

Around 1850 another flourishing phenomenon was *historicism*. The entire history of European and partly also non-European style and ornament was now available to industrial art. Addressing "the educated public" was the approach adopted by the movement in Norway too, and the growing middle class was the main target group, although efforts were also made to reach the working class, and the "peasant environment" was to be brought in as well. Numerous courses in wood carving were arranged, above all in the 1880s–90s, to raise the quality. The professor of art history Lorentz Dietrichson, one of the leading debaters and critics in Norway at this time, declared in 1876 that systematic work was now necessary to bring the working classes to realize the significance of beauty in work, for the national economy as well as for aesthetic and moral values. Dietrichson was also the first to publish a book on Norwegian decorative art, *Den norske Træskjærerkunst, dens Oprindelse og Udvikling* (1878).

It is a meticulous work that Dag Sveen gives us here. He undertakes detailed analyses of stylistic elements from the Middle Ages, Renaissance, baroque, and rococo, with the aid of extant objects and contemporary illustrations when it has not been possible to trace the objects. The carved objects acquired both a new and more international market and a new function. They became material manifestations of a national cultural tradition and important symbols of national identity.

*Hans Medelius, Stockholm*

## Three Homelands

*Ilmar Talve*, Kolme kotimaata. Kirja-Aurora, Turku 2004. 457 pp. ISBN 951-292698-9.

A summary of three original books in Finnish.

Original works: *Kevad Eestis*, Tartu 1997; *Kutsumata küläline*, Tartu 1998; *Kolmas kodumaa*, Tartu 1999.

■ "We were the witnesses of an era and the only and the frankest way to portray it is an autobiography. The subject of the autobiography is the life of its author. The autobiography focuses on the portrayal of the individuality and the existential development of the author. The aim is to cover the whole life and to shed light on all the elements shaping it and having an influence on it. The autobiography with its egos and worlds can also be seen as cultural history if the starting point is to try to understand the development of an individual within the context of his surroundings and the world in which he has grown up and lived, with all its contents and the influences he has received from the world around him. Even though each individual is a product of his nation and his particular social class, he still has to learn the culture with all its values, meanings and ways to act. As a consequence, we can only know ourselves as well as we know the

world we live in". With these words Ilmar Talve, a well-known figure of the Finnish ethnology, starts his autobiography.

The style is the mediator, transmitter and connector of the not coincident experiences of the author. The style enables the connection between the author and his past and, at the same time, creates a bridge between the author and his future readers from the point of view of the writing moment. Talve is both an academic and an author. His writing style includes elements of an ethnological novel. He clearly has the ability to combine literary expression and ethnological portrayal, thus, his autobiography is very catching. In addition, it is very interesting to follow the book with a map of the region. The memory and memories of Ilmar Talve are spectacular. An extensive index is attached to the book. Jouko Grönholm has written the after word including a full bibliography.

*Estonia*

Ilmar Talve was born on January 17, 1919 in the sick room of Mga railway station; the family lived in a railway carriage. They were waiting the border between Estonia and Russia to open in order to return to Estonia. As was stated in the Treaty of Tartu, the border was opened in 1920 and in 1922 the family moved to Tapa at the crossroads of Tallinn-Narva railway. The small town of Tapa lived in the rhythm of trains. Tapa had been known already in the middle ages: the former name of the town, Taps, had first been mentioned already in 1482. As was common, the family changed its surname Thalfeldt to an Estonian Talve in 1936.

The passage of the author's early years in Tapa is a very interesting and detailed description of the local life and its people. In 1931, *Eesti Rahva Muuseum* (National Museum of Estonia) in Tartu had created a correspondent network. Still at school, Talve joined the network the following year. His interest in ethnology and arts had already been awakened. Later at secondary school, literature and history got a firm hold of the young scholar. The first article of he dealt with youth slang (*Tuleviku Rajad* 1937/20).

The notion of sister nation prevailed on both shores of the Gulf of Finland. On an Estonian-Finnish scout camp Talve made friends with a boy from Vyborg with whom he started corresponding and studying Finnish. A similar camp was organized next year on the Karelian Isthmus. In 1937–1938, during the last years of secondary school, most young men wanted to go straight to the army. But Talve wanted first to go to university and then to the army. The young man's trip to Finland was full of action before a new life at the University of Tartu began in autumn 1938. The decision to study at Tartu had a strong influence not only on Talve's life but also on ethnology. The Second World War broke out on September 1, 1939.

