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Contents

Magic and Texts: An Introduction

Ane Ohrvik and Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir

Why dedicate a volume of *ARV* to the topic magic and text? Part of the answer is historically based. Magic became early one of the most central fields of investigation when folklore was established as a field of academic interest in the Nordic countries at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, uniting scholars across disciplinary and national borders (see, e.g., Troels-Lund 1879–1901; Bang 1901; Ohrt 1917; Forsblom 1927). Through the decades to follow, studies in magical beliefs and practices have generated numerous volumes of Nordic archive and fieldwork research (see, e.g., Ohrt 1927; Linderholm 1940; Reichborn-Kjennerud 1928–1947; Lid 1950; Solheim 1952; Rääf 1957; Tillhagen 1958; Klintberg 1965; Grambo 1979). Today these studies serve as important reference works, as source materials, and as comparative entities to a still vibrant, productive, and central field of folklore research (see, e.g., Östling 2002; Stark 2006; Dillmann 2006; Alver 2008; Tolley 2009; Mitchell 2011).

In this research, magic has mainly been studied in relation to folk medicine practices, witchcraft beliefs, practices and legislation, religion, and in connection with narrative studies of legends and beliefs. These topics also represent the basis for the studies of magic and texts in the present volume, where scholars from different fields of research focus on folk beliefs and healing practices in Scandinavian rural communities, perceptions of magic in different social groups, the production of magical texts, and prosecutions and legal trials concerning magical practices. What was the everyday context of magic and witchcraft in the medieval, early modern and modern period in the Nordic countries? How did people pass on their magical knowledge? What was the dialectics between magical knowledge as beneficial on one hand and dangerous on the other within the different communities? In what way and by whom were traditional methods of folk healing practices considered to be a crime? And how does this relate to general ideas on magic in the communities? By asking these questions the intention of this volume is to provide studies communicating and discussing with as well as challenging the long line of research on magic.

Another intention of this volume is to explore and problematize texts as a *source*: How do we read texts? Whose voices do we interpret? What is the relationship between the magical beliefs and practices we are studying – and the texts? In the study of magical beliefs and practices in Nordic cultural history, a great variety of textual sources are available. In this volume, Fredrik Skott studies magic by making use of juridical laws and trials documents, Stephen Mitchell and Ane Ohrvik investigate individual manuscript writings, Catharina Raudvere uses ethnographic fieldwork notes and Laura Stark reads personal memoirs, while Clive Tolley and Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir study Old Norse literature. This diversity of textual sources represents official, "private", academic, and artistic texts written by individuals and groups from different social and cultural backgrounds. By highlighting texts as a source we thereby give attention to how we use texts in our investigating process and thus explore and explain our methodological apparatus and the potential ideological and material properties in texts.

The text-related questions and themes are discussed and described in various ways: How can we study texts pertaining to the diverse traditions of magic? What kind of information, for instance, do different kinds of archive material provide? How does the attitude of former folklore collectors and their analytical framework affect the texts they produced and thus the archive material we use today? What about earlier texts, such as those characteristic of the *galdrabók* genre? Are they homogeneous, or do they change or develop over certain periods of time? How can we understand the systematic occurrences of encryption in early modern Black Book texts? Do such texts contain knowledge that was considered dangerous? In what way do literary texts from medieval times highlight or explain earlier ideas on magic and magical practices? Can we presume that they attest to actual folk beliefs, or were some of these ideas perhaps already fixed narrative motifs at the time they were written, and to some extent stock features of certain narrative genres? How can we refine our understanding of magic in a specific period by using later writings as the main sources? These questions are far from new in this field of research (see, e.g., Sweeney 2000; Raudvere 2002; Mitchell 2011). What this volume does provide, however, are new combinations of source materials and cultural contexts which offer new insights, new perspectives, and perhaps also contribute to challenging established ideas and notions on how we read and treat texts.

Even though the study of magic, as we now have established, has been a core subject field within Nordic folklore research in the last century, this does not mean, however, that magic as a concept is easily defined. Magic is not something that essentially exists but is a result of interpretations of beliefs and practices in different times, places, and social contexts. The wide-

spread use of the concept of magic and the way it implies a cultural and linguistic naturalness often deceives us to think we "recognize" and "know" what magic is. This deception often leads us to ignore its analytical property, its shifting meaning and uses through time and place and the way the construct of "magic" has been used as political and ideological weaponry. Therefore, it is important to define and explain the tool by which we recognize magic and how we know when something is magic.

As is the case for many concepts, magic has a dual role, becoming a central part of our everyday speech and being used as a definition of the most improbable objects. As Amy Wygant notes, magic is: "a central paradigm in our speaking, writing and thinking, our representations of ourselves, our souls, our ways of acquiring knowledge, the universe itself and its creation" (Wygant 2006:1). Here, Wygant pinpoints important conceptual challenges connected with the use of magic. Maybe this linguistic and emotional property embedded in our speech and acts makes the analytical concept harder to grasp and define? In Hildred Geertz's reflection on Keith Thomas' influential study of popular beliefs in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England she questions Thomas' notion of what magic is:

> What could be meant by "magical beliefs"? Do the ideas or attitudes that he groups together in this way form a unitary "Thing" with a definable "shape"? Is "magic" a distinct type of belief or practice or attitude that can be studied for its prevalence, persistence, or decline? For its uses and consequences? (Geertz 1975:71)

The very question of whether "magic" is something that can "form a unitary 'Thing' with a definable 'shape'", to loan Geertz's words, is an important one to ask. Inspired by Bruno Latour's warning about analysts of magic being magicians, Randall Styers takes the debate even further with the argument that theories of magic are essentially magical themselves: "Despite the array of theorists who reiterate the claim that it is magical to believe in the power of words, scholars themselves have exerted substantial power with their theories of magic. […] Theorists of magic exercise the very magical power of words they so disclaim" (Styers 2004:223).

Even though the editors of this volume do not support in full Wygant's and Styers' statements, since it would virtually make us incapable of studying magical representations or applying the concept analytically, they remind us of how the making and application of concepts and categories, both historically and today, is closely linked to the exercise of power. In her work on elf charms in Anglo-Saxon culture in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Karen L. Jolly stresses the concepts of "interrelatedness" and "contested meanings" in cultural studies. She points out that clear-cut categories often applied by scholars must be handled cautiously.

> The tendency in western thought to propound mutually exclusive opposites – whether it be Good and Evil, God and the Devil, Magic and Religion, or Civilized and Barbarian, Christian and Pagan, Religion and Science – is useful only as a means

to understand the dialectical interaction between these forces or tendencies. As ideas these extremes are quite powerful, but the realities of human existence range between them (Jolly 1996:3).

Just as all traditions and beliefs have always been ever-varying, so have ideas and practices related to magic. And even if clear-cut divisions are hard to apply to traditions – placed in the dialectical field between continuity and change – folklorists and related disciplines have sought to create and explain concepts of magic within this changeable framework. In order to understand the culture we are studying, the constructions of concepts – and opposites – are useful methodological tools in analytical processes. What we as analysts must be aware of and take into account, however, is the power embedded in the concepts employed and what possible consequences their applications have or might bring. Naturally, this is also true when studying how magic has been defined historically. In her reflections on how definition-making processes connected to magic related to social groups in early modern Sweden, Linda Oja points out that:

> To put it in somewhat extreme terms, one could say that all categorizing is exercising of power because it involves the forcing and controlling of the surrounding world by making boundaries between different phenomena and thus brings certain things together while leaving others out. When making a definition, other meanings, connections and lines of demarcations are excluded (Oja 1999:19).[1]

As analysts our goal should be not only to identify the categories used but also what possible blind spots they might have generated, keeping constantly in mind that the premises we make by applying our methods, concepts, and classifications are always a result of interpretations.

So where does that leave us in the study of magical beliefs and practices? How can we understand our own methodology? And how do we understand magic? A possible way of highlighting the methods employed in this volume and explaining our application of magic as a concept is through the emic-etic perspective. Roughly explained, this perspective refers to two kinds of research methods and initial viewpoints; that from within a social group and hence the perspective of the subject, and that from outside the group and hence the perspective of the observer. In their purified forms, the emic approach investigates perceptions, categorizations, rules of behaviour, ideas and practices voiced by a given social group, while the etic scientist-oriented approach seeks to interpret cultures impartially, emphasizing what the investigator considers important (Ben-Amos 1976:215–242).

The term magic, for instance, is primarily an etic construction in the context of popular beliefs and practices in the medieval, early modern, and modern period. Stuart Clark has pointed out that it can be quite difficult in a European context to find anyone from the early modern period who accepted the term "magic" as a description of their practice, "magical" as a la-

bel for the thoughts they had or who named themselves "magicians" (Clark 2002:111). In a similar vein, Richard Kieckhefer points out the discrepancy between concept and the actual practices in his study of magic in the Middle Ages, stating that: "few of these people would have asked themselves whether the term 'magic' applied to their practices. […] Only the theologically and philosophically sophisticated elite bothered greatly about questions of definition" (Kieckhefer 2000:9). The concept of magic was first and foremost subject to an intellectual debate, whereas ordinary people who were the main subjects of the debate used other labels (see, e.g., Amundsen 1999; 2013; Cameron 2010).

In identifying the magical element in our historical texts, the authors of this volume apply the emic perspective and highlight what people themselves used when naming their beliefs and practices. As such, the authors study as diverse labels as *seiðr* and *fjǫlkynngi* in Old Norse literature, *forgjøring* and *forhekselse* in eighteenth-century Norway, *trollskott*, *älvaeld*, *näckbett*, *vålbundet*, and *vidskepelse* in eighteenth-century Sweden, *taika* and *loitsu* in nineteenth-century Finland, and *inskott*, *omlagning*, and *trolldom* in Swedish-Speaking Finland in the early twentieth century. As local labels used to describe healing practices and witchcraft, to explain diseases, bad luck, or simply malice to mention but a few of the connections made, they all point to beliefs and practices related to supernatural powers and the manipulation of such. It is precisely these latter commonalities which make it possible for the authors to interchangeably apply the etic perspective and use *magic* as a common term. By applying magic as a concept, the authors are able to compare different textual sources within the realms of their respective studies. Furthermore, this application makes the studies in this volume available as comparative objects and references for relating investigations on this topic. Thus, it is the dialectical use of the emic and etic perspective in this volume which makes it possible to provide insight into specific and unique social and cultural conditions and circumstances, while at the same time makes them available contributions to a larger field of research on magical beliefs and practices.

The texts themselves are, furthermore, important objects when researching magic and its underlying ideas. According to popular beliefs throughout the ages, words were powerful, and written words were even more so. It is therefore of great value in the present volume that the authors provide actual text examples, whether they are dealing with charms and spells, literary texts, fieldwork notes or legal documents. Moreover, the studies offer suggestions concerning reading strategies for these texts. When concentrating on the oldest textual sources, Clive Tolley, for instance, chooses to distinguish between two approaches: *a literary, synchronic approach*, which emphasizes "how magic works within any particular narrative" and *a historical, diachronic approach*, where the texts

are used "to elucidate the original context of the magical acts described, possibly several centuries earlier" (see, pp. 16–17). While Tolley's research falls largely under the second approach, Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir gives an example of the first approach by focusing on medieval narratives and the relationship between magic and text within that frame. In their research on grimoires and Black Books, Stephen Mitchell and Ane Ohrvik focus on magic texts from the late medieval and early modern period and what we can learn from the texts as ideological products by studying the semantic and cultural properties of the texts. The collections and documents dealt with in the three remaining articles direct our attention to written reports from the mostly uneducated rural population of early modern and modern Scandinavia. Fredrik Skott close-reads and compares a variety of written texts primarily from eighteenth-century Sweden in search of magical belief systems. By viewing two personal narratives as *key texts*, Laura Stark studies the narrative "framing" embedded in the texts and how they provide narrative reconstructions of how magic and the supernatural were integrated into the lives of two individuals. These texts represent what Stark labels *realistic ethnographic fiction*. Finally, Catharina Raudvere focuses on material from folklore collections and how illness and misfortune in popular beliefs are conceptualized through the texts.

The following articles are presented in chronological order, starting with considerations about pagan traditions and Old Norse literature, and ending with descriptions and practices in Scandinavian rural communities in later centuries. While Clive Tolley builds his research on diverse Old Norse texts, focusing on the traces of *seiðr* and shamanism, Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir treats magic as narrative devices within Icelandic literary works, the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*. Stephen Mitchell then turns our attention towards the grimoires from Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, making a *Stichprobe* out of four manuscripts from late medieval times into the early modern period. In a similar vein, Ane Ohrvik makes a kind of *Stichprobe* too by her close readings of encrypted and unencrypted texts in two early modern Norwegian Black Books, revealing the secrets behind secret writings. Turning to the relationship between magic and healing practices, the three remaining authors rely on archive material from the period between the eighteenth and the early twentieth century. In his study of *smöjning* in eighteenth century Sweden, Fredrik Skott highlights the thin line between healing practices and magic through his reading of court documents and describes how the custom became to be seen as a punishable criminal act. From the early twentieth century, Laura Stark investigates magic and folk belief in Finland, based on personal narratives, while Catharina Raudvere studies the folklore collector's Valter Forsblom's documentation of healing practices in Swedish-speaking Fin-

land. It is our hope that the readers of this volume will enjoy these articles, and at the same time gain new perspectives on a number of the common features that have long characterized scholarly debate on magic, and undoubtedly will continue to do so.

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[1] "Något tillspetsat kan man säga att all kategorisering är maktutövning, då man betvingar och kontrollerar omvärlden genom att dra upp gränser mellom olika företeelser och därigenom sammanföra vissa saker och särskilja andra. Då man fastslår en definition utesluter man andra möjliga betydelser, kopplingar och gränsdragningar." Translation by the authors.

The Peripheral at the Centre

The Subversive Intent of Norse Myth and Magic

Clive Tolley

One of the tantalising aspects of ancient Norse magic is that while our written sources portray it as an important aspect of life in pagan times, these sources date in general from long after the times they describe, and the picture gained is at best fuzzy, and inadequate in many respects. The underlying motivation of the present study is to look at how we may refine our understanding of magic, while still using these later writings as the main documentary focus. The particular theme of the present investigation is marginality or peripherality in Norse magic, and the aim is to elucidate the interconnected antitheses of the central and the marginal, male and female, the ego and tradition. These topics cannot, of course, be observed directly in their original living settings, hence hypotheses cannot be confirmed. Moreover, while the interpretations offered here are intended to suggest something of the world view that may have obtained in pre-Christian Scandinavia (or rather, within some traditions there), they necessarily reflect traditions built up over many centuries, including in post-conversion times, as they are preserved in mainly thirteenth-century written sources.

While I seek to outline aspects of the place of magic and related myth within a *systematic* approach, I endeavour, within the outline indicated, to make some headway in refocusing the investigation of Norse magic onto the *person* rather than the system more strongly than hitherto. In the first place, a central theme is to attempt to define the seemingly specifically feminine aspects of some Norse magic (unsurprisingly, the focus here is on forms associated in the sources especially with women, such as *seiðr*). A further question raised is how someone engaged with the otherworld may have responded to it through a personal negotiation of tradition. There is little enough evidence upon which to build a picture, but I will make some observations on one of the very few Old Norse poems from the pagan period we do have that represents a personal response by someone who was a protégé of the divine master of magic and poetry, Óðinn – Egill Skalla-Grímsson's *Sonatorrek*.

Although the present study is text-based, for the sake of space I avoid any long citations. The texts under consideration are readily accessible (and most will be found gathered for convenience in the second volume of my study, Tolley 2009a).

Introduction: How to Read Texts

The collection of essays in which the present offering is included focuses on magic and texts; what then is magic, and what is a text? I am not going to enter into arguments about the essence of magic – plenty has been written on this elsewhere. For the present study, it is enough to say that magic means the manipulation of what we would call supernatural forces to achieve ends which could not be achieved, or not easily, by normal physical means. Magic operates, or members of society believe it to operate, in almost all communities; my focus here is on certain aspects of the magic of late pagan Scandinavia, as reflected in mainly textual sources which, while written down well after the conversion, are generally accepted as reflecting traditions going back to the pagan period. There are important aspects of the *practice* of Norse magic such as the degree to which it relied on formulaic spells or involved soul loss (matters which vary from culture to culture) which call for attention, but not here. More pertinent to the present discussion is the *context* of magic: in what circumstances was it used, by whom, and what were its connections with religion (the worship of gods – whatever that may imply in a Norse setting) and with power – was it central to the exercise of power in early Scandinavia, or a marginal activity engaged in by those perceived as outsiders?

Magic of the past may be sought chiefly in two areas: archaeology and texts. It is primarily Eddic verse, along with some skaldic poems and prose works such as Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*, all recorded in thirteenth-century Iceland (though sometimes extant only in later manuscripts), that I make use of in this study. As this period is several centuries after the demise of paganism and hence after the focus of attention of the present investigation, a short discussion of textual sources is called for. General theoretical questions of what a text actually is, and where its meaning resides (with the author, the scribe, the original readership or modern audience), call for a far deeper consideration, particularly in light of much modern focus upon such questions, than it is possible to engage in here; I confine myself to a few remarks of particular pertinence to the study in hand.

A text may be studied in two ways that are relevant here: *a literary, synchronic approach* looks at how magic works within any particular narrative, considering relationships with other narratives and how contemporary society and its concerns are reflected; *a historical, diachronic approach* uses a text to elucidate the original context of the magical acts described, poss-

ibly several centuries earlier, particularly before the shift to Christianity – here, the text itself is not the focus of attention, and it becomes what we might term a "para-text" (the contemporary "text" or context of the magic performance having been lost). A literary approach may well be viable without any diachronic historical consideration, but any historical approach which seeks to use a text to highlight the time of its setting rather than its composition is fallacious if it does not first take into consideration the synchronic interpretation of that text – a crucial point that, regrettably, is not always borne in mind.

A text is only secondarily a piece of material writing: primarily, it is a narrative (often oral in origin) that has explanatory power for its audience. Just what a text is trying to explain, or to achieve, may vary considerably, but it is important to realise that when remote from its object – in the way that, for example, the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Eiríks saga rauða* is remote from a purported act of magic in Greenland some two and a half centuries earlier – its purpose may differ considerably from the contemporary "text" (or context) of the event described (which may well be fictional anyway). The need for philological and contextual investigation of the texts which form the mainstay of any research into Norse magic and religion is paramount; as the texts are to a large degree literary in nature, the creative inventiveness of writers acts as a particular stumbling-block to the literal-minded. It may be worth giving an example. It might seem reasonable to argue that, since the contemporary sagas of thirteenth-century Iceland (the *Sturlunga saga* collection in particular) portray much less magic than the family sagas set in an earlier historical period, there must have been a diminution of magic practice (as Gísli Pálsson argues: 1991); it seems to me more likely that the family saga authors felt greater licence, for their own artistic purposes, in merely imagining magic to have taken place in a fairly remote historical period, rather than that they were recounting facts (which could only be derived from an unverifiable but certainly unreliable oral tradition) about magic practices of ages past, the actual level of which we in truth have no means of determining. A catalogue of examples of largely thirteenth-century or later sources being ascribed too high a degree of reliability by scholars in terms of what they tell us about the pagan period might easily be drawn up (I have dealt with a few in detail myself; for example, the account of the *vǫlva* in *Eiríks saga rauða*, Tolley 2009a:I, 487–507, or phallic worship in *Vǫlsa þáttr*, Tolley 2009b).

Nonetheless, few researchers regard these later sources as wholly devoid of information derived from tradition stretching back into the pagan period, and a careful use of them as "para-texts" for historical research is surely justified. We cannot, of course, ever *prove* anything, but we can at least make suggestions about the way magic and religion may have operated in the pagan period, even if these suggestions relate to something preserved in a

very fragmentary form which requires a great deal of contentious reconstruction.

Such reconstruction entails the further problem of *systematisation*: the sources recounting Norse myths and beliefs are individual, frozen realisations of parts of an ever-varying tradition, and this is evidenced in the inconsistencies we find between our preserved sources. The process of reconstruction of necessity infers links between elements of this tradition which may in reality never have been associated, and it smoothes out differences which must certainly have existed. Hence any discussion of the beliefs and myths of the pagan period (itself a vague concept) will result in a picture that, however it is constructed, is both more speculative and less certain than is sometimes recognised. This bears upon a wider consideration, which perhaps amounts to a third way of considering a text (in addition to the two approaches outlined above), as a *performance*. One of the main advances in folklore studies (and to a degree in literary studies) over the last few decades has been the increasing realisation that a text, be it written or oral, forms but part of a larger entity encompassing the circumstances of its delivery, the performative elements of those delivering it and hearing it, the diachronic and geographic background of the tradition that has led up to the performance, the individual responses to tradition and setting on the part of the performers, and so forth. To decontextualise a text is to deprive it of meaning. All medieval texts are decontextualised to a degree, but when we seek to leave aside the little late medieval context that we do have and try to infer an earlier context (using the text as a "para-text"), we inevitably pare down the meaning, in overall performative terms, yet further. If we are to undertake such a task, we need to think carefully how to go about making reasonable suggestions for filling this void; textual sources on their own do not suffice to reveal all that might be said about pagan magic.

I do not consider archaeological finds in any detail, though they can scarcely be ignored. I would nonetheless like to point out an important aspect of archaeological discussion which bears upon our consideration of magic and texts: artefacts when discovered are detextualised (and often decontextualised), but archaeologists provide them with texts (interpretations), which, with increasing frequency, are derived not from comparable archaeological work but from readings of medieval written texts. There is a tremendous temptation to fall into circular arguments here: written texts from long after the date of artefacts in question are used to interpret these artefacts (which are thus provided with their own "texts"); the medieval texts are then regarded as reliable witnesses to the nature of magic in the pagan period on the basis of the archaeological finds, which in fact have been interpreted on the basis of these very texts. I would not wish to decry the value of some excellent recent archaeological work in the area of ancient Norse belief, but it is, for example, disconcerting to find major exhibitions

such as the British Museum's Vikings: Life and Legend (2014) presenting contentious interpretations, with more than a hint of such circular argumentation to them, as facts to the public, even if the accompanying catalogue (Williams and Pentz 2014) is more circumspect (and indeed a worthy, if limited, fount of information and discussion).

Another area which holds out the hope of increasing our understanding of the role and status of practitioners of magic is anthropological and sociological study. I make use of a small selection of such sources to begin to advance our understanding of what pagan Norse magic may have been like; it is hoped that a more detailed study may follow later.

Centrality and Peripherality; Male and Female Gender

If we are to extrapolate anything resembling a cogent picture of magical practice, however speculative, from our sources, we must surely have recourse to research of a broadly anthropological nature, including gender-related sociological studies, as well as to comparative religion. As already noted, it is important that such research is conducted in tandem with an acute awareness of the nature of the textual sources which form the main body of evidence for magic in the Norse field.

It is only relatively recently that witchcraft (as it existed from about the fifteenth century on) has come to be viewed as a working belief, as opposed to a mere invention of Church inquisitors or jealous neighbours, and it has become increasingly clear that it shares much with traditional forms of shamanism (see e.g., Ginzburg 1991; 1992; Pócs 1999; Wilby 2006; 2010); yet witchcraft is always a peripheral activity, defined against an establishment religion, whereas shamanism, in its most distinctive forms, is generally the focal form of social contact with the spirit world. I. M. Lewis (1971: 170–177) distinguishes between central and peripheral shamanism, the latter being where shamanistic traits are found within the spiritual practices of a community, but do not form the central form of religious expression; this seems to occur particularly where agriculture forms the main means of sustenance. In this loose sense (and it is worth noting that Lewis's arguments are rather more complex than I can do justice to here), the witchcraft of the late Middle Ages might be described as a variant of peripheral shamanism. While some elements of later witchcraft, especially as presented through the eyes of inquisitors, are not relevant for the earlier period, others, such as trance contact with the spirit world, almost certainly are (see Tolley 2009a: I, 109–133). The dichotomy between "central" and "peripheral" shamanic cults, however, while important, needs further refinement.

A crucial aspect of Norse myth, as preserved in the renderings recorded in post-conversion sources, is, I would argue, that *peripherality is made a central concern*; peripherality, in the sense I will be using it here, connotes

that which subverts the established norms: and magic and religion cannot here be viewed apart from each other (a point emphasised for example by Mary Douglas 2002:29, 34–35, who criticises James Frazer forcefully for doing so). We might think of the model of the Greek Dionysus, always considered an outsider, the "other", yet always central to cult (see Tolley 2009a: I, 97–99). In all the Norse sources the practice of magic is presented as a peripheral activity (in line with the primarily agricultural nature of society) – and is hence more like witchcraft than classic shamanism – yet its two central practitioners within the mythic arena are the most prominent of the gods, Freyja, who taught *seiðr*, and Óðinn, who practised it (*Ynglinga saga* ch. 4 and 7).

Ynglinga saga emphasises the peripherality or unacceptability of *seiðr* by noting that although Óðinn practised it, it was accompanied by *ergi* (unmanliness or dishonour). Its peripherality is patent too in its having been taught by Freyja. Whilst *Vǫluspá* may be open to varying interpretations, Ursula Dronke's seems to me the most convincing (see Dronke 1997, introduction and commentary on the poem): the *vanir* begin as outsiders, and attack the in-group of gods, the *æsir*, using especially *seiðr*, the mistress of which was Freyja; Freyja then infiltrates the world of gods and men through her avatars, Heiðr and Gullveig. The *æsir* are unable to defeat their rivals, and the two sides eventually have to draw up a truce and form one community: the peripheral is placed centre-stage, a process epitomised in the scene where the gods are about to lose their erstwhile enemy, Freyja, to the giants, which would bring calamity.

The purport of this part of *Vǫluspá* is ambivalent: the *vǫlva* who is imagined as proclaiming the poem appears to revel in the power of these female characters of myth, practitioners of her own magical craft, against the male world of the *æsir*: she is undermining the authority of her client, Óðinn, reminding him that he was once forced to yield to the power of a woman, and is forced again to resort to a *vǫlva*'s authority. On the other hand, there may be a deliberate dichotomy here between the voice of the poem and its message, particularly if (as seems likely) it was composed in that twilight time as Christianity gained the ascendant: the *vǫlva* and the magical power of women is something that a Christianising audience would listen askance to (I suggest something similar may be operating in the much later *Vǫlsa þáttr*: Tolley 2009b; note that I follow e.g. John McKinnell 2013 and many others in seeing *Vǫluspá* as in essence the composition of a particular person at a particular time, even if it has no doubt been adapted to some extent in oral tradition).

The *ergi* that accompanied *seiðr* when practised by men may have included unmanliness in a number of forms, but perhaps one aspect of this, symbolised by the imagined confrontation between Óðinn and the *vǫlva* and his implicit humiliation in being shown his powerlessness, was that a man was

forced to adopt a female perspective on the world, which, we may reasonably assume, prevailed in this overwhelmingly female practice: I suggest that in the male appropriation of *seiðr* there was an implicit understanding that while men may hold political authority, women are endowed with an invincible power, derived from the goddess Freyja, of persuasion, knowledge, life and prophecy, the rejection or loss of which would result in the demise of society. We cannot do more than suggest what this perspective may in truth have been in any detail, but the poet of *Vǫluspá* seems to have understood at least that it existed, and could be viewed as a threat.

Freyja and Female-Gender Aspects of Norse Magic

Freyja is surely essentially an "Inanna goddess" type; this is not to say that we can just transfer features of the Sumerian Inanna (and Akkadian Ishtar) onto the figure of Freyja, but many aspects that are preserved in obscure or fragmentary form with the Norse goddess suggest strong similarities in overall make-up, which is more clearly visible in the better-preserved Sumerian and related texts (attempts to dismiss these similarities as insignificant or commonplace, for example by Britt Mari Näsström 1991, seem superficial, and by splitting off one feature at a time they fail to take into account the *coincidence* of features which justifies the comparison; a full analysis of Freyja cannot be undertaken here, however). Rivkah Harris (1991) argues that Inanna is essentially a paradox, a deity embodying within herself fundamental and irreconcilable polarities and contrarieties – both order and chaos, structure and antistructure – and confounding and confusing the normative categories of masculine society, insisting that life is more complex than masculine aspirations would allow: she has a voracious sexual appetite, yet in some texts appears as a maiden; she is a loving spouse yet is hostile to her husband Dumuzi; she is androgynous, and is said to make women of men and men of women (and her cult personnel were transvestites). She encompasses the two forms of potential disorder: sex and violence – and the battlefield is her playground. She is associated with the rulers of the land, but also with prostitutes (and is herself a prostitute).

Many of these aspects can be paralleled with Freyja, the beloved *mær* (maiden) of the gods who is also a lascivious whore, the goddess of sex who, dwelling in Fólkvangr, 'Battle-Field', gets half the slain alongside Óðinn; she is the destroyer of the society of the *æsir* who becomes their darling. I would suggest that, like Inanna in Harris's interpretation, Freyja similarly embodies irreconcilable polarities. The subversion of norms that this implies is realised in her practice and teaching of *seiðr*, which, at least as far back as we can peer, would therefore seem to be both an essentially subversive, 'peripheral', activity, and one that was recognised as central to paganism. Part of its subversiveness surely consists in its being a primarily female

practice, with women arrogating to themselves a level of authority they would not normally exercise; whilst Christians would view this as particularly obnoxious (and, unlike pagans, would seek to stamp it out rather than accepting it as a paradoxical part of religion), this is surely something that goes back in essence to the pagan period. Norse sources on the whole do not make a very strong connection between what *vǫlur* or *seiðkonur* do and the myths of the goddess Freyja: but this is surely a reflection of the attenuated and stylised nature of these sources, from a time long after the coming of Christianity, when magical practices were wholly outside the sphere of accepted religion, and notices of close connections with pagan gods would have been eschewed. From earlier sources, we sometimes get tantalising hints of a much closer connection, as in Strabo's gruesome scene of the prophetesses of the Cimbri beating on the wagon coverings to raise a din, and prophesying on the basis of the blood of captives, whose throats they slit, as it spurted into cauldrons (*Geography* VII, 2.3, composed around AD 7) – a dramatic realisation, surely, of the bland statement that the goddess of prophetic *seiðr*, Freyja, got half the slain. Close to the probable homeland of the Cimbri but from the later Viking period, a reflection of such a connection with the warring exploits of kings may be found in the burial of a woman, fairly clearly a witch (her bowl had the remains of ointment, and the narcotic henbane was found with her, reminiscent of later witches' ointment), at Haraldr blátǫnn's royal fortress of Fyrkat in Denmark (Williams and Pentz 2014:196–197).

Freyja and the Image of Birth

In her study of female shamans, Barbara Tedlock (2005:202) claims that in their initiatory experience, women tend to focus on birth as a symbol for becoming a shaman, rather than the violent dismemberment and reassembly that characterise male initiatory visions in hunting societies. We do not know what sort of initiatory visions *vǫlur* had, or indeed if they had any at all. Yet birth and rebirth appear to be central to the Inanna-type goddess, and to Freyja – though establishing this requires a fair deal of speculative interpretation. This intractability of the sources is perhaps not surprising, and not just because of their fragmentary nature (in this case, it is a fragment of the skaldic poem *Húsdrápa* that is most relevant); as Liv Helga Domasnes notes (1991:66), the role of women and gender roles is likely to be an area that was heavily influenced by the changing cultural values of Christianity, so earlier understandings of such roles have to be teased out of our sources with difficulty. It is also, of course, not clear that any postulated initiation experience would necessarily be reflected in the divine arena in the form of a myth; yet given the propensity for female initiation to involve images of birth, it seems likely that myth reflects these experiences.

The relevant myth here is that of Freyja's necklace (or girdle), the Brísingamen. I have discussed this in detail elsewhere (Tolley 2009a:I, 389–403, mainly following Dronke's interpretations): in essence, the necklace appears as a talisman of birth, which is lost to a deathly sea world, whence the god Heimdallr retrieves it. This is paralleled by the descent of Inanna into the depths, which marks the disappearance of life and fecundity from the world, which return as she ascends. The story of the Brísingamen is told in anything other than fragments only in the late *Sǫrla þáttr* in Flateyjarbók (1860:275–283), where there is surely little if any understanding of the original religious message of the myth; yet tantalising hints remain. For example, the necklace is made by four dwarfs, whose price is that each should sleep with the goddess on successive nights. The nature of dwarfs in Old Norse tradition has been brilliantly illuminated by Ármann Jakobsson (2005) in an article whose insight compensates for its brevity: dwarfs embody *absence*, which is realised in their association with death, darkness, migration away, disappearance, lack of women, lack of size. The four dwarfs of *Sǫrla þáttr* can only be the directions, North, South, East and West (Snorri, *Gylfaginning* ch. 8), who are imagined as holding up the firmament (the horizon, of course, can never be reached, so it is fittingly represented by dwarfs, who forever recede, disappear, and the gap between horizon and firmament is infinitely small, again hinted at in dwarfs' smallness, receding into absence); the talisman of birth is thus drawn from the four corners of the world and encompasses the fecundity of all, yet its very creation results from a union with beings of absence, just as it is subsequently stolen away into a world of death (or absence) on Vágasker, 'Wave Skerry'. Its return marks the bringing of life and fecundity to the world by the goddess: if this myth was indeed in any way related to a female initiation experience, it implies a role perhaps as a healer or midwife (roles which are typical of female shamans: Tedlock 2005:206), but certainly as a guarantor of well- being in society. The presentations we have of *vǫlur* are scarcely likely to be full depictions of their roles within pagan society, if indeed they give us much reliable information at all, but the focus of prophecy on the fate of the crops is surely some faint reflection of the role of Freyja in this myth (if we can accept that in outline it follows the pattern of the myths of Inanna and other similar Middle Eastern goddesses).

In the myth of the Brísingamen, Freyja as it were departs on a journey by proxy, the necklace being a metonym for the goddess herself (in the parallel myth of the descent of Inanna, the goddess undergoes the otherworld journey). In another myth, Freyja is said to wander herself, under the name Mardǫll, about the world in search of her mate, Óðr, and as she went she wept tears of red gold (Snorri, *Gylfaginning* ch. 35). The wandering of a goddess, particularly of fecundity, in search of her lost mate is found widely,

but here it may be argued that the myth is a variant realisation of the Brísingamen myth, with somewhat different imagery. A wandering woman was almost by definition a whore (see Heizmann 2002:205–210) – a notion which underlies a third myth of Freyja's departure, albeit an aborted one, when she is pawned (or porned) to the giants as a prize for building the walls of Ásgarðr, and here *Vǫluspá* refers to her paradoxically as "Óðs mey" ('Óðr's maiden'), an innocent girl crying for her lover. Short as the myth of Óðr is in its preserved form, it is possible to infer a rich symbolism within it, beyond the basic pattern of the mourning goddess – though, as ever, we cannot determine the degree to which such inferences were ever manifested in actual tradition. I have suggested (Tolley 2009a:I, 450–455) that the name Óðr – identical with the substantive/adjective *óðr*, 'frenzy, wild' – suggests a spirit-being in some form: Freyja may be seeking out her spirit mate just as a female shaman would call upon her male spirit mate and helper, and hence the myth could be seen as representing either an initiatory experience of the shaman, who would wander out into the wild when called by the spirits to her profession, or more straightforwardly a seeking out of the spirits in the performance of a shamanic ritual; on another level, this may be a mythical representation of a shaman's retrieval of a soul stolen by the spirits into the otherworld (such retrieval often involves the male imagery of a fight, as among the Sámi (see Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978:15), since the dead do not wish to give the soul up; however, more female-oriented imagery is found in many parallels, such as the attempted revitalisation of Lemminkäinen from the world of the dead by his mother in Finnish tradition: see e.g., poem 35, sung in 1845 by Simana Sissonen in Ilomantsi, in Kuusi, Bosley and Branch 1979). Reading such ritual significance into the myth can at best be tentative; we do not know that *vǫlur* had any such spirit-calling initiatory experience, or that they retrieved lost souls in the way shamans in many societies did. Nonetheless, if we accept any close connection as having existed between practitioners of magic and the goddess who was mistress of it, we are justified in seeking to suggest ways the myths may have been ritualised, or reflected ritual.