German troops invaded Poland. According to a secret protocol within the Treaty of Non-aggression the areas between Finland and Poland were to be divided into spheres of interest of the parties. The parties of the secret protocol were the Soviet Union and Germany.

*The War*

"All precedent preparation for the exams suddenly felt unimportant and meaningless. What were the studies and other plans for?" On the other hand, there was not much choice than to continue studying. The students listened carefully to the radio and followed the progress of the war in Europe. Poland was divided; Latvia and Lithuania were to follow. The Winter War in Finland broke out on November 30. Talve pursued his studies and felt how the war progressed. Gustav Ränk had been appointed the first professor of ethnology in Estonia in 1939. Talve's proseminar topic dealt with barking knifes. After the initial astonishment Talve started to draft the first distribution maps of the tool. Ränk was satisfied with his work. The spring semester 1940 was the last free year as a student before the army. Talve had the Estonian, Soviet and German armies to choose between.

Under the Soviet occupation, Russian language and Marxism-Leninism were introduced as new subjects to the university. At the same time, night-time arrests and deportations of Estonians began. Independence was not returned, against the expectations, when the Germans occupied Estonia. The university remained closed during autumn 1941 while German staff occupied the main building. While his homeland went from one occupying power to another, Talve graduated from the University of Tartu as magister philosophiae in 1942. Simultaneously, he continued his ethnological field work and following the war until 1943.

The Germans began mobilization in Estonia. Talve chose the Finnish army instead of the German one. The route to the army was particular; an Estonian fisherman took the young men in his fisher boat across the Gulf of Finland to Finland. Finns had accepted Estonians in their army, to some extent even encour-

aged them to join, but they were totally unprepared for their arrival. The Estonians had difficulties to adapt. Poor nourishment, sometimes inexistent, eroded motivation. Talve spoke good Finnish which was of great help to many and in many situations. Despite the war Talve nurtured his ethnological networks in Helsinki and in Turku. The Estonians fought alongside Finns against the Soviet Union. In August 1944, each Estonian in the Finnish army could decide whether to return to Estonia. Talve and his brother returned to German-occupied Estonia in autumn 1944.

*The Escape*

The thought of fleeing German-occupied Estonia started to arise. Without his brother, Ilmar Talve left to Saaremaa, from where it should have been possible to take a boat to Sweden. The first attempt failed because the fleeing boat was shipwrecked in an aggressive storm from south-west. The Germans took the fugitives back to Estonia. On the second attempt the boat hit a torpedo and sunk. Talve survived from the sea, however, and was taken to Gotenhafen (now Gdynia) refugee camp. According to the plan, Talve was transferred to another camp in Flensburg and started to work in a paint factory. A lot of Estonians were gathered in Flensburg.

After the German surrender prisoners of war were divided into different camps according to nationality. The Finnish prisoners of war, transferred from Norway to Germany, took the Estonian prisoners from Flensburg to Denmark with them. Talve's knowledge of Finnish and the experiences in the Finnish army were of great help. "I was arriving in Sweden after all, even though I had to circle the Baltic Sea." In Denmark, Talve spent a month in a camp for Finnish prisoners of war. The Finnish embassy organized a "return" from Denmark to Finland via Stockholm. However, the prisoners stayed in Stockholm until Finland's relation to the Soviet Union was cleared. Talve was taken to a special camp for Estonians in Sweden until he would receive a refugee passport. This camp was different from others: health care was provided and Talve started to study Swedish.

*Nordiska museet and the Baltic Department 1945–46*

At the camp Talve wrote a letter to Sigurd Erixon who had founded *Institutet för folklivsforskning* (Institute of Folklife Studies) at the Nordiska museet. Soon Talve started to work as an archivist at the institute. The Swedish colleagues began to call the institute "the Baltic institute" because there were so many Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian archivists employed after the war. The director of the Tartu National Museum, Eerik Laid, worked with distribution maps at the same Baltic department. Also Talve continued his work with the distribution maps. Ethnological studies restarted towards a new direction.

After the war, there were only a few foreigners in Sweden: some 20,000 Estonians, thousands of Latvians and hundreds of Lithuanians. Finns were greater in number but they had a different status. The term "Estonian" was not widely used because they were all called Balts. The Balts, in turn, were called exiles. Sweden had, as one of the very few states, recognised the annexation of the Baltic States to the Soviet Union. The Allies, the Soviet Union among them, had won the war. In Sweden, Stalin was praised even as a democrat and, consequently, the Baltic exiles were not very popular. The Swedes could not understand why to flee the Baltic States now liberated from the Germans by the Red Army.

In order to preserve their identity the Estonians, with Eerik Laid as their leader, founded a Republican Society in Sweden. It was more ideological than political because political actions were not allowed for exiles. Before that, the political parties had merged into a Democratic Club into which the Republican Society later assimilated. The demand for Estonian literature was strong and a publishing house for exile literature, Orto, was established as well as a literature journal in Estonian. The Estonians quickly developed an active social life and created an influential friendship network. Through this network, Talve received the first message from his parents in Estonia: "Do not take any hasty decisions because of nostalgia. Stay where you are. Nobody knows what will happen to us", his mother had written on a card. At least they were alive and in Estonia.

Time flew. Talve worked, wrote, married a Finn, had a baby, studied and led an active social life with fellow Estonians in Stockholm. He received a licentiate diploma in 1951. Erixon retired in 1955. Talve chose *Bastu och torkhus i Nordeuropa* as the topic of his doctoral dissertation. At the same time he started to work with Niilo Valonen and with ethnological field work in Finnish villages. It was also time to enter the Swedish army. Talve had received Swedish citizenship in 1954.

In 1957, a congress for Nordic ethnologists and folklorists was organised in Lund. Talve met a Finnish

professor of sociology, Esko Aaltonen from Turku, and an idea of cooperation and of extending ethnological studies to industrial areas, workers and cities was born. The idea was developed further and Talve started to think about moving to Finland. Work was plenty but scattered around in Sweden and in Finland. On top of everything, he had his dissertation to finish. News of Talve's father arrived from Estonia: he had fallen ill and died in 1958. Talve's correspondence with his widowed mother went on.

Research projects innovated with Aaltonen started to materialize after Aaltonen had received funding for studying workers. An assistantship of ethnology had been established at the University of Turku and Esko Aaltonen had been appointed a part-time acting director of ethnological studies. There was no professorship of ethnology in Turku, but Aaltonen began to advance an establishment of one. Talve was first appointed an assistant and later an acting professor of ethnology.

Talve finally moved to Finland in 1959. He had moved several times in his life: from Estonia to Finland, from Finland to Estonia, from Estonia to Germany, from Germany to Denmark, from Denmark to Sweden and now from Sweden to Finland. This time the situation was different, however. Talve had a family and his work in Turku. He was no longer an exile but an academic at the University of Turku. "That evening and the boat trip is something I'll remember for the rest of my life. The wind was calming down and the sea was almost unrippled. It almost felt like coming back home. Fatherland and homeland; one can choose the latter but not the first. All those years, when my homeland was something else than my fatherland, were not controversial, however. In the beginning, I had no choice. For a long time, I have thought about moving to Finland."

*Finnish and Comparative Ethnology in Turku*

Turku is the oldest university town in Finland (1640–1828) along with Uppsala and Tartu. Moving there was easy. A concept of Finnish and comparative ethnology at the University of Turku started to develop. This required significant background work. At first, Talve had an assistantship of ethnology including beginners' and follow-up courses in the Estonian language. The teaching language was Finnish. There were no textbooks either in the Estonian language or in the history of literature neither in Finnish nor in any other language. Thus, Talve applied the language-teaching methods of the University of Tartu.

Among other projects, Talve finished his dissertation and defended it in Stockholm on May 7, 1960 at Drottninggatan, the then main building of the university. The first opponent was Olof Hasslöf. Gustav Ränk was disqualified as a fellow Estonian. The second opponent was Toivo Vuorela from Finland and the third, Rudolf Jalaka from *Svenska Handelsbanken*. The dissertation received a lot of attention in the Swedish and Finnish press. A professorship of ethnology at the University of Turku was established by a decision of April 28, 1962. On October 4, the faculty unanimously appointed Ilmar Talve a professor of ethnology.

The faculty had now been established but how should it develop in order to fulfil the requirements of teaching and researching ethnology? Talve started to define the faculty by, at first, naming three research priorities: first, Research on the life and circumstances of industrial workers, second, Research on urban life, and, third, Research on changing circumstances of rural life and industrialization. In his inauguration speech, Talve defined his tasks: "our research target, the people and its culture, should be redefined. In doing so, we should take into account the social development and industrialization at the end of the nineteenth century". This was something completely new in the field of ethnology. A new era of ethnology had begun in Turku.