We are not told why Óðr wandered off, but a parallel myth is told by Saxo (*Gesta Danorum* I, vii, 1–2). Here the protagonists are Frigg and Óðinn. There is considerable overlap between the seeress Frigg and Freyja, and Óðr is often seen as a variant of Óðinn, the wandering god *par excellence* (de Vries 1956–1957:II, 87–88; 1931:33–39), who moreover dies on the gallows (*Hávamál* 138). In Saxo's myth, Frigg decides to turn a gold statue that Óðinn has been presented with by his grateful worshippers into jewellery, and sleeps with a craftsman to get her way; Óðinn discovers this and goes off in a huff on a trip (during which his place is usurped by the juggler Mið-Óðinn, who, as Óðinn returns, retires to the land of the Finnar, where he dies). Such sexual promiscuity would be typ-

ical of Freyja (and if this were part of the tradition, calling her *mær* in *Vǫluspá* would be a pointed irony or paradox), and her subsequent search for her lost mate would highlight her inherent contrariety (seen too in her counterpart Inanna's wanderings after Dumuzi, whom she scorned). The making of jewellery at the cost of sexual favours is surely parallel to the crafting of the Brísingamen, but it also places gold centre-stage. Gold symbolises prosperity and longevity: in *Vǫluspá*, the gods lacked no gold at the beginning of the world, but its disappearance marks their decline and final destruction. Freyja (most probably) appears through her avatar Gullveig, 'Gold Draught', whose life cannot be extinguished in Hárr's hall. 'Gold Draught' surely alludes too to the mead of poetry, saved from the giants by Óðinn, which at an earlier stage of mythological development almost certainly symbolised life itself (Doht 1974:231). Freyja, as Mardǫll, weeps tears of gold, and seeks out Óðr, whose name again recalls Óðrerir, 'Rouser of *óðr*', in the myth of the mead of poetry: Freyja, through the symbol of her guardianship of prosperity and life, weeps her mate back, presumably out of the realm of death – though we do not know if she was more successful than her counterpart Frigg, trying in vain to weep her son Baldr from Hel's clutches.

Mardǫll is said to weep specifically *red* gold. This may suggest the 'fire of ocean' (especially as Mar- is 'ocean'), which is a kenning for gold (with many variants: Meissner 1984:229–232). But red surely also alludes to blood. In connection with women, this suggests an allusion either to menstruation or to birth. Such tabus and symbolism as must have existed around menstruation are all but impossible to discern in Old Norse, though Margaret Clunies Ross (1981) has argued cogently that Þórr frees himself from a river of menstrual blood (later described as urine) in the form of the River Vimurr (in *Þórsdrápa*); it is also interesting that the witch of Fyrkat's costly blue costume was interspersed with red thread (Williams and Pentz 2014: 196–197). In the present myth, birth seems a more likely reference. Now, the daughter of Freyja and Óðr was Hnoss, 'Treasure': hence the goddess's weeping of gold is realised under a different symbol in her giving birth to treasure.

Both menstruation and birth occur in initiatory experiences of female shamans; Tedlock (2005:189) cites the calling of the Greenland shamaness Teemiartissaq (from Thalbitzer 1923:II, 454–457), where the shamaness clothes herself in the appearance of a bloody butterfly she encounters, which enables her to visit the ocean deity and shamanise, and (207) the Ul'ichi shamaness Sophia Anga, who gave birth to twin tigers, who conveyed her to the otherworld and wished to keep her there, but she was able to tame them, and became a specialist healer in birth-related illnesses. Birth is thus a channel into the otherworld, and gives access to its power (when properly mastered). In Finnish folk magic tradition, extensive use was made of *väki*, 'power',

something almost concrete that could be summoned to produce effects on those nearby; many things had a *väki*, but one of the most powerful was vagina *väki* (referred to as *vitun vihat*): its particular potency stemmed from the notion of the vagina as a passageway to the otherworld (a baby, after all, comes from the otherworld through the vagina), whose powers could be channelled through it (Stark 2012:173). Such notions cannot be directly traced in Old Norse: yet the myth of Freyja and Óðr hints at the notion of reaching the otherworld, whither Óðr, 'Spirit', has departed, through 'giving birth' to gold, or to Hnoss.

Just as Freyja was a wanderer, so too were *vǫlur*: these are consistently presented as turning up at farms, rather than as being visited at their own abode (if we leave aside the summoning of dead *vǫlur*, as takes place in *Baldrs draumar* and, by implication, in *Vǫluspá*). In this respect they differ from the majority of both shamans and witches. Wandering sets them outside societal norms, where a woman was settled in a house and beholden to her husband, and where men, if not necessarily physically settled, were ideally in a settled relationship with a lord; from the wider Germanic field, the theme of the lordless wanderer forms the basis of the Old English poem *The Wanderer*. Hence the *vǫlva* subverts not just the norms of being a woman, but of being a member of society in general. The performance of *seiðr* is also implicitly subversive, and not merely in being something 'peripheral' to the main religious activity of society: one of the consistent features in presentations of the practice, which it is reasonable to see as reflecting a memory of something real in the rite, was the use of a raised dais, a *seiðhjallr*. In general terms, being raised up is a declaration of authority (note for example how King Hrollaugr had to roll himself down the king's hill to the position of the *jarl* to divest himself of kingship in *Haralds saga ins hárfagra* ch. 8): hence, occupation of the *seiðhjallr* is in part surely an arrogation of power by a woman, and by someone outside the hierarchical system of authority.

Travel also implies dissociation and reassociation. Freyja is dissociated from the *vanir*, then socialised among the *æsir*. All shamans, male and female, are dissociated from the society in which they live to become something special, liminal beings between the worlds of people and the spirits, but are then reinstated in the community to fulfil a role within it. This dissociation-cum-association is symbolised in Norse by the *seiðhjallr*, which not only lifts the *vǫlva* up (symbolising her authority), but also separates her from the surrounding community while at the same time designating her as its spiritual practitioner. The *seiðhjallr* creates a liminal space which allowed access to the spirit world without being subjugated by it.

Male and Female Magic among Scandinavians and Their Neighbours

Norse sources present *seiðr* and the activities of *vǫlur* as a markedly female practice, though magic practice in general is not so clearly female (Dillmann 2006:156–157); while the wider context and the interrelations of practices within it need further consideration, for the present I confine myself to focusing on the primarily female practices. The Norse female bias is in contrast to what is found among the neighbouring Sámi and Finns, albeit in rather later sources, where generally men were regarded as being far more likely to have the necessary strength to operate as magical practitioners (the Sámi *noaidi* and Finnish *tietäjä*); in most forms of classical shamanism too men prevail, with women being viewed as exceptional in the role, or as incapable of attaining to the highest degrees of the profession. Tedlock (2005) is probably right in trying to balance the books by emphasising that female shamanic practitioners have been underrepresented in the records – though she fails to demonstrate this in anything like a comprehensive and thorough manner. Women have certainly been misrepresented by the tendency of early field-workers to see only the most dramatic practitioners as real shamans, ignoring the many other sorts of essentially shamanic practitioners, often women, within a community, and also by the earlier lack of female field-workers – for example, Kustaa Karjalainen (1921–1927), in his extensive study of Khanty traditions, concluded that essentially women did not have any distinctive spiritual life: this is merely the result of his exclusion, as a man, from their spirituality by native women (Anna Leena Siikala, personal communication; see also the sections on female rites among the Khanty in Siikala and Ulyashev 2011).

The contrast between Norse and neighbouring peoples to the north and east may not have been quite as harsh as may appear, therefore, but it still remains, and probably reflects the more agrarian basis of Norse culture. Where men are the main dealers with spirits, the justification stems essentially from their greater physical strength, which is translated metaphorically into a strength in spirit too; thus the Finnish *tietäjä* needed to be hard (symbolised particularly in the need to have firm teeth), a quality possessed by few women in sufficient degree, to guard against ingress by spirits (Stark 2006:ch. 9). By contrast, women's much leakier bodies indicated also a spiritual permeability which militates against their being able to resist and control spirits. This is not an inevitable way of thinking: spiritual strength might in principle be conceived as wholly unrelated to physical strength, but there would appear little empirical evidence for such a stance within the area under consideration. Yet the association of *seiðr* with *ergi* implies, as I and others have argued (see Tolley 2009a:I, 158–160, following, in part, Clunies Ross 1994:208–210), that the practice was probably thought to involve spirit penetration, which on the Finnish and other models women are more

susceptible to. Whether this is regarded as a "weakness" is a moot point; from a female perspective, it gives practitioners power, even if it means opening oneself up to the spirits, as it provides knowledge and an authority within society which is not generally open to men. It is only from a male perspective that it may be viewed as dishonourable, as it means lowering one's barriers and allowing ingress of alien forces and hence achieving something other than by one's own *máttr ok megin* ('might and main').

Relationality and Individuality as Aspects of Magic Practice

These observations relate to a notion that I have argued elsewhere (2009a:I, 159), that female practitioners are more likely to have worked on a basis of *relationality*, whereas men work through *individuality*. Relationality denotes a definition of the self in terms of relationships with others, whereas individuality denotes self-definition in terms of separation from others. These notions have been applied fruitfully in anthropological work (e.g. Opas 2008), but derive ultimately from the work of Carol Gilligan in social psychology (Gilligan 1982), who found that women generally espouse a relational approach to the world, and men an individualistic one, though the approaches are not ineluctably bound to biological sex, and might apply differently within other societies (something Gilligan does not consider; her work in general has come under much fire – see e.g., Kerber *et al*. 2001 – but some of the basic ideas are at least suggestive). I have proposed, for example, that the *vanir* (irrespective of their sex) can be seen as essentially relational, as against the fundamentally individualist *æsir* (Tolley 2009a:I, 164). If such notions have any validity, the implications for female magical practice would be for practitioners to tend to take a more collaborative approach with the spirit world, rather than one involving simply mastery and command over the spirits, and an openness to possession is consistent with this; it would also be less likely that the practitioner would see herself going out on a soul journey quest to overcome some spirit or problem in a distant otherworld by force, a scenario based primarily on the image of the male hunt (or, in military terms, a raid).

Erika Bourguignon (1979) attempts to distinguish between forms of shamanism involving deep trance, and those involving possession trance; the former are typical of male shamans in hunting societies, the latter of female shamans in more complex agricultural communities. She argues that trance is an experience, undergone in the spirit world by the shaman but invisible to the audience, whereas possession is a performance, with the shaman presenting the contact with the spirit world dramatically. The argument may not be wholly without merit, but it is not borne out empirically: for example, Siikala (1978) demonstrates that shamanic activity is always a performance, and it always involves varying states of conscious-

ness. Emma Wilby's studies in Scottish witchcraft also demonstrate a range of interactions with the spirit world (2006; 2010). We may be confident that the sources describing Norse magic are vastly oversimplified, or rather they deliberately *evoke* the practice but do not comprehensively *describe* it, since this was not their contextual purpose. Even so, a more complex performative and interactive aspect than is generally encountered is hinted at in *Vǫluspá*, for example in the exchange of payment and the retorts at the centre of the poem.

Óðinn's Subversive Magic

Magical practice, particularly that of women, therefore appears to have a subversive role, questioning the norms of society, and this is represented in its divine practitioner, Freyja. The other main divinity associated with it is the head of the gods, Óðinn. His performance of *seiðr*, however, is secondary: he learnt it from the *vanir*, and it is presented as shameful for him to do – hence it is an adoption of peripherality. Moreover, Óðinn's practice of *seiðr* appears directed to a very different end from that envisaged by human *seiðkonur*, in a way that is consistent with the differences between relational and individual approaches outlined earlier. Whereas female practitioners serve their community, mainly prophesying over the success of crops, the earliest source to mention Óðinn's *seiðr*, Kormákr's *Sigurðardrápa* from around 960, tells us that "seið Yggr til Rindar", "Óðinn got to Rindr through *seiðr*" to beget an heir to avenge his murdered son, Baldr – a specifically personal act.

With great insight, Kevin Wanner (2007) probes the question of why Óðinn, the central character of the Old Norse pantheon, always acts from a marginal position. Wanner traces how Óðinn embodies the notion of how Norse religion was not grounded in a Platonic ideal of a constant prototype world to which worshippers aspire, as (for example) is Christianity, but rather in the transience of the world we live in (a sentiment at the heart of much Old English poetry too, encapsulated in the aphorism *līf is lǣne*, 'life is transient', e.g. *The Seafarer* 65–66). Óðinn attempts in vain to resist his fate, and is finally overcome; like fate itself, he is capricious in the choice of warriors he causes to be slain; he wanders, ending up in compromised circumstances at the courts he visits – "Norse myths valorize the ability, preeminently embodied by Óðinn, to move through and make use of spaces controlled by others" (Wanner 2007:345): Óðinn is a tactician, seeking some advantage until the ultimate demise. Óðinn's practice of *seiðr*, like his consultations with *vǫlur* and with *Míms hǫfuð*, is part of his tactical play to gain knowledge in the attempt to thwart fate, but it specifically represents a use of the peripheral, of the subversive, to do this, in line with his actions in general.

The social subversiveness of *seiðr* is mirrored in its sexual subversion; this was particularly apparent when men practised it (a man becomes *argr*, 'unmanly'), withdrawing from exercising the male forms of authority and engaging in an act of female authority. The practitioners of *seiðr* might be looked upon as belonging to a "third gender", a concept that is found in some societies (for example the Indian transgender *hijra*: Roscoe 1996), as they adhere to the norms of neither men nor women; on the other hand, as Tedlock notes:

> Some researchers have suggested that a shaman is neither masculine nor feminine but rather a mediator between the sexes, a third gender that is either woman-man or man-woman. [. . .] It is [. . .] rather the transformation of gender or the frequent gender switching, bending, blending, or reversing that is important and that enables shamans to manipulate potent cosmic powers during rituals. (Tedlock 2005:250)

Hence the important factor is the *liminality* involved in crossing genders, which would accrue spiritual power. The concept of gender does need further investigation – in many societies the divisions lie more between married and unmarried (for example) than between the sexes (see the array of discussions in MacCormack and Strathern 1980) – but I will not engage in this issue any further here.

The other exploit of Óðinn that calls for comment is his self-sacrifice (*Hávamál* 138–142). I would emphasise *sacrifice* here: his death is often viewed as an initiation, but any initiatory aspects are secondary. As Peter Jackson (2009) points out, for example, it is not only in initiation that new knowledge is gained: an understanding of the will of the gods is gained through offering sacrifice too, and this understanding is manifested in Óðinn's case in the form of the runes, or divine mysteries (runes as carved symbols being merely concrete realisations or symbols of these mysteries). Divination also accompanied sacrifice according to the sources (whether or not the blood of the victim was used remaining somewhat obscure); divination is merely a more focused version of the divine knowledge which is made patent through sacrifice. Óðinn's sacrifice is certainly closer to the mainly male visions of shamanic initiation involving dismemberment and reforging of the body than the myths connected with Freyja. It also pointedly incorporates both centrality and peripherality in one act: sacrifice is central to cult, yet to sacrifice oneself is a subversion of norms, and the form of sacrifice adopted, hanging, marginalises the act by classing the victim among criminals. The centrality of the act is signified in its taking place on the world tree (probably – *Hávamál* is not wholly unequivocal on this), yet, while the tree may be of focal importance, it adopts the guise of the gallows here, and is set out on the windy periphery, indeed on the edge of the world of death whence the runes are grasped: gallows were out on the wild edges of settlement (cf. *Hamðismál* 17). In *Vǫluspá* and *Vafþrúðnismál*, the great tree itself suffers, reflecting the vicissitudes of fate as much as the victim

that hangs on it, and manifesting the paradox of death (in the form of decay) afflicting the metonym of the world's very life, the tree, just as the same life-giving tree is paradoxically the means of Óðinn's death. Óðinn's self-immolation relates to the world of sacrifice and fate, but it does not appear to function primarily as an initiation, as a way to learn how to conduct fruitful contact with the spirit world on behalf of the community.

The Lament as an Egoistical Subversion of Tradition: Egill's *Sonatorrek*

Óðinn proclaims his own sacrifice in the first person, "veit ek" (I know), just as the *vǫlva* he consults in *Vǫluspá* stamps her own authority on her prophetic powers, "fram sé ek lengra" (I see further forward). The assertion of one's ego may itself be viewed as yet another variant on the theme of subversion, for it separates the self from the community that is addressed (and served, in the case of magical practice), and establishes the individual as an entity separate, at least to a degree, from the tradition to which he or she belongs.

Such declarations of personal spiritual authority are ascribed to fictional characters, in imagined scenarios: this contrasts with many texts recorded from shamans, whose chief concern was to manifest actual spiritual mastery over spirits. We rarely get any such postulation in Old Norse that is not a fictional, imagined example. Yet a rare instance exists of a poet speaking in his own person: Egill Skalla-Grímsson's *Sonatorrek*, which was composed in the late tenth century. The text is preserved only in very late manuscripts, and is patently corrupt in many lines, yet much of the central imagery and the message are clear (see the editions of *Egils saga* by Bjarni Einarson and Sigurður Nordal; the extant poem is preserved in "full" only from the seventeenth century, in Ketilsbók, though fragments of the text are found earlier, including in manuscripts of Snorri's *Skáldskaparmál*, from the early fourteenth century). The poem is fascinating in the present context not just for its "first-person subversiveness", its questioning of tradition, but also for its being a lament, a typically feminine expression of grief which is uttered by possibly the most masculine character in the whole Norse canon.

For Egill, the gods were a reality. I do not mean by this that he necessarily *believed* in them in the way a Christian believes in Christ, but that the gods were the ever-present entities of the thought-world within which he moved and composed as a poet, in a way they were not, for example, for his later *áttungr* Snorri Sturluson. Egill is presented as a protégé, almost a euhemerisation, of Óðinn. It is hence scarcely surprising to find him acting as something of a magician, according to *Egils saga*, for example rectifying misused runes (ch. 74). He is also invariably a difficult character: he subverts norms throughout his saga, in line with his being a type of Óðinn. Both his assertion of self in his poetry (and in general in his life story) and his use of a

feminine art form are characteristically Óðinnic, matched by the god's endless quest for self-preservation through the acquisition of knowledge (runes, the mead of poetry) and his resorting to feminine *seiðr*.

It may be fruitful to compare *Sonatorrek* with accounts of shamans. Even though we cannot view Egill's verse as directly shamanic, it provides an example of the personal interaction of a pagan thinker with the world of the gods. In texts recorded from shamans and witches, the personal experience of the spirit world is always emphasised (and is a means of convincing the audience of the practitioner's authenticity as an interlocutor with that world), yet this is something lacking in Norse, given the absence of such first-hand accounts; *Sonatorrek* at least serves as an example of the sort of personal engagement that must have existed in Norse tradition too. Egill states that he has been Óðinn's friend, until betrayed by him (through the death of his sons); he also states that he would take up arms against Ægir and Rán, the deities of the sea that took one of his sons, if it were possible. The poem is infused with dark imagery – even the sea is the outpourings of the deathly wounds of the primeval giant, Ymir, crashing against the rocks, pictured as the boathouse doors of a dwarf (a deathly being of absence, as we have seen).

One striking example of a comparable shamanic "text" is that of the modern Sámi shaman Marit Ellen, who similarly lost two sons (her life story is discussed in some detail by Bente Alver 2014). For her, the previously remote and austere spirit world – where she can see her sons now residing – takes on a rosier hue, and the spirits are seen more as helpers than a threat; she thus adapted her image of the otherworld, in a way not countenanced by her more traditional father. Egill seems not so much to adapt his image of the spirit world, as to rail against it (it is more in the vein of Dylan Thomas's poem, "Do not go gentle into that good night"); but his relationship with it in any case changes – his friendship with Óðinn is now over, though he acknowledges his help in providing him with poetic inspiration, the way to celebrate his sorrows.

How far *vǫlur* and other magical practitioners were poets we cannot say, but where first-hand records survive from later times, witches and particularly shamans are typically guardians of the imaginative world of poetic inspiration. Somewhat tangential as it may be, Egill's *Sonatorrek* at least hints at one context of "magic" that is essentially lost from Norse tradition. We may intimate from it that magic was not merely an objectively defined practice used for political or other purposes, but provided an arena for a strong interplay between personal experience and tradition relating to the otherworld. Such a living and manifest relationship (and, given the strongly feminine slant, relationality) of the individual with the spirit world would have been crucial to maintaining the ongoing trust that practitioners of magic were afforded.

Conclusion

Norse magical practices appear, in the main, closer to witchcraft (where magic occupies a socially peripheral role) than to shamanism (where it is central); yet my analysis attempts to bridge the gap, by emphasising how Norse myth and magic appear to have set the peripheral in the centre. The liminal power of otherness in witchcraft acts as a subversive force which was a centre of attention in society, a notion that is encapsulated in myths relating to the divine practitioners of *seiðr*, Freyja and Óðinn. This subversiveness is realised most graphically in the deeply feminine nature of *seiðr*, such that it was shameful for men to practise it.

Difficult as they are to interpret, some of the myths connected with Freyja, in particular those of the Brísingamen and of her search for her mate Óðr, may show a typically feminine focus on birth; it is suggested that this symbolism may have formed part of the imagery of *seiðr*, concerned with the salvation of life from death or absence, and – with the proviso that we actually have no evidence for initiation rites in *seiðr* – such imagery is also likely to have been part of the initiatory and practitionary experience of *seiðkonur*.

It is furthermore likely that the approach to the spirit world, and indeed to the social world, of female magical practitioners would have been one based on *relationality* rather than *individuality*; there was accordingly less likely to be an emphasis on primarily male imagery such as the contest for lost souls, or the violent reforging of the shaman at his initiation.

Although Óðinn transgressed into the feminine world of *seiðr*, he acts in an archetypically masculine way, centred on the defence of his individuality. His actions, including his use of magic, are tactics in his everlasting attempt to thwart his demise.

Egill's *Sonatorrek* is Óðinnic in its subversiveness, using a feminine form (the lament) in its assertion of independence towards tradition and the society of gods and men (paralleling Óðinn's use of the feminine *seiðr*). The poem relates to myth rather than magic; but magic too emerges as both peripheral and central, and my arguments have built upon the notion of myth and magic as having once been more closely intertwined than may be apparent in our extant textual sources. *Sonatorrek* acts as a sort of microcosm of this general principle, realised on a personal level, and is important as indicating that individuals, not merely classes of people (such as *seiðkonur*), could adopt a subversive and creative attitude to the otherworld. It hints at what must have been an important aspect of any magic in practice, the interplay between individual practitioners and the traditions they were bearing and manipulating.

In sum, therefore, I suggest that magic in the pagan period was both a subversive, peripheral activity, and at the same time a central concern; some of the repercussions of this subversiveness resound still in our preserved

sources, recorded mainly well after the conversion. One of my aims has also been to show some of the distinctively feminine aspects that are likely to have characterised forms of magic purveyed mainly by women: and, since female power is, in a male-dominated society, by definition subversive, this topic is subsumed within the wider investigation of the subversion of norms as a central feature of many Norse myths and magical activities. I have attempted in this essay to consider, selectively but in some depth, how magic and myth interrelate, and how approaches derived from anthropology and sociology may provoke more nuanced understandings (without prejudice to the need for a careful philological basis to text-based research). I hope this attempt will go some way towards expanding the horizons of the study of Norse magic.

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The Narrative Role of Magic in the *Fornaldarsögur*

Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir

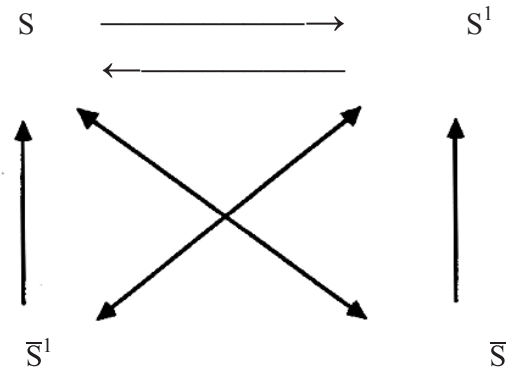
In throwing light on both the fundamental elements of narratives and the laws governing their arrangement and interaction, narratology enhances our understanding of narratives as expressive vehicles. Besides, it can be useful in explaining our own thought processes, i.e. what happens when we express our opinions, world-view and feelings in a connected narrative. This is illustrated by various studies where narratology has been applied with good results to narratives of different types. The practical value of this analytical approach is, however, probably best illustrated in studies of oral material, and particularly myths, legends and fairy tales, which are usually characterized by formal regularity (Holbek 1998:323–389). The studies by Vladimir Propp (1968), Algirdas J. Greimas (1987) and Alan Dundes (1976 and 2007), all of which are based on oral material, are perhaps the best known, but they have been taken further by a number of more recent scholars (see, for example, Onega and Landa 1996; Herman 2002).

Though textual analysis with narratological methods has received less attention, Roman Jakobson and Petr G. Bogatyrev (1966) made important contributions in this direction in their comparison of oral tales and literary texts. Nevertheless, it is natural to apply narratological theories to literary works that are thought to be close to oral tradition, such as Icelandic medieval literature; examples of this approach are the studies by Theodore M. Andersson of the *Íslendingasögur* (Sagas of Icelanders) (1967), Joseph Harris of the *Íslendingaþættir* (the short independent narratives interpolated in the sagas) (1972), Margaret Clunies-Ross of the Nordic myths (1986) and Jürg Glauser of indigenous Icelandic romances (1989).[1] Finally, it is also worth mentioning, in this connection, various studies of the use of oral formulae (e.g. Lord 1960), of which Gísli Sigurðsson has been a leading exponent (2002). In this article I intend to focus on the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* (the legendary sagas of the North) by examining the narrative role of supernatural motifs. Can we presume that they attest to actual folk beliefs, or were some of these ideas perhaps already fixed narrative motifs at the

time they were written, and to some extent stock features of the genre? My main question seeks to explore to what extent their authors employ witchcraft and magic (*fjǫlkynngi*) for narrative purposes, such as controlling the plots of the sagas. This enables us not only to illuminate the nature of the *fjǫlkynngi* that is described in these tales but also to form an idea of the way audiences in the Middle Ages would have understood stories of people with magic powers. Furthermore, by applying narratological methods in the examination of these sagas, it may be possible to throw light on how the authors used oral material in their works, either as the basis of whole works or in individual episodes or descriptions.

Narratology

The most influential narratological theories within narratology are without doubt the analysis of functions by the formalist Vladimir Propp, in which he defined 31 functions in Russian wonder tales (Propp's functions (Pf.) 1–31). According to his theories, these functions constitute seven spheres of action among the *dramatis personae*; that of the villain, the donor (provider), the helper, the princess (a sought-for person) and her father, the dispatcher, the hero and the false hero (1968:25–65, 79–83). Another important theory is that of the "semiotic square", representing the "basic structure of signification" (*la structure élémentaire de la signification*), proposed by the linguist Algirdas Greimas, who claimed that the signification of stories in general is dependent on oppositions:



According to Greimas's model, a typical story begins in a *status quo* where the hero is safe and sound (S). Soon he learns that a villain has acted against his interests (S̄), which leads to the state of danger or chaos (S1). The hero responds to and/or attacks the villain (S̄1), and therefore changes the situation from danger to safety, or *status quo*, again (S). Thus, the hero needs the villain, just as the villain needs the hero, because without these opposite

agents there would be no conflict, and without conflict there would be no story (Greimas 1987:63–83).

This is not the place to give a detailed account of Propp's and Greimas's theories; they are summarized and referred to in other studies (see, for example, Kristensen 1976:90–93; Holbek 1987:331–338, 349–353; Herman 2002:115–170). One of the things these theories demonstrate is that the characters in oral tales (such as fairy tales) are stereotyped and conform to the properties of their roles, which in turn depend on the structure of the tale. All stories have a certain structure, and the closer they lie to oral tradition, the simpler their structure is. This can best be seen in myths and oral fairy tales or "wonder tales", the narrative structure of which is thought to be closest to what has been termed the basic structure of signification (see Greimas's model above).

Other relevant theories when considering literary texts like the Icelandic *fornaldarsögur* include Claude Lévi-Strauss's studies of the structural nature of myth (1967), which in many ways correspond to theories of linguists such as Noam Chomsky (2008:347–367) and other scholars of *cognitive science*.[2] The present article is inspired by these theories, which will be applied to the narrative material to some extent below. But first, let us call to mind the main features of the narratives under consideration.

The *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*

Within Icelandic medieval literature, the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* are possibly the genre that is closest to oral tradition, and can be regarded as a gold mine for research into the boundary between oral and written literature. The *fornaldarsögur* were mostly written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though it seems certain that the most recent examples were not composed until the fifteenth, and recastings, both as new versions of earlier sagas and as *rímur*, continued in later centuries. The actual material on which the authors of the original sagas drew, however, is evidently much older. Though scholars disagree about the delineation of the *fornaldarsögur* and even whether they constitute a separate genre, I think it is safe to see them as a distinct category of medieval Icelandic literature, since they differ from other categories in a number of ways.[3] One of the disputed issues is the extent to which the authors drew on oral tradition.

One of the distinguishing features of the *fornaldarsögur* is that they contain many more supernatural events than most other sagas (cf., for example, Mitchell 1991:16–17; Mundal 2006:719, 723), and therefore abound with supernatural creatures, people with magic powers and *fjǫlkynngi* of various types. It has been argued that the supernatural features of these sagas become more plentiful as time progresses. It may indeed be possible to demonstrate this through comparative studies, but this

is far from being a hard-and-fast rule: the least credible sagas are not necessarily the most recently composed. On the contrary: some of the older sagas include memorable examples of magical elements, for example the potion of oblivion prepared by Grímhildr, the mother-in-law of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, as described in *Völsunga saga*. Further examples are Sigrdrífa's runic wisdom from the same saga, the magic mantle made by Áslaug for King Ragnarr in *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* and the accursed sword made by Olíus in *Ásmundar saga kappabana* (Rafn 1829–1830:I, 166–171, 280–281; II, 464–466). But how are we to account for the substantial and important presence of supernatural beings and people with magic powers in the world of the *fornaldarsögur*?

Something that may be important in this context is the physical distance between the world of these sagas and that of their audience; it was probably never the intention that the *fornaldarsögur* were to be taken seriously, or at least not to the same extent as other saga genres such as the *Íslendingasögur* and the contemporary sagas (such as those of the *Sturlunga saga* cycle and the Bishops' sagas). The *fornaldarsögur* differ from these genres in that they generally take place before the settlement of Iceland and as they are set in Scandinavia – or in even more remote regions – they are at a greater remove from their audience, both in time and in space, than those that are set in Iceland. Although there is in fact much to suggest that people regarded the *fornaldarsögur* as stories about their distant ancestors, this dislocation resulted in the times that they describe being swathed in mist, with the world of the marvellous never far away. In the same manner, the past always seems to be more accommodating to witchcraft and magic: as Stephen A. Mitchell has pointed out, "there is relatively little witchcraft in the contemporary sagas" (2011:85), in which the subject is the author's own age, while the authors of the *fornaldarsögur* are dealing first and foremost with the past, even though the sagas themselves obviously spoke to their audience through their picture of the past.[4] In other words, the *fjǫlkynngi* depicted in the *fornaldarsögur* can be related directly to their origin in oral tradition and the age of the material and, of course, to an attempt on the part of the authors to create the atmosphere of a world long past, a pre-Christian age which stands in opposition to their Christian contemporary world (cf. ibid: 85, 98, 103).

Although admittedly the *Íslendingasögur* also dealt, like the *fornaldarsögur*, with the past, it was much closer in time to the medieval audience, and the setting was of course familiar to them in a very real manner. This difference in the nature of the relationship between saga and reality can be seen from the fact that, while figures in the *Íslendingasögur* who have magic powers are individuals who live on particular farms in the inhabited areas of the country, those of the *fornaldarsögur* (including trolls, dwarves and other supernatural creatures) are generally encountered in wild places and there-

fore resemble folklore phenomena more than any part of the human community. Of course the distinction is not quite so clear-cut: there are all sorts of practitioners of magic in the *fornaldarsögur*, including prophetesses, isolated recluses who practise *fjǫlkynngi* in secret, chieftains who perform sacrifices to the pagan gods (*blót*), counsellors who accompany heroes and help them in battle and shape-shifters who fight, in human or animal form, or sink into the ground and appear elsewhere.

Though beings with magical powers can sometimes be helpers (cf. Propp's spheres of action), like the dwarf Möndull in *Göngu-Hrólfs saga* (Rafn 1829–1830:III, 328–331), they are usually enemies of the saga heroes, belonging to the sphere of the villain, and magic in itself can often be regarded as the opposite of real heroism. In terms of Greimas's scheme, those who possess magical knowledge tend to be in paired oppositional relationships with the heroes. In other words, their role is generally related to $\bar{S}$ and their actions result in a shift from $\bar{S}$ to S^1, a state of imbalance. In the same way, they are closely related to functions Pf. 4–8, 18 and 30 in Propp's analytical system. As a result, people or supernatural beings with magic powers seem to have been ideal as a foil to highlight the superiority of the heroes.

In studies of the world-view of Old Norse literature, scholars have sometimes referred to supernatural beings and events as constituting an "Other World", which is located either outside or inside the world of the saga. Certainly, in the case of the *fornaldarsögur*, the distinction between these two worlds is far from clear. Sometimes it is to some extent geographical, such as when the heroes sail to the north and east and become further and further distanced from the known world, the Norse world of Scandinavia.[5] In other instances, the division can be made by features in the landscape itself, for example by water, such as a lake, fog or islands (Heide 2011:58), or by the transfer of the scene of the action to a distinct location, such as the inside of a cave or a mound. In some ways this is a different world, a world of trolls and magical beings, but still it is far from being a homogeneous Other World.[6]

With the boundaries between these two worlds being so indistinct in many ways, it is also no easy matter to draw a distinction between the nature of events that take place in the hero's familiar world, on the one hand, and in a supernatural setting on the other. Some scholars have nevertheless tried to define the Other World as being a pure fantasy world, e.g. because in it, magic is used in a thoroughgoing fashion. This view is now being increasingly criticized, however: for example, the Norwegian historian Hans Jacob Orning argues that even if the *fornaldarsögur* include tales of supernatural heroes, monsters and magic, we should not treat them as fantasies, as they exhibit remnants of folk belief where magic had an important role (Orning 2010:10). One thing is certain: that the supernatural dimension of the *fornal-*

darsögur is something that merits study in itself and it is likely that an analysis of this material can increase our understanding of the world-view of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Icelanders. We should also be able to use these sagas to gain an insight into their audience's knowledge of the past, though in most cases we can assume that they reflect, first and foremost, their ideas about the past. All in all, the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* are stories about the past, and so the "scenarios of the past" to which the authors and audiences turned are what is important when we consider their world-view, and their attitudes to magic.

Fjǫlkynngi

Magic incidents and motifs play an important role in the *fornaldarsögur*, but to analyse this role effectively it is important to answer basic questions such as: What does it mean to be *fjǫlkunnigr* in the sagas? Do the sources provide a coherent image of those skilled in witchcraft and/or magic, or must we turn to other medieval texts to complement the fragmentary information obtained in the *fornaldarsögur*? One must of course be wary of assuming here that ideas about witchcraft and magic were any more clear-cut in medieval times than they are today, and it is uncertain whether the ideas reflected by the sagas can be elucidated or complemented by other sources (Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2006:38).