Later that same year, dark clouds shadowed the Talve family: his wife had got cancer. Fighting against time had been successful but fighting against cancer not. In 1966 Talve was left a widow and a single parent of three. In his book, Talve combines the description of his private life and work in an excellent way.

In 1975 Talve started to work with *Suomen kansankulttuuri* (Finnish Folk Culture). The book is still the essential textbook of ethnology and a classic in its field. The first edition was published in 1980 and a third completed one in 1989. In the same year, political unrest in Estonia began.

Ilmar Talve was retired in January 1986. The topic of his farewell lecture was the connections of Finnish folk culture with Europe. At the same time, a lot happened in the politics of his former and present homeland. Prime minister Olof Palme was murdered in 1986. According to Talve, the murder was a warning to Swedes of their naïve foreign policy. President Kekkonen died in 1986. It did not come as a surprise but a political shift was to follow also in Finland.

Talve's days on pension followed a regular rhythm – before noon he wrote his novel at home and after noon he continued academic work at the faculty. Talve received his first distinction on academic work from the Kalevala Society in Finland. He had two projects to finish: his novel and his research. The manuscript of his novel was finished and was called *The exile*. "When I sent my manuscript to Lund I had a feeling of letting something in the air – now I can only hope it could fly".

*Estonia*

The first telephone conversation with his brother in 32 years took place in Hotel Viru in 1976. After that, an invitation to Talve's brother in Pärnu was sent four times. Finally in 1988 his brother was granted a month's visit to Finland. "We hadn't met after we had returned to Estonia from Finland in autumn 1944 which meant a break of 44 years. In 1944, he was 22 and I was 25 years old. Now we were both old men. One's own aging is somehow obvious but it is always surprising to see somebody else aging". There were plenty of things to talk about. "After my brother had left I often thought of all those years that he had spent in Estonia and I abroad. To have one's 70th birthday – what does it really mean to have lived for 70 years?"

Talve had sent author's copies of *The exile* to Estonia. The first reviews in his native country were positive which felt great. In May 1989 the Tuglas Society organized a congress in Helsinki for Estonian writers living in Estonia and abroad. In those days, for Estonians living in Estonia, it was easiest to travel to Helsinki instead of other destinations.

President Kekkonen's clear ban of 1964, of not having any contact with expatriate Estonians, was still to be seen. At least the journalists observed it. "Gorbachev told Finns that they lived in a neutral country. Thus, the events in Estonia and elsewhere in the Baltic came as a surprise to Finns." The congress was organized, however, and was a success. On a direct TV broadcast, Talve answered a question about his possible return to Estonia: "of course, but I will only return to a free and democratic republic of Estonia."

In 1990 Ilmar Talve received a Henrik Visnapuu (USA) literature prize for his book *The exile*. A "Baltic chain" was formed: 50 years from Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and 50 years from the outbreak of the Second World War. Two years after the TV broadcast free and democratic Estonia was no longer utopian. In autumn 1991, the Estonian television followed the professor emeritus of ethnology of the University of Turku on his trip to his fatherland. Estonia, old home, parents' grave and Tallinn, "everything was so familiar but, at the same time, somehow distant".

"I have lived half of my life in Finland. Finland is a good country for me as I have been able to do most of my life's work there. But I love to visit Estonia, my third homeland, from which I can return back home before the evening."

*Kolme kotimaata* is a very personal ethnological and also a novel-like portrayal of Estonia before and during the Second World War and the war camps. The story of the author progresses interestingly from an exile to an immigrant. The attitude of Sweden towards the Second World War and its consequences is clearly visible in the book. The book also deals with the history of different doctrines of ethnology in Estonia, Sweden, Finland and elsewhere in Europe. In the autobiography, personal meets general in a sincere way. Talve's personal voice is the greatest aspect of the book and the three books form a great entity. I expect to improve my Estonian or for somebody to translate the trilogy. I would like to read the books unsummarized and, perhaps, see it all on screen.

*Leena Louhivuori, Helsinki*

## The Will to Change the World

*Maria Zackariasson*, Viljan att förändra världen. Politiskt engagemang hos unga i den globala rättviserörelsen. Boréa, Umeå 2006. 277 pp. Ill. ISBN 10:91-89140-46-X.

■ We are suddenly thrown back thirty years in time. To Umeå in the 1970s, when we too were dreamers and idealists. Fifty people gathered in the park and then moved on to the square for a May Day demonstration. We were in the age of small communist parties suffixed with different abbreviations, and it was bloody cold, as I remember. We are also reminded of Nikolai Dobronarov's lovely poem, "Kak molody my byli", or "How young we were", about self-sacrifice, visions, and altruism. The city in this dissertation is called Korsås, but it is easily recognizable, and it evokes in me the peculiar pleasure of translating a text by one of the church fathers of communism into Swedish for distribution to the local book café, in the hope of doing something good for mankind; nothing less.

The book is readable. It is not earth-shattering in any way, but solid and proper academic work based on extensive reading about political youth culture. The author knows her stuff; she is competent and the dissertation maintains a good level. She cites her informants' opinions in completely neutral terms but with solidarity, and performs a good analysis of them. We are given an empathetic glimpse into the settings frequented by young people who are not involved in party politics but have a strong political awareness. The most important thing for them is a pronounced interest in politics and social issues, manifest activism, ideological convictions, the certainty of having the right foundation for their actions, and emotional fervour. Most important of all for the vision of a better world is to act. You have to do something. It is through action that the visions and hopes can be realized. The necessary condition for this, as we see at numerous points in the book, is being "aware", having attitudes.

In many cases the background to this can be found in growing up in a family where the parents were active in politics or at least politically minded. This is not a matter of simple indoctrination – which is called socialization in the book. In most cases a trigger is needed. This can be the encounter with an unfair educational system, for example, as a visiting student in England, or it can be a stay in a developing country through an exchange system, or it can be the encounter with a brutal police force, as for example in Gothenburg in 2001 during the demonstrations and riots at the EU summit. This prompted many of the informants to join organizations like Attac. Other interviewees are involved in the Social Forum. The author has interviewed young people in both Sweden and Norway, and there seems to be no great difference in the motivation on either side of Kölen. Idealism tends to transcend national borders.

The most striking thing is that so many of the young people are the children of parents with a university education. The question of representativeness raises itself, and even if the author is clearly aware of this, she does not reflect sufficiently upon it. Do the children of academics have a special disposition to consider problems from a moral point of view? And if so, why is this? We get no answers to that in the book.

It is nevertheless readable and it can be an eye-opener both for those of us who have young idealistic children, actively doing something in the name of justice, and for others who do not suffer the appeals of these young people to their own guilty conscience. The book is an example of good ethnological craft, and one can only wish readers "bon appétit". What I like best is chapter 6 about the future. Here, as in other parts of the book, a number of the informants express a wish for more participant democracy. Participation is the key word in the dissertation. What it involves in concrete terms is difficult to pinpoint, but neither the interviewees nor the author have any doubts that this is where the solution lies. It is also clear from the book that this participation cannot take place without an extremely conscious relationship to the media world. The overall strength of the book is not that it points to solutions but that it asks questions

*Niels Kayser Nielsen, Aarhus*

## New Thinking and Reflections

*Nytänkande och eftertankar. Kön, kulturella föreställningar och livsvillkor.* Maria Zackariasson & Birgitta Meurling (eds.). Etnolore 29, Uppsala 2006. 137 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-506-1855-5.

■ You have perhaps noticed that it is not always easy to continue an academic career after getting a Ph.D. degree. It is sometimes easier to get funding while writing one's thesis than it is as a post-doc researcher. Studies also show that it is even more difficult for a female researcher in the humanities. This notion is the point of departure for a group of researchers. Their aim was to strengthen female researchers' opportunities to move forward in their academic career and to create opportunities for them to stay at the university, to succeed in creating a financial starting point for project-based research. This project (STRAS) was initiated by the Faculty of Arts at Uppsala University in 2002–2003 and led by Birgitta Meurling and Inga-Lill Aronsson. This report ("New Thinking and Reflections: Gender, Cultural Conceptions and Living Conditions") is one outcome, besides seminars and research plans, of this project. The point of departure is interesting and underlines the fact that women do not always have the same possibilities as male colleagues to pursue an academic career, a fact that in many cases is played down, because sex is not supposed to make any difference in research. This project brings the issue to the surface. The qualification of women should not be a "leaky pipeline". Fifteen women took part in the project but not all of them present their on-going

research in the report due to lack of time.