Let us begin by looking at the vocabulary. It is sometimes said that the large number of words in Icelandic denoting different aspects of the weather is a reflection of the importance of the weather in daily life in Iceland through the ages, and the fact that it is a more or less evergreen subject of conversation. In other words, terminology for phenomena that are commonly talked about is likely to be varied and to be well preserved. This seems to be the case with *fjǫlkynngi* in the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*; the single term *fjǫlkynngi* seems to be far from sufficient to cover all aspects and nuances of the topic. The most common synonyms or near-synonyms are *brǫgð* 'tricks', *feikn* 'fear/terror', *forneskja* 'sorcery', *galdr* 'magic', *gørningar* '(act of) sorcery', *konstr* 'art/magic', *kukl* 'magic/sorcery', *kunnátta* 'knowledge/skill', *kynngi* 'magic/magic quality', *list* 'art', *seiðr* 'witchcraft/sorcery', *trǫlldómr* 'witchcraft', *trǫllskapr* 'witchcraft', *tǫfrar* 'magic' and *vísdómr* 'wisdom'. Words for actions employed in the practice of *fjǫlkynngi* include: *efla* 'impart power to', *gala* 'chant', *kasta á* 'cast a spell on', *leggja á* 'put a spell on', *magna* 'strengthen, charm', *rísta* 'cut/inscribe', *rýna* 'scry' and *seiða* 'bewitch'. If the number of terms used in the sagas can be taken as an indication of their audience's familiarity with *fjǫlkynngi*, or with ideas regarding *fjǫlkynngi* through the medium of saga entertainment (*sagnaskemmtun*), then it would seem to have been very common. But what was involved in the *fjǫlkynngi* described in the sagas? Before

we consider the role of *fjǫlkynngi* in the sagas, we must consider the types of magic it covers.

François-Xavier Dillmann divides his study of magic in medieval Icelandic sources – one of the most extensive studies of magic in the Nordic countries to appear in recent years – into two parts: one on *fjǫlkynngi* in various contexts, the other on persons who practice it. He begins the first part with an examination of divination,[7] and then turns to three categories of *fjǫlkynngi* proper (Dillmann 2006:29–102, 168–237), which are applicable to the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* even though Dillmann's study draws largely on the *Íslendingasögur* and is therefore not always concerned with comparable manifestations of *fjǫlkynngi*. These categories are as follows.

1) *Fjǫlkynngi* in connection with warfare and weapons.
2) *Fjǫlkynngi* in connection with the body and the soul.
3) *Fjǫlkynngi* in connection with the four elements, particularly as regards the weather and natural magic (influencing the forces of nature).

Dillmann also discusses the circumstances in which *fjǫlkynngi* is practised. The second part of his study is also divided into three parts, as follows.

1) The nature and personality of those who are skilled in magic.
2) The social position of those who are skilled in magic.
3) Ambiguities in the position of those who are skilled in magic, including the way they are regarded by others.

It is appropriate here to take a closer look at *fjǫlkynngi* itself, as depicted in the *fornaldarsögur* and in terms of Dillmann's three categories:

1) *Fjǫlkynngi in connection with warfare and weapons*. Since the world of the *fornaldarsögur* is one in which there is frequent armed conflict over power and riches, it is hardly surprising that we find *fjǫlkynngi* frequently employed for the purpose of acquiring and maintaining power. The heroes acquire magic tunics and other items of clothing, and also weapons, that have magic properties. Some of these are the products of supernatural creatures, particularly dwarves, while others have spells cast on them or are steeped in poison. Various types of magic devices that are not strictly weapons are also used in warfare, e.g. helmets that render the wearer invisible, tents and ships.

2) *Fjǫlkynngi in connection with the body and the soul*. Magic of this type is very plentiful in the sagas, often connected with military operations and struggles over power. Shape-changing is the most common type, followed by unusual physical abilities, such as supernatural strength, immunity to poisons and immunity to weapons. The category also includes spiritual skills such as astral travelling, abilities such as casting spells, pronouncing magic formulae and the power to exert magic influence through one's eyes, and even the abil-

ity to learn magic skills. Supernatural healing abilities come under this category, as does the ability to make people enamoured of someone, this being essentially the ability to command the will of another person.

3) *Fjǫlkynngi in connection with the four elements, particularly as regards the weather and natural magic*. The most common manifestation of this type of magic in the *fornaldarsögur* is weather-magic, or what is termed *gerningaveður* (unexpected storms, fog, etc. which are caused by the magician); others include the production of darkness, smoke, invisibility, travelling through the ground and fire. Stones, silk, herbs and other natural objects and substances are used in magic in this category as means of intervening in the normal workings of the natural world. As in other sources, depictions of natural magic of this type reflect not only people's longing to gain control over the forces of nature but also their recognition of a need to know better, and understand, these important forces.

While the depiction of magic in the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* can be analysed in terms of a different kind of system (see, for example, Hermann Pálsson 1997:112–122; Price 2002:93–94; cf. Mitchell 2011:80), Dillmann's tripartite division provides a good overview of the material and the variety of narratives describing *fjǫlkynngi*.

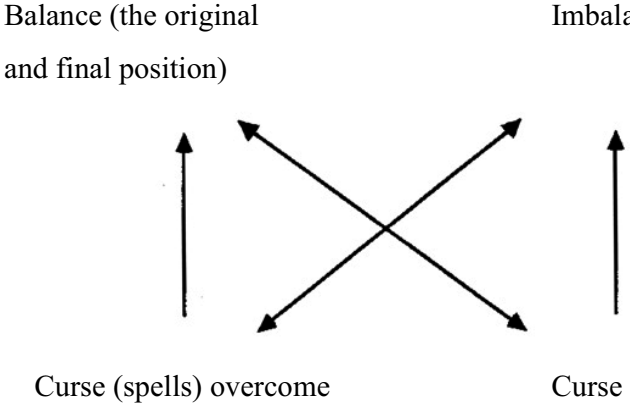
The Role of Magic in the *Fornaldarsögur*

There are various kinds of sources from different times that attest to magical belief systems, such as ecclesiastical writings, ancient law-books, judicial documents, and literature (see, for example, Russell and Alexander 2007: 29–71). While it is safe to say that the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* reflect some of the ideas that Icelanders of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had about witchcraft and magic of past ages, as indicated, for example, by the number of terms pertaining to *fjǫlkynngi*, we can also argue that they contain traces of even older ideas, as can be seen if these narratives are compared with sources of other types (see, for example, Orning 2010:8–10). It is important, however, to remember that the *fornaldarsögur*, like all narratives, adhere to certain narrative principles that may, in some respect, be characteristic of the category or the "genre" itself (see, for example, Righter-Gould 1980; Hallberg 1982). It is necessary therefore to question in this context whether, and if so in what way, witchcraft and magic are employed as a literary convention. It is evident that characters skilled in witchcraft or supernatural beings from another world to some extent serve to provide some kind of magical solutions and thus have a specific function in the narrative pattern of the sagas. But to what extent? We might ask, for example, whether a magical sword – and thus also the person(s) skilled in magic or the supernatural being(s) that give it power – only has the narrative function of creating the preconditions for certain circumstances or scenes, such as the demise of a certain hero. May it be that the author resorts to the use of the motif simply because he needs an excuse, or reason, for a slaying,

and that *fjǫlkynngi* therefore constitutes, in fact, a stock structural element? Put another way, what is the narrative role of items pertaining to the supernatural world of the sagas? Can we say that supernatural motifs are restricted to their narrative function, or do the underlying ideas also, somehow, reflect the society of the time when the sagas were told or written? Or is the *fjǫlkynngi* of past times depicted for purposes of entertainment, and might this explain the popularity of the genre?

It can be seen from a great number of examples that *fjǫlkynngi* is used to control the plot, i.e. to set scenes and advance the action. For example, the enchanted sword Tyrfingr gives shape to the story of *Hervarar saga og Heiðreks*, leading to the death of the main characters one by one until Angantýr Heiðreksson is left as the last of his line. Then the role of Tyrfingr is complete; nothing remains to be told about the sword, and the saga ends (Rafn 1829–1830:I, 411–512). But for Tyrfingr to play such a dominant role it was necessary that a curse be put on it, conferring on it its special powers. Curses are one of the most popular narrative devices employed in the *fornaldarsögur* and in other traditional tales to advance the action. They enable the author to create circumstances that determine the subsequent development of the entire plot, i.e. to function as a sort of narrative framework. The most famous example of this is the curse laid on the gold by the dwarf Andvari in *Völsunga saga* – the consequence being that all those who come to possess it will thereby meet their death (ibid.:153). From that point onwards, the curse on the gold hovers over the saga heroes, and runs through the saga, causing dissension, betrayal and gruesome deeds.

Curses and spells have a similar function in fairy tales, creating the baleful circumstances or a particular challenge to be overcome by the hero. The curses in fairy tales form part of the stereotyped structure, being part of the sphere of action of the villain (Propp 1968:79), the party who upsets the state of equilibrium in the story according to the theories of Propp and Greimas, and giving the occasion for the actions that will restore it.



In both cases, the curses can be seen as a sort of catalyst that sets the action in motion (cf. Pf. 8). In more complicated narratives, however, such as the *fornaldarsögur*, they are also a means used by the author to provide the protagonist the experience he needs in order to prove himself as a hero, and therefore to move him along the path towards a higher stage of development, as for example in *Hálfdanar saga Eysteinssonar* (Rafn 1829–1830: III, 531; cf. Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2001:clxxvi–clxxvii).

While some authors clearly use spells and curses as the basis and dynamic force in their stories, setting in motion a series of events that elicit more mature behaviour from their heroes, they can function as something more than a structural device. When people who have had spells cast on them lose their independent will they become tools in the hands of the caster of the spell. In this condition they do things they would not normally do, and it is by this means that the magician creates a set of circumstances that would otherwise be difficult to establish. An example is the potion of oblivion that Grímhildr gives Sigurðr Fáfnisbani in *Völsunga saga*, which makes him forget Brynhildr and marry Guðrún (Rafn 1829–1830:I, 182–183). By making the hero the victim of a magic spell, the author absolves him from responsibility and the audience does not blame him for not behaving in a proper moral fashion; thus it can be said that *fjǫlkynngi* can be a device used by the author to keep the audience's sympathy where he wants it. In other words, he uses it to control the audience's reaction; the reader or hearer of the story can be relied upon not to think that Sigurðr has willingly betrayed Brynhildr even though he now loves another woman. This leads to a complicated situation in which the role of the villain, as the betrayer of the bonds of love, has been transferred to a third person, the practitioner of *fjǫlkynngi*; this arrangement also ensures that the new object of Sigurðr's affections, Guðrún, is also free of responsibility for the situation. From the point of view of the audience, Brynhildr is therefore not the only victim of this love triangle; so too is the man who has betrayed her and so is his new woman friend. By using devices like this, the author can make the audience aware of moral questions, for example whether, and if so when, harmful deeds or crimes are under the perpetrator's control and when a person no longer really controls his or her own conduct but is caught in a net woven by others. This is not to say that all those who enjoyed *Völsunga saga* in medieval times understood the procedure in this way, but certainly, the possibility lies within the text. Many other incidents can be interpreted in a similar way; in *Héðins saga og Högna*, Héðinn abducts Hildr, Högni's daughter, as a result of a spell cast on him by the goddess Freyja, and consequently does not play the role of an ordinary villain. The same applies to young women who are cursed and turned into dangerous trolls, e.g., Signý (also known as Gríðr) in *Illuga saga Gríðarfóstra*, who is forced, by the evil curse, to act as a murderer, or Lofthæna in *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, who is only a temporary villain, due to the curse of her stepmother (Rafn 1829–1830:I, 394, 398–399, 403; II, 151–152; III, 657).

The same applies to the use of magic in a broader context; by using *fjǫlkynngi*, saga authors can change the laws governing the development of the story because once magic makes its appearance, the audience is not able to demand logical explanations of cause and effect in the same way as it can under normal circumstances (cf. Sweeney 2000:13, 46–48). As mentioned above, practitioners of *fjǫlkynngi* are generally in the role of opponents of the hero (cf. the villain) and thus the function of *fjǫlkynngi* tends to be to demonstrate and emphasize the strength and virtue of the hero. It comes as no surprise how often the heroes of these stories have to contend with supernatural hazards and magical powers, since these provide choice occasions for illustrating their superiority.

A consequence of the simplification involved in analysis by narratological methods is the impression that practitioners of *fjǫlkynngi* in the sagas are completely stereotyped and therefore shorn of personal character. This is by no means the case. A survey of the *fornaldarsögur* reveals that *fjǫlkynngi* is practised by characters as diverse as berserks, dwarves, evil beings, foster-fathers and foster-mothers, giants, goddesses, inhabitants of the far north, including the Perms of Bjarmaland and the Lapps, kings and queens, priestesses, princes and princesses, prophetesses, semi-trolls, sorcerers, stepmothers, trolls and other supernatural beings. Thus, the practitioners themselves are far from beings standardized. The same applies to *fjǫlkynngi per se*, for instance, spells and curses: although its role is restricted, in narratological terms (as for example to set the action in motion, as in Pf. 8), this does not mean that it is not diverse in nature and cannot reflect actual ideas that people had, and older beliefs – even if the ideas are to a large extent stereotyped and the wording tends to be formulaic. Let us examine few examples.

Turning to those who cast spells on others and how this relates to actual folk beliefs, we must consider the settings in which this is done and why they resort to spells. Trolls, which are commonly found in this role, are often bereaved: it is common for the saga heroes to travel around slaying trolls as a matter of course. Stepmothers are ignored by their stepchildren and amorous stepmothers are rejected, and even physically abused (Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 1995:25–30). Lúða, the stepmother of Hjálmþér in *Hjálmþérs saga og Ölvés*, is a good example of a woman who has been mocked and is seized by rage after her stepson uses violence against her. The spell she casts after being disgraced publicly by her stepson following her unsuccessful attempts to seduce him is, in fact, her attempt at revenge, to which she resorts in a state of excitement and anger (Rafn 1829–1830:III, 469–471, 479). Leaving aside the moral aspect of Lúða's situation, it is precisely in such circumstances of mental crisis that many spells are cast and curses pronounced (e.g. Olíus' curse in *Ásmundar saga kappabana*, and Ógautan's curse in *Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar*, both in Rafn 1829–1830: II, 432, 465–466). The mental state of the person working the magic is sig-

nificant, and it is interesting that several of the sagas testify that curses are pronounced in states of excitement. In some cases, those pronouncing the curses take care to do so with plenty of people listening (e.g. *Úlfhams saga* in Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2001:19–20, 47–49; cf. Skírnismál st. 34, Finnur Jónsson (ed.) 1932:79), reflecting the ancient belief that there must be witnesses to the pronouncing of a curse for it to have the desired effect (cf., for example, Mitchell 2003:31).

Another ability attributed to practitioners of *fjǫlkynngi* in the folklore of many parts of the world was the ability to control the weather. In the thirteenth century this ability was recognized as a fact by the church authorities, e.g. by Thomas Aquinas (Robbins 1959:487). The notion itself is considerably older, however; as early as *c*. 700, provisions existed to punish those who caused storms. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was commonly believed that witches could cause lightning and hail; an illustration of this is that in 1563 the king of Sweden had four witches in his army, apparently for the purpose of influencing the weather (ibid.:487); in the sixteenth century, weather-magic was associated particularly closely with the Lapps, to go by the description by Olaus Magnus (1996–1998:173–174). Weather-magic is frequently encountered in the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*; an example is the interesting account in *Þorsteins þáttr bæjarmagns*, in which a dwarf gives Þorsteinn a triangular stone with three colours and a steel spike. Þorsteinn has only to pick with the spike at the various coloured parts of the stone to produce hailstorms, sunshine or lightning (Guðni Jónsson 1950: 325–326, 338–339). Magic of this type has parallels in folklore, even though descriptions like this seem specific. In some cases we can perhaps assume that particular and circumstantial descriptions like this one may be inventions by the authors; but it is impossible to be sure of this, and such descriptions may just as well have been traditional at the time that the sagas were written.[8] In any case, they spice up the narrative and make the world described more interesting.

Another feature that bears witness to the background of these sagas in oral tradition and their entertainment value is the occurrence of formulae in connection with certain procedures, e.g. the spell-casting formula '*mæli ek um og legg ek á …*' (Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2001:clxxiii). Formulae like this have strong connection to oral tradition and are found in several variants, both in the *fornaldarsögur* and in oral fairy tales; they also bear witness to popular belief in the power of the spoken word and the importance of following established phrases and formulae in the practice of magic.

Although only a few examples of the role of magic in the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* have been examined above, they show that the ideas involved may be rooted in older notions regarding magic, and so correspond with accounts in sources of other kinds – and may even throw new or clearer light on them. But how can we explain the existence of these traditional ideas in the world of the *fornaldarsögur*?

Folklore studies have generally demonstrated that ideas live where there is a receptive environment for them. Seeds transmitted from one place to another will not grow into plants, and far less into a local species, unless the right climate and soil conditions exist for them (von Sydow 1948:50–52). The same can be said of ideas that are transmitted from one age to another. It seems that the authors and audiences of the *fornaldarsögur* provided the ideal soil for keeping alive old ideas about *fjǫlkynngi*. But tellers of tales and those who listen to them are scarcely concerned with preserving subject matter: they use it for making stories and being entertained. It was for these purposes that remnants of old beliefs acquired a new role, and in fact the most common literary motifs do not necessarily preserve older or more realistic ideas than those that are preserved in only one or two variants. Although curses and spells and other magic devices came in useful when a plot needed to be set in motion or the author needed to enlist the sympathy of the audience for a particular character, there is nothing to indicate that the audience ever believed that people capable of casting spells actually existed in large numbers around them. Thus, narratology can enable us to analyse the role of *fjǫlkynngi* in literature and how it can be employed as a narrative device in the hands of the saga author. Detailed examination and comparison can demonstrate what ideas recur again and again, and thus what notions of magic people had in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (cf., for example, the discussion in Mitchell 2011:116).

Conclusions

Whether the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* reflect what people really believed or understood about magic is open to debate. In this article, however, I have illustrated that the large number and diversity of terms and the countless variants of individual motifs stand as an indication of how firmly established these ideas were; they would not have been so had they not been current in our culture over a long period. In other words, it is not unlikely that notions that Icelanders of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had about witchcraft and magic of past ages actually reflect remnants of actual magical practices to some extent. On the other hand, we must take into account the fact that saga authors can use magic in different ways even though they are writing within the same tradition. Thus, they can refer to older ideas while at the same time giving their imaginations free rein as long as they operate within the existing conceptual framework.

Turning to the main question of the article, we have now tried to examine in what way authors employ witchcraft and magic (*fjǫlkynngi*) for narrative purposes, and from the discussion above, it may be deduced that magic is indeed generally used to fulfil a certain narrative function. It seems clear that the authors use magic to:

a) Provide the hero with an opposite number, an opponent in the plot.
b) Bolster the hero's moral standing, e.g. by presenting magic in contrast to the heroic ideal.
c) Present a picture of pre-Christian times.
d) Spice the narrative, so enhancing its entertainment value.

In all cases, the setting in the past is of great importance, and as studies have shown, medieval authors tended to use magic more freely in their depictions of former times (Mitchell 2011:103). The *fornaldarsögur* took their audiences out of their real environments and away from the restrictions that governed their daily lives. This dislocation gave the authors freedom to create stories full of supernatural events which tell us a lot about our own society even though they are so far removed from it that they obey other rules that are self-consistent in their setting (cf. Rabkin 1977:33). Thus, we can say that the authors of the *fornaldarsögur* used magic for narrative purposes and that the audiences of these sagas in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were receptive to ideas of this type.

It should be noted that the conclusions presented here are based only on specific sources within the fields of Icelandic literature and oral tradition and therefore reflect primarily the ideas to be found there, and not notions of magic practices or attitudes to magic in a broader context. In addition, this is not a comprehensive survey of *fjǫlkynngi* in the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*; it is therefore probable that a more detailed study would both reinforce these conclusions and add something to them. The examples examined above nevertheless permit us to conclude that even though the practice of *fjǫlkynngi* as described in the *fornaldarsögur* may reflect traditional and/or older ideas about magic, the art of the storyteller and saga-writer lay in how they used magic for narrative purposes. The further the time and geographical setting of the *fornaldarsögur* was removed from that of the community that formed them, the easier it was to employ *fjǫlkynngi* as a way of telling meaningful stories, entertaining an audience or simply composing an exciting plot. It is therefore natural to assume that one of the reasons, at least, for the presence of such a number of supernatural beings and people with magic powers in the world of the *fornaldarsögur* is that they offered the authors easy as well as entertaining solutions in the composition of their works.

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[1] For more recent studies in the field of narratology and medieval Icelandic literature, see, e.g., Torfi H. Tulinius 2002:31–43; and 2014.

[2] These theories are explained in further detail in my article "The Other World in the *Fornaldarsögur* and in Folklore", where I examine the basic structure of signification in narratives in connection with the *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*.

[3] The *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* have been a popular field of research in recent years, and the debate about the boundaries of the genre is probably not yet closed. For recent studies, see, for example, Ármann Jakobsson, Lassen and Ney, eds., *Fornaldarsagornas struktur och ideologi* (2003), Ney, Ármann Jakobsson and Lassen, eds., *Fornaldarsagaerne: Myter og virkelighed* (2009), and Lassen, Ney & Ármann Jakobsson, eds., *The Legendary Sagas: Origin and Development* (2012). Scholars are not in agreement either on the definition of the "genre", or how many texts should be considered as "actual" *fornaldarsögur*, see, for example, Quinn *et al.* 2006. The present author is currently engaged in a project dealing with the *fornaldarsögur*, and has published several articles on their background in history and medieval art On the origins of this category as literature, see Torfi H. Tulinius 2002:44–69.

[4] Stephen Mitchell, for example, argues that the authors of "contemporary sagas" do not use magic as a means of influencing the progress of events, in contrast to the procedure in sagas dealing with earlier times (both the *Íslendingasögur* and the *fornaldarsögur*). He cites the frequent occurrence of magic in the *fornaldarsögur* as one of the features that distinguish them from other genres of medieval literature (2011:92, and 8). On *Sturlunga saga*, see also Gísli Pálsson 1991:163–164.

[5] These territories include, for example, Jötunheimar, Geirröðargarðar, Bjálkaland, and some Finnish regions (for instance Kirjálabotnar), along with even more remote, southern areas, such as Indíaland, Tattaría and the river Jordan. These realms are inhabited by humans and animals with magic abilities, supernatural beings and imaginary races, for example giants, dwarves and trolls (Eremenko 2006:221; see also Orning 2010:5–8).

[6] For a more thorough definition of the "Other World", see McKinnell 2005:4–5; Lindow 1995.

[7] Including, of course, the talents and actions involved in the prediction of future events and practising *seiðr* where this is done in order to acquire a knowledge of the future (Dillmann 2006:29–52).

[8] This does not, however, seem to be the case in the *Íslendingasögur* and *Landnámabók*, where witchcraft and magic reflect oral tradition and the authors usually do not seem to add descriptions of their own (Dillmann 2006:595, 619).

Leechbooks, Manuals, and Grimoires

On the Early History of Magical Texts in Scandinavia

Stephen A. Mitchell

Introduction

The idea of powerful and comprehensive books of magic, what we today usually call grimoires, is an ancient one, extending in the West at least as far back as Periclean Athens.[1] It is also an idea with deep roots in Christian learning and in Christian lore. The concept is, for example, artfully used in *Acts* 19:19, when the "magicians" of Ephesus, under the influence of Paul's miracles, destroy their goetic tomes; as depicted in the English of the King James translation of the Bible, "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men…" (*multi autem ex his qui fuerant curiosa sectati contulerunt libros et conbuserunt coram omnibus…* [*Actus Apostolorum* 19:19]).

A similar tale is told in a medieval legend best-known from the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, which was on several occasions turned into the West Norse *Jacobs saga postola*; this short apostle saga presents the conversion of the magician Hermogenes by Saint James the Greater and broadly mimics Paul's experience in Ephesus. But when Hermogenes brings all of his books of magic to James with the intention that they should be burned, James replies that he fears people will be killed or harmed by the reek thus caused and says that they should instead be weighed down and cast into the sea, emphasizing the power inherent in the physical objects themselves. And for the modern reader, the various translations offer insights into the medieval Nordic terminology used to describe such works.

In the three surviving thirteenth-century West Norse translations of this tale,[2] the explicit phrase "all his magic books" (*omnes libros artis suae magicae* [Grässe 1850:438]) of the Latin text is translated using three different terms: one manuscript reads, "Then he took his chests, full of magic books [gen.: *fiolkyngisboka*], and put them on his back and the back of his disciple, and cast them down at the feet of the apostle and wanted to burn them."[3] Another reads, "Then he went home and gathered together all his books of magic [dat.: *galldrabocum*]."[4] A third translation says simply that the chests

were full of books [gen.: *boka*], without mentioning what sorts of books, the same treatment given in a separate translation into Old Swedish, which says that Hermogenes gathered together "all of his books" [i.e., *alla sina bøker*].[5]

The compounds used in the first two instances, *fjǫlkyngisbók* [pl. *fjǫlkyngisbœkur*] and *galdrabók* [pl. *galdrabœkur*], are terms that literally mean 'magic books' but employ different glosses for 'magic'. In the Old Swedish case, and likely also in the third Norse text although that manuscript is incomplete, the unmarked use of "books" is conditioned by the fact that Hermogenes' profession, and thus, by inference, the nature of the books, has been established earlier in the text by calling him a *magus* 'magician'. And, of course, other ways of expressing the idea of such books exist as well: the fifteenth-century Swedish translation of *Seelentrost* employs yet another term for magic [*tøfri*] in a descriptive phrase for magical texts in its admonition that "thou shalt not have those books in which magic [*tøfri*] is written."[6]

Compounds of this sort (i.e., *fjölkynngisbók*, *galdrabók*, *töfrabók*) have retained their currency into contemporary Icelandic,[7] but by the early modern period, many writers in the non-insular Nordic world begin using such locutions as *trollböcker* 'magic books' or *trolldomsböcker* 'witchcraft books', as well as the only partially overlapping phrase 'Black Books' in all its varieties, i.e., *sortebøger, svart[e]böcker* and so on, shortened from *svartkonstböcker* 'books of the black arts'.[8] And already as early as the sixteenth century, magical texts have acquired a new name in at least some Western vernaculars (e.g., Jean Bodin's *De la Demonomanic des Sorciers*), the term by which they are generally known today, i.e., grimoires.[9]

My interest in this essay deals less with the lexical inventory for such objects than with the evolution of, and toward, early compilations of magic, what will become the 'Black Book' tradition so prevalent in the post-Reformation Nordic world, what Ane Ohrvik (2012) has poignantly characterized as attempts at "conceptualizing knowledge." In an effort to characterize the magical book in his history of this special genre, Owen Davies comments:

> … grimoires are books of conjurations and charms, providing instructions on how to make magical objects such as protective amulets and talismans. They are repositories of knowledge that arm people against evil spirits and witches, heal their illnesses, fulfill their sexual desires, divine and alter their destiny, and much else besides. Grimoires are books of magic, then, but not all books of magic are grimoires … (Davies 2009:1)

The admirably artful ambiguity of Davies' final sentence, together with Ohrvik's recent examination of Norwegian 'Black Books' and Richard Kieckhefer's monumental study of a late medieval German necromancer's manual (1997), inspire this essay's interest in considering 'books of magic´ in the Nordic world in the periods on either side of the Reformation; thus, building on these recent developments in our understanding of such mate-

rials, and as part of a larger project on charms, this essay is something of a *Stichprobe,* examining magical and related materials in four late medieval and early modern Nordic manuscripts, looking to develop a better understanding of the *galdrabók* genre, how it was conceptualized and developed, and of the place of such texts for our knowledge of the practice of magic.[10]

As regards the question of what I mean by 'magic', put very briefly for the purposes of this essay, I regard magical practices as attempts to contact unseen "Power" in the effort to know the future and/or influence its course of events.[11] Such practices have a complex history in modern scholarship (cf. Cunningham 1999), having been largely shaped by the colonial discourses of earlier eras, discussions which framed such ritual activities as bearing a special relationship to, but being separate from, religion and science. One of the most influential of these authors, James Frazer, extended Edward Tylor's earlier views about magic, arguing that magic, science and religion were to be understood within an evolutionary scheme: magic could be understood as faulty reasoning about causality, which over time was replaced by religion, which would, in turn, give way to science.[12] Among the very many important theoretical statements on this point, Nur Yalman's well-considered remark distils the essence of the debate when he comments that: "The core of the magical act rests on empirically untested belief and is an effort at control – the first aspect distinguishes it from science, the second from religion."[13]

That there were practitioners of the occult arts believed capable of knowing future events and able to influence their outcomes is a well-attested aspect of both learned and lay tradition in Scandinavia, with the corresponding result that the reputation of such powerful texts as these magicians were believed to possess comprises an impressive aspect of Nordic folk tradition: the legends of post-Reformation Iceland, for example, are rife with tales concerning books of magic – legends about *Rauðskinna*, *Gráskinna*, and other famous anthologies of magical recipes, and stories of attempts by men like Galdra-Loftur in the eighteenth century to wrest such fabled collections of magical charms and occult knowledge from the graves of famous magicians like Bishop Gottskálk (d. *c*. 1520).[14] Yet empirical evidence for the actual existence of such collections of charms and other forms of magic in medieval Scandinavia, the sort of thing one can actually hold in one's hand, so to speak, is as good as non-existent.

Bereft of physical data, early information about such works comes mainly by way of ecclesiastical and legal references to them, such as those in the tale above of Hermogenes and Saint James the Greater. Undoubtedly, however, the best-known reference to a book of magic from the Nordic Middle Ages concerns the young Jón Halldórsson, later Bishop of Skálholt (1322 to 1339). According to a brief tale in the fourteenth-century *Söguþáttur Jóns Halldórssonar biskups* – which the eponymous bishop himself is presented

as relating later in life – while Jón was a student in Paris, his teacher left the room one day. Seeing that the master's book remained open, the young man hurried to read from the text, and a great storm broke out. Jón now hears the master returning and resumes his seat. The master walks in, saying that if the storm continues until evening, it will dry up all the lakes in France. Then it strikes the master that perhaps someone has been toying with his book during his absence. Jón admits it, and the master remedies things by reading aloud from the book a section nearly as long as the one Jón had read ("sem þar les hann eitt capitulum […] þótti mér vonligt at þat væri nærri því langt sem ek hafði áðr lesit"), causing the storm to subside.[15]

Yet not all examples of such special books come from literary texts: several real-world incidents suggest the seriousness with which such books were regarded. Among the legal charges the thirteenth-century Danish King Erik Menved levels against Archbishop Jens Grand is the accusation that Grand possesses a magical book (*liber necromanticus*).[16] And in an Icelandic legal case from 1554, Oddr Þorsteinsson is accused of seducing a woman through the use of the magical arts which were found in the books of magic (*galldrabækur*) he had in his possession.[17]

The references to powerful 'books' of the sort purportedly belonging to Jens Grand, Jón Halldórsson's master, Bishop Gottskálk and Oddr Þorsteinsson raise the question of just what is meant by such a concept, and, of course, both in medieval Latin and Old Norse, a 'book' (*liber, bók*) was clearly something other than the modern notion of a printed, mass-produced, commercially bound, and marketed tome, an idea that also extended into the early modern period for many. As Ane Ohrvik (2012:15–16) notes with respect to the seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century Norwegian anthologies of charms and other forms of wisdom literature she has studied, the terms 'manuscript', 'book', and 'Black Book' are all relevant to the presentation of knowledge and to the early modern materials in various ways, but their meanings differ, the differences building on physical form, content, and inferred intent. Black Books (*svartebøker*) she characterizes "as books containing knowledge and, consequently, as sources of knowledge," often of magical formulas and recipes. Following Davies and Ohrvik, one might wonder: even if all post-Reformation Nordic grimoires are 'Black Books', are all early modern 'Black Books' grimoires? And what trends can we infer about such texts as Scandinavia transitioned from the medieval to the early modern?

Charms in Early Nordic Texts

The four manuscripts I explore here are specifically selected so as to give as broad an impression as possible as regards national traditions, dates of composition, and relationships to science and religion. In broad chronological

order, one is an early fifteenth-century Danish medical treatise;[18] the second is a similar collection of medical materials from Sweden, begun in the fifteenth-century, which includes a number of charms, mainly from the beginning of the 1500s;[19] the third is a Norwegian anthology of religious and other materials, including charms, from roughly the same period (*c*. 1480 to the 1530s);[20] and the fourth is a collection of some four dozen post-Reformation Icelandic charms.[21]

The Danish materials in AM 187 8º, the earliest of our texts, are generally associated with the medical traditions of Salerno (Schola Medica Salernitana) and (as well as to an extent, through) the works of Henrik Harpestreng, the most famous of medieval Nordic medical figures, who wrote among other works a book of herbs and a book of gemstones.[22] With some exceptions, one would be hard-pressed to identify the entries in AM 187 8º as charms if one were only looking at the outcomes they seek to address. Indeed, many of the problems it mentions would hardly seem out of place in modern medical handbooks – advice on treating edema (*Ad guttam*), urinary illness and gallstones (*De urina infirmorum, De [dif]ficultate urine et calculo*), wounds (*Vm thi welt helæ saar*), gout and lameness (*For ict oc for haldt*). On the other hand, some may seem, given the state of science at the time, more obviously magical and divinatory, when, for example, they offer advice on prognosticating death (*Probacio galieni*) or determining the gender of an unborn child (*Om thu wildæ widæ*). Others are more straightforwardly apotropaic: "Against devil's arrows" (*Contra sagittas dyaboli*), "Against demons, poisons, and melancholy" (*Contra demonium et uenenum et spleneticis*), "Preventing your wife from committing adultery" (*Vt tua mulier non possit cum alio adulterari*), "To prevent the theft of cattle" (*Om thi whilt, at thiufæ tachæ æy thit fæ*).

Of course, what binds all of the texts together is not the titles the medieval writers or modern scholarship have assigned to them, or even the intent of the charms, but rather the means, the *how*, by which they are believed to work. If, for example, the advice on preventing the theft of cattle in AM 187 8º were to build a strong stockade or to bar and lock the barn door, we would hardly think of the entry as consisting of anything other than tips on medieval animal husbandry and home security. But the remedy suggested is of a very different sort: it recommends that those who want to ensure that thieves, robbers, and wolves not steal their livestock inscribe a special Latin prayer ("O Lord, you who created horses, pigs, cattle, cows, and sheep," etc.) on the door post where the animals go out.[23] Likewise, against wantonness, for example, the text suggests using the juice and uppermost leaves of the gladiola (*Gladiolus*) mixed with wine or water, and administering it with atrament or other liquid.[24] The charm element resides in the fact that in addition to the pharmacological components, the potion should be made *as* the *Pater noster* is being "read." And here, of course, we see at work practices

calling on all three aspects of the traditional magic–science–religion triptych.[25]

A very similar Swedish leechbook, Linköping Stifts Bibliotek M5 (hereafter LStB M5), contains, according to the numbering in Klemming's edition, no fewer than 1,210 recommendations, remedies, and formulas in Latin and Swedish, of which only a very few are charms (according to those identified by Linderholm).[26] Again, many are of a routine medical nature as regards the afflictions they seek to heal (e.g., fever, hypersomnia), whereas some others are practical but strike the modern reader as advice beyond the medical sphere, such as formulas for ridding homes of mice and rats or how to catch a fugitive or remedies against demons.[27]

The rituals associated with these charms are often quite elaborate. The "Blessing for gout" (*Signilse for icth*), for example, calls for a variety of actions by a priest – holding a bowl of water, making signs, speaking verbal formulas, reading scripture, and drawing parallels to biblical passages. Yet little about the charm stands out to the modern mind, apart perhaps from its unorthodox goal of driving out the devil (*expellantur…dyaboli*) that causes the affliction.[28]

One of the several charms for ridding a household of rodents, *Ad expellendum Glires* (Klemming 1883–1886:224), opens by invoking, or perhaps more aptly, usurping the language of Roman ritual: it begins, *Adjutorium nostrum &c.*, that is, *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini. Qui fecit caelum et terram* (Our help is in the Name of the Lord. Who made heaven and earth). It is noteworthy that traditionally this sentence is said responsively, the first phrase by the priest, the second by the congregation, perhaps an indication of the way in which the charm was to be performed. That phrase is followed by reference to John 1:1, a verse much favored in medieval magical practice, *In prinicipio erat Verbum* [*et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum* (In the beginning was the Word, [and the Word was with God, and the Word was God]) (cf. Gjerløw 1982). After this formal Latin preamble, the text continues in Swedish, repeatedly channeling the power of God – "in the name of God who made heaven and earth."[29]

Operationally, the charm consists of a series of statements and commands in the first person, beginning, "I abjure you, rats and mice, both large and small,"[30] and continues with a series of exhortations, "I exhort you rats and mice both large and small that you leave this house and this farm and never again come here," "I exhort you further by God's highest power," and "…I command you by God's living power."[31] It also exhorts the rodents with reference to itself, "by this holy exhortation and charm" (*med tenna helga manilse, oc beswerilse*), and refers further to the use of – and by the power of – an aspergillum (*oc med tenna öwerstenckilse)* and holy water (*med tetta vigdevatn*), again painting a clearer image of how the charm was to be performed, and by whom, concluding with *Jn nomine patris* + .