The report is an excellent example of high-quality research. The topics picked by the researchers are interesting, significant and in many cases essential in the life of both men and women. The report consists of six articles and a preface written by the editors Maria Zackariasson and Birgitta Meurling. Four of these articles are written by ethnologists and these are in my opinion (being a folklorist myself) the most interesting. A unifying theme connects the articles: they are about interpretations and meaning of gender, sexuality, family and perception of the body. They show us in different ways that our interpretations of femininity and masculinity are important for meaning-making and can be seen as tools to understand our surrounding world. Birgitta Leppänen Sjöberg, a classical scholar, deals with the view of rape and adultery in ancient Athens. Concepts such as shame (female) and honour (male) are discussed and give us a good understanding of these phenomena even today. The art historian Eva Lindqvist Sandgren writes about how posterity has looked upon late medieval female writers at Vadstena convent. The art, illustrations and decorative paintings executed by women have had a concealed role in history although these paintings were exceptional.

The four articles written by ethnologists form an excellent whole and are about femininity and masculinity in some way and complement each other very well. Rebecka Lennartsson writes about male sex buyers and the ideas of masculinity that this implies. She asks whether this is a kind of sick male sexuality and ponders where the dividing line between sick and healthy sexuality runs, if anywhere. She puts the notion of the sex buyer in a therapeutic discourse where he is looked upon as a perpetrator but also as a victim when talking about his experiences from an individual-oriented perspective and as a male divergence and a disorder. This has consequences for the understanding of masculinity, in other words what makes a man a man. The hegemonic masculinity which honours control, culture and rationality has rarely been studied from the perspective of what this means to men. Lennartsson concludes her article with the question: what if men do not feel well because they have adopted too much of the hegemonic masculinity.

The next article, by Maria Zackariasson, deals with female political activism and its point of departure is the idea of women being a different and a more emotional kind of politicians than men. She has interviewed female activists in the global fair trade movement and comes to the conclusion that there are women who do not fit the stereotype of being emotional but rather can be seen as purposeful and rational. *Anorexia Nervosa*, with a media article as the starting point is the topic of Birgitta Meurling's article. Her central question is how the sick and the recovered body of a woman are produced in words and pictures. One point that she makes is that women are expected to be tiny and vulnerable and sometimes even produce a femininity to underline this character. The feeling of intimacy in the story is increased by pictures of thin and sick women. Furthermore, their subordinate position is underlined. Readers of the story in the magazine feel as if they are reading a "true" story but at the same time this kind of reporting gives a romantic and aesthetic picture of the women being full of anxiety. Life stories about divorced men are the topic of Anna Ljung-Hagborg's research presented in the report. With extracts from interviews she analyses three men's life stories and looks at how they talk about the past events as a way to give meaning to the present. One of her concerns is to study male emotional weakness. A unifying theme in the life stories is an absent father, which can be interpreted as a tendency in modern life to look at relations in the past as significant and influential.

Though this report is said to be about the meaning of gender I find another unifying component in the paper: the expression and interpretation of emotions. Almost all of them are about feelings and emotions in one way or another. Emotions as a topic of research have been "rediscovered" during the last few decades, and their interpretation can be seen as challenge to humanistic research today. The report *Nytänkande och eftertankar* gives the reader a glimpse of research done by female humanists at Uppsala University and gives a desire to know more about the topics, all of them of immediate interest. The articles support each other in a fine way and do not overlap. The appearance of the report is rather modest but the content is excellent, and the initiative successful.

*Lena Marander-Eklund, Åbo*

## On Encountering Death

*Inför döden*. Lynn Åkesson (ed.). Edition Andersson AB, Höganäs 2006. 271 pp. Ill. ISBN 91-976169-0-7.

■ The ethnologist Lynn Åkesson of Lund University has edited a comprehensive work of popular science whose subject is death. The book is richly illustrated with pictures dating to both older and newer ages. The picture editor is Susanne Ewert. The dust cover shows a pair of red woman's shoes, the idea behind this choice of subject being the obvious one of death having emptied the shoes even if that is not specifically stated. Such symbolism is far-fetched and unnecessarily slick. Concealing death in this way ought not be necessary in a work whose theme is death. The book has in other respects a very attractive design layout and the many colour illustrations make this a de luxe edition.

In addition to two ethnologists, contributors to the volume include a geriatrician, an ethicist and hospital chaplain, a scientist in the field of natural and cultural landscapes, and a leader of study courses for funeral directors. The book is aimed at the general public and offers the next of kin both information and beneficial advice in connection with a death.