It is instructive to compare "this holy exhortation and charm" in LStB M5 with the recommendation that follows immediately after it, also meant for ridding a home of pests, specifically rats (*For rotthor*). It begins in the manner of many cookbooks: "Take" (*Tag*), it says, *orma gress rot* "the root of the Geranium sanguineum L.," burn it in a censer, closing the windows so that the smoke does not dissipate, and the rats will flee, "as has often been proved" (*tz er offta pröffwat*).[32] Not surprisingly this unambiguously pharmacological approach is not regarded as a charm, and yet its goal is precisely the same as the much more robust ritual of the earlier remedy.

Roughly contemporary with the charms in LStB M5 is a remarkable collocation of learning, devotion, and magic from Telemark in Norway, the so-called *Vinjeboka*. Discovered under the floorboards of the dilapidated stave church in Vinje in 1796 as that building was being razed, its earliest sections have been argued to be as old as *c*. 1480, the last from some time around the Dano-Norwegian Reformation. This little book contains a variety of magical formulas, cures and remedies for men and animals, occasional verses in Latin, a Marian legend and nearly a dozen hymns to the Virgin by various hands.

From even that brief description, it is clear that *Vinjeboka*'s contents are more discursive than those of either AM 187 8^{o} or LStB M5; in addition, it differs sharply from these other "books" in its size and feel – *Vinjeboka* consists of 56 leaves or 112 pages, of which 106 contain text written by 12 different hands, but measures a mere 4.8 × 7.0 cm.[33] By contrast, both AM 187 8^{o} and LStB M5 are octavos, roughly twice as large in format.[34] AM 187 8^{o} is made up of 59 leaves, of which 56 contain medical, and magical, text, the final leaves being filled mainly with household tips and nib tests. In the opinion of Ottosson (1977) the texts in LStB M5 were copied by many different hands and only later collected into a single volume.

Moreover, basing this observation on the decisions of Bang, Linderholm, and other early editors, it would seem that the density of charms in *Vinjeboka* is much greater than in the two previously discussed manuscripts. Garstein (1993:26) estimates that roughly 30% of the recipes in *Vinjeboka* contain powerful charms and symbolic materials. And, indeed, some of the charms live up to our expectations of what a grimoire ought to contain, e.g., "To blunt an enemy's sword," "To gain power over a woman," "To win the love of a young woman," "To expose a thief" (Garstein 1993, nos. 7, 12, 13, and 18). But reading through the titles of many of *Vinjeboka*'s cures, one could also easily imagine that it is a veterinary manual or farming guide: "For sprain in a horse's leg," "To improve soil in fallow land," "For a boil on horse's leg," "For corneal inflammation in a horse," "For a boil on the udder of livestock," "To prevent grain spoilage" (Garstein 1993, nos. 26, 27, 30, 34, 42, and 44).

Again, it is, of course, generally *how* the remedies are thought to work, rather than the problem they are thought to work on, that matters. For example, as a recipe, "To improve soil in fallow land" may sound like a simple matter of mucking the field or other practical bit of farming tradition, but instead this recommendation depends entirely on ritual and spiritual matters: "For fallow land: Make the sign of the cross over the fallow land with your foot and say thus, May the five holy wounds [of Jesus] heal this wounded [land] in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."[35] And although this same principle ultimately holds for "To get power over a woman," it is surely also the case here that the topic itself suggests that charm magic will be at work: "Likewise if you would gain a woman's will etc.:[36] On a Friday morning before the sun rises, write these following signs with blood from the little finger of your right hand /// and show them to the one you would have, and she will do as you will. It has been proven."[37] It should be noted as well that although the language of these two charms is mostly in the vernacular, the closings are in Latin. In the case of "To improve soil in fallow land," the Trinitarian formula (*in nomine Patris* and so on) would presumably have been known by everyone, whereas in the case of "To get power over a woman," the Latin closing (= "and she will do as you will. It has been proven") would presumably have required a different sort of reader.

Finally, the fourth of the texts under review here, usually referred to simply as *Galdrabók* ("Book of Magic," ATA, Ämb 2, F 16:26), is "a little vellum manuscript in sextodecimo," meaning that it is smallish, although larger in format than *Vinjeboka*.[38] It was created over time by four different individuals,[39] the first beginning in the very late sixteenth century, with the process continuing for the next fifty or so years.[40] *Galdrabók* consists of forty-seven recipes, cures, and recommendations of various sorts, virtually all of which might be characterized as charms, or magical in character, with a high proportion of the entries offering symbols and signs of various sorts that are to be used in the performance of the charm.

Likewise, the subject matter of the recipes in *Galdrabók* is generally at odds with the other three texts. *Galdrabók* distinguishes itself by its recipes being much more anthropocentric than those of the other texts. It also includes some markedly traditional forms of European magic (e.g., "Egyptian days," no. 21) not seen in the other texts. In addition to *Galdrabók*'s interest in more figurative forms of magic and more human-oriented magic pursuits, another feature distinguishes this manuscript from the three previously discussed texts, namely, the not infrequent invocation of the old Northern pagan gods. We know from other contexts that this practice continued elsewhere in the Nordic world as well (see, e.g., Mitchell 2009), but such references are pointedly *not* in evidence in AM 187 8^{o}, LStB M5, or *Vinjeboka*, all of which, to the extent they invoke

powers, do so with respect to Christianity, i.e., God, Christ, the Virgin Mary, and various saints.

To be sure, Christian powers are also invoked in *Galdrabók* but the full catalogue of powers whose *mana* is appealed to in *Galdrabók* is impressively broad, including not only Christian figures but a variety of powerful deities, demons, and spirits. The penultimate charm in the collection, the so-called "Fart Charm" (*Fret Rúner*), is a good example, concluding, "thou wilt be as weak as the fiend Loki, who was bound by all the gods: in thy mightiest name Lord, God, Spirit, Shaper, Óðinn, Þór, Savior, Freyr, Freyja, Oper, Satan, Belsebub, helpers, mighty god, warding with the companions of Uteos, Morss, Noht, Vitales."[41] As impressive a list of powerful entities as it is, this "designation of adjuvant powers," as this typical portion of a charm's structure has been called,[42] pales in comparison with the first charm in the collection, an apotropaic charm against all kinds of dangers, which uses over one hundred names and titles, drawn primarily from Judeo-Christian tradition, containing, I note, no obvious references to pagan Nordic deities.

The opening line of that charm, apparently intended both to inform and instruct the reader, provides us with another interesting insight into the use of such materials in the case of a textual amulet: "This prayer ought to be worn on oneself in all kinds of dangers that threaten from water, sea, and weapons. It should also be read just before one sees one's enemies…"[43] The practice of bearing written charms on one's person was well-known in medieval and early modern Scandinavia (e.g., a mid-fifteenth-century amulet from Norway bearing the Vulgate of John 1:1–14 [Unger and Huitfeldt 1847–, 7:440–441; cf. Mitchell 2011:48–49]), but in this instance, the charm suggests that both *having* the names on one's person and *reading* them (*lesastz,* notably not *lesa upp* or the like) as a separate performed act gives special protective powers to the bearer.

Finally, whereas the other three texts often present entire or significant portions of their recipes and so on in Latin, one senses that *Galdrabók* is much more invested in vernacular forms of magic. In saying that, I am *not* suggesting that the authors of *Galdrabók* lacked a knowledge of Latin, for to be sure, its influence can be seen in the text, albeit mainly in biblical quotations (e.g., Psalms 119:75 in no. 39), in Latin (and Latinate) titles and name forms (e.g., *Rex judiorum* in no. 1), in well-known elements of religious praxis (e.g., the Pater Noster in no. 3), and in the occasional phrase (e.g., CONSUMMATUM EST, "it is done," in no. 4). By contrast, the other texts deliver entire recipes in Latin, which I interpret as meaning that either the authors have drawn faithfully on Latin sources, or, perhaps, are quite comfortable code-switching between Latin and the vernacular, the sort of competence and behavior one would expect in religious communities. Although I underscore that it is an entirely subjective judgment, one gets the

impression that whereas Latin represents a form of communication in the other three texts, the use of Latin in *Galdrabók* has more to do with its effect on readers, i.e., to bedazzle them,[44] or perhaps with the charm's efficacy, i.e., that its use is necessary to the ritual.

Conclusion

What features characterize these four manuscripts and the charms in them? Certain key areas of interest are obvious. The most common problems the charms in these four texts seek to address are: *healing physical distress in humans* (e.g., "Against toothache," "For childbirth"); *averting evil influences* (e.g., "For protection against all kinds of evil," "Against the hate and poison of fiends and enemies"); *exerting control* (e.g., "To cause fear in your enemy," "To obtain whatever one wants," "To blunt an enemy's sword"); *treating animals and soil* (e.g., "For a stubborn horse," "Against rabies," "To improve soil in fallow land"); and *discovery or divination* (e.g., "To discover a thief," "Determining the gender of an unborn child"). Whether these four manuscripts, anything but randomly selected, are in fact representative of Nordic magical texts as a whole in the late medieval and early modern periods is far from certain.

Yet, always bearing in mind then that these four manuscripts represent only a very small data set in the grand scheme of things, and that local traditions and conditions may have varied greatly, certain contours are discernable in these texts. There is, as one would expect, an incremental movement from an almost exclusive focus in the earliest leechbook, AM 187 8^{o}, on anodyne medical issues toward ever widening areas of concern in the later ones: LStB M5 and *Vinjeboka* expand their uses of magic to include extra-medical issues like rodents, fugitives, and determining guilt. In *Galdrabók*, the physical problems of humans represent a distinct minority arena of interest among its charms, which are mostly concerned with other kinds of anthropocentric problems (e.g., love, sex, fear, anger, hate).

Also, the Old Danish and Old Swedish leechbooks rely more or less exclusively on pharmaceutical and/or religious means to remedy the problems they seek to address, whereas *Vinjeboka* to a very small degree and *Galdrabók* to a very substantial degree depend on carved or written visual expressions of charms. *Galdrabók* further distinguishes itself, if my inference is correct, in its use of languages (which may also speak to the nature of the authors and users of this text), with Latin appearing to be more of a decorative, affective or mystifying device than a vehicle for communication. This book especially stands apart by virtue of the fact that its charms often invoke a range of deities and powers including the pre-Christian gods of the north, something seen not at all in the earlier texts. Of course, rather than a development within Nordic charm traditions, this use may tend to re-

flect specifically Icelandic narrative traditions, where the pagan gods often played important roles throughout the Middle Ages in certain genres like the *rímur* (e.g., *Skíðaríma*) and the *fornaldarsögur*. On the other hand, Icelandic magical tradition may not have been quite so unique with respect to these superannuated views as is sometimes believed (see, e.g., Mitchell 2009).

Expressed thus, it would appear that these four manuscripts virtually reverse the evolutionary scheme associated with such early figures in the field as Tyler, Frazer and Freud – who understood cultural evolution in terms of a "magic > religion > science" paradigm; instead, these texts speak to a movement in the opposite direction, from essentially scientific stances (as the users would have understood them) toward increasingly magical ones.

In the context of the developments we witness in the periods on either side of the Reformation, it is important to bear in mind several different historical trajectories. One, of course, moves forward in time from the late fifteenth century and onwards, and reminds us that it was especially in the sixteenth century that the translation into the Nordic vernaculars of large numbers of relevant texts took place. One thinks in that context, for example, of the nearly preternaturally industrious Brigittine monk, Peder Månsson, in Rome 1508–1524, with his very specific interest in alchemy, translating into Swedish learned books concerned with medicine, agriculture, mining, war, gemstones, and the like.

The other trajectory, arcing from both the distant and the more recent past into the fifteenth century and beyond, is equally important, if more elusive and less likely to be greeted warmly by specialists: before there were grimoires, before there were leechbooks, for that matter, before the introduction of writing with the Roman alphabet, and then later co-existing with it, there were written individual charms, charms recorded with, and perhaps to some extent, performed through the use of, runes.[45] Possessing as we do a significant number of runic inscriptions whose magical purposes are apparent (cf. McKinnell, Simek, and Düwel 2004; Mitchell 2011), there is a tendency to envision surviving rune sticks as the results of performances, that is, as the end products of actualized charms. Some undoubtedly are, but could it be that some of these inscriptions were intended to be the means by which the knowledge of particular charms was recorded and passed on?[46] Even if that was sometimes the case – and a very big "if" it is – such materials would still be far short of representing 'books' of charms; indeed, I raise this point mainly as a way of noting that the connection between writing and charm magic in the north is much older than the later Middle Ages, and may be more subtle and complicated than we sometimes imagine (cf. the example of Skírnir's use of runes and the *gambanteinn*/*tamsvǫndr* in *Skírnismál* as discussed in Mitchell 2007), and that relationship may too have influenced the emerging concept of books of magic.

Finally, let us consider the very end of the story described above about Bishop Jón's youthful dalliance with magic in Paris, when he supposedly causes mischief by reading aloud from his master's *bók*, an act that results in a supernatural event which is only undone when his teacher reads aloud from the same text. Jón is said to have made the following observation: "'From such [stories] one can see', said the bishop, 'what "art" [*list*] lives in books, even if the world becomes very old'" ("'Má af slíku marka,' sagði byskupinn, 'hve listin lifir í bókunum þótt heimrinn gjöriz mjök gamall'" [Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir 1998:447]). I translate *list* as 'art', as it seems to me to be the English gloss that comes closest to capturing the wide range of meanings of the original, but it should be noted that Old Icelandic *list* encompasses a plethora of related concepts of particular interest to us: skill and artistry, magic and witchcraft, craftiness and scheming, science and art.[47] Jón's comment comes, of course, in the context of an extraordinary tale, yet the kind of belief it apparently wants its audience to accept about the power of the written word, and especially about the power of particular kinds of books filled with such powerful words, has not, it seems me, been fully plumbed yet for the Nordic case.

Naturally, the most likely model for this high-status perspective on writing and reading, a view of books as repositories of specialized knowledge, and power, would in the first instance have been religious works – that is, missals, lectionaries and so on, religious texts that were regularly seen by non-ecclesiastics during the performance of the various offices; over time, with the increased importation and production of leechbooks, herbals, books on gemstones and the like, these more secular works too acquired some of that same authoritative and prestigious luster, a particular kind of *list*, a term which might even be glossed in this context as 'power' or 'authority'.[48] As some of those texts increasingly came to be focused, exclusively or nearly exclusively, on an interest in charms and related matters, they naturally came to be defined by these interests, and took on the special associations of the texts being called grimoires elsewhere – not yet in the case of either of our early examples, AM 187 8^{o} or LStB M5, which are clearly leechbooks at heart; somewhat with *Vinjeboka*, a much more mixed manual aimed at both spirtiual and quotidian matters; and fully with *Galdrabók,* a true Nordic grimoire.

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[1] Concerning the history of such texts, see Davies 2009:6–43. I take this opportunity to note that the research for, and writing of, this article was principally conducted during my time as a Fellow of *The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Uppsala,* whose assistance and encouragement I gratefully acknowledge, an expression of gratitude I also extend to those who commented on a version of the essay given as a lecture at Universität Zürich in April 2014.

[2] Regarding the dating of the texts, cf. *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* (available at http://onp.ku.dk/).

[3] "Þa tok hann kistur sinar ok lagði a bak ser ok lærisveinum sinum, fullar fiolkyngisboka, ok kastaði niðr fyrir føtr postolanum ok villdi brenna þær i elldi," Unger 1874:515–516.

[4] "Hann…for siþan heim til innis oc samnaði saman ollum galldrabocum sinom," Unger 1874:531.

[5] "þær er fullar voro upp boka," Unger 1874:534; "hermogenes bar atir alla sina bøker," Stephens and Dahlgren 1847–1874:I, 165. The Old Swedish translation is believed to have been executed in the period between 1276 and 1307, but the citations here come from the fifteenth-century Codex Bildstenianus.

[6] "Thu skalt ey hafwa the bøkir ther tøfri ær scrifwat vthi," Henning 1954:25.

[7] Sigfús Blöndal's authoritiative *Islandsk-dansk Ordbog* lists, for example, *fjölkynngisbók* (199), *galdrabók* (234), and *töfrabók* (876), all glossed as *Heksebog*.

[8] For Swedish, *trollbok* 'magic book' is in evidence from 1619, *trolldomsbok* 'witchcraft book' from 1596, and *svartkonstbok* 'book of the black arts' from 1620.

[9] Bodin (1580:72) writes, "on appeloit [!] ce liure le Grimoire, tenu secret."

[10] For overviews of the genre in the North, see Hødnebø 1982; Stokker 2007; Mitchell 2011; and Ohrvik 2012.

[11] I here intentionally mimic the orthographic convention, and the perspectives on magic, developed in Wax and Wax 1962 and 1963.

[12] For more complete and more explicit discussions of my views, as well as reviews of the theoretical literature, see Mitchell 2011:11–14, 159–160 *et passim* and Mitchell forthcoming.

[13] Yalman 1968; I have in mind such key contributions to the discussion as Hammond 1970 and Tambiah 1990.

[14] Many of these tales are conveniently collected and translated in Simpson 1975; for texts in Icelandic on magical books, charms and so on, see Jón Árnason 1954–1961:I, 432–467, on in-

dividual magicians, I:468–599. For a overview and discussion, see Einar Ól. Sveinsson 2003: 195–213.

[15] Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir 1998:445–447. The main, and oldest, manuscript for this story, AM 657 a–b 4º, dates to the mid-1300s. *Index Exemplorum* (Tubach 1969) lists this exemplum, citing as the source, *Islendsk Æventyri,* as #737, "A student caused a storm when he read his master's book of magic. When the master returned and read a chapter in the book of equal length, the storm ceased." See Mitchell 2011:46, 224n29.

[16] Given the confusion connected with the terms 'necromancy' (< *necromantia,* cf. Greek *nekros* 'corpse') and 'nigromancy' *nigromantia*, it is difficult to know if this phrase meant a more generally magical volume or one concerned specifically with raising the dead, on which see Kieckhefer 1997:4, 19. See also Krarup and Norvin 1932:170; Riising 1969:331; and Mitchell 2008:105.

[17] "…og lockad hanz omaga til samlagz vid sig med sijnum koztrum og gaulldrum eptir þui sem þær galldrabækur innehilldu er fundizt haufdu j hanz geymslu," Jón Þorkelsson et al. 1857–: XII, 751. I want to thank Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir for pointing this interesting passage out to me, one of the earliest cases of this sort I know of in early modern Norden.

[18] AM 187 8º was published in Såby 1886, who believed (p. III) the book in its entirety to derive from the mid- or late fourteenth century ("til midten eller siste halvdel af det 14de årh."). Såby adds, however, that it undoubtedly goes back to an older, now lost original, and that if the *mæster gislebertus* named in the manuscript (p. 86) is indeed the thirteenth-century English physician, Gilbertus Anglicus, "have vi her en grænsebestemmelse for bogens alder." Brix 1943:36, likewise dates AM 187 8º to the 1300s. Modern scholarship (e.g., Sørensen 1982:77), however, places the manuscript in the early fifteenth century and connects it to the convent of St. Clara in Roskilde.

[19] LStB M5 represents the seventh *Läkebok* in Klemming's anthology of 1883–1886:196–399, who describes it as a paper manuscript from the beginning of the 1500s ("pappershandskrift från början av 1500-talet"); others have since identified the charms in M5 as coming from a variety of periods: some from the late 1400s; some from the early 1500s and later; moreover, some have been identified as deriving from *Christiern Pedersens Lægebog* of 1533 (cf. Ottosson 1977:127–128).

[20] This little book, called *Vinjeboka* after the church in Telemark where it was discovered, is available in a scholarly edition with modern Norwegian translations (Garstein 1993; individual charms are also to be found in Bang 1901). It was traditionally dated to ca. 1520 (cf. Hødnebø 1982:672), but Garstein 1993:21–23 broadens the possible range of the various entries, from as early as 1477 to as late as 1537.

[21] Published with a facing Swedish translation as *En isländsk svartkonstbok från 1500-talet* ('An Icelandic Grimoire ["Black Book"] from the 1500s' [Lindqvist 1921]), and subsequently produced in an annotated facsimile edition by Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson (1992), this collection consists of some four dozen charms generally thought to be from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (cf. the comments in Lindqvist 1921:11, and Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson 1992:10). It was translated into English in Flowers 1989. It has always been something of a mystery just how the manuscript should be referred to: notably, neither Lindqvist nor Matthías Viðar use a *siglum* reference. Archivist Anna Pettersson at Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet, Riksantikvarieämbetet, kindly informs me that it is catalogued as "ATA, Ämbetsarkiv 2, Vitterhetsakademiens handskriftsamling, serie F 16 volym 26," which might be shortened to "ATA, Ämb 2, F 16:26." Both those rather lengthy monikers being what they are, I accept the title *Galdrabók* as shorthand in this essay when referring to this text.

[22] For overviews on Harpestreng's career and importance to the history of Nordic medicine, see Skov 1945 and Kværndrup 2006.

[23] "Om thu wilt, at thiufæ tachæ æy thit fæ oc æy ransmæn oc æy ulwæ tachæ th*æt,* tha scrifh th*æt*te ofæn dyrnæ træt, thær the gangæ wt: D*omi*ne, qui creasti equos, porcos, boues, uaccas *et* oues in adiutoriu*m* ho*minu*m, crescant op*er*a tua, et defende animalia tua de dentib*us* lu-

po*rum et* de manib*us* inimico*rum*. *cristus* illa ducat, *cristus* illa reducat *et* p*er* intercessionem s*anct*i eustachij defende illa de lupis *et* latronib*us,* amen," Såby 1886:88.

[24] "Tac gladioli os oc blathæn af hænnæ, the høgstæ, the th*ær* wændæs nithær aiorthæn, oc læs p*at*er n*ost*er i the stund, th[u] writher ofæn th*ær* af, oc blandæ m*æth* wijn æller m*æth* watn oc gijf thæ*n* siukæ at drickæ m*æth* canap oc atrame*n*t oc uinella," Såby 1886:47. See my comments on this text in Mitchell 2011:47 and, 226n42.

[25] On the relationship between these three areas, see Mitchell 2011:12–13, 23. It is not for nothing that the editor remarks of the manuscript, "Vi have i denne lægebog en god prøve på den så-kaldte munkemedisin med dens rå empirisme, dens uvidenhed og overtro," Såby 1886: VI.

[26] See nos. 81, 82, 85, 90, 94–96, 98, 104, 105, 107, 109, 110–112, 115, 118, 119, and 127 in Linderholm 1917–1940. That said, I take this opportunity to emphasize that my comments here are *not* intended to represent a statistically-oriented, let alone, statistically-significant, study, the occasional use of terms that imply quantification in a broad sense (e.g., very few, density) notwithstanding.

[27] Using the numbering in Klemming 1883–1886, fever = 118; hypersomnia = 576; ridding homes of mice and rats = 177–182; to catch a fugitive = 91; against demons (*elffwos uel elffwas*) = 1210. I note that whereas we today understand the role of rodents in the spread of disease, most famously in the case of the fourteenth-century bubonic pandemic, in the cultural moment of these texts, rodents were mainly seen as despoilers and thieves of foodstuffs.

[28] Klemming 1883–1886:229; modern Swedish *gikt.* I am here following Linderholm's selection of magical elements in charms and blessings.

[29] In the original, "vnder gwds nampn Som skop himmil oc jordh" and again later "vnder gwdz liiffwandis mackt Som alzwollger gud skoop himmil oc jord med."

[30] In the original, "Jach forswär ider Rottor oc myss bada stora oc smaa."

[31] In the original, "Ta manar iach ider rottor oc myss. bade store oc smaa, At y flyn häden vtaff tetta hwss oc aff tenna gard, oc komme her aldrig mera igen," "Jach manar oc ider vnder gwdz högxta makt," and "…biwder Jac ider vnder gwdz liiffwandis makt."

[32] "Tag orma gress rooth oc bren i eldpanno oc stengh vel fentrena sa at rökin ey vtkomber. Oc rotthorna fly, tz er offta pröffwat," Klemming 1883–1886:225.

[33] Garstein 1993:12–13, 23. The book was, however, originally larger and has lost some pages. Garstein concludes that in its current state the book contains "more than 96%" of its original contents (14). As regards the language of the manuscript, Garstein calls it "late medieval Norwegian," that is, Danish with Norwegianisms ("senmiddelaldernorsk, dvs. dansk målføre isprengt en rekke norvagismer"), pointedly noting that the one thing *not* present is the local Telemark dialect (1993:18–19).

[34] AM 187 8º measures 16.7 × 12.5, cm with 59 leaves according to Konráð Gíslason, Kaalund, *et al*. 1889–1894:II, 437. The exact dimensions of LStB M5 are unknown to me other than that the catalogue card at the library states, "1 bd (skinn med guldpressning) i liten 8:o," information made available to me electronically, courtesy of reference librarian Eva Nilsson Sjöquist.

[35] "Ffor trodh: Saa gør ith kors ov'r thz throdh mz thÿ fodh og sÿgh ssoo: The hellige fem wundh'r thess helæ tessæ wundh'r in nomine Patris et Filÿ et ss. sath." Garstein 1993, no. 27 (cf. no. 37).

[36] Cf. Garstein 1993, no. 12, where "naakendz qwinnÿsz williæ" is translated as "en naken kvinnes vilje," apparently mistaking the indefinite for the adjective 'naked'.

[37] "Item om tu wilt haffwe naakendz qwinnÿsz williæ etc.: Om fredagh ath morghen før soll gaar wp, scriff tesse efterschreffne caracteres mz blodh aff tÿn lislæ fingh'r i tÿn høgre handh /// ok thee them før then tw haffwe will, et fiat tibi sicut vis. Probatum est." Garstein 1993, no. 12 (cf. no. 13). The three slash marks represent what in the original are three identical signs consisting of a vertical line, capped by a single rightward and downward directed line beginning at the top of the vertical line; the vertical line also has a "foot", consisting of a single leftward and upward directed line beginning at the bottom of the vertical line; in between, two

parallel lines, rightward and downward directed, are centered on the vertical line. Thus, one might say that there are, in essence, four parallel lines, more or less equally spaced, and set at a 45 degree angle to the vertical line.

[38] In a sextodecimo, each sheet is folded into sixteen leaves or thirty-two pages, resulting in a manuscript in the range of 13–16 cm × 8–13 cm. Cf. *SAOB*'s formulation, "format på pappersblad l. bok, som (motsvarar det som) erhålles, då ett ark papper dubbelvikes fyra gånger (o. delas i sexton lika blad)."

[39] The first three hands are thought to have been Icelanders, the fourth a Dane working with Icelandic materials. See Lindqvist 1921:10–11; Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson 1992:9–12.

[40] "en liten pergamenthandskrift i sedesformat," Lindqvist 1921:9. It was acquired in Copenhagen in 1682 by Johan Gabriel Sparfwenfeldt through whom it made its way to Stockholm. The history of *Galdrabók* is given in Lindqvist 1921:21–22, and Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson 1992:10.

[41] Flowers' translation (1980:80), following the forms of proper names in Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson 1992:437, and with my minor orthographic emendations. In Lindqvist's diplomatic edition (1921:72, 74), "huer du saa syneloss som fianden [Loke?] fra aller Gud[er] [snarrder?] i dinu Mechtigste Naffne Herre Gud Ande wercke[re] Oden Tor frelsere Freg Frege Oper Satan Belsebub med hielpere till stórrkende Gud [wernd?] med Filgere Uteos Morss [Noht?] Vitales."

[42] The phrase Bozóky (2003:38) uses in the original is "nomination des puissances adjuvantes."

[43] Flowers 1980:59. "þesse bǽn á ásier ad berast i allskiñs háskasemd*um*, vatz, siáfar og vopna, Item lesastz ádur madur sier mótstodu men*n* sijna," Lindqvist 1921:24.

[44] I find that Finnur Jónsson (1902:125–126) reached a similar view, "Der findes endel såkaldte lægebøger (AM 434d, 8º), der går over til et slags trolddomsbøger (*galdrakver*), skrevne tildels med latinske ord ind imellem, ok enkelte ord med lönskrift, f. ex. 435, 8º; det hele fik således et vist mystisk præg… "

[45] Recognizing the need at this juncture for the standard "hostage video" for those in or on the margins of runology, let me say that I readily acknowledge that runes are nothing more, or less, than an epigraphic system, a means of written communication, and have no *inherent* magical qualities. On the other hand, as a writing system, they could, and were, also used for magical purposes.

[46] On the role of memory and the various approaches to, and means of, preserving information in the Old Norse world, see especially the discussions in Hermann 2009; 2014, and the literature cited there. I first became aware of this alternative explanation, so far as I recall, when the possibility was raised by Maja Marsling Bäckvall several years ago at the Aarhus University summer school on "Paganism and Christianity in Old Norse Textual Culture."

[47] Cf. the following selected glosses from the Arnamagnæan's *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog:* 1) færdighed, dygtighed, kvalifikation, kunstfærdighed; 2) magi, trolddom, magisk kneb; 3) list, snedighed, kneb, trick; 4) videnskab, kunstart, kundskabsgren, studium.

[48] Cf. Mitchell 1991:102–103; and Kieckhefer 1997:1–8, who notes that historians have studied the dissemination of literacy and the subsequent loss of control and power for the church, focusing "on churchmen's fear that literacy contributed to the diffusion of heretical views, and on the efforts at censorship that ensued. But less work has been done on the dissemination of *magical* texts, which in some ways represented an even more sinister threat to orthodox culture, and on attempts to control these texts" (1).

Passing Through as Healing and Crime

An Example from Eighteenth-Century Sweden

Fredrik Skott

In the spring of 1720 a little girl in Södra Ny in Värmland told her neighbours about a remarkable feast that had taken place the previous night, which was Easter Eve. She claimed to have flown to it together with some older women. The food they were given had consisted of snakes and frogs. And the host was no lesser person than the devil. The rumour of this flight to Blåkulla, the location of the witches' sabbath in Sweden, spread quickly over the peninsula of Värmlandsnäs. The matter was brought up both at a general parish meeting and at an extraordinary district court. There was a visitation by the church, and the King in Council set up a special commission to examine the accusations of witchcraft. One of the last major witch trials in Swedish history thus took place between 1720 and 1724. A large number of women were charged and sentenced for having made pacts with Satan. One of the women, Elin Eriksdotter, later became the matter of legend as one of Sweden's most famous "witches", under the name "Captain Elin" (Klintberg 2010:N10).

The trial in Södra Ny has been the subject of several studies (Skott 1999; 2013:17–27; Wikman 1992:9–68). What is less well known is that the witchcraft commission also examined other rumours. For example, a large number of people in the district of Grums were investigated. The accusations concerned both superstition and *maleficium*, in this fall attempts to use magic both to heal and to injure. Moreover, the commission examined claims that "abominable pagan idolatry" was taking place in the parish of By, not far from today's Säffle. A dozen parishioners were accused of having taken their sick children to a stone near the manor of Sjögerås. Several of them indeed admitted that they had passed the children under the stone in the hope that they would be cured of their afflictions (Skott 1998).

Here the focus will be on the stone at Sjögerås. Using texts from the trial, I shall examine the ritual as idea and practice; with the term *ritual* I wish to emphasize that the actions were not only recurrent, bound to a specific time and place, but also formalized and, not least of all, based on and

intimately associated with contemporary beliefs. Furthermore, the actions were magical in character; the ritual was thus an attempt to control or master supernatural powers for a specific purpose, in this case to cure or deliver the sick.

When it comes to practices in folk medicine in the early modern period, the state of the sources is usually problematic. The extant texts about the trial in the parish of By, however, consist of almost thirty folio pages, which is very unusual for a Swedish superstition trial, that did neither concern *maleficium* nor travelling to Blåkulla. Based on a close reading of the texts, and on comparisons with other descriptions of corresponding rituals, I will try here not just to ascertain what unspoken beliefs in magic may have served as a foundation for the healing method, but also how the ritual itself was categorized and assessed by different strata in society.[1]

The Investigation

On 2 October 1720 the parish of By was visited by Ingemund Bröms, Superintendent of the Diocese of Karlstad. Because of the accusations of witchcraft he held visitations in several of the parishes of Värmlandsnäs. The parishioners had to answer questions about journeys to Blåkulla, about the accused "witches", and also about whether any other form of superstition occurred in the parish. In By the parishioners replied that, although they knew of the rumours of witchcraft, no one in the parish had any part in such a gross sin. On the other hand, the lay assessor Anders Halvarsson of Smörgraven was able to tell of a stone at Sjögerås where "people place sick children" (By 13/5 1724 A). Bröms warned the parishioners and later also reported on the superstition to the King in Council. The commission which had been appointed to examine witchcraft in Värmland then took over. Its members inspected the stone and questioned a large number of parishioners about why they had visited the stone and how the actual healing was done. In 1721 they brought up the stone in a report to the King in Council, and judgement was pronounced the following year: the commission found a dozen people guilty of participation in superstition. The accused did not receive their final sentences, however, until 13 May 1724 from *Justitierevisionen*, the Supreme Court of that time.

The number of people accused in By was much larger than in other similar and contemporary trials. It was also unusual for commissions to conduct a close examination of accusations that concerned only folk healing, but in this case the investigation has left us an unusually large amount of documentation.

Healing or Delivery

Sjögerås is situated some way out on the Värmlandsnäs peninsula. The property goes back to the Middle Ages (Schyman 1958:102–104). In the 1720s Sjögerås was a manor with crofts subject to it. The owner was Agneta Rutensköld (1673–1743), widow of Lieutenant Anton Johan Bagge (1662–1704). The stone in question was just west of the farm, right beside the boundary. The court noted that the stone was leaning upright against a rock and that it had been set up by humans. It was about two metres long, roughly 60 centimetres wide at the bottom, and slightly narrower at the top. Two smaller stones were fixed between the tip of the big stone and the rock.

According to the commission, the stone at Sjögerås was widely known. It was visited not only by the nearby crofter families; people from far away also brought sick children to the stone. This had gone on for a long time, "as it can be concluded from the statements, for over 200 years". The records mention several concrete cases. Parishioners had, for example, brought "a boy child who was weak-limbed at birth, who is still alive", others brought "their child who was then sick and later died", and "a girl child from Gunnarsbohl … who was sick in the bowels, and another sick child … from Spässlanda" to the stone (By 13/5 1725 B3–6). Above all, it seems to have been children who were brought there, although the records state explicitly that adults also used the stone. Apart from the bowel sickness, no specific diseases are mentioned. The ritual performed at the stone was complicated; nothing could be left to chance:

> Under this stone the sick person was to be stuck widdershins [anti-clockwise] against the sun from south to north, and that 3 times in a row … at no other time but early on Sunday morning before sunrise or Thursday evenings after sunset has been customary … silently, without speaking either going there or coming back, the latter of which was to be done without looking back, and if a cure was expected they should also be fasting on both sides; moreover … after the crawling under the stone there were to be offerings of money, pins, skeins of thread and the like, anything according to ability and opportunity, for the sick person … in the hill itself under the stone, there was a little hollow (By 13/5 1724 B2).[2]

The aim of the ritual was that "the sick person will either regain his health or else be all the sooner relieved of his hardship through death"; the idea, then, was that the sick would be delivered in one way or another from their afflictions (By 13/5 1724 B3).

The Ritual

In the quotation above it is claimed that the sick were stuck under the stone. In other contexts the commission uses words like "crawling", "drawing", "slipping" and "thrusting" instead – and it is expressly stated that the people

who went to the stone used the latter two words, *smyga* and *småcka*. In Swedish scholarship the term *smöjning* is often used (from Old Swedish *smøghia*, meaning to thread, lead, or slip something in) to designate a ritual that involves a person crawling or being dragged through some form of hole in order to cure his or her illness (SAOB 1898–:S7853–7855). In international scholarship the term "passing through" has been used for customs with the same meaning (Hand 1968).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the ritual of passing through attracted great interest. Famous scholars such as Jacob Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie*, 1875–1878), Wilhelm Mannhardt (*Wald- und Feldkulte,* 1904–1905), and James G. Frazer (*The Golden Bough*, 1911–1915) have discussed the ritual. In Denmark the subject was considered by H. F. Feilberg (1897) and in Norway it was examined by scholars such as Nils Lid (1922; 1950) and Ingjald Reichborn-Kjennerud (1928:154–157; 1933:103–104). In Sweden both Gunnar Olof Hyltén-Cavallius (1864:400) and Nils Gabriel Djurklou (1874:36) have described *smöjning*. The ritual and its meaning have also been discussed by Nils Edvard Hammarstedt (1892; 1894), Louise Hagberg (1921), Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1932), and Carl-Herman Tillhagen (1958:116–117; 1983:169–170). The most detailed study of the ritual, however, is by Wayland D. Hand of the UCLA Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology. In his article "'Passing Through': Folk Medical Magic and Symbolism" (1968; 1980) Hand shows that variants of the ritual have occurred in much of the world. The tradition is undoubtedly very old as well. In the *Rigveda*, one of the basic texts of the Vedic religion of ancient India, pulling a person through a hole is mentioned as a healing method (Broberg 1878:54–55; Hammarstedt 1894:35).[3] There are also many early European examples. Marcellus Burdigalensis, for instance, a physician in Constantinople in the fourth century, recommended passing a child through a cleft cherry tree to cure a hernia (Hagberg 1921:174; Reichborn-Kjennerud 1928:154). In the multi-volume *The Golden Bough* James G. Frazer cites a number of early prohibitions against the healing method. In the seventh century, for example, Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, prescribed eleven days' penance on bread and water for parents who passed their children through holes in the ground. Bishop Burchard of Worms (died 1025) likewise forbade the ritual.

In the Nordic countries passing through is attested as a healing method from the start of the fourteenth century onwards (Nielsen 1885:376; Reichborn-Kjennerud 1928:154). This, however, probably says more about the state of our sources than about the actual age of the tradition; there was probably some form of passing through in the Nordic countries before the coming of Christianity. Pulling people through different kinds of holes in the hope of curing illness also occurred well into modern times. In our folklore archives there are hundred of narratives about the ritual and descriptions of

how it was practised in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century (cf. Hammarin 2013:57–68).

Drawing children under a stone set up against a rock, as at Sjögerås, appears to have been rare. Judging by the extant records, it was much more common in Sweden to draw a child through a hole in the ground (*jorddragning*) or a cleft in a tree (*träddragning*). In addition, there are descriptions of how sick people could be passed through different man-made objects. For comparative purposes I start by looking at a number of examples of different kinds of passing through, before returning to the stone in Sjögerås.

Passing through the Ground

In the early twentieth century Ragnar Nilsson, a native of Värmland working on behalf of the Institute of Folklore Research at Gothenburg University College, collected almost 6,500 pages of narratives by old people in Värmlandsnäs (Skott 2003). One of the many people he interviewed was Maria Nilsson (born 1868) of Södra Ny, not far from the parish of By and the manor of Sjögerås. In 1931 she told him about *jorddragning*, passing through a hole in the ground:

> If a child got sick and showed no signs of recovering, they went to a suitable slope and dug under an oblong sod. They dug themselves a hole under the soil which was held together by grass roots, so that the sod stayed in place over the hole. Then they went to the sod on a Thursday evening with the child, which had to be completely naked. Two women accompanied it. One of the women stuck the child under the sod and the other drew it from the other side. The child had to be stuck under the sod with their head first. Then she handed the child back but not under the ground but above, head first this time too. They had to "draw" it in the same way three times running. And they had to do this in the same way the next two Thursday evenings. On the third Thursday evening they had to put the sod back into the pit. Before that they threw in pigs' bristles, three drops of blood, knife tips and the like and said: "This is for you, for the health of the child." Then they shoved the sod back into the pit (IFGH 2580:73–74; cf. Nilsson and Bergstrand 1952:52).[4]

This record gives good insight into how a child could be passed under the ground in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (cf. Bergstrand 1950: 186–187; Hammarin 2013:57–68). As with passing through trees, the method was chiefly used to cure rickets, although other diseases are also mentioned in the records. Rickets is a deficiency disease that chiefly strikes children; it is a consequence of vitamin D deficiency which leads in the long term to a soft, misshapen skeleton. Fatigue, cramp, irritability, and loosening of the teeth are other symptoms (Norvenius 1997:122–123). In the nineteenth century the disease went under a great many folk names such as *ris*, *skäver*, and *skärva* (Westum 1999). Medieval and early modern descriptions of the ritual rarely specify the diseases, but they show that it was usually children who underwent it. One example comes from the

Icelandic manuscript *Hauksbók* from the early fourteenth century, compiled by Haukr Erlendsson, with its mention of children being passed through a hole in the ground: "þær ero sumar, er taka bǫrn sin ok ganga til gatnamótz ok draga þau þar in gegnum jǫrð til heilsu þeim oc til þess at þau skili þa betr haldast oc vel hafast" ("There are some who take children and go to a crossroads and draw them there through earth for their health and so that they will keep better and thrive", *Hauksbók* 148; cf. Reichborn-Kjennerud 1928:154).

In the majority of the early descriptions of the ritual, Thursday evening is said to be the effective time, and crossroads are often stipulated as a suitable place for passing a person under the ground. In 1595, for example, the Norwegian bishop Jens Nilssøn described a pit in the earth by a crossroads in Vinje "which they use to slip people through when they have been sick for a long time" (Nielsen 1885:376; cf. Reichborn-Kjennerud 1928:154). In Johannes Rudbeckius' records of visitations and cathedral chapter meetings from the diocese of Västerås there is a note for 1634 stating how two women in Kärreboda "slipped a child through the sods at a crossroads on a Thursday evening so that the sick child would regain its health" (Hall 1915:66). Passing through the ground is also mentioned in several Swedish superstition trials from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the parish of Tuna in Medelpad the housewife Margareta of Vi was examined on 15 November 1688. One of the charges concerned passing through the ground:

> 1687 on 2 January Mrs Karin of Klingstadh tells how her husband Erich Swerkillsson was sick, and then came Mrs Margareta of Tunom, who asks what is wrong with the old man, is he sick? Mrs Karin answers Yes. Mrs Margareta replied, you are very negligent for not looking for a cure, go south in the land and dig up a hole through the ground and pass him through and he will get well (Tuna, 15/11 1688; cf. Östling 2010:74).[5]

Another example comes from Våla parish in Uppland. There the 34-year-old Kerstin Ersdotter was charged in 1754 with having used passing through the ground in an attempt to cure her child which had "been swollen in the feet and so wasted away in the legs that it could not stand". In court she was alleged to have "committed superstition with her sick child at a crossroads in the big meadow at Hässelby in that she dug a hole under a sod, and on three Thursday evenings drew the child through it" (Våla 15/2 1754; cf. Oja 1999:186).[6] Kerstin Ersdotter admitted passing the child through the earth but denied that it took place at a crossroads. She was sentenced to a fine of eight days' imprisonment on bread and water.

Passing under sods was a method also used for other purposes than curing sickness. Hyltén-Cavallius (1864:400) describes a superstition trial in 1610 in Sunnerbo district, Småland. As a method for reviving a fiancée's love, a man was said to have been advised to

take an oak pole and thrust it through the headland of a field on a Sunday morning, before the sun rises. Through the opening he then had to pass three pieces of rye bread, three pieces of fish, and three pieces of meat. He and his fiancée then had to eat these together; in this way 'nobody, whether below or above the ground, would separate their love'.[7]

The historian Mikael Häll (2013:289–290) cites yet another variant. In 1640 a man named Peder Jönsson told the Söderköping town court that he could "mend guns" with the help of a special stone: he buried both ends of a sod, placed the stone under it, and pulled the gun through the opening three times (cf. Tillhagen 1985:36, 63, 82).

Superficially at least, passing through the ground as a healing method is akin to the Icelandic judicial ordeal of "ganga undir jarðarmen" ("going under the sod") in the Viking Age. The historian of religions Peter Habbe (2005:116; cf. Lárusson 1962:558–559) gives the following account of the ritual: "It involved a strip of turf, often on a slope, being cut out in the form of an arch or a wedge and raised up on a spear of specified length. The person who was to perform the act then passed under the arch. If the sod fell on him, he was judged guilty."[8] Going under the sod also occurred in the custom of swearing blood-brotherhood, a fraternity stronger than blood ties (Bø 1959:540–541). The ritual is described in *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, which is probably from the thirteenth century (Malm 1993:27).

Passing through a Tree

Trees of extraordinary form have often been used in folk medicine (von Sydow 1932; 1971:206–208). For example, natural holes in trees were used for passing-through rituals. These could be trees with a hole through the trunk or with branches which had grown together to form a hole. People could also use two trees which had grown together or trees where the roots had grown to form a space between a root and the ground. Ida Matsson (born 1891), from the parish of Tving, told the Folklife Archive in Lund about the custom of passing through trees in Blekinge:

Children who had rickets should be cured by passing the sick child through a hole in a tree. It had to have grown naturally. Such trees were very rare. In the parish of Tving there was a spruce like that. People from neighbouring parishes came there on pilgrimage to have their children healed. The parents had to take the sick child and go to the tree one night in prime (a night between the new moon and the waning moon). The parents would stand on either side of the tree and pull the child back and forth through the hole seven times. Then they would take the linen off the child and bury it at the foot of the tree, kneel and say a silent prayer that the tree would take the illness (LUF M9801:5).[9]

In the journal *Runa*, Richard Dybeck cites an older example. In the parish of Kogered in Småland the common people, according to a record from the mid-seventeenth century, had "set up a cross, called Böketoffta God, where there is a tree that is still standing today in Böketoffta meadows, two miles

Smöjeka in Dingtuna, the oak with a hole through which sick children were passed “three Thursday evenings for each child and [in] unconditional silence” (Dybeck 1874:4).

from the village of Kogered, through which they passed their sick children, and where they also had the custom of making money offerings" (Dybeck 1845:79).[10]

Johan J. Törner's *Samling af widskeppelser* (Collection of Superstitions), compiled in the mid eighteenth century, mentions another form of passing through trees as a method for healing hernias: "A branch of a young tree is split and the sick person is slipped through it, and it will immediately close. Then the branch is tied well together with bast" (Törner 1946:172).[11] Splitting a tree and then passing a child through the cleft appears to have been a relatively common healing method according to both older and younger tradition. For example, Hyltén-Cavallius (1864:400; cf. Djurklou 1874:36; IFGH 3318:16) writes:

> Tree-rickets in children is cured if the parents go out on a Thursday morning, split a living oak or aspen, with wooden wedges and a wooden club, and pass the child, naked, through the cleft three times. Then the wedges are removed and withies are tied round the tree, so that the wound may grow together again. If this happens, the child will regain its health; but if the tree withers, the child will die.[12]

Other variants of passing through trees occurred.[13] For example, one could saw off naturally formed loops in branches and thus obtain a portable piece of a tree for the healing ritual (Hagberg 1921:177). One could then pass the sick child through it, or, if the hole was too small, its clothes (Dillner 1963; cf. IFGH 1283:23). In the 1893 *Svenska turistföreningens årsskrift* there is a description of how a tree of this kind was used in Sörfors:

> What first met our eyes on entering the big kitchen … was a *loop* of wood, 25 centim[etres] high, which stood between two kitchen chairs. Beyond it, right in front of the window, stood a cradle with a child in it, but oh, what a child! So thin and wretched that it looked like a skeleton; where it ought to have been fat it was slim, and vice versa … This child, "born last Christmas", was thus sick, but instead of seeking a doctor or other help, it was now to be healed by being drawn three times through this loop, which in the folk idiom is called "*valbundet*", one Sunday evening and two Thursday evenings in a row; during that time the *valbundet* was to stand between two chairs, as we found it. In which millennium will superstition cease among the peasantry? (Högstadius 1893:27–28)[14]

Passing through Objects

In court records, in early "collections of superstitions", and in more recent folklore material there are also examples of passing through man-made objects. Sick children, for instance, could be passed through the bars of a chair, the rungs of a ladder, a window, a fence, or under a coffin (Hagberg 1921: 180; Hammarstedt 1892:30; Tillhagen 1958:116). In Törner's (1946:151; cf. IFGH 3475:28) collection of superstitions from the eighteenth century we also read that the sick person's linen could be drawn through church keys, and in the records of a trial from 1673 there is even a description of passing through bread.[15]

Explanatory Models

The ritual performed at Sjögerås had a number of constituent elements. The time (Sunday morning/Thursday evening), the motion (widdershins, from south to north), the number three, the silence, the fasting, the offerings, and the prohibition on looking back once the ritual was over, are ancient elements in a large number of folk-medicine practices in different parts of the world (see, e.g., Hand 1980; Tillhagen 1958:135–140). What distinguishes the healing at Sjögerås is, above all, the way the sick child crawls or is drawn between the stone and the rock. Here the act of passing through is also at the centre. Why were children passed under the stone at Sjögerås? How can the ritual be interpreted?

The state of our sources is often a problem for the interpretation of folk-medicine practices. Whether we are talking of court records from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries or records of folklore from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the sources seldom tell us anything about the users' own view or interpretation of the ritual (cf. Hand 1969:402).

Records of folklore often concern how the passing through was performed "in the old days", perhaps because the informants usually had no personal experience of the ritual. One explanation for the lack of information in old court records may be that the reason for the supposed effectiveness of the ritual was of less significance to many of the people who were accused; the main thing was that the method was believed to be able to cure their sick children. Others who were accused had perhaps reflected on this themselves, or had heard someone tell how the healing actually worked. Probably, however, the explanation was something they were reluctant to communicate to the judicial authorities. To put it briefly, many of the accused were probably fully aware that the best way to get off as lightly as possible was to express remorse for having been "superstitious", rather than try to explain the underlying beliefs. Nor were the courts particularly interested in hearing the users' own explanations; the judges already "knew" that the ritual of passing through was ineffective, and that it was the devil who lay behind the superstition.

In Nordic folklore research, passing through was discussed especially in the first half of the twentieth century. Since then the scholarly debate about folk healing has, in principle, fallen silent. Although the majority of the theories about the background and meaning of the ritual are thus about a hundred years old, they still have not passed their "best before" date. In Nordic research, four general explanatory models have been discussed:

- *Scraping off* – as when a snake sloughs its skin, the sickness could be scraped or peeled off when the child was drawn through a tight hole.
- *Transfer* – the sickness was transferred to the earth, the tree, or the object through which the sick person was passed.

- *Return* – the ritual was a way to give the sickness back to the powers that had caused it.
- *Rebirth* – the passing through was a symbolic birth, allowing the sufferer to be reborn in good health.

The explanatory models above are often combined. Nils Edvard Hammarstedt (1894:43–44; cf. Jirlow 1920:60–62; Jungner 1932:126; Lid 1950: 113–117), for example, interpreted passing through as both a symbolic birth and a way to give the disease back to "the dead, those who have returned to their origin, the earth from which they came":

> As will be seen, passing through thus reflects not only an underlying idea of a rebirth, but, when considered from another side, also a more or less clear subsidiary idea of a resurrection from the dead in an improved form. The sick person who underwent the ritual not only passed once again through the womb of the earth and was thus born again, but also visited the realm of the dead and returned thence, it was hoped, liberated and purified from the evil afflicting him (Hammarstedt 1894:44).[16]

Others have instead combined rebirth as an explanatory model with theories about scraping off and transfer. Passing through, according to Louise Hagberg (1921:182; cf. Hugoson 2014; von Sydow 1932:249–258; Tillhagen 1958:116–117), was originally "a purificatory and magical-symbolic birth act":

> The child was to be drawn naked through the tree so that the disease would be scraped off and transferred to it, or else it was transmitted through the linen worn by the child, and anyone who did anything to such a tree or used such a garment risked having the disease transferred to himself. When the evil was transferred to the cleft tree or the upturned sod, the person who had been passed through it was restored to good health as the damage thus inflicted was healed. The child was originally pulled naked as it emerges from the womb, and according to the rule applying to all pulling through, it was always to be inserted head-first (Hagberg 1921:182).[17]

As will be clear from the examples discussed in the article, the form of the ritual has varied over time, and also from place to place. The same applies, no doubt, to the meaning of the passing through. If the ritual had *one* original meaning at all, it is surely impossible today to determine what it was. In other words, just one explanatory model is not sufficient.

As regards the passing through at Sjögerås, there are at least two factors suggesting that the theories about scraping off or transfer are not an adequate explanation for why sick people were pulled under the stone. First of all, the court records mention that offerings were a part of the ritual. For example, there is a description of how the 15-year-old maid Lisbet Jonsdotter from the parish of Botilsäter "had with her from her mistress half an öre as an offering, and the same was placed by Kierstin under the stone" (By 13/5 1724 B5). Apart from money, the commission mentions that pins and skeins of thread were offered, "anything according to ability and opportunity, for the sick person" (By 13/5 1724 B2). That the term offering was used indi-

cates that the objects were given to someone or something either in appeasement or in gratitude (Hand 1969:402).

The folklorist von Sydow (1932:250–258), however, dismissed the idea that offerings in connection with passing-through rituals were initially aimed at some form of supernatural power. Instead he regarded the objects as concretizations of the diseases that were to be cured. Garments, coins, pins, and other things mentioned in the court records and folklore material thus represented the disease that was scraped off the patient by means of the ritual. "The offering thus primarily has no address", writes von Sydow and continues:

> It was not a supernatural power that was to have it; it is merely a concretization of the delivery from illness, and the people did not think any differently about this except possibly in a case or two, where they asked themselves: who shall have the offering? And then they made up a causal fiction in response to the question (von Sydow 1932:254).[18]

As has been pointed out, any original meaning of the ritual is of minor significance here. Nor is there any doubt that various forms of offerings were an essential part of the attempts to heal diseases, at least in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. To increase the chances of a prayer being heard, for example, sick people could donate coins to a votive church or place them in a votive spring (Linde 1955; Weikert 2004:146–150). Offerings could also be made to someone other than God, to those who were believed to have caused the disease (Reichborn-Kjennerud 1928:113–114, 150–151).

There are countless records telling of how either the dead or various supernatural beings caused illness. Folk names such as *trollskott*, *älvaeld*, *näckbett*, and *gastanyp*, reflect how different diseases could be explained as an effect of shots, bites, or nips by trolls, elves, and the like (Bergstrand 1950; Lid 1950; Reichborn-Kjennerud 1933:3–13; Tillhagen 1958:17–23). Rickets, the complaint for which passing through was normally used in Sweden, was explained, especially in the south of the country, as the result of people having given the child the disease through looks, speech, or touch. Folk names for rickets, such as *lönnskärva* or *horskärva*, show that it was mostly prostitutes who were singled out as guilty of this (Frykman 1977:33–34; Rääf 1957:332; Westum 1999:135–141). In the northern parts of Sweden in particular, it was believed instead that the hidden people or the dead were responsible if a child was afflicted by rickets (Westum 1999:128–135, 201–203). Terms such as *valbundet*, *vålbundet*, or *vårdbundet*, which were sometimes used about the disease, but more often about the trees through which children were passed, also mark the link to supernatural forces.[19]

Apart from offerings there are further signs that the ritual at Sjögerås may have been an attempt to give the sickness back to the hidden people. As we have seen, the commission stated that the purpose of the ritual was that "the

Passing through the ground in the parish of Arnäs, Ångermanland, 1933 (Nordiska museet).

sick person will either regain his health or else be all the sooner relieved of his hardship through death" (By 13/5 1724 B3). In its report in 1721 the commission likewise found that superstitious parishioners stuck sick people under the stone "in the godless belief that either they would soon get better by that means, or their departure through death would be hastened, as was found, on enquiry, really also happened to many, thus strengthening them in their reprehensible false belief" (By 13/5 1724 B2).[20] The users of the stone thus seem to have believed that someone or something had the power, in one way or another, to deliver a sick person from an affliction.

From the commission's documents it is not possible today to state with certainty what beliefs lay behind the passing through at Sjögerås. There is much to suggest, however, that the ritual involved an attempt to return the disease to the invisible powers who were believed to have caused it (cf. Tillhagen 1958:117). At the same time, it is obvious that the accused were afraid of the stone, which could be interpreted as a sign that they believed the disease could be transferred from the patient to the stone. I shall return to this.

Healing or Crime?

Whatever the underlying beliefs, there is no doubt that those who used the stone at Sjögerås believed, or at least hoped, that the passing through could heal the sick. The commission's report of 5 August 1721 gives some insight into how the users valued the ritual:

And it was found that not only people from distant places who visited this stone, as a generally accepted resort and the ultimate means in the case of desperate diseases when no other cure could be found or expected, but also that the wretched sufferers themselves found no rest until they were given up to this mute and unhelping helper (By 13/5 1724 B2).[21]

One year later, however, in the commission's judgements for 1722, there are also statements of a different kind. For example, it is recorded in the judgements that one of the accused "admitted and lamented his ignorance" and that another "admitted and confessed with expressions of remorse" (By 13/5 1724 B3). The maid Lisbet Jonsdotter from the parish of Botilsäter was just fifteen years old when she passed her mistress's child under the stone. The commission noted that she regretted "her simplicity and youthful folly in that she did not understand that she was thereby doing anything evil" (By 13/5 1724 B5). It is very possible that the differences reflect a changed attitude among the accused, that they had realized during the investigation that the passing through was an expression of superstition. At the same time, when the accused pleaded ignorance and showed remorse, it may just as well have been a defence strategy intended to gain a milder punishment for something that the commission, but not they themselves, regarded as a crime.

In her dissertation the historian Linda Oja (1999:188–197, 284–288) has demonstrated significant differences between how different strata in society regarded magic. The official view of magic was solely negative. In judgements, laws, and sermons, all forms of magic were categorized as evil and forbidden. As regards different forms of black magic, pacts with the devil, and journeys to Blåkulla, it seems that the common people had the same outlook.[22] Opinions differed, however, when it came to the various forms of harmless white magic. As Oja (1999:189–193) notes, neither the healers themselves nor people in general appear to have considered magic intended to cure people as particularly evil or prohibited. In his study of healers in seventeenth-century Norrland and Svealand, Per-Anders Östling (2010:65–68) comes to the same conclusion.

The commission's documents from the trial in the parish of By reflect different opinions of magic. As we have seen, the accused, at least initially, did not categorize the passing through as sinful or criminal (cf. Sörlin 1993:94–95). The owner of the manor of Sjögerås, Agneta Rutensköld, is an exception, however. She told the court that she was aware that what went on at the stone was sin, delusion, and downright idolatry. Agneta Rutensköld even testified to how she had tried to get rid of the stone:

… she cited her great age and ignorance, and her long defenceless and poor state of widowhood, and pleading as an excuse that under such difficult and highly oppressive circumstances, of which she tearfully complained, she had not dared to destroy the stone completely, for fear of the people's threats and menaces, although she had had it carried a good distance from its customary place some years ago, but it was

immediately restored overnight to its former place, unknown by whom this happened (By 13/5 1724 B6).[23]

There is no doubt that Agneta Rutensköld, despite her assurance of her own poverty, belonged to the local elite in Värmlandsnäs. As regards the passing through, she appears to have positioned herself half-way between the peasantry and the members of the commission. Although she had not used the stone herself, she had not reported the crime either. The same applied to the local clergy. Ingemund Bröms's visitation record shows that at least two deputy vicars knew what was going on at Sjögerås. Master Benedictus Magni Hasselberg (died 1746), deputy vicar of Kila, for example, said that his wife had previously advised the wife of a dragoon not to take her sick child to the stone. But the deputy vicar had not reported this to the authorities. During the visitation, then, Bröms not only issued a severe warning to the congregation but also ordered the local clergy to teach their parishioners what a serious sin they were committing through superstitions of this kind.

The commission likewise reacted to the passiveness of the clergy. In their report to the King in Council they noted: "it was lamented by everyone, when questioned, that the priests had not bothered about it, much less tried to prevent or discourage this superstition, until last year when Bishop Bröms had held a visitation in the parish".[24] The passive stance of the local clergy was probably due to the fact that they, like Agneta Rutensköld, did not want to get into unnecessary conflict with other parishioners. As the historian Göran Malmstedt (2002:121–126, 170–171) has pointed out, the priest or his wife often came from the parish in which they had to serve. They were well incorporated in the social life of the area and thus often found it difficult to make any major changes to local traditions.

Both Superintendent Ingemund Bröms and the commission did, however, react vehemently to what emerged during the hearings. The commission was led by Nicolas Stedt (1679–1736), judge and assessor at the Göta High Court. Other members included Leonard Johan Ringer (mayor of Karlstad) and Elavus Fryxell (vicar of Väse). The members of the commission did not hesitate: passing through was nothing less than "abominable pagan idolatry" (By 13/5 1724 B2). Words like abomination, blasphemy, delusion, depravity, provocation, unbelief, and whoredom occur often in the commission's documents.

Idolatry

The great Swedish witch trials took place in the 1660s and 1670s. The main charges concerned journeys to Blåkulla, taking children to the witches' sabbath, and making pacts with the devil. Thousands of women were accused, hundreds were executed. Although the number of Blåkulla cases decreased after this, there was no reduction in the total number of cases concerning

witchcraft and superstition until well into the eighteenth century (Sörlin 1993:22–26). The authorities' campaign against harmful magic was most active towards the end of the seventeenth century and during the first half of the eighteenth century, and as Linda Oja (1999:284–288) and others (Burke 1983; Olli 2007:73–104; Skott 2012; Östling 2010) have shown, this can be seen as a part of the attempt to reform folk culture. The people had to be educated to become "good Christians", which also meant loyal subjects. Superstition was regarded as a serious threat to the official religion and was combated with education, but also with the aid of laws, trials, judgements, and punishments.

It is obvious that the commission categorized the passing through at Sjögerås as superstition. They reacted against the fact that the ritual took place on a Sunday and that the patient was drawn under the stone three times. Sundays, the commission felt, should be devoted to "the glory and worship of the most holy God" and nothing else (By 13/5 1724 B2). The number three, moreover, was viewed as a likely sign that God's name had been abused. The commission wrote that, although the accused "would not admit that any charms had been used there, it seems likely since it was supposed to happen three times, that the name of the Holy Trinity was dishonoured and abused" (By 13/5 1724 B2).[25]

Ultimately, in the view of the commission, the ritual of passing through was the same as devil worship. The ritual performed at Sjögerås was thus regarded as a crime against God and Christianity:

> What can or should be more piously and preciously respected than the majestic glory of the most holy God, which should never be given to idolatry, but He has been deprived of this through pagan delusions and it has been offered to a dead, coarse stone, but more properly to the adversary of God and all His children, the devil himself, who has been worshipped and invoked here for so many years, to his pleasure and delight (By 13/5 1724 B2).[26]

When people used the stone, "this mute and unhelping helper", they were in fact appealing to the devil (By 13/5 1724 B2). The court thus diabolized what the users probably regarded as harmless magic, which in turn can be viewed as a strategy to reform folk culture (Olli 2007:98–104). Passing through was simply labelled as idolatry: "an infamous apostasy from the true God and the living faith, which engenders temporal and eternal destruction, as the origin, cause, and end of all evil" (By 13/5 1724 B3; cf. Oja 1999:291).[27] Time after time it was pointed out that the accused went to the stone because they were ignorant of Christianity. Superstition, however, was not only regarded as a reflection of false belief; superstition also led to false belief (Oja 1999:182). In short, the ritual of passing through was a gateway to other forms of devil worship:

> And even if someone in the meantime should succeed in his intention [to heal those who were passed under the stone] and his attempts in accordance with the false be-

lief, this derives solely from his own false and superstitious imagination, which the devil, who has such power over the children of false belief, is all the more willing to promote, as he tries hereby to gain a foothold in order to seduce them into his service and when then in his service further strengthen and confirm their fall from one delusion to the other (By 13/5 1724 B3).[28]

The commission observed that it was important to intervene in time to prevent and subdue "such superstitious and idolatrous behaviour" as took place at Sjögerås.

The Punishment

In May 1722 the commission passed judgement. Pursuant to the statutes of 1665 and 1687 concerning oaths and breach of the sabbath, and the royal ordinance of 1698 concerning misdeeds, no fewer than eleven persons were sentenced for "having themselves attempted and committed, and having advised, encouraged, and consented to abominable superstitions and idolatry". For "having committed these punishable acts", the majority had to sit in the stocks (By 13/5 1724 B3; cf. Nildin-Wall and Wall 1996:78).[29] The widow Agneta Rutensköld of Sjögerås was instead sentenced to a fine (By 13/5 1724 B6).

The commission's judgements were not executed, however. It was not until two years later, on 13 May 1724, that the accused received their definitive sentences. *Justitierevisionen,* the equivalent of the Supreme Court at that time, acquitted Agneta Rutensköld, but the others were sentenced to fines or imprisonment for eight days on bread and water. In addition, they were to confess their guilt before the congregation in church and show their remorse publicly (By 13/5 1724 C).

When judgement was pronounced, the healing at Sjögerås had ceased. By completely destroying the stone, the members of the commission had effectively stopped the ritual of passing through. In its report to the King in Council in 1721 the commission stated:

The stone now having been inspected, and having been informed about the ceremonies held there during its use, this idol was promptly destroyed by lighting a large log fire both above and below, whereby the stone was burnt up with the greatest speed and then crushed into small bits, and thus got rid of, so that, with God's help, no more provocation shall take place. We should not omit to state humbly here that we had previously summoned the crofters and their wives living in the surroundings, who had been accustomed to serve the sick who sought healing at the stone, to ignite and maintain the fire and then crush their idol, which they would not have willingly accepted if they had dared to evade it (By 13/5 1724 B2).[30]

It is obvious from the quotation that the people who used the stone were not willing to participate in destroying it. The enforced burning and crushing of the stone was probably felt to be much worse than eight days' imprisonment on bread and water. The destruction not only removed the possibility to heal

Demonstration of passing through a tree in Uppland in 1918 (Nordiska museet).

sick children in the future; the users were probably also afraid that those who had already been cured would fall sick again.

At least as regards trees which were used for passing through, it seems to have been a widespread belief that anyone who damaged such a tree would suffer severe illness or even death (Hagberg 1921:182; Tillhagen 1958:

117). The same fate was assumed to strike those who took money, clothes, or other offerings left at the site (Hagberg 1921:176). The folklore collections have countless narratives about direct associations between the healed persons and the things through which they had been passed (cf. Hand 1968: 401). Descriptions of passing through a hole in the ground sometimes state that if the grass continued growing on the sod that had been dug up and then put back in place, the sick person was restored to good health. But if the grass withered or dried up, the outcome was worse (Hagberg 1921:179). The same applied to trees which had been split as part of the passing-through ritual. As the wound to the tree was healed, the patient got better; if it did not heal, the patient would die (Hand 1968:383). In several cases the informants stated that it was considered important to look after the trees long after they had healed. Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1932:248) gives a clear example of this: "I heard an old crofter in Småland tell of how his brother, when small, had been pulled through a rowan which had been cleft for the purpose. The cure had been successful, but the father was then so anxious about the rowan, because if it withered the boy would inevitably die."[31] In other words, the patient's health was believed to depend on the well-being of the tree; if it was chopped down, the person who had been healed got sick again (von Sydow 1932:246–247; Tillhagen 1958:117). In short, it was risky to destroy something that had been used for passing through. This was probably true of the stone at Sjögerås as well.

Passing Through as Healing and Crime

As the historian Per Sörlin (1993:157) has observed, the great Swedish witch trials in the 1660s and 1670s are regarded as a sharp introduction to a process that largely took place in the following century. The attitude of the authorities to various forms of white magic appears to have hardened towards the end of the seventeenth century and in the first half of the eighteenth century (Oja 1999:287). On an overall level the measures should be seen as part of the efforts by the state to reform popular culture (Oja 1999: 287; cf. Burke 1983). It is from this perspective that we can understand the work of the Värmland witchcraft commission. In their report they observed, often in disparaging words, that both the ritual and the stone at Sjögerås had no effect. The superstition was based on false belief, if not downright idolatry. Both the ritual and the folk beliefs on which it was founded were diabolized; in the judicial records, white magic is equated with entering a pact with the devil (cf. Östling 2010:66). Through the judgements it pronounced, the commission wanted to curb superstition, to set an example.

Initially, at least, those who passed their sick children under the stone at Sjögerås scarcely understood the ritual as either a sin or a crime. Instead the

passing though was a way to cure diseases at a time when no doctors were available, at least not for the crofters around Sjögerås. Nor was the ritual unique for the parish of By. On the contrary, various forms of passing through have existed over much of the world, going as far back in time as our sources today allow us to see. The origin of the ritual is obscure, and the same, unfortunately, is true of its significance in Värmlandsnäs in the 1720. There is a great deal to suggest, however, that the users tried to give the disease back to the hidden powers that caused it, although it cannot be entirely ruled out that the purpose of the ritual may have been to transfer the diseases to the stone. Although the extant source material from the trial in By does not give us a clear picture of the beliefs that underlay the passing through, it does give us important clues to an understanding of a belief system that simultaneously overlapped and radically differed from what was preached at the time by church and state.

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Judicial records:
Arboga 22/9 1673 = Landsarkivet i Uppsala. Arboga rådhusrätts och magistrats arkiv AI:6.
By 13/5 1724 A = Värmlands arkiv. Handskrift, hist. 11 1/2: Utdrag af Biskops visitations protocollet i By kyrka den 5 octob. 1720. B = Riksarkivet. Justitierevionens utslagshandlingar i besvärs- och ansökningsmål. Innehållande: 1) Ingemund Bröms brev till Kungl. Maj:t (26/10 1720); 2. Kommissorialrättens rapport (5/8 1721); 3. Kommissorialrättens dom nr 11 (11/5 1722); 4. Kommissorialrättens dom nr 12 (19/5 1722); 5. Kommissorialrättens dom nr 13 (31/5 1722); 6. Kommissorialrättens dom nr 14 (11/5 1722). C = Riksarkivet. Justitierevisionens registratur.
Tuna 15/11 1688 = Riksarkivet. Svea Horätts arkiv, Renoverade domböcker för 1688, Gävleborgs m.fl. län, Tuna tingslag och socken.
Våla 15/2 1754 = Landsarkivet i Uppsala. Våla häradsrättsarkiv AI:a:14.

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[2] "Under denne stenen skulle de siuke stickas ansyls [motsols] emot solen ifrån söder till norr, ock det 3 gånger efter annan … inga andra tider, utan söndagzmorgon bittida innan solens uppgång eller torsdags-qwällarne effter nedergången hafwa warit brukligt … tyst, utan at få tala hwarken wid fram- eller återgåendet der ifrån, hwilcket senare borde skie, utan at få se sig tilbaka, om eljest der wid skulle wäntas någon bot, de skulle ock å begge sidor wara fastande; dessutom skall … efter krypandet under stenen blifwet offrat penningar, knappnålar, tråharfwor och sådant, alt efter som förmågan och lägenhet wara kunnat för den siuka … i sielfwa backen under stenen, war en liten håla."

[3] In the *Rigveda*, according to Broberg (1878:54–55), Hammarstedt (1894:35), and Tillhagen (1958:116), the thunder god Indra is addressed thus: "Genom vagnen och dess spann / genom oket, allsmäktige / drog du Apala tre gånger / och ren som sol'n blef hennes hud." ("Cleansing Apala, Indra! thrice, thou gavest sunlike skin to her, Drawn, Śatakratu! through the hole of car, of wagon, and of yoke.")