Lynn Åkesson opens with a chapter about how opinions on and the management of death has changed over time. Emphasis is placed on the very recent past in that the presentation is based primarily on the author's interviews not only with funeral-parlour business people and clergymen, but also with producers of gravestones. Obvious changes have taken place between conditions in the 1980s and those of the 2000s, with simplicity and cost-consciousness having become less pronounced during this period. A far more varied selection of motifs has manifested itself in the choice of coffins. The Internet has become a new venue for announcing death, while virtual memorial parks have also appeared. Burials in anonymous memorial parks have, however, shown a tendency to decrease in favour of increasingly individualized arrangements of burial sites and gravestones.

The geriatrician Ove Dehlin applies a bio-medical perspective to death. On the one hand, it is a matter of what takes place in a body which ages and finally dies. And, on the other hand, of how the process of aging can be postponed. Heredity constitutes an important factor in the aging process and the brain must be kept active if senility is to be counteracted. The average lifespan in Sweden has lengthened greatly during the 1900s and now totals 83 years for women and 78 years for men. Since 1988, death has been legally defined in Sweden as the cessation of cerebral function.

The hospital chaplain and medical ethicist Ingrid Ågren Bolmsjö discusses thoughts and feelings on death prevalent in recent years. Her contribution is for the most part based on her experiences in conversing with the dying and their next of kin at hospitals where she has practised. She has also conducted interviews with other individuals. Many people seem to have a greater fear of dying than of death itself. Bolmsjö discusses various ways in which this fear of death, in the sense of its being a fear of the unknown, can be counteracted. When death has occurred, the mourning process for these next of kin comprises a mental effort which must be allowed to take its time. Numerous practical recommendations on the subject are given in this chapter.

Nils-Arvid Bringéus, the Nestor of Swedish ethnology, gives an account of cultural historical findings from his more than fifty-year-long research activities. This research has dealt with numerous topics having to do with death and funerals in a lengthy historical perspective reaching up to the present day. One that is discussed in this account concerns the many class-based distinctions of times past. This was manifested, for example, in connection with the pealing of death-bells in churches. Such social differentiation was discontinued in Lund as late as in 1898 when a common point of time for all bell-pealing was introduced. Demonstrations of social prestige were also displayed during the latter half of the 19th century by means of the size of burial plots and the height of gravestones. Conducting the funeral ritual inside the church building did not become common until the end of the 19th century, while the bestowal of funeral wreathes became customary in the early 1900s.

Announcements of deaths in newspapers began appearing in the 1850s. The symbol of the cross in such announcements is encountered for the first time in 1890. This symbol continued to predominate until 1976, when other pictural symbols also began appearing. Taking the form of, for example, flowers or birds, these have become increasingly common in recent years. In the present day, announcements also often appear on the anniversary of a death.

Ann-Britt Sörensen, who conducts research in the field of natural and cultural landscapes, characterizes

the cemetery as being "a green cultural heritage". She discusses cemeteries from an aesthetic point of view with regard to their ornamentation in the form of plants and grave décor, and of the design of gravestones. The *Skogskyrkogård* (Forest Cemetery) in Stockholm is taken as an example for her discussion. This cemetery was established in 1912 and placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1994. Her study includes interviews with teenagers concerning their feelings about cemeteries based on those that they visited in connection with organized cemetery tours. Several quotations from these interviews are presented in the chapter.

The author indicates which plants are suitable for planting in cemeteries and on graves. This chapter contains good advice for holders of burial rights concerning the practical care of graves. The design of memorial parks containing anonymous graves is the subject of a special discussion. Such memorial parks began being laid out in Sweden starting in the 1950s. Use of cremation began to emerge in Sweden in the 1930s and now includes about two-thirds of all deceased persons.

Cemeteries have become increasingly multicultural in later years, at least in cities, as a result of extensive immigration from various regions of the world. Jewish cemeteries have existed previously, having begun to be established as early as the late 18th century. Muslim cemeteries have become increasingly noticeable in recent years as a result of Islam having become the second largest religion in Sweden. These Muslim cemeteries are orientated in the direction of Mecca and characterized by simplicity. Cremation is not practised by Muslims or by Orthodox Christians, Jews or Baha'ists. It has, however, been put into practice among Hindus and, in many cases, among Buddhists residing in Sweden.