[4] "Om ett barn blev sjukt och inte visade tecken till att vilja tillfriskna, gick man till en lämplig backe och grävde under en avlång torva. Man grävde sig ett hål under den av gräsrötter bundna jorden, så att torvan kom att ligga fast över hålet. Så gick man till torvan en torsdagskväll med barnet som skulle vara alldeles naket. Två kvinnor följdes åt. Den ena kvinnan stack under torvan och den andra tog emot det. Barnet skulle stickas under torvan med huvudet före. Så räcker

hon barnet tillbaka men inte under jorden utan ovanför, även då med huvudet före. Man skulle "draga" det på samma sätt tre gånger efter varandra. Så skulle man fortfara på samma sätt i två efterföljande torsdagskvällar. Tredje torsdagskvällen skulle man skotta jorden tillbaka i gropen. Dessförinnan kastade man ned svinhår, tre droppar blod, knivuddar o.d. och sade: "Här har du nu ditt för ungens hälsa". Sedan skottade man jorden tillbaka i gropen."

[5] "1687 d: 2 Januarij berättar Hustro Karin i Klingstadh, at hennes Man Erich Swerkillsson war siuker, då kom Hustro Margareta till Tunom, så säger hon hwad fattas Gubben, är han siuker? Hustro Karin säger Ja. Swarade Hustro Margareta du är mycket försummelig at du intet söker Medel, gack söder i Marken och graf opp ett Håhl igenom Jorden och drag honom igenom så blijr han wäl godh."

[6] "warit swullit om fötterna och lika som borttwinad i benen at thet icke kunnat stå" "begådt widskieppelse med sitt siuka barn wid en korswäg på Hässelby stooräng i så måtto at hon grufwit håhl under en jordtorfwa, och tre torsdagsqwällar dragit barnet therigenom."

[7] "taga en eke-påle och slå igenom en åker-ren, en söndags-morgon, förr än solen gick upp. Genom öppningen skulle han sedan föra tre bitar rågbröd, tre bitar fisk och tre köttbitar. Dem skulle han och hans fästemö tillsammans uppäta; så 'skulle ingen, hvarken under eller ofvan jorden, deras kärlek åtskilja'."

[8] "Det innebar att en torvflik, ofta på en sluttning, styckades ut i bågform eller kilform och lyftes upp på ett spjut av en bestämd längd. Personen som skulle genomföra handlingen gick sedan under bågen. Föll torvfliken ner bedömdes personen vara skyldig."

[9] "Barn som hade skervan (engelska sjukan) skulle botas genom att man drog den sjuke genom ett hål i ett träd. Det måste vara självvuxet. Sådana träd var mycket sällsynta. I Tvings församling fanns en sådan gran. Dit vallfärdade folk ifrån närgränsande socknar för att få sina barn botade. Föräldrarna skulle taga det sjuka barnet och gå till trädet en natt i prim (en natt emellan ny och nedan). Så skulle föräldrarna stå på var sin sida om trädet och draga barnet fram och tillbaka genom hålet sju gånger. Så skulle de taga av barnets linnetyg och gräva ned vid trädets fot, falla på knä och bedja en tyst bön att trädet skulle taga sjukdomen."

[10] "upprättat ett kårs, och kallat Böketoffta Gud, hvarvid ett träd finnes än i denna dag och står i Böketoffta ängar, 1/8 mijl ifrån Kogereds by; hvarigenom de dragit sina sjuka barn, jemväl och brukat och dervid offrande af penningar." Unfortunately, the original source has not been found.

[11] "Man klyfver en quist på et ungt træ och låter den sjuka krypa derigenom, så skall det straxt gå up. Sedan bindes quisten væl tilsaman med bast."

[12] "Träd-skerfvan hos barn botas, genom att föräldrarne gå ut på en thorsdags-morgon, klyfva en lefvande ek eller asp, med trä-kilar och trä-klubba, och föra barnet, naket, tre gånger igenom klofvan. Sedan borttages kilarne och vidjor bindas rundt omkring trädet, att såret må gro igenom. Sker detta, så blir barnet friskt; men fyrnas trädet, så dör barnet."

[13] Törner (1946:70), for example, mentions that a person who wants to cure back pain "går i skogen och böjer ned et ungt träd /:biörk:/ och binder det med toppen til jorden och kryper 3 gånger derigenom, spottar effter sig, går ther ifrån, ser sig ej tilbaka, så går det bort." ("goes into the forest and bends a young tree /:birch:/ down and ties the top to the ground and crawls through it 3 times, spits over his shoulder, walks away, does not look back, then it goes away.")

[14] "Det som först mötte vår blick vid inträdet i det stora köket … var en *ögla* af trä, 25 centim[eter] hög, som stod mellan tvänne köksstolar. Längre fram midt för fönstret stod en vagga med ett barn i, men ack, hvilket barn! Så magert och uselt, att det såg ut som ett skelett; där det skulle vara tjockt var det smalt och tvärtom … Detta barn "född i julas" var alltså sjukt, men i stället för att söka läkare eller annan hjälp, skulle det nu, för att bli friskt, trädas tre gånger genom denna ögla, som på folkspråket kallas "*valbundet*", en söndags kväll och två torsdags kvällar i rad; under tiden skulle valbundet stå mellan två stolar, så som vi funno det. I hvilket årtusende skall vidskepligheten hos allmogen upphöra?"

[15] Arboga rådhusrätt 22/9 1673; cf. IFGH 3487:38. In his *Beskrifning om Swenska Allmogens Sinnelag*... Petrus Gaslander (1754:28) mentions another form of passing through: "If the bride

crawls through a harness, she will give birth without effort, but the children will become *Maror*", that is, turning into a haunting supernatural being, often in shape of a woman.

[16] "Såsom ses, ter smöjningen sålunda icke blott en underliggande tanke på en pånyttfödelse, utan från en annan sida betraktad också en mer eller mindre klar bitanke på en uppståndelse från de döda i en förbättrad gestalt. Den sjuke, som genomgick smöjningen, passerade icke blott ännu en gång jordens sköte och föddes sålunda på nytt, han besökte äfven de dödas rike och återvände därifrån, såsom man hoppades, fri och renad från det onda, som förut vidlådit honom."

[17] "Naket skulle barnet dragas genom trädet för att sjukdomen skulle avskrapas och överföras på detsamma, eller och överflyttades den förmedelst det av barnet burna linnet, och den som tilläventyrs åverkade ett dylikt träd eller begagnade ett sådant plagg, riskerade att på sig få sjukdomen överförd. När det onda överflyttades på det kluvna trädet eller den uppskurna jorden, tillfrisknade den som dragits i samma mån som den sålunda tillfogade skadan läktes. Barnet drogs ursprungligen naket såsom det framkommer ur moderlivet, och enligt den vid all smöjning rådande regeln skulle trädandet alltid ske med huvudet först."

[18] "Offret har sålunda ingen primär adress. Det är ingen övernaturlig makt som skall ha det, utan det är blott en konkretisering av befriandet från sjukdom, och folket har ej tänkt sig saken annorlunda utom möjligen i ett eller annat fall, där man gjort sig frågan: vem skall ha offret? och där man då diktar en kasualfiktion till svar på frågan."

[19] The word *vård* is used as a designation for the soul, but also for the spirits of the dead. The word comes from Old Swedish *varþer*, meaning 'ward' or 'guard' (Jungner 1932:120–124; Strömbäck 1935:130–134; 1978:24–25; Tillhagen 1958:117; Westum 1999:128–135).

[20] "af den gudförgätne inbilningen, at antingen igenom det medlet dem skulle straxt blifwa bättre, eller deras afgång genom döden befordras, som wid efterspörjande, til styrcka uti deras fördömmelige wantro, wärckligen ock är befunit med många ware skedt."

[21] "Ock som man befann ej allena det folck från långwägige orter besökt denne Sten, såsom allmän wedertagen tillfluckt ock det ytterste medel uti desperate siukdomar när ingen annan bot war att finna eller förmoda, utan ock at äfwen de nödlidande eländige sielfwa ingen ro hos sig funnit, innan de till denna stumma ock hielplösa hielparen blifwet upoffrade."

[22] On the way pacts with the devil were viewed, see also Olli 2007.

[23] "… hon sig sökt ärfäkta med sin förburne ålder ock enfaldighet, samt sitt långlige enkioförswarslöse ock fattige tilstånd, jemte föregifwande till ytterligare sin enskyllan at under sådane swåra ock mycket tryckande willkor, der öfwer hon sig med tårar beklagat, ej hafwa tordts, av fruktan för folkets hot ock undsägelser denne stenen aldeles förstöra, fast hon likwäl för några åhr sedan låtit bära honom ett godt stycke ifrån sitt wanlige stälne, men är dock straxt om en natt blefwen igen återstält til sitt förra rum, utan at weta av hwem skiedt."

[24] "hälst wid efterfrågan af alla beklagades, at presterna sig derom intet bekymrat, mindre denne widskepelige stora förargelse afstyra eller afråda sökt, innan förledet åhr at h. biskop Bröms hållit visitation i församlingen."

[25] "ej widkännas, at der wid några wisse ordformer blifwet brukade, der dock troliget faller, efter det skulle skie tre gånger, at den Helige Trefaldighetz namn der wid blifwet wanwördat och missbrukat."

[26] "Hwad kan eller bör heligare ock dyrare aktas, än den aldraheligaste gudens majestäteliga ära, den han aldrig wil gifwa afguderi, hwilken dock är blefwen igenom hediske wilfarelser honom beröfwad ock en död grof gråsten offrad, men rättare Gudz och alla hans barns wedersakare diefwulen sielf, som här igenom i så många åhr blefwet dyrckad ock tillbeden till sitt nöje och fägnad."

[27] "en skändelig affällighet från den sanna guden ock en lefwande tro, som af sig föder timmerligit och ewigt föderf, såsom uphof, orsak, ock ände til alt ondt."

[28] "Och fast någon undertiden til äfwentyrs skulle lyckas uti sitt upsåt [att bota de som drogs under stenen] ock försök effter des medförande wantro, så härrörer sådant endast af des egen falska ock widskepelige inbilning hwilken diefwulen såsom mäktig uti wantrones barn så

mycket redebognare är att befordra, som han här med söker få det insteg, at dem så medels til sin tienst kunna förföra samt der utinnan widare styrka ock befästa, att förfalla ifrån den ena wilfarelsen til den andra."

[29] This probably refers to the penal ordinance of 29 July 1698: "Kongl. Majt:s Til Hofrätterne angående theras straf, som äre antingen Rådzbane til en eller annan missgierning, eller å något annat sätt ther till wållande, eller ock wetta af någon missgierning, men then nedertysta och ingen uppenbara, jämwäl giöra sig af någon missgierning å ett eller annat sätt delachtige."

[30] "Sedan man nu stenen besedt, ock sig underrätta låtet om de wid des brukande förluppne sollenniteter, följde promt denne afgudens förstöring, i det at en stor stockeld anlades både under ock öfwer, hwar igenom stenen i största hast blef förbränd, ock sedan der på i små smutter sönderstötter, samt således avskaffad, at der af näst gudz hielt ingen mer förargelse skall skie. Här wid har man i underdånighet ei eller obemält lämna bordt, at man förut hafft ditkallade omkring boende torpare och torparehustrur, som låtet bruka sig att betiena de siuka, hwilcka wid stenen sökt sin bot, at både upblåsa ock sköta elden, samt sedan sönderkrossa sin hafde afgud, hwilket de icke gärna pågådt, om de dristat sig att undandraga."

[31] On the meaning of the rowan in folk belief, see Tillhagen 1995:148–159. "Sålunda hörde jag en gammal torpare i Småland berätta om hur hans bror som liten hade dragits genom en rönn, som spräckts för ändamålet. Kuren hade lyckats, men fadern var sedan så rädd om rönnen, för vissnade den, så måste pojken dö."

A Hidden Magical Universe?

Exploring the Secrets of Secrecy in Early Modern Manuscripts

Ane Ohrvik

How do you keep a secret? Naturally, the best way to keep a secret is not to communicate it to anyone. But what if you want to secure your own access to a secret by communicating it in order to prevent details from getting lost while at the same time preventing or reducing access to it by potential spectators? What would be your method? One way of doing it could be to write your secret down, encrypting the text applying a code only you or a selected few could understand. In this way you would deny any interceptor direct access to the meaning of the text, making him or her dependent on the key to unlock it. Texts throughout history and across the continents testify to a continuous concern for and interest in the development and application of encryption methods in writings. As a result of the digital age the development of encryption methods has moved to a whole new level, with digitally designed algorithms of such a high degree of complexity that only computers with powerful programs are able to crack the codes.

Historically, however, the desires and motivations for secrecy have been as diverse as the methods applied to achieve it. Securing state and military information and strategies, raising political opposition in times of suppression, protecting or restricting access to knowledge, or being able to communicate with secret allies are only a few examples of the possible motivations for secrecy. What these forms of secrecy have in common, however, is an inherent assumption or idea held by the cryptographers of the potential danger, threat, or simply disadvantage the disclosure of the information would entail if accessed by unwanted interceptors. Conversely, one should also bear in mind the possibility that secrecy in itself – both historically and today – serves as the primary objective, for whatever purpose, whereas the information encrypted might be of minor interest if not only as text which can potentially reveal its insignificance and thus uncover the secretive scam.

In his comprehensive study *Science and the Secrets of Nature* (1996) William Eamon investigates early modern European books of knowledge and especially the so-called *books of secrets*, books proclaiming to reveal hidden knowledge. According to Eamon these books reflect a view of

secrecy as *epistemological* on one hand and essentially *social* on the other.[1] While the *epistemological* notion implies that "secrecy was a given in the order of nature, and that the 'secrets of nature' are permanently and fundamentally unknowable", the *social* secrecy involved the "intentional suppression of information in order to protect knowledge from outsiders" (Eamon 1996:11). This article will explore how the concept of secrecy is applied and understood in a selection of Norwegian Black Books and, specifically, how secret writings are used in two Norwegian Black Books from the eighteenth century. In this reading I apply Eamon's concepts of *epistemological* and social secrecy and posit that both notions of secrecy are at play in the *Black Books*.

The main goal of this study is to explore the methods behind the encryptions and the motivations that possibly created them. My initial question is why specific words and text stanzas are subject to the active use of encryption. First, the question requires an investigation of the semantic meaning of the encrypted text and secondly, it invites a cultural and social study of what might have been the writers' motivation for encrypting specific parts of the text. As such, I do not only see the Black Book texts in general as potential holders of meaning but also as potential carriers of cultural influences, attitudes, values, and beliefs from the time when they were written.

Extending this view of the Black Books as carriers of beliefs, an overall premise for this study is that these texts hold ideas and descriptions of practices related to magic. Here, magic is understood as beliefs related to the existence of supernatural powers, and practices connected to attempts to control and make use of such powers. Magical beliefs and practices are explicitly or implicitly expressed in the texts. By a close reading of both encrypted and unencrypted texts in these books I suggest a possible answer to the question: Does the encrypted text reveal a hidden magical universe?

Lønnskrift as Encrypted Writings

The application of encryptions (*lønnskrift*) is a common feature in the early modern Norwegian manuscript genre commonly labelled "Black Books" (*Svartebøker*).[2] The word *lønnskrift* means "hidden writing". Generally, the word has been a common Scandinavian label for encrypted writings for centuries and has also been used academically in labelling encryptions in Scandinavian Black Books (see, e.g., Bang 1901:xiv–xxxi; Ohrt 1917:91; 1921; Klintberg 1980:52–57). *Lønnskrift* in Black Books describes encryptions where the writers employ one or more methods of disguising the meaning of a word or a text passage and can involve backward writing, ciphering, and a combination of, for example, Kabbalah symbols, Greek letters, and runic inscriptions. Instances where the writers exclusively apply runic inscriptions as an encryption method have often been termed as a use of the *runic*

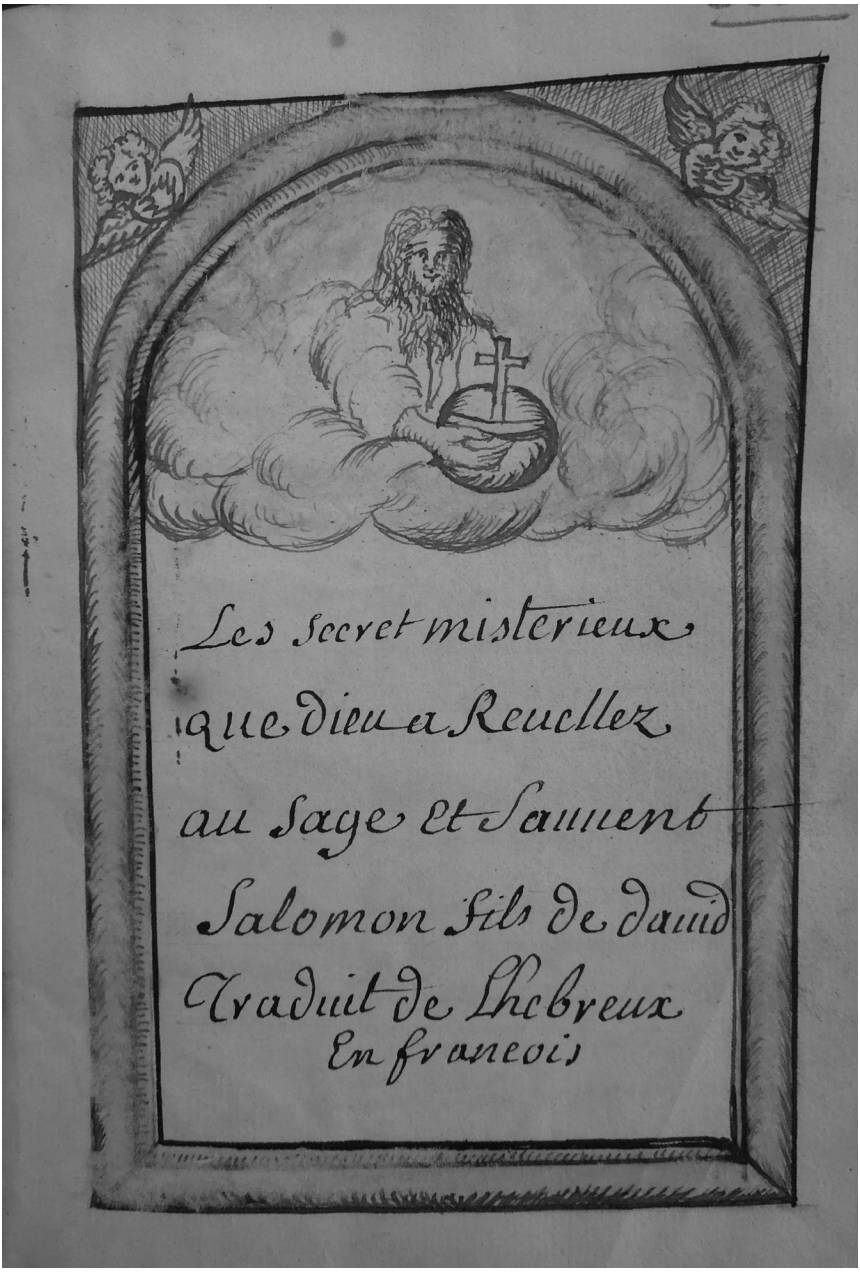
alphabet or simply *runic formulas* (Bang 1901:vii; Ohrt 1917:77). I apply the term *lønnskrift* in a similar manner as a common designator of encryptions in Black Books. Furthermore, I distinguish between code and cipher in encrypted texts. While a *code* implies the replacement of a whole word or phrase with a word, number, or symbol, *ciphering* involves the replacement of letters rather than whole words (Singh 2000:xii). Commonly, the encryptions in the Norwegian black book texts apply the latter technique.

The number of Black Books that employ *lønnskrift* as a mean of concealment indicate that it is a rather common feature in these manuscripts. In my recent study of fifty-one Norwegian Black Books, altogether twelve manuscripts contain usage of *lønnskrift* (Ohrvik 2012a:195–254.). In some of these twelve manuscripts, other languages besides Danish are also used, such as Latin or quasi-Latin, German, and Greek. Additionally, six other manuscripts appear with Latin phrases in the Danish text and one manuscript has both Latin and German in addition to Danish. While the use of *lønnskrift* without doubt represents an act of concealment, the use of foreign languages such as Greek, Latin, and German should not automatically be regarded as open writing. Depending on cultural and social circumstances, using these languages – even attempting to imitate them as with quasi-Latin – could certainly invoke interpretative challenges for readers without the necessary education and training. One hypothesis could be that employing foreign languages in some instances is a case of related secretive strategies as with *lønnskrift*. A study of the motivations behind the application of foreign languages is, however, a subject for future studies.

Concepts of Secrets and Secrecy in Black Books

The conception of the knowledge in the Black Books as *secrets*, or the presentation of knowledge as a disclosure of formerly unattainable knowledge, is an underlying idea in the texts. The term *hemmeligheter* (secrets) appears in the introductions to several books, as a way to explain and characterize the content of what follows.[3] First, the books explain their source in terms of "Cyprian's Secrets", attributing the knowledge to the medieval mythical figure of Cyprian as the original author, and secondly by describing the nature of the knowledge as "secret things" (see, e.g., NB Ms 4 1819:1v; NFS Moltke Moe 106 1:45r respectively).[4] This is illustrated in a Black Book from the late eighteenth century where Cyprian recounts his search for knowledge in the first person and describes it as hidden:

[…] in my youth I had heard
tell that there is
hidden and secret knowledge and art
of how to know
numerous secret things… (ibid.:45v).[5]



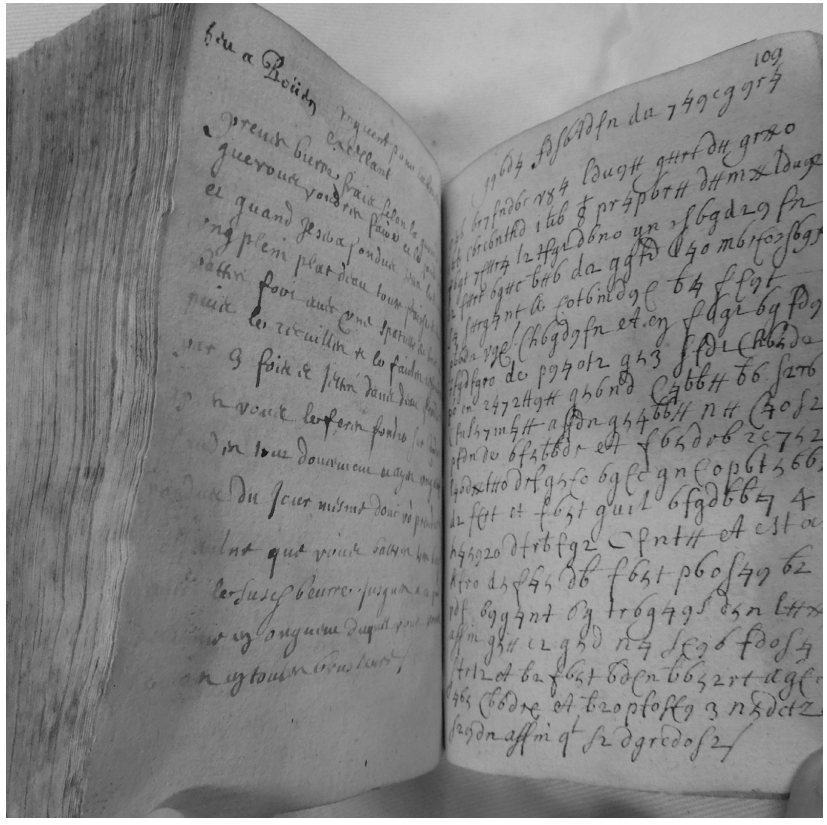
1. MS 4667. In this French manuscript from the mid-eighteenth century, the title *Les secret misterieux que dieu a Reuellez au Sage Et Sauuent Salomon Fils de dauid Traduit de Lhebreux En francois* clearly promises "mysterious secrets" from the wise and learned Solomon, son of David. This pseudo-Solomon manuscript in octavo consists of 435 pages of text and numerous pen-drawings of magical figures, sigils, and talismans. Wellcome Library, London. (Photo by the author.)

Even though the knowledge is "secret", writing it down in the book contributes to its disclosure. Wordings such as "Contains all the teaching which consists of the evil spirits in the abyss which is announced about secret things and hidden treasures" from the same book illustrates a similar seemingly contrary position towards secrets and disclosure (ibid.:45r).[6]

Using the term secret as a description of the knowledge in the books attributes qualities of exclusiveness to the content presented. Furthermore, it can also be conveyed as an effective "sales pitch" to a reader of the book, underscoring the restrictedness of the knowledge and the reader's luck in gaining access to it. This use of the term secret resembles what was used in the English printed books of secrets. As Allison Kavey points out in her study of English books of secrets from the sixteenth century, the very notion of actually revealing formerly unknown or unavailable knowledge was imperative when publishers directed their attention towards potential readers through the first pages of the books (Kavey 2007:59–94). Even though Norwegian Black Books were never objects of mass copying practices and remained as individual manuscript production, the introductory addresses in the books still suggest a careful and even strategic consideration of the potential readership and how the writers wanted the books to be perceived and interpreted (cf. Ohrvik 2012b:10–13; Ohrvik 2013:80–90). This is also evident in comparable manuscripts from other European countries in the early modern period (see, e.g., figs. 1 and 2).

Considering these conceptions of secrets and secrecy, the use of *lønnskrift* in the Black Books appears somewhat of a contradiction. It is apparent from this practice of writing that parts of the texts appear hidden for any given reader. Only a semantically or symbolically constructed key to the interpretation or translation of the encryptions used in the text can unlock its meaning. Why hide parts of the text, while simultaneously claiming the disclosure of formerly hidden knowledge?

When Black Books inform that the books contain "hidden and secret knowledge and art" and offer information on "how to know numerous secret things", they echo what a great number of printed books and manuscript texts in Europe claim to hold through the early modern period. This particular form of secret, moving far beyond economic strategies and "sales pitches" in the early modern book market, is, using Eamon's concept, *epistemological* in the way the writers (and readers) emphasize and characterize the very nature of the knowledge in qualitative and descriptive terms. Starting in the sixteenth century, and widely disseminated by the growing printing presses around Europe, formerly unknown or unattainable craft and magical knowledge and practices were made available to a growing group of readers. Eamon characterizes this particular form of writings as "the great hunt after the secrets of nature", and their shared claim, either openly or implicitly in the texts, was the revelation of the *arcana naturae* (ibid.). As



2. MS 7298. This manuscript from the seventeenth century carries the promising title *Secreta Secretorum.* Written by different writers in French, Latin, Spanish, and some Italian, it was probably made over a long period of time. The manuscript contains medical and other recipes, medical definitions and classification of medicaments, alchemical recipes, and prayers. While both title and paragraph headings promise the revelation of secrets, pages upon pages are filled with encryption in cipher, making it virtually impossible to reveal its meaning without a key to decrypt it. Wellcome Library, London. (Photo by the author.)

Pamela O. Long notes, "secrets of nature" was a phrase widely used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to denote unknown things about the natural world that one still could get access to, for instance, through observation and experimentation (Long 2004:7). Hence, during the early modern period, there was a close relationship in meaning between "secret" and the "occult", the occult here meaning as much a way of thinking as that of the semantic use of the word (Monod 2013:4; Storey 2011:143–166).

While the printing presses made the secret knowledge somewhat of a contradiction, taking the dissemination possibilities into account, the "secrets" had their forerunners in manuscript form. The pseudo-Aristotelian manuscript *Secretum secretorum* (Secret of secrets) of which over six hundred Latin and vernacular manuscripts exist in Europe, was certainly one of the most popular books of secrets during the Middle Ages, thus highly influential for later works on "secrets" (cf. Davies 2009:24; Kieckhefer 2000: 142–143). Claiming to be a book of revealed knowledge for the selected few, it offers knowledge on medicine, health regimen, physiognomy, astrology, alchemy, numerology, and magic. Its origins are obscure but all known versions go back to an Arabic version from the tenth century and it is uncertain whether a Greek version ever existed.

During the early modern period, "secret" could also have other denotations, such as the practical meaning of "technique" in texts (Long 2004:7). Furthermore, "secret" and "recipe" would also occur as nearly synonymous in meaning, as Sandra Cavallo shows in her study of texts and craft manuals written by Renaissance physicians in Italy (Cavallo 2011:191–212). In a Norwegian Black Book from *c*. 1750, this meaning of secret as recipe is evident in a formula offering "a Secretum when one travels wild during the night and is unable to distinguish between night and day" (NB Ms 4 832: 51r–v).[7]

The other concept of secrecy I claim characterizes the writings in Norwegian Black Books involves the presentation of knowledge in *lønnskrift*. I posit that the use of *lønnskrift* serves as a *social* act of concealment (cf. Eamon 1996:11). It is social in the sense that specific passages of text are consciously concealed and unattainable to others except the writer(s) by encryption, thus written out of consideration for potential social circumstances. A likely question to ask is why these texts and words are concealed. What content and meaning hides behind the encryption, and what does it represent in the textual context? In a reader, an immediate response to the concealment would naturally be that an encrypted text contains essential information and knowledge particularly important for a recipe or formula to work properly. Or is it, perhaps, the very "magical core" of the texts in question?

The use of *lønnskrift* invokes questions about the motivation, function, and meaning of the concealment in addition to questions concerning the cul-

tural context in which it appears. Before investigating these questions we will take a closer look at the cultural context of this form of secrecy. There is evidence of intentional concealment of the meaning of texts throughout the early modern period in Europe. While the motivation for using encryption in texts could differ from context to context, the result would ultimately be the same: their meaning became secrets.

Social Secrecy

Even though we do not necessarily explain Leonardo da Vinci's use of mirror writing in his notebooks as a method to avoid prosecution, since he was a natural left-handed autodidact, it still served a very important purpose at the time: it protected his inventions from copyists because it made copying difficult. Da Vinci probably knew the extra benefits generated from his small "handicap", since similar writing tactics did occur among his fellow Renaissance engineers (Eamon 1996:88). The Italian engineer Giovanni da Fontana (*c*. 1395–*c*. 1455) wrote all his technical treatises exclusively in cipher to prevent people from reading his work. Another Italian artisan, the architect Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1501), found that he was repeatedly plagiarized, and he complained about his misfortune thus:

> Such knowledge [of my inventions] as I have has been acquired with great toil and at the sacrifice of my means of livelihood, so I am reluctant to show them forth to all, for once an invention is made known not much of a secret is left. But even this would be a lesser evil if a greater did not follow. The worst is that ignoramuses adorn themselves with the labours of others and usurp the glory of an invention that is not theirs. For this reason the efforts of one who has true knowledge is oft retarded. If in all epochs this vice hath abounded, in our own it is more widespread than in any other (ibid.).

Since maintaining craft secrecy in many cases was the key to economic well-being among artisans, we can understand why distribution of one's work was not regarded as all good and advantageous. Stealing and claiming credit for others' work was not uncommon during late medieval and Renaissance Europe. William Eamon notes that because of this "a 'secret' was more valuable than public knowledge" (ibid.). Underpinning this argument is the acknowledgement of the inner life of medieval and Renaissance science and artisan knowledge, which was a corporate system of knowledge learnt by either university education or artisanship in guilds. As such, craft secrecy was connected with developing proprietary attitudes within artisanship (ibid.:89; Long 2004:141).

Deliberately concealing text in manuscripts and printed books was, however, far more common in the genre of esoteric writings. Secrecy was of paramount importance in the intellectual genres of alchemy and magic in the Renaissance, and renewed techniques of concealment developed among al-

chemical and Neoplatonist writers (Long 2004:17). This secrecy could be occasioned by the urge to keep knowledge hidden from the "unworthy" or "unwise" public, as for instance was the case with Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535), the author of one of the most popular books on intellectual magic during the 1500s, *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres* (*Three Books of Occult Philosophy*). Agrippa reserved magical knowledge for a small and learned group of wise men. One should "conceal in silence and hide such sacred dogma with constant taciturnity within the secret sanctuary of your religious breast" (ibid.:159). Agrippa bases his view of secrecy on the virtue and sacredness he saw in magical knowledge:

> Magic is a faculty of wonderful virtue, full of most high mysteries, containing the most profound contemplation of most secret things, together with the nature, power, quality, substance and virtues thereof, as also the knowledge of whole nature, and it doth instruct us concerning the differing, and agreement of things amongst themselves, whence it produceth its wonderful effects, by uniting the virtues of things through the application of them one to the other, and to their inferior suitable subjects, joining and knitting them together thoroughly by the powers, and virtues of the superior bodies. This is the most perfect, and chief science, that sacred, and sublimer kind of philosophy, and lastly the most absolute perfection of all most excellent philosophy (Tyson 2006:5).[8]

The magical knowledge was that of perfection, sacredness, and of chief science, and thus demanded the highest degree of moral integrity and purity from those operating in the magical field. As such, the secrecy was connected with a form of *exclusion* – the secret text was protected from unwanted access by those found unworthy of having it and using it (cf. Bok 1984: 4–14).

Another side of the secretive spectrum connected with both magical and alchemical knowledge as well as medical works were those writers who employed encryption in manuscripts and printed books as an act of "intentional concealment" (ibid.). Early use of cryptograms and obscure symbols is observed in manuscripts reserved for students in the Hermetic school (Eamon 1996:43). Encryption in form of word substitution and dispersal as well as cipher was also used in private notebooks to protect knowledge from unwanted spectators (Leong and Rankin 2011:9–10). While this form of secrecy certainly entailed and was motivated by epistemological notions regarding the particular knowledge in question, the encryption served other and perhaps more important functions prompted by social factors. Encrypting manuscripts could create restricted readership, make a recipe or a text appear noteworthy, and could also – paradoxically – attract new readers (ibid.: 10). Whether these functions appeal to the use of *lønnskrift* in Norwegian Black Books remains to be investigated here.

Lønnskrift as Ciphering and Backward Writing

The first Black Book under scrutiny here is a manuscript from 1732 written by the young Sergeant Ulrich Christian Heide (*c*. 1711–1785) in Østfold County (NB Ms 8 3182). The book is in octavo format, consists of fifty leaves where ninety pages are written. The majority of the book contains extracts from one or more (probably printed) art books with recipes for the treatment of or making of ink, varnish, leather imprint, mixing of colours, the preparation of herbs, distillation of oils, in addition to, for instance, extracts from newsletters, and advice on swordsmanship. However, a particular section of twelve pages within the manuscript entitled *Particularia* is partly encrypted by way of two methods that are employed both separately and together: a systematic combination of numbers replacing letters and backward writing.[9] The two encryption methods appear both in paragraph headings informing of the content that follows and in selected recipes and formulae that follow. A later owner has interpreted the numeric encryption used and presents the "Keys to Particularia" on the last leaf of the book.[10]

Hiding what appears to be the "classic" content of a Black Book indicates that Heide regarded this particular section of the book as being of special importance. Not using the common titling of these manuscripts, such as Cyprian, Black Book, or Art Book, but instead *Particularia*, also suggests an intention of secrecy. Thus, as Arne Bugge Amundsen notes, the book appears as a "neatly disguised Black Book" (Amundsen 1987:16).[11]

The numeric encryption constitutes a letter replacement where 1 is *a*, 2 is *e*, 3 is *i*, 4 is *o*, 5 is *u*, 6 is *l*, 7 is *m*, 8 is *n*, and 9 is *r*. This ciphering does not follow the letters by alphabetical order nor does it have an immediate inner coherence, as for instance a fixed system for the number of unciphered letters between each ciphered letter in the alphabet. For a cultural historian not trained in cryptography, it is difficult to determine the origin of the system and whether Heide's use of cipher in fact represents standard encryption techniques identified by an inherently logical construction. As a Sergeant, Heide could very well have been exposed to cryptography as part of his military training, or at least have had access to information on the subject. Since the need for secrecy regarding military information, strategies, and battle tactics has always been crucial for military operations the military has, throughout history, been one of the most significant developers of cryptography (Singh 2000:ix). Another possible explanation is that Heide, based on techniques and/or methodologies he had learnt, created the encryption himself.

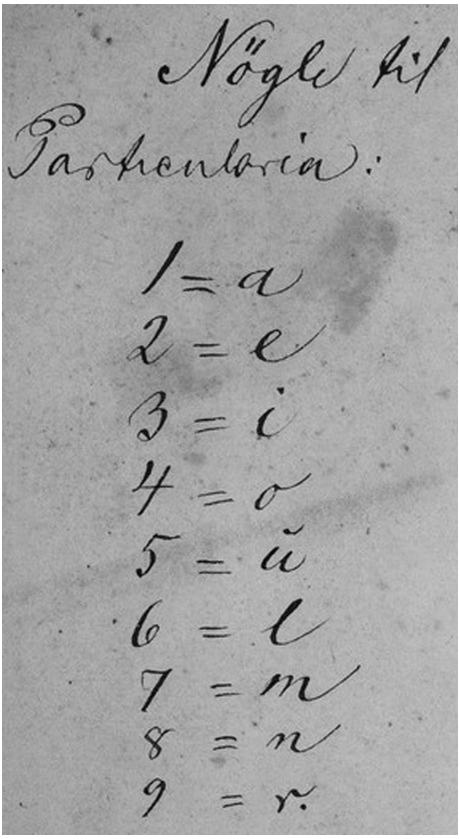
Writing backwards, however, represents a standard encryption method historically. Primarily, this method creates instant confusion for a potential reader, although its logic is not hard to identify for a person with a minimum of knowledge of cryptography. However, the lack of complexity in this particular method is compensated by the fact that Heide occasionally employs

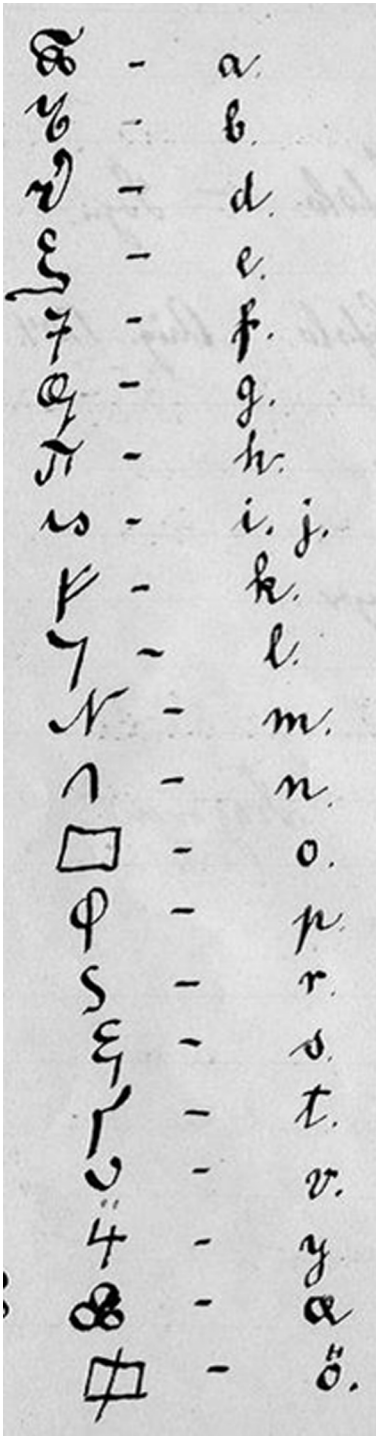
two encryption methods in the same text. It might thus have been the totality of encryption techniques which was intended to cause confusion and ensure Heide's secrecy.

In the years after Ulrich Christian Heide wrote his book he became an educated man well oriented in contemporary polemics. From the distribution of his estate after his death, his book collection comprised subjects on politics, history of science, and philosophy, represented by authors like Voltaire, Ludvig Holberg, and J. S. Sneedorff (Amundsen 1987:18). Being in service abroad made him fluent in French, Russian, and German, in addition to knowing "something of Mathematics" (Ovenstad 1948:439). Using the "key" to interpret the *Particularia*, however, reveals a world view where the belief in supernatural objects, beings, and forces is present. Recipes and formulas for protection against witchcraft, epic formulas for supernatural danger causing fire and bleeding, and the preparation of objects with magical qualities testifies to this. Furthermore, recipes concerning women and erotica, to outwit enemies or competitors or reveal their plans, to win at cards, in hunting, and in battle all testify to masculine and military interests. The subjects reflect popular beliefs and practices at the time and probably also Heide's personal interests as a young, inexperienced, and curious man from the lower ranks of society standing on the doorstep to adopting new knowledge, experiencing foreign cultures, and making a career within the military.

How, then, does Heide employ his encryption? What kind of text parts are encrypted, and what particular words does he hide behind cipher and backward writing? Is it possible to detect a pattern within the encryption that can suggest his consideration for and perception of the content and hence his motivations for secrecy? In attempting to close in on Heide's motivations for encryption, one place to start is to investigate what he does *not* encrypt – which, after all, represents half of the text.

There are thirty-five recipes in *Particularia*, of which eighteen are without encryption.[12] These recipes involve procedures for the burning of adder skin and the collection of stones from the swallow, how to fight and win and how to win at cards, how to acquire a person's knowledge, and how to disclose a person's secrets. Furthermore, we find recipes for how to lose interest in women, for luck in hunting, how to silence your opponent, how to make a candle from which only a virgin can borrow light (in reality a recipe for identifying a virgin!), and how to find out whether your friend abroad is dead or alive. Connected to the majority of these recipes are textual instructions for the preparation of specific materials or objects that are considered to have special powers and deeds, or that will obtain it through preparation procedures. The objects serve to heal wounds, bring fortune, promote affection, reveal secrets, give protection, and enhance self-control (lose interest in women).





3 and 4. The keys to interpret the encryption in *Particularia* (fig. 3 on the left) and the "secret alphabet" in the Hafslo book (fig. 4 on the right) are both provided by later owners and readers of the books. Courtesy of The Norwegian Folklore Archive, Oslo.

An example of an object considered to have special powers and deeds is the adder. This snake appears frequently in Nordic folklore and tradition, especially connected to traditional medicine. Apart from having general healing qualities it was especially connected to beliefs concerning fertility and childbirth, and having luck, and was used as an ingredient accordingly (Ilomäki 2009:163; Herjulfsdotter 2008:51–66; Ohrt 1921:123; Reichborn-Kjennerud 1924; 1933:67). In Heide's text, it has multiple functions; the ashes from a burnt adder skin can improve one's strength against enemies, heal wounds, enhance people's affection for you, and also promote your potential disputes.

What characterizes the recipes for the preparation of the adder skin, along with the majority of the content in the unencrypted recipes, is that it originates from a relatively well-known corpus of traditional beliefs and practices concerning the relationship between certain afflictions, conditions, and situations, and the methods and objects appropriate for restoring them. As such, this content was neither exclusive, controversial nor provocative in an early modern Norwegian context. This might very well be the reason why Heide did not see any reason for encrypting it.

Apart from recipes for how to win at cards and have luck in games, the recipes that are subjects to encryption do not correspond thematically to the unencrypted ones. Does this imply that Heide regards the content of the encrypted text as being of special importance, or was his secretive practice randomly chosen? Only one instance of thematic overlap suggests the first notion to be the case, implying systematic and intentional encryption for specific subjects.

Heide applies encryption to recipes for protection against witchcraft, thieves, and murderers, the identification of a thief, taking out fire, stemming blood, identifying a virgin, protecting a girl from getting pregnant, and getting a woman to love you. Furthermore, he encrypts recipes for how to achieve all knowledge, how to hide weapons, how to protect oneself in battle in addition to how to win at cards and games. Initially, most of these subjects – apart from those relating to love and pregnancy and card games – involve potentially dangerous and even life-threatening conditions and situations. This observation further strengthens the impression that Heide evaluated the subjects of *Particularia* by the content and significance and applied encryption accordingly. As a start, then, we might say that Heide's encryption scheme was motivated by epistemological considerations of the content, whereas his actual encryption was basically *social* (cf. Eamon 1996:11).

The main function for the encryption Heide uses is – as with encryption in general – to disrupt the meaning of the recipe or formula in question. The disruption functions by encrypting words referring to the main purpose of the recipe or formula, to whom it is directed, and by hiding ingredients or

procedures specifically important for the method to work properly. In a recipe for how "To get affection from all people" the stanza "affection from all people" is encrypted, thus hiding the essential purpose of the recipe from a reader and making it virtually impossible to use (NB Ms 8 3182:32r). Furthermore, the procedure explains that you should "write these words on a clean piece of paper with your own blood, Mersus Stalon, Metoro Texto." The ciphering covers the words "your own blood", hence hiding an ingredient in the text that presumably was regarded as essential for the recipe to work according to the intention. Comparing the encrypted and decrypted version of the Norwegian text, the encryption appears as follows, here enhanced by italics:

At du Kand hafve *y8d2st h48 1664 f46K* skrif dise ord paa et stycke reent papier med *d3t 2g2t Bl4d* Mersus Stalon, Metoro Texto	At du Kand hafve yndest hos alle folK skrif dise ord paa et stycke reent papier med dit eget Blod, Mersus Stalon, Metoro Texto (ibid.).

Interestingly, the formulaic words at the end of the recipe, words in quasi-Latin (imitations) seemingly without logical meaning yet traditionally considered to have magical qualities, appear without encryptions.[13] The most plausible explanation for this is that Heide did not regard the words as having supernatural qualities and powers outside the specific context of the recipe. Rather, only by being meticulously true to the detailed instructions in the recipe would the magical qualities and powers embedded in the words *activate* and hence "magically charge" spoken or written words or other central entities communicated in the text (cf. Ilomäki 2009:172).

The very first paragraph of *Particularia* giving the advice "That no Witches shall bewitch you" works in a similar fashion. As protection measures, the text informs us that one should "bind these words on yourself Habor Antloger, Æratin, in nomine, Patris F: S: S:, Amen" (NB Ms 8 3182: 31r). Even though only eight out of twenty-four words are encrypted the disruption it creates makes it hard to understand the main purpose of the advice, specific details in the ritual instruction, and essential formulaic words. As with the first example given, the quasi-Latin appears exposed whereas the proper Latin prayer phrases appear partly encrypted.

At ingen *T946d* folcK skal for *g3492* Dig bind disse ord *p11 D3g* Habor Antloger, Æratin, in *84 7382*, *P1t93s* F: S: S:, *1728*.	At ingen Trold folcK skal for giöre Dig bind disse ord paa Dig Habor Antloger, Æratin, in no mine, Patris F: S: S:, Amen (ibid.).

Taking into account that this advice involves the call upon divine protection and powers by using the Trinitarian formula in Latin: "in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti" (in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit), it is somewhat puzzling that this particular stanza is en-

crypted. Even though the contemporary elite and theologians in particular criticized the use and invocation of God's name and His intervention in "superstitious" popular practices such as healing, by the mid eighteenth century, it was no longer the lack of religious faith that posed the biggest challenge in the eyes of the critics, but rather that people believed "too much", including beliefs in supernatural powers and beings (cf. Amundsen 1999: 13–49). Calling upon the good forces by way of prayer to fight the forces of evil would therefore cause irritation rather than harm in these circles. The use of Latin phrases connects the Christian prayer with a Catholic tradition, even though it is highly uncertain whether this is consciously done or rather an inherently traditional formula which by this time had lost its "deeper meaning".

Heide also applies both encryption methods in the same text section. In a recipe entitled "so that a girl will not get pregnant", the procedure explains that one should "sew a root of tormentil in a white cloth, as long as she wears the same cloth she will cause no harm" (NB Ms 8 3182:32v). It continues by giving an alternative procedure: "P.S: or make a stick of flying Ronne [Rowan tree] and put it in her clothes idem." The encrypted (enhanced by italics) and the decrypted text appears as follows:

Ta en *egip ehci Laks eufilb*	aT en pige iche skal blifue
regnavs, dys ellitnemrot deor	svanger, syd tormentille roed
i *te edelK dvih, dla ned*	i et Klede hvid, ald den
dnuts nuh revfah emmas	stund hun hafver samme
edelK aap gis ad redaks nuh	Klede paa sig da skader hun
tetni. P.S: eller giør en	intet. P.S: eller giør en
P38d 1f f6yv2 R4882 og	Pind af flyve Ronne og
st3ck i hendes *Kl2d29* idem.	stick i hendes Klæder idem (ibid.).

Unlike the first two examples given, this text is almost entirely hidden behind encryption by thirty words out of forty. Neither the purpose of the recipe, the person whom it concerns, nor the main ingredients involved are accessible to the reader. Whether or not this indicates that Heide regarded this text as being of specific importance is hard to say. Since the recipe involves the manipulation of potential effects on others, it might very well have been social considerations and circumstances that led Heide to encrypt the text. Perhaps the recipe served as Heide's secret "weapon" as a young single man in the 1730s? In a cultural and social context, however, the recipe might have been perceived as an indirect call for improper conduct since its purpose is to hinder the potential consequences of intercourse. Following the suggestions presented above, a preliminary conclusion from this could be that moral considerations rather than the potential magical qualities embedded in the text served as the primary motivating factors behind this particular encryption. As an act of disguising, the encryption serves to intentionally suppress the information given and thus points to a form of *social secrecy* in accordance with Eamon's concept (1996:11).

Lønnskrift as "the Secret Alphabet"

The second book under scrutiny can be approximately dated to the mid-eighteenth century. Its origin is unknown since there are no provenance records earlier than the twentieth century. The manuscript was purchased in Hafslo in the County of Sogn and Fjordane in Western Norway in 1904 and became a part of the *Heibergske Samlinger* (The Heiberg Collection) in the same year (NFS Tillier I:55–62).[14]

Unlike the *Particularia*, this manuscript applies a variant of encryption more common to the Norwegian Black Book corpus, namely, an encryption based on a combination of ciphers, letters, Kabbalah symbols, Greek letters, and runes. To understand the potential impact and significance of the application of Kabbalah symbols and runes in the manuscript calls for an investigation of the use of these symbols in a cultural-historical perspective. Thus, not only has the use of these symbols a long history in a literary context. For European grimoires in general, the Kabbalah came to represent the magical symbols per se whereas runes served a similar role for the Scandinavian Black Book tradition in particular.

The development of the Jewish mystical interpretation of the Torah known as Kabbalah emerged during the late medieval period. In Hebrew, Kabbalah literally means *receiving* or *tradition* and contains a set of esoteric teachings and mystical religious interpretations of the relationship between infinite and finite, between an unchanging and eternal God (God before God) and God's creation. The Kabbalah was subject to challenging intellectual debates amongst European Jewish scholars, but also became subject to a more practical use which was highly influenced by Spanish occult tradition and Arabic astral magic (Davies 2009:30). As Hebrew was perceived as God's spoken language, so too were the Hebrew letters connected to God by divine emanations along with the orally transmitted secret names of God received by Moses.

The Kabbalistic principle of the power lying in the holy language and encoded in the names of God consequently appealed to medieval magicians across borders of religion. In the Renaissance, for instances, the Kabbalah represented one of the more disreputable and esoteric aspects of intellectual magic. The German humanist Johannes Reuchlin wrote in 1517 that the Kabbalah "is the reception, through symbols, of a divine revelation handed down so that we may contemplate, to our salvation, both God and the individual Forms" (Clark 2001:151). Within practical magic the symbolic power of Hebrew characters made some grimoire writers go so far as to apply pseudo-Hebrew letters which in fact were inventions or imitations (Davies 2009:31). It is probably within this latter context that the application of Kabbalah symbols in early modern Norwegian Black Books must be placed. By this time the mystic and occult has taken the place of "divine revelations", and as "Kabbalah" symbols they first and foremost represent

replications, imitations, or inventions. Regardless of their "true nature", however, the fact that they most probably were considered part of a "secret language" and hence charged with potential magical powers is undisputable.

When runes acquired properties tied to magical beliefs and practices is hard to say. The introduction of the Latin alphabet in Norway in the ninth century represented the start of the process by which the practical use of runes in Norway ended (Spurkland 2001:212–213). Its practical use and "oral" properties as an alphabet used for short messages also made it less applicable when the new alphabet and later the book and printing presses were introduced (Bagge 2001). By the sixteenth century runic writings were definitely history. However, already late in the same century, runic writings gained a growing academic interest and became a subject of antiquarian study.[15] Perhaps as a consequence of its acquired antiquarian properties, or maybe because runic knowledge was no longer considered common knowledge, runic writings achieved new qualities and a new cryptographic function in Nordic Black Book writings.[16] Warnings issued by a Norwegian archbishop as early as the mid-fourteenth century about the use of "runes, black magic and superstition" (Davies 2009:31) indicate that these new qualities were attained over a long period of time. Judging by the Scandinavian Black Books at hand, the application of runic writings does not seem to be common until the early modern period.[17] However, this could very well be explained by the scarcity of material from earlier centuries. And when runic writings appear more commonly in eighteenth-century Black Books, printed books exploring the runic alphabet were available on the book market for those interested in antiquarian subjects and might very well have served as inspiration in the development of cryptographic methods. What we can establish here, however, is that runic writings gained magical qualities in the context of Black Books and grimoires during a period when the practice of runic writing declined and eventually disappeared as an active written language (cf. Klintberg 1980:53). This leaves us with an understanding of the application of the "secret alphabet" – especially runic and Kabbalah writing – in the Norwegian Black Books as inherently magical – without speculating about the degree.

What, then, can be understood from the unencrypted and encrypted content in our current Black Book from Hafslo? What content received the veil of secrecy? Following the reading strategies from the *Particularia*, the recipes and formulas in the Hafslo book that are not encrypted represent seven out of a total of twenty-five recipes and involve topics concerning how to prevent dogs from barking at you, how to prevent tiredness when travelling, how to prevent frost on your feet, how to grow hair, and how to prevent snakebites. Dominating all of these recipes are instructions for the preparation of specific substances made from plants or biological

waste (human sweat and hair roots, and bird heart) which are to be carried around or prepared for application on the skin. Thematically, the unencrypted and encrypted recipes correspond only in one topic concerning how to prevent tiredness when travelling. Like the unencrypted recipes in the *Particularia*, the unencrypted recipes of the Hafslo manuscript also involve topics regarding ordinary challenges in everyday life which are offered solutions that are neither controversial nor part of an exclusive corpus of knowledge. This leaves us with a preliminary assumption similar to that of the *Particularia* that the writer was not indifferent or random in the choice of encryption but based it on *epistemological* notions about the content. Certain subjects were regarded as important to conceal and keep secret.

The encrypted recipes involve a great variety of subjects. A common denominator of most of them is that it involves the practice of witchcraft and magic to some degree. Whether it concerns how to make people dance, to destroy strings on a violin or mute them, to bewitch a gun, to get lucky in shooting, or fill a room with snakes, all the recipes involve the making of objects or substances considered to achieve supernatural qualities through the production process or its specific use. In a recipe entitled "How to bewitch a gun" the text informs that you are to "kill a louse from your head [and put it] in the gun pipe". If you follow these instructions "he [the gun] will not be good, before you shoot a Raven, collect his heart, put it in the gun, and shoot towards the earth" (NFS Tillier I:61). As in the examples from *Particularia*, in this recipe too, key words and stanzas such as "louse from your head", "his heart", and "in the gun, and shoot towards the earth" are concealed by encryption and disrupts the meaning and purpose of the text. Here the encrypted words and letters are marked by italics in its translated version:

At bekomme et Gevær
Forhekset
Dræb en *luus af hovedet* i Piben
da bliver han ikke god, förend mand
skyder en Ravn og tager *hans*
hierte og lægger *i bossen* og *skiu-*
der mod *iord*.

Human and animal biological waste, when extracted from its natural habitat and placed in a different context, is transformed and imbued with powers to alter an otherwise natural course of event and condition. The supernatural powers are not achieved by appealing through formulaic words or stanzas to God or related forces within a Christian religious context, nor does this involve demonic or diabolic powers. It is the potential of magical qualities and powers in nature itself that the text directs its attention towards and aims at taking advantage of.

Other encrypted subjects in the Hafslo book concern how to identify the gender of an unborn child, to make a rooster or hen crow, to make fire out of water, to achieve the strength of two men, and how to attain good memory. Three encrypted recipes are especially interesting since none of them are furnished with a heading explaining their content or purpose, thereby applying secrecy to the texts in two ways. They introduce the book and are marked by the numbers 1 to 3. Nor does their content explicitly reveal the purpose of the recipes, although seen together we get an indication that they might concern the identification of virgins.[18] The recipe "3 tio" instructs that you should "Take green or dry parsley or the root of it and put it at a warm secret place overnight". The day after, you are to "rub it between your fingers, let her smell it confestum mingit" (ibid.:57). The encrypted words and letters are marked by italics in its translated version:

Tag grön eller tör Petersille eller Roden
Deraf, og læg den paa et *varmt hemeligt*
Sted en nat over, og gnid saa mellem
Fingrene, *lad hende da lugte derpaa*
Confestum mingit.

Where the parsley should be kept and what you are to do with the parsley are both encrypted in the text. This leaves the reader without essential information and makes it impossible to use the recipe without decrypting it. Unlike the encrypted recipes in *Particularia* which all deal with potentially dangerous and even life-threatening conditions and situations, the encrypted text of the Hafslo book is of a different kind. In addition to involving some degree of witchcraft, many of the recipes are specifically aimed at enhancing personal conditions or circumstances such as getting access to knowledge otherwise hidden, obstructing other people's ability to hunt or play an instrument, or gaining extreme strength or good memory. In order to have the required effect, one might say that it is both plausible and wise to keep this knowledge hidden in the text. As such, it remains "exclusive" to the writer and gives him the desired advantage in certain situations. And because the writer takes advantage of supernatural powers and qualities in nature, it indicates that not only *social secrecy* (cf. Eamon 1996:11) was decisive when encryption was considered but also *epistemological* secrecy. Possibly, the nature of the knowledge itself contributed to its disclosure.

A Hidden Magical Universe?

When the Danish Folklorist Ferdinand Ohrt published his second volume of *Danmarks trylleformler* (Danish Witch Formulas) with the subtitle *Efterhøst og lønformler* in 1921 he urged for comparative studies of *lønnskrift*.[19] In his opinion "only comparative research will reveal the meaning or the magical laws of these words and stanzas" (Ohrt 1921:11).[20] Even though I

agree with Ohrt that comparative studies can broaden our insight into the application of encryption in Black Books and similar texts, my study is, at best, a first step in the process of achieving more knowledge of the meaning and the methods. Furthermore, it is not the "magical laws" that have been my objective but rather an understanding of the *repertoire* of secrecy in these two texts and indications of the possible *motivations* for this secrecy. It is also by seeing these key elements together that we get a better understanding of the magical qualities of the texts.

The *repertoire* of encryption concerns both what topics are subject to encryption in the books, how the encryption is applied in the text, and what encryption methods are used. The encrypted texts involve topics that are either characterized by potentially dangerous and even life-threatening conditions and situations or involve the improvement of personal conditions or circumstances. Unlike the unencrypted text, the encryptions include advice requiring the involvement of supernatural powers or preparations of objects with magical qualities. In both books, the encryption is methodically applied by hiding essential information such as the main purpose of the advice, key ingredients in the recipe, or important preparation methods. As such, neither the topics encrypted nor the encryption applied is randomly chosen in either of the books, but rather the result of careful consideration. Although the encryption methods used in the books are qualitatively different they both serve the same essential purpose: to hide the meaning of the text. While the encryption methods of *Particularia* are inherently systematic it is prosaic in its construction. The Hafslo book, however, applies a method potentially charged with magical qualities although it is impossible to determine the writers' perception and interpretation of this encryption method.

By applying William Eamon's concepts of secrecy as *epistemological* on the one hand and essentially *social* on the other, I have shown how both notions of secrecy are at play in Norwegian Black Books. The *epistemological* notion is expressed in several Black Books when the introductory texts explain the nature of the knowledge as hidden and secret knowledge. In the two Black Books investigated here, the choice of text to encrypt points to *epistemological* considerations about the content (yet not in terms of what Eamon refers to as "the secrets of nature") whereas the *social secrecy* is expressed through the writers purposeful actions of concealing certain parts of text. I suggest that the writers' main motivations for this *social secrecy* were twofold: partly it was based on moral concerns for what the text communicated, partly to hinder potential readers' access to certain forms of knowledge and secure exclusivity.

But has this study of the application of encryption uncovered a secret "magical universe"? Based on my study of two Norwegian Black Books from the eighteenth century, I believe the question was wrongly asked. The encrypted texts *do* hide content which involves magical beliefs and prac-

tices, and one of the encryption methods was – historically – imbued with magical qualities. On the other hand traces of magical beliefs and practices do not exclusively belong to the encrypted texts, and there are also a large number of Black Books which do not apply encryption at all. If looking for a "magical universe", one might say that this describes the genre as such and not the encrypted texts in particular. The secrecy of the two Black Books must first and foremost be understood from the vantage point of knowledge. In a time when access to knowledge was limited and possessing it advantageous, encryption was an appropriate method for securing its power. And the methods for securing the secrets were taken from varied techniques available at the time. In his discussion of secrecy in medieval manuscripts Richard Kieckhefer points out that "knowledge might *bring* power but it also *was* power" (Kieckhefer 2000:142), a statement I believe has universal qualities. Keeping knowledge hidden makes it a potent reservoir of power.

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[1] Eamon also suggests a third form of secrecy which he calls *epistemic*, including aspects of nature that were viewed as unknown for historically contingent reasons (Eamon 1996:11).
[2] See Stephen Mitchell's article in this volume for a thorough review of the history of, and differences between, Black Books, magic books, and grimoires in a Scandinavian context.
[3] See, e.g., NFS Moltke Moe 106 I:45r–v, NFS Moltke Moe 106 III a), NFS Moltke Moe 106 III e):1v, NB Ms 4 1819:1v, NB Ms 8 640b:2r, and NB Ms 8 640c1:1r.
[4] For a further discussion of the practice of authorship attribution in Norwegian Black Books, see Ohrvik 2011.
[5] "…[D]a ieg fra min ungdom havde hørt/ talle om at der Skulde Være en/ forborgen og Skjult Kundskab og Kunst/ til og hvorledes at man kunde faa/ adskillige hemmelige Ting at vide." All translations of the Norwegian Black Book texts are by the present author.
[6] "Indeholder al den Undervisning som/ haves af de Onde Aander i afgrunden/ som er forkyndt om hemmelige Ting og/ forborgne Skatter…"
[7] "et Secretum naar en Farer vild om Natten saa at han hverken kand begrebe Natt eller Dag."
[8] "mAgica facultas potestatis plurimae compos, altissimiis plena mysteriis, profundissimam rerum secretissimarum contemplationem, naturam, potentiam, qualitatem, substantiam, & virtutem, totiusque naturae cognitionem complectitur: & quomodo res inter se differunt, & qúo conueniunt nos instruit, hinc mirabiles effectus suos producens, vniendo virtutes rerum per applicationem earum adinuicem, & ad sua passa congruentia inferiora, superiorum dotibus ac virtutibus passim copulans atque maritans. Haec perfectissima summaque scientia, haec altior sanctiorque philosophia, haec denique totius nobilissime philosophiae absoluta consumatio" (Agrippa 1601: fol. ai r–v).
[9] The coded text appears from leaf 31r to 37r.
[10] "Nögle til Particularia", see NB Ms 8 3182:50v.
[11] "fiffig kamuflert svartebok."
[12] See NB Ms 8 3182:31v–37r.
[13] Only one of the words, *Mersus*, derives directly from Latin and has three related meanings: 1) dip, plunge, immerse; 2) overwhelm; and 3) sink, drown, bury.
[14] The current study is based on a transcript made by the State Veterinary Carl Tillier in the ear-

ly twentieth century a few years after the manuscript was bought on auction and became a part of the Heiberg Collection (HEI no. 2408). The transcript exists both at HEI and at the National Folklore Archive (NFS). Here I refer to the transcript archived at NFS.

[15] One of the most distinguished authors in this respect was the Danish physician and antiquarian Ole Worm (1588–1655) who also went by his Latinized name Olaus Wormius. Worm wrote several treatises on runestones and collected texts written in runic writing. His most famous work was *Danicorum Monumentorum libri sex* (Six Books on Danish Monuments) published in 1643, presenting depictions of numerous runestones and inscriptions from Denmark. This work marked a turning point for the general interest among the learned in the historical and cultural significance and importance of the Nordic runic tradition (Spurkland 2001: 212).

[16] There are a few examples of the use of runes in manuscripts outside the Nordic region. A fourteenth century manuscript of Italian provenance, now in the British Library, applies the "runea" as an encryption method to hide the names of planetary spirits (Davies 2009:31f.). In a late medieval manuscript from Southern Germany, runes are used to transliterate key words in the text (Kieckhefer 2000:141).

[17] The oldest Black Book in a Norwegian context, the so-called *Vinje Book* dated to approximately 1480, is without runic writings (cf. Garstein 1993). For more details of the *Vinje book*, see Stephen Mitchell's article in this volume.

[18] From the first text we learn from the instructions that the intention of the recipe is to identify who among a group of girls are "corupta", which could mean false or damaged. It might very well also mean, however, the person who is not trustworthy among them all.

[19] Ohrt's book is provided with an English summary at the end and here the books (in which the witch formulas occur) are translated as "witch-books" and "witch-manuscripts" (Ohrt 1917: 508, 511, 514).

[20] "…først en sammenlignende Forskning vil kunne klargøre disse Ords og Rækkers Mening eller magiske Love…" Ohrt's publication is still the most comprehensive collection of sources concerning the use of *lønnskrift* in Nordic Black Books.

Magic and Witchcraft in Their Everyday Context

Childhood Memories from the Nineteenth-Century Finnish Countryside

Laura Stark

Witchcraft and magic were still being widely practised in Finland when, in the late nineteenth century, the Fennoman intelligentsia under Russian rule instigated a massive campaign to collect Finnish-language folklore. This campaign began in the 1880s under the direction of the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society (henceforth FLS) in Helsinki, and continues to the present day, reaching its peak in the Kalevala Jubilee Year Collection Contest of 1935–36. In the decades prior to the Second World War, this campaign relied on the assistance of rural inhabitants, many of whom had little or no formal education. It resulted in the vast collections of the FLS Folklore Archives, which include tens of thousands of narratives and descriptions related to magic and over 52,000 variants of magic incantation texts. These collections shed considerable light on the diversity of magic and witchcraft practised in the Finnish countryside before the Second World War. In contrast to the microhistorical approach which has been used to analyse court documents on Finnish witchcraft trials of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the sheer abundance of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century source materials on magic and witchcraft has allowed Finnish folklorists to use a different approach which has been called "the archaeology of cultural thought" (Apo *et al*. 1998:25, note 1). In this orientation, folklorists have focused on ancient and enduring models at the mental level of culture, in other words, semantic structures of folklore and the processes underlying its use (ibid.). Finnish folklorists of the Cultural Thought School have not sought the unusual individual or exceptional event which illuminates the norm, as is often the case in microhistory or history of mentalities. Indeed, Finnish folklore materials derived from interviews with or writings by rural commoners do not facilitate the case study approach familiar from microhistorical research based on "official" documents. Folklore texts are rarely lengthy, nor do they necessarily allow the kind of dissection of detail

or following of "clues" that historical documentation can provide. What archival folklore texts do offer is the possibility to discern broad and systematic patterns of culturally-shared and recurrent thought, behaviour, and meaning.

One drawback to the hundreds of thousands of folklore texts on magic recorded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is that they tend to omit personal experiences of magic, detailed information on how magic rites were carried out, and explanations regarding how magic was integrated into the daily lives of rural inhabitants. In this paper, I examine two early twentieth-century texts which are unique among the archives on magic and witchcraft housed in the FLS Folklore Archives by virtue of the fact that they provide coherent frameworks of meaning to the magic practices and beliefs they describe, and moreover they integrate these practices and beliefs into everyday contexts that would have been familiar to nineteenth-century Finnish magic specialists and ordinary magic users alike.

Before I discuss these texts in more detail, however, I would like to comment on what I mean by the term *magic* in the context of rural nineteenth-century Finland. Within Finnish folk discourse on magical harm, the terms *taika, noituus, konsti,* and *temppu* referred to knowledge of cause-and-effect relationships that were understood by early modern persons to fall outside the category of the "natural" or "normal". Based on the abundant sources of the Folklore Archives, it is clear that early modern rural persons tended to have very clear ideas about what they considered "normal", and these concepts helped them to quickly deduce a supranormal cause if something out-of-the-ordinary had occurred. The "ordinary" world was seen to operate according to commonsense means, as opposed to the "non-ordinary", "non-natural" or supernatural world where puzzling, fantastic, or hard-to-explain things occurred. Christian miracles, angels, saints and divine intervention were part of the "non-ordinary" world, as were omens, the Devil, nature spirits, and magic. Indications that something "non-ordinary" was occurring included livestock going missing in the forest, attacks by forest predators on livestock, a cow ceasing to give milk, snakebite, sudden illness, the prolonged crying of infants, and loss of affection between lovers or newlyweds. Rather than being attributed to luck, chance, or fate, these negative occurrences which fell outside of the narrow definition of the "ordinary" course of events were immediately assumed to be caused by some kind of malevolent, intentional agency, either human or non-human. In other words, the Finnish terms I gloss here as "magic" referred to any *unnatural* mechanisms for making things happen which derived from secret knowledge. As Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966:11) pointed out, magic, like science, allows persons to define the parameters of the "normal" and "natural" within narrowly-defined limits. Thus the ideal – whether a harmonious marriage, the predict-

able behaviour of animals, or a healthy body – was taken to be the natural state of affairs, whereas anything less than a successful outcome was deemed unacceptable and meant that an immediate explanation – usually a supernatural one – was called for (Stark 2006:43–45).

At the same time, the practice and narration of magic was a reaction against a crisis of "presence" in the impoverished backwoods of nineteenth-century rural Finland, in other words, the perception of constant threats to personal agency which meant a compulsion to continually adapt to external conditions. Rural Finns experienced themselves as "open" and vulnerable to their environment, and used magic to protect themselves from its intrusion into the self. This was because in their mode of experience, the world did not remain external to the self, but was entangled with it (see also De Martino 1973; 1980). Behaviours related to magic and the supernatural were also used to protect the individual from the harmful desires of other persons – seen as a form of physical agency – and to produce a perception within the individual that he/she could defy the other people's intentions (see also Weiner 1983:701).

Within Finnish folklore scholarship, "magic" has often been divided into the ritual activity (*taika*) on the one hand, and spoken incantations or verbal formulas (*loitsu*) on the other. Rural Finnish informants distinguished between these two, but it was not necessary for both elements to be present in order for an activity to be characterized as magic. The term *sorcery* in this paper refers to magical harm thought to be caused by a human agent. In nineteenth-century rural Finland, sorcery beliefs bore little trace of the Church's earlier diabolistic doctrine on witchcraft, and Finnish sorcery narratives in general appear to contain fewer references to demons or pacts with the Devil than do most other magic traditions in Europe.

A Finnish specialist in magic, able to perform sorcery, healing, and divination, was generally referred to as a *tietäjä*, meaning literally "one who knows". The *tietäjä* was assumed to have secret knowledge others did not possess, and was versed in the ritual use of long incantations in the trochaic tetrameter now known as Kalevala metre. In their enormous repertoires of ritual and folk poetry, *tietäjäs* preserved knowledge which is partly the legacy of a shamanistic past (Siikala 1992). Although the majority of *tietäjäs* appear to have been men, some were also women, particularly in the northern areas of Finland. *Tietäjäs* generally received their knowledge from older *tietäjäs*, but they were also believed to have been born with special powers, namely, an inner force known as *luonto* which was hard enough or strong enough to withstand the harmful forces against which they battled using magic rites and incantations.

The Archival Project and Key Texts

Finnish folklorists in recent decades have become increasingly interested in how and why the folklore texts in the FLS Folklore Archives were produced. Most of the texts regarding magic and witchcraft were either collected from rural inhabitants by educated folklore collectors, or were sent to the Archives by rural inhabitants themselves. These latter lay collectors wrote down their own experiences and interviewed their neighbours and family members. They then sent this information to the Archives, often in the hope of receiving monetary prizes. They were also motivated by rhetoric in which the Archival staff promoted folklore as the cultural heritage of the Finnish people, a form of national and local history. The collective memories of uneducated Finns were depicted as almost a living national treasure, and rural inhabitants were exhorted to collect folklore as part of their civic duty (Aspelin 1885:4, 216; Krohn 1891:1; Mustonen 1894:3; Stark 2006:136–138).