In the book's last chapter, Christer Gustafsson, who is in charge of study courses for funeral directors, considers legal and economic questions that can occur in connection with deaths. The author's presentation aims at providing practical advice to the next of kin. This deals with questions about what is allowed or forbidden in connection with forms of funerals, but also about what can be arranged for in the form of wills, gifts, etc. According to the law on burials, the next of kin are required to follow the deceased's wishes to the extent that this is possible. If, after cremation, the next of kin wish to spread the ashes somewhere else than in a memorial park, they are required to apply for permission to the county administrative board of the county in which the ashes are to be spread.

The book under review here should appeal to a large number of readers, insofar as everyone is affected by death in his or her immediate circle. The text of the book combines the results of lengthy research in the cultural sciences with practical advice by experts in biomedical, ethical, aesthetic, economic and legal fields, all of which can be of vital interest in connection with deaths. The societal relevance of this research is made very clear in the present volume.

*Anders Gustavsson, Oslo*

## Instructions for submission of manuscripts to *Ethnologia Scandinavica*

*Articles* should if possible be sent by e-mail or on diskette. Manuscripts should preferably be in English, although German may be accepted; if necessary the language will be edited by a native speaker. Articles may be submitted in the Scandinavian languages for translation, but articles in Finnish should be translated in Finland before submission. Articles will undergo peer review. We reserve the right to revise and cut the texts, and to ask authors to make revisions.

Articles should not be longer than about 20 pages of typewritten text with 1.5 line spacing, approx. 50,000 characters. Please aim for clear, concise language, remembering that you are writing for a non-Scandinavian audience. To make the translator's work easier and to avoid misunderstandings, authors are recommended to add technical terms and expressions in English in brackets or in the margin. Quotations should not be too numerous nor too long.

*Legends* to figures should be brief, not including anything that is not discussed in the text of the article. Legends should be written on a separate paper and clearly numbered. The illustrations – photographs, drawings, and tables – should be clearly numbered. Credits (archives, photographers, etc.) should be stated at the end of the legend. Figures should be referred to by their number, not "the table below" or "the photograph above". The placing of the figures in relation to the text should be clearly marked. Figures should be submitted along with the manuscript.

*Notes* should be avoided as far as possible. References to authors or book titles should be included in parentheses at the relevant point in the text. Notes should only be used for clarification or discussion.

The list of *References* should include only books referred to in the text. Details should be presented as follows:

Balle-Pedersen, Margaretha 1981: The Holy Danes. *Ethnologia Scandinavica* 11.

Frykman, Jonas 1988: *Dansbaneeländet. Ungdomen, populärkulturen och opinionen.* Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

Löfgren, Orvar 1992: Landskapet. In *Den nordiske verden* I, ed. Kirsten Hastrup. København: Gyldendal.

*Reviews* of new dissertations and other books of broad general interest should be 4–5 A4 pages long with 1.5 line spacing, 8,000–10,000 characters. A review should consist of a brief presentation of the content and method of the work, followed by a comparison with similar significant works, and ending with a personal evaluation.

Reviews of other ethnological and closely related works should present the content and method and a personal appraisal. The length should be 1–2 A4 pages with 1.5 line spacing, approx. 5,000 characters.

Reviews written in English or German should be submitted by e-mail or on diskette.

When in doubt, check the format of previous issues of *Ethnologia Scandinavica*.

The author will have an opportunity to check the translation and make any necessary changes. When the manuscript has been approved, no changes in proof will be tolerated unless there is an obvious risk of misunderstanding.

Translations and proofs should be returned to the editor as quickly as possible. The deadline for manuscripts, at present 1 September, must be observed so that publication is not delayed.

Authors of articles receive two copies of the journal.

Ethnological research in the Nordic countries is now developing in a number of different directions, as demonstrated by the varied content of *Ethnologia Scandinavica*. The focus this year, however, is mainly on processes of marginalization and what they mean for the identification of people and commodities. We learn how French wine producers, to assert themselves in global competition, try to give their wares a distinct identity based on their place of origin. People tend to be categorized and identified in the same way as products, although many try to resist this. From this angle, several of the articles seek to show how complex and multifaceted identities and processes of identification actually are, whether they concern homosexuals in Norway, Greenlanders in Denmark, or refugees in Sweden. In most cases it is a matter of wanting to be recognized as a fellow human being. The stress on the significance of belonging is an important theme in the Finnish articles as well. New research areas become ethnological when societal development requires it. A growing research field applies cultural perspectives to value conflicts and risk management in health care, and this too is exemplified in the year's volume.

Printed in Sweden
Grahns Tryckeri, Lund 2007

ISSN 0348-9698