Whereas the information recorded by educated folklorists tended to be constrained by what they were interested in or what they happened to already know about traditional rural culture, the materials sent to the Archives by farmers, tenant farmers, and labourers better reflect the interests and priorities of rural commoners,[1] and provide a broader picture of the cultural knowledge they possessed. But not all texts sent by lay collectors are equally useful to twenty-first-century researchers. Instead, they tend to fall into two categories: insider narratives and key texts. The knowledge shared within nineteenth-century rural communities was in many ways uniquely local as opposed to the more universal knowledge taught in schools today. People who knew each other's circumstances and life histories needed only to refer obliquely to knowledge of shared events when telling each other tales of magical practices and events in their locality. Moreover, when they felt that something inexplicable had a supernatural cause, they had no need to make this deduction explicit to their reader. Instead, when they wished to imply magical causation, it sufficed to refer euphemistically to a "dog" (the embodiment of mobile magical harm), or to mention persons climbing up a tree backwards or mumbling while standing on a low, flat, stone (*alapaasi, alakivi*). Since insider narratives were written down as if told to close acquaintances, they tend to leave semantic linkages unexplained, to merely allude to magic and the supernatural, and to contain more dialogue than commentary. Whereas insider narratives are thus often difficult for the twentyfirst century researcher to comprehend, in key texts, by contrast, the narrator has made an effort to address his text to persons outside his immediate culture, for example to folklore collectors and the staff of the Folklore Archives, and to explain the underlying concepts, categories, and events of his narrative. A primary way in which key texts illuminate older cultural concepts and causal links embedded in

narrative is through narrative "framing", in other words, the placing of commentary, explanation, or other signals of narrative distance and intent "around" the dialogue or the core events of the plot. Key texts can thus be seen as cultural "bridges" which can be used by twentyfirst century researchers to more easily access the cultural knowledge of rural nineteenth century Finland.

In the discussion that follows, I reflect on the ways in which Frans Leivo's 38-page "*The secrets of Pekka's wife Kaisa, a folk doctor and magic-worker*"[2] and Pekka Vauhkonen's 78-page "*Recollections of magic belief in my childhood*"[3] function as exceptional key texts by providing narrative reconstructions of how magic and the supernatural were integrated into the everyday life in the authors' childhood communities.[4] In his handwritten text submitted to the Folklore Archives in 1930, Leivo (born 1878), who was a photographer and lay folklore collector, claimed to have reported "word for word" the conversations he overheard in his youth between a female magic-worker from Western Finland, whom he named Kaisa to protect her anonymity, and the clients who came to her home seeking advice. In 1921, Vauhkonen, a construction foreman from Eastern Finland, sent to the Folklore Archives his handwritten manuscript describing the magic he remembered having been practised by his family and others in his rural community, and explained the beliefs underlying those practices. Although it is not possible to determine the extent to which the events and persons described in these texts are based on fact, at the very least, they represent a form of *realistic ethnographic fiction*. The folklorist Satu Apo (2001:18) has used the term realistic ethnographic fiction to refer to writers who want to give a realistic depiction of their topic and at some level aim to provide a holistic view of the cultural thought and practice of a given group or community, even if the actual events and expressions they describe cannot be verified as fact. According to Apo, such literary sources are more trustworthy when they fulfil two conditions: the narrative deals with the culture in which the author himself was raised, and the writer is committed to a realistic (historically plausible) mode of presentation. It is the *holistic* descriptions of cultural thought and practice in these narratives which are particularly valuable and can provide unique insights into the culturally-shared meanings and social dynamics of that culture.

In this paper I ask: what new information regarding magic in Finland is provided by these unique recollected narratives? What do these texts tell us about the relationship between magic and the context of everyday life in which it was performed?

"The Secrets of Pekka's Wife Kaisa, a Folk Doctor and Magic-worker"

Frans Leivo was born the son of a former soldier and peddler in rural Western Finland. At the age of five, he began to weave the decorative string sold by his father. At the age of eight he learned to read and write, and by his own account proceeded to read everything he could find (Leivo 1918). He had to wait until age fifteen to begin primary school, and then trained under a painter and a coppersmith, eventually becoming a photographer and lay folklore collector. In 1930 at the age of 51, Leivo sent his manuscript to the FLS and prefaced it with the following introduction:

> I have written these so that the old customs of the people will remain to the world of science if the Finn. Lit. Society or those studying the past of the folk would like to receive for themselves some illumination. I have written it in the dialect of Nousiainen district, word for word, like it happened. Most of it I heard as a young boy while listening to conversations, and wrote it down secretly. In other words the advice and conversations are perfectly accurate. Only the names have been changed. Kaisa is the healer (*puaskari*) and magic-worker (*taikuri*) Kuppar Eeva, who has been mentioned [by me] many times before. In other words, this is the complete, practical truth.

From his preface it can be seen that Leivo received his information not in the usual manner of interviewing the magic-worker or her clients, but by secretly recording the conversations between them. Leivo later constructed his narrative by framing long sequences of dialogue within the context of a typical day in Kaisa's life which consisted of a series of visits from clients already known to her personally. His text is therefore built almost entirely from detailed exchanges of speech between the magic-worker and her clients. In constructing his text, Leivo's decision to situate magical knowledge within the context of everyday social interaction differs significantly from the approaches to folklore collection which prevailed in Leivo's day. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the belief, myth, or rite in question needed to be divorced from its context so that it could be compared, categorized, and typologized in order to contribute to both reconstructions of folkloristic origins and international folklore classification. Leivo opens his description with the first visit by an elderly man:

> Pekka's [wife] Kaisa was both feared and respected in the district. She was a folk doctor or healer (*puoskari*), a *tietäjä*, magic-worker (*taikuri*), and a minor witch (*noita*). Once it happened that somebody had stolen a ruble's worth of money from old man N.N. The old man suspected and accused a certain girl of the theft, but the girl became furious at this and promised to go to Kaisa and have the old man bewitched into a miserable state. The old man heard of her threat, and went first. Kaisa was sitting near the hearth brewing coffee when the old man stepped inside. "Good midday," said the old man. "God grant a good midday," answered Kaisa. "Who has given grandfather a fright?" "Well, some money has been stolen from me and I think that a certain girl took it." "We will see," said Kaisa. She went out and fetched a frog

Jaakko Lonkainen (born circa 1853) was a sorcerer (*tietäjä*) and blacksmith who lived in the same district of Eastern Finland as Pekka Vauhkonen. Here he plays a horn flute. Huikkola village, Kitee district. Courtesy of the Finnish National Board of Antiquities. (Photo: A. O. Väisänen.)

and walked around [the old man] three times clockwise and counterclockwise with the frog and then set the frog down on the ground and watched which way it jumped and said, "The thief comes from that direction." Then she poured alcohol over which spells had been uttered (*taiottu*) into a chalice and looked into it and showed it to the old man and said: "Look and see who the thief is, he is a fat man, not a girl." The old man was startled by this and said, "can you get [the money] back?" "Yes indeed", said Kaisa.

In Leivo's narrative Kaisa then proceeds to advise the old man to go to church before the following Sunday mass and place a needle in the church

bell ropes and say: "As many devils should come to torment you as these bells have been rung for the graves of [departed] souls." The old man then asks Kaisa if he should pay her something. She responds that no payment is necessary, but that if he wishes to leave a gift, then he should leave it on the table. The old man puts 10 kopecks on the table and leaves. The next Sunday, the old man carries out the rite as instructed and, as Leivo explains: "When the old man […] came home [after attending church], the money had been put behind his front door, the thief had heard of the old man's visit to Kaisa and, fearing Kaisa's magic powers, had brought the money back."[5] Leivo then continues to the next visit:

> …After "grandfather" had left, old woman Lehmälä arrived: "May God grant you a good day." "May God grant, may God grant," answered Kaisa, "how is grandmother today?" "Well, nothing special, but I had to come once again and ask you for advice, since I heard that people come when they need wisdom and help."

"Old woman Lehmälä" has a number of concerns on which she seeks Kaisa's advice: a cow does not come home from the forest,[6] her churn produces no butter, and another cow will not allow itself to be milked. Kaisa advises ritual remedies for the first two problems, but in response to the last, she tells her visitor that it is the result of "an evil person's words", to which the old woman replies that she has suspected as much. The old woman then offers her own opinion, telling Kaisa that a witch's arrow should be sent to kill the person who has tormented her innocent cow, and asks if Kaisa can do it. Kaisa, however, responds that she does not want to send a witch's arrow to kill the perpetrator, since it involves baptizing the arrow in God's name. She explains that there are other ways to cure the cow if only one knows who has caused the problem. She advises taking ashes from the home of the perpetrator and placing them inside soft bread which is then fed to the cow.

When the old woman then complains that her son feels a strong lust or yearning for a girl that he does not even like or respect, Kaisa declares that many girls feed young men something in drink to attract them, usually menstrual blood in coffee but sometimes other bodily substances in food.[7] Kaisa continues: "I have explained these matters to you because I know that you are older than me, that is why I dared to tell you. One is not allowed to explain them to a younger person, then one loses one's [magic] power…"

When the old woman asks how the love magic can be rendered ineffectual, Kaisa advises her to invite the girl to her home and throw coffee dregs in the girl's face and say, "drink now devil, I will give you drink, as you have given me drink earlier."

After the old woman leaves, Kaisa proceeds to advise six more visitors on remedies for supernatural rashes, cattle diseases, the stings of wasps and bumblebees, toothache, leg pain, chronic coughing, blisters and rashes, childhood illnesses, hypothermia, headaches, warts, and breast pain when nursing a baby. When Kaisa's husband joins the conversation with an anec-

dote regarding his own experience of toothache and how he was assisted by a place spirit, the conversation turns to place spirits residing in houses and outbuildings, and Kaisa discusses the difference between place spirits and spirits of the dead, until the suffering visitor reminds Kaisa that she still needs a remedy for her toothache. When a male visitor asks how he can have better success in trapping forest animals, Kaisa is unwilling to reveal any actual magic – such success is in God's hands, she emphasizes. She advises the disappointed visitor instead to lay his traps carefully and ensure that as little as possible of his own scent remains on the traps. To assist another visitor, Kaisa goes to look at her sick cow and diagnoses that it has been tormented by a nightmare (*painajainen*).

Leivo's narrative evokes a vivid picture of a community of individuals and their concerns over illness and non-natural events in daily life. In Leivo's account, Kaisa seems to have a neighbourly, comfortable relationship with her visitors, and she appears to be willing to listen patiently to their many complaints and worries. At times, Kaisa refuses to engage in magic when it goes against her personal moral code. Contrary to the stereotypical image of a female magic-worker, Kaisa is married, and although we glimpse her husband only briefly in the narrative, he appears to feel at ease in occasionally joining in the conversation between Kaisa and those seeking her advice.

It is worth noting that in Leivo's text, Kaisa and her visitors almost never explicitly refer to magic or sorcery by name. In this, his account resembles more closely an insider narrative than does Vauhkonen's, which uses explicit terms for magic (*taikailu*, *temppu*, *konsti*), and provides brief explanations of folk concepts which according to him are "probably unknown to most enlightened persons of today". In the discussions between Kaisa and her visitors, by contrast, the notion of magical causality is merely implied.

"Recollections of Magic Belief in my Childhood"

If Leivo's text illuminates the negotiation and transfer of magical knowledge from healer-sorcerer to client, Vauhkonen's text tells us what "ordinary" persons did with the magical knowledge they possessed or received from specialists, and how they understood it. Vauhkonen's descriptive narrative is the longest single text concerning magic practices I have found in the Folklore Archives. It contextualizes magic belief and practice in daily agrarian life and provides detailed descriptions of people's attitudes and expectations during rite performances.

Although some information exists regarding Frans Leivo's life, much less is known about Pekka Vauhkonen. Vauhkonen mentions in his text that he grew up on a farm owned by his family. He was probably born in the 1850s or 1860s in the village of Puhossalo, from which he wrote later in life. Al-

though it has not been possible to ascertain his precise date of birth, one Kalle Vauhkonen, the son of an itinerant labourer, was born in 1838 in the same village and was probably Pekka's father. Puhossalo was a village in the district of Kitee in North Karelia, from which have been recorded some of the most complex and archaic incantations and descriptions of magic rites (see also Siikala 2002:281–282). It is clear from his handwriting and writing style that Vauhkonen had received some education in his youth, probably even formal schooling. At the same time, his lyricism and use of alliteration in his prose reflects a familiarity with older conventions for composing traditional Kalevala-metre poetry. By his own account, Vauhkonen never practised magic as an adult, although he had an uncle who was a famous magic specialist, and he himself witnessed and participated in numerous magic rites carried out in his childhood home. Vauhkonen opens his recollections by writing:

> Both my parents believed strongly in magic, and trusted to wizardry and incantations. And my uncle was the best and most famous sorcerer (*poppa*) or wizard (*velho*) of his day and locality, even in the whole wide region. Just like the best doctors of today, he was driven around many districts healing the sick and diagnosing magical harm and illnesses originating from other sorts of causes (p. 1).

In April of 1922, the secretary of the FLS, E. A. Tunkelo, wrote Vauhkonen to ask for more information regarding whence Vauhkonen had learned his magic incantations. In response to Tunkelo's request, Vauhkonen sent to the FLS poems in traditional Kalevala metre which he himself had composed. In these poems, Vauhkonen described how he acquired his folkloric knowledge as a child from his family "in a backwoods cottage", and emphasized the rural poverty of his childhood by describing himself "as a wretched child with a sooty shirt" (see Stark 2006:128).

Like Leivo's text, Vauhkonen's manuscript is not divided into chapters or sections but rather represents one continuous narrative flow. However, the narrative can be thematically divided into twenty different sections, plus an opening introduction and a closing statement. These are: (1) Introduction/My uncle Pekka the sorcerer, (2) The *hittara* or *hikinenä*, (3) Divination, (4) Curing the *hittara's* infection, (5) A failed rite for removing toothache, (6) Supernatural infection from things related to death and water, (7) Great wizards and their paraphernalia, (8) A wizard (*velho*) rescues a small boy lost in the forest, (9) The forest "covers" an ox,[8] (10) "Closing" the forest, (11) "Breaking" someone's health and causing supernatural infection from the earth, (12) Curing abscesses, (13) Supernatural infection from the earth (*maahiainen*), (14) A rite to cure goitre, (15) A salt cure for warts as a joke, (16) Breaking someone's luck or health (*rikkeet*) and sending back the "dog", (17) Failed love magic, (18) Supernatural infection from sauna steam, (19) Rites for when cows are let out for the first time in spring, (20) Cattle diseases, (21) The beggar feared for his sorcery,

and (22) Closing words. In this paper, I focus on sections 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 16, and 22.[9]

Vauhkonen's manuscript not only describes but also traces out the logical connections between magical specialists, supranormal illness, divination, curing, sorcery and revenge, mysterious disappearances in and near the forest, magic related to courtship and marriage, and magic employed to protect cattle. Although Vauhkonen used his own dialectal terms for many of the supernatural beings and illnesses he discussed, his account closely follows other recorded descriptions of Finnish magic and the supernatural recorded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Stark 2006).

An important thematic thread which runs through Vauhkonen's account is supernatural infection from the environment, for which Vauhkonen uses different terms. One of these is *hittara*, which was, according to Vauhkonen, supernatural infection conceived of as an agent capable of intent:

> A *hittara* was generally a sort of invisible and inconceivable being, which was aggressive and ready to attack people, especially when [the victims] were frightened by something. The water spirit (*wesihiisi*) and *kalma* [= supernatural force linked to death] were great evil-doers in the empire of the *Hittara* (pp. 4–5).

Another term, commonly used in other descriptions of supernatural infection, was *kalma* (in Vauhkonen's text: *kalama*), which referred to supernatural infection from places and objects associated with death such as graveyards or cemetery soil (Jauhiainen 1998:126–128; see Stark 2002:46, 48–49). In addition to the forest and cemetery, supernatural infection could also result from contact with bodies of water, the earth, wind, and fire (Stark 2006:254–285). Infection was seen to be particularly likely to occur when the human victim of the infection had violated a norm so that the water, earth, fire or cemetery became angry, or if the human victim took fright when near the source of infection, which was thought to open the boundary between the self and the external world so that outside forces could penetrate the human body.[10] Vauhkonen provides an example from his childhood of a toothache believed to have been the result of infection by a water-dwelling *hittara*:

> Now comes to mind something laughable, the following case from my childhood. I had a terrible toothache which had continued for a long time. My parents tried to figure out, ponder and guess whence the *hittara* had infected me, had begun to gnaw at my teeth. Finally they decided that it had infected when I had gone swimming in a bay and nearly drowned about a kilometre and a half from our home. Into that bay emptied a small brook known for its evil, as a dwelling place for the *hittara*. Now there was nothing to do but go quickly to appease the *hittara*, to take it a bundle of twigs as a gift.
>
> On Sunday morning, before tasting a crumb of food – that is when the magic (*taika*) worked the best – my father hauled me onto his shoulders and left to carry his son to the bay. There I was supposed to hurl the magic bundle into the bay, once my father had first made a circle with it three times around my head. My attempt at

throwing it did not really succeed perfectly, since I was still not used to carrying out magic acts.

My father scolded me severely for having failed, and probably called me a blockhead, and believed that our magic (*taika*) was all for nothing, and would have utterly no effect. And in fact it brought no relief to my suffering at all. It hurt so badly that still now in my memory I can feel a terrible thudding in all of my teeth, even in those which didn't grow naturally but for which money was paid to have them artificially fitted.

Since my father was convinced that I was incapable of carrying out the magic (*konsti*) properly and that the magic had for this reason remained ineffective, we revisited that spot another time or two to renew the magic (*temppu*), but the *hittara* did not disappear even after that. The pain only continued.

So we had to come up with some new magic (*konsti*). Now my father carved three sticks from a piece of wood. I was supposed to use them to dig at the roots of my aching teeth so that they would be bloody. Then we took those sticks to the forest and used a hammer to drive them into the wood of a growing rowan tree. The *hittara* was thus finally nailed to the tree to "squeeze the tree, to pinch the rowan" (pp. 10–13).

This narrative and others like it in Vauhkonen's text suggest that incantations and magic rites most often intersected the lives of ordinary rural inhabitants in situations of illness or suffering. However, the failure of a magic rite to produce results was rarely grounds for losing faith in magical cures – not least because rural Finns had little choice but to rely on informal healing methods, since medical doctors were extremely few in relation to the rural population.[11] Another important reason for the persistence of faith in magic was that many explanations for illness involved *relationships* with supernatural agents rather than mechanical rites. If the rite failed, then the reason could be that the supernatural agent responsible had not been correctly identified or it had not been properly placated.[12] In some cases, it was believed that a sorcerer needed to be powerful enough to dominate and subdue supernatural agents of infection such as *hittara* and *kalma*, and Vauhkonen explained that one needed to force *obedience* from the illness-agent before healing could take place. The "wizards" referred to in his description below were famous *tietäjäs*, while the ineffective "little tricks" were procedures carried out by minor household healers:

…When often those little tricks were of no avail, then people complained, bewailed, and marvelled over what a strange tooth disease this was, since it obeyed no one and nothing. Such a disease might no longer be an ordinary one, brought about by a small *hittara*, rather, a strong *kalama* itself had attacked. That blackguard was not about to obey anything. There had to be an especially famous and skilful wizard in order for it to obey, and those kinds of wizards were quite rare. But uncle Pekka and a certain woman named Margetta, and Eerikäinen of Haso farm, they were the sort from whom *kalama*, even the Devil himself, fled (pp. 14–15).

According to Vauhkonen, magic specialists were believed to derive part of their power from the magic pouches they carried with them, which typically contained:

…small bones, three snake heads obtained in spring before St George's Day [April 23], a snake's assembly stone,[13] snakeskin, teeth and claws from a bear, bear grease, asafoetida herb (*pirun pihka*), arsenic, incense, and Ukko's soil, etc. etc. Ukko's soil is the sort of earth taken with an important person's knife from under one's left heel when thunder (*ukkonen*) rumbles for the first time in spring (p. 25).

Those who possessed magic pouches were "terribly dangerous" and could command fear and respect from others. As Vauhkonen explains, "[i]t wasn't good for anyone to make him or her angry, rather, he or she was someone to be flattered and fawned over" (p. 26, see also Stark 2006:174–175).

"Sending Back the Dog" to Magical Malefactors

Although "infection" from earth, forest, lakes, wells, fire or cemeteries was a common mode of explanation for illness,[14] not all supernatural illness was blamed on natural surroundings. Human agents were also seen to be capable of causing magical harm through sorcery. Vauhkonen, like many other persons who supplied information to the FLS Folklore Archives, referred to this magical harm caused by human agency as "breaking" (*rikkominen*), and described it as "one of the most terrible things that a malicious person could do to other persons using invisible power." Such "breaking", according to Vauhkonen, could be used to make another person become epileptic, go insane, or to cause him illness or suffering for the rest of his life.

In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Finland, when persons feared that they were victims of "breaking", they usually turned to a *tietäjä* for help in identifying the source of harm and retaliating against it. At this point, the identity of the malefactor was not always known. This was often precisely the reason why counter-sorcery was undertaken, since it was seen to be effective in identifying unknown culprits. It was widely believed that according to the natural laws of magic, counter-sorcery would automatically target the guilty and bypass the innocent, relieving the victim of the problem of actually having to identify his enemy (Stark 2006:180–186).

When a *tietäjä* performed counter-sorcery to punish the perpetrator of magical harm, it was thus believed that the magical harm itself (widely referred to as a "dog") would find its own way back to its sender or "master", regardless of whether this sender had been identified by the *tietäjä*. The "dog" was thought to attack its master or mistress even more furiously than it had attacked its original victim, causing sudden pain, illness, or even death, according to the *tietäjä's* instructions. At this point, the malefactor could be identified once word circulated through the village that someone had suddenly suffered an inexplicable attack of pain or illness. There exist at least fourteen narratives collected in Finland between 1897 and 1961 which describe the "dog" being sent back to its sender. These narratives describe the relationship between the victims and perpetrators of the magical

Magical objects used by Finnish sorcerers (*tietäjäs*) included (clockwise from top left corner): a dried, coiled snake (Karvia district), a dried frog (Noormarkku district), a bear's claw (Pomarkku district), a piece of bear's throat (Isojoki district), a tree branch grown naturally in the shape of a loop (Pomarkku district), hide from a bear's paw (Pomarkku district) and a birch ring (Sotkamo district). Courtesy of the Finnish National Board of Antiquities. (Photo: E. Nikkilä, 1932.)

harm, the perpetrator's motivation in inflicting magical harm, the concrete means (magical food or objects) by which the perpetrator sought to cause the harm, the victim's realization that the harm (for example illness or snakebite) arose from malevolent human agency, the question posed by the *tietäjä* as to whether the "dog" should be sent back to the perpetrator and if so, how severe should be its "bite", the victim's response to this question, and whether "sending back the dog" was effective in causing suffering and/or remorse in the perpetrator (see Stark 2006).

What is not provided in these accounts, however, are detailed descriptions of the *actual magic practices* carried out by both the original perpetrator and the *tietäjä* who sent back the magical harm. While information on the former is understandably scarce, since very few persons wished to admit to having performed harmful witchcraft, Vauhkonen provides a comprehensive description of how a magic specialist assisted his family by performing a magic rite to "send back the dog". To my knowledge, this is the only detailed account of such a rite in the Folklore Archives. Vauhkonen's account is given here in full:

…That brings to my mind a bigger, mind-blowing magic rite (*taikailu*), which was also carried out in the sauna at my home, when I was a child.

Once, the majority of the members of our household were feeling rather poorly. At that time, you see, nothing seemed to be going quite right in our life. Somebody had "broken" the entire household. It was therefore necessary to fetch a sorcerer from somewhere who would correct the problem, release us from this "breaking", send the dog to its home, as was said concerning release from "breaking".

That sort of sorcerer could be found some twenty or thirty kilometres from our farm, and so he was fetched. For smaller difficulties, "releasers" could be found from closer at hand, from one's own village, in fact, but none of them could release a person from more serious "breaking". For that, he had to be an entirely "toothy-outhed man",[15] a man who knew all the magic tricks, who could put the Devil himself in pincers, who could drive a knife into his heart.

And so! That sorcerer fetched from afar was, or at least pretended to be, the sort who was fully capable with his magic of making the Devil tremble in his trousers, of making the Evil One flee.

And so the sauna was heated and the entire group of us, from the father of the family to the smallest child, went to the sauna with the sorcerer. There the demon-frightener first bathed us, slapping each of us separately with a sauna whisk made of birch leaves, and at the same time reciting an incantation so that he foamed at the mouth.[16] Then he put each of us three times through a hoop fashioned from the blades of three scythes, first by lowering the hoop over each of us from head to foot two times, and then one time from bottom to top. While doing this trick, the sorcerer was in an extremely agitated state the entire time, but that was still nothing compared to what happened next. Now, you see, the sorcerer encircled each of our heads with a hunting knife, two times clockwise and one time counter-clockwise, and then in a fit of frenzied rage, hurled the knife into the sauna whisk lying on the floor, and then, holding the knife, flung the whisk out of the sauna window and against the cooking hut so that the wall of the cooking hut reverberated. Apparently in this way he flung out our tormentor, supposedly pierced to the core by the knife, thus sending the dog to its own home to bite and gnaw the person who had "broken" us.

That sorcery seemed to have been very effective. A certain person living not far from us was heard to have become so violently ill in the same moment that he[17] nearly died.

You see, a "dog" sent home in the proper manner was exceedingly severe, it could kill the "breaker" where he stood, depending entirely on what the person who sent it home wanted it to do. The sorcerer, in fact, usually asked the person he cured, from whom he sent the dog home to set it upon the "breaker", how severe should be the bite of the dog sent home, should it kill right away, or merely torment?

Usually people were sufficiently merciful towards the "breaker", so that his life was spared, but otherwise to be dealt with as harshly as possible, since he had worked his magic in the first place without reason, in order to harm another. Therefore that worthless lout should receive his just reward, and so be less willing to start bewitching a second time.

The release of our household from the "breaking" occurred in the winter. In the spring, we boys found the sauna whisk which had been thrown from the sauna to the cooking hut, about a half kilometre from our farm, near the road that led to the cottagers who lived on our land. Apparently our sorcerer had taken it there, had given the "dog" a ride that distance from our home. When we took the whisk apart, we found inside of it a forked piece of alder wood about six inches long, and a bundle of alder twigs wrapped in the red string usually used for working magic.

That forked piece of alder wood in the whisk was naturally meant to be the person whom the "dog" was sent back to bite. It was at that piece of alder that the sorcerer had aimed the thrust of his knife at the same time that he had chanted the incantation and glared and distorted his face in such a horrible manner.

I still remember the words of the incantation:

"Go, dog, to your home / to your master by supper / to your mistress by breakfast / to the rest of your family by mealtime / to bite, to gnaw / to cause extreme pain / Go far from the blameless / skirt 'round the innocent / go past the decent people (pp. 52–59)."[18]

The credibility of this narrative, which provides an unusually detailed account of counter-sorcery carried out by a *tietäjä*, is supported by the fact that the *tietäjä's* aggressive demeanour and dramatic ritual actions adhere closely to numerous other portrayals of *tietäjäs* going all the way back to the eighteenth century (Siikala 2002:242–244). The purpose and meaning of the rite described in this narrative could be analysed using explanatory models related to social conflict, psychological strain, and phenomenological crisis, among others.[19] The question of how Vauhkonen himself understood the events depicted in this story, however, is not easy to answer. Vauhkonen's text as a whole is carefully – and I would say deliberately – crafted so as to prevent the reader from drawing any firm conclusions regarding the author's interpretation of his own recollections, and it is to this aspect of his text that I turn next.

Ambivalence, Humour, and Open-ended Interpretation

The instructions given by the staff at the FLS Folklore Archives to lay folklore collectors in the late nineteenth century make it clear that the Archives never intended for lay collectors in the countryside to send stories related to magic that they or others considered to be "true". Instead, the Archives were explicit in seeking to collect traditional, fictive "tales" with crystallized belief legend motifs (Virtanen 1982:183). The *Taikanuotta* (Magic Net) collector's guide, reprinted three times between 1885 and 1936, suggested that lay collectors of magic should tell the elderly persons they interviewed that it was no longer necessary to keep their magic knowledge a secret because no one in modern times believed in it:

… But pointing out to magic informants that they don't need the magic anymore and that people today, or so they say, neither believe nor adhere to it, but rather let it be recorded as a memory left over from the old days, may be a good introduction, a way to get started among strangers and those who are shy (Mustonen 1894:3–4).

In defiance of the Archives' stance on the truth value of magic-related narratives, however, many rural inhabitants who sent folklore to the Archives wrote of their own personal encounters with the supernatural as "absolutely true", and sought to convince the archival staff that the events described in their stories had, in fact, actually happened (Stark 2006:107–108). Vauhko-

nen's approach, by contrast, was to steer between these two extremes and resist a final designation of his narrative as either fact or fiction. He did this by presenting open-ended mysteries, characters with ambivalent attitudes, and ridiculous or tragicomic situations. This is true not only of the many sub-narratives within Vauhkonen's recollected narrative, but also of Vauhkonen's expressed attitude towards his narrative as a whole. On the one hand, Vauhkonen claimed to be a disbeliever who laughed at magic. At one point, when describing a magic rite for curing warts that he recommended as a joke to his friend, he writes: "I had never tried that magic myself, I had only heard it talked about, and of course I didn't believe it any more than I believe in the usefulness of any other sort of magic, I just advised my friend to try it in jest, purely as a joke" (p. 50). Yet he also qualified his scepticism at several points. For example, after depicting a situation in which a sorcerer's magic led to the finding of a small boy lost in the forest, Vauhkonen wrote: "As to the curiousness of that event, even the person who does not believe in magic, nor is blinded too much by any other delusions, must admit that there was something remarkably mysterious, incomprehensible even to the great wisdom of the modern age, in that occurrence" (p. 32).

Vauhkonen did not only express his own ambivalence towards the efficacy of magic, but also described his sorcerer-uncle as both *believing and disbelieving* in the magic that he himself performed. In describing the *lempi*-raising magic[20] performed in the sauna by Vauhkonen's uncle to make unmarried girls more attractive in the eyes of potential suitors, Vauhkonen explained:

> …there were more than a few girls for whom Uncle Pekka raised their *lempi*, chanted marriage-luck over them and bathed them. Many daughters in neighbouring parishes who were approaching twenty years of age and had not yet been married used Uncle Pekka's *lempi* magic and felt the slap of the bathing whisk. Many bundles of pasties and fatty pork pies, and many sorts of other good things came to Uncle as payment for finding a husband, chanting *lempi* incantations and *lempi*-bathing. It suited Uncle to eat and laugh under his breath at people's craziness even though he himself – at least to some extent – believed in the efficacy of his magic, the powers of his incantations, as sensible a man as Pekka was otherwise. He was, you see, still a child of his time. How much Uncle Pekka believed in wizardry, I will demonstrate by mentioning the following account… (pp. 1–2).

On the one hand, Vauhkonen expressed an interest in folk beliefs and sought to demonstrate to his readers that there was a causal connection between magic rites and their tangible consequences, even if this connection was inexplicable from a modern perspective. For example, the Vauhkonen family's ox had been lost in the forest for three days before a neighbouring farm master was fetched to "bind" the forest (typically done by tying two saplings together), which was believed to force the forest to release the ox. Vauhkonen describes what happened next:

You see, I remember that event precisely as it happened. The person who bound the forest barely had time to return to the farmyard after working his magic – and he was not away on that trip for more than twenty minutes – when my mother, who had left the farmyard later than the "binder" to search for her ox, came back in tears and announced that, her eyes having been opened, she had found the ox [dead] (pp. 38–39).

Vauhkonen also describes how the large group of people who had been searching for the ox for several days reacted to this event: "When the ox was found, the whole group of us stood around hesitantly, talked about and wondered at it, and there was a lot to wonder about, for as ridiculous and absurd as it seems, in that episode there was an oddly mysterious coincidence between the closing of the forest and the finding of the ox" (p. 38). Vauhkonen relates a similar attitude of open-minded wonder in his account of how his parents worked magic to cure him of painful boils which had suddenly appeared on his stomach as a child:

In such a way I was cured of my boils. And each person can either believe, or disbelieve, in the efficacy of that magic. But nevertheless I must, in the name of all truth and without mocking the faith of my parents, say that my pain ceased and the abscesses slowly diminished with no discharge at all. And perhaps it is no miracle after all if our magic worked. For there we were, the whole trinity of father, mother, and son believing in the efficacy of our magic and as we know it is precisely faith which moves mountains, let alone makes those sorts of little boils to recede (pp. 44–45).

By contrast, in some places Vauhkonen also dismissed and ridiculed magic rites, and argued that modern rationality and enlightenment represented positive progress. In his "Closing Words", he explained:

This way of life, in which darkness and the powers of evil were feared, was still lived at the end of the nineteenth century and is still lived today in many places in the Finnish backwoods. Of course, modern education (*sivistys*) has to a great extent shoved aside the useless tricks of the era of magic (*taikailu*), but many ploughmen of the light of enlightenment and sowers of the seeds of enlightenment (*valistus*) are still needed, before our people are everywhere weaned away from belief in magic, from fear of the magical harm (*rikkomiset*) of others and all sorts of other magic-doings (*taikailu*) (p. 78).

Unlike Leivo, who merely reported a series of everyday conversations about magic without inserting himself into the narrative or taking a stance regarding its truth value, Vauhkonen's narrative can be seen as steering a careful path through the ideological struggle fought between the FLS staff and rural respondents regarding the truth status of magic narratives. One of the key devices used by Vauhkonen to express his ambivalence towards belief in magic and to resist his narratives being typecast as either truth or fiction was *humour*. Vauhkonen's manuscript contains one narrative clearly composed for comic effect (17) as well as two personal experience narratives in which Vauhkonen tells how the events struck him as humorous (15, 19). Vauhkonen suggests, for instance, that he heard many stories of *lempi*-raising rites designed to interest suitors in a girl, and recounts one of these in his manu-

script. In this story, the male protagonist is not intimidated by the love magic directed against him, and moreover, the elderly female performer of the ritual is made the ridiculous butt of humour through her speech impediment and the undignified antics of the ritual itself (pp. 60–63; Stark 1998:273–274). In another anecdote, Vauhkonen describes his reactions on one occasion on which a farm mistress performed a rite to protect her cattle in which she stood over the cowshed doorway with legs spread so that the cows could walk underneath her one by one.[21] When a particularly tall cow almost knocked the mistress off her perch, Vauhkonen reported:

> That event made us onlookers grin, even snigger. We did not, you see, approve of this sort of triumphal arch, and for that reason we were so ready to laugh at the tricks played by the cow. You see, it was not any kind of fun to watch a puny little old woman spread her legs and strain to stretch them over the wide doorway, and what's more, those acts of magic already seemed to us young folk, people of the modern age, to be wasted effort, disgraceful nonsense (pp. 69–70).

The humorous depictions of persons and situations in Vauhkonen's narratives may be explained in part by the fact that by the time he reached adulthood, he had internalized a more modern perspective which equated folk belief with ignorance. Another reason for Vauhkonen's humour, however, may have to do with the political nature of magic: one reason why magic was both narrated and listened to was that it conferred social power on the listener through possession of secret knowledge (Luhrmann 1989; Stark-Arola 1998:39–43; Stark 2006:206–208). As such, magic was deeply interwoven with everyday forms of power and their contestation, including gendered power relations. I have elsewhere analysed how humorous magic stories were narrated by men to render ridiculous those magic rites that women used for self-empowerment (Stark-Arola 1998:271). Humorous anecdotes told by men about women's magic functioned as a way to dismiss it to the realm of the foolish and inconsequential, as well as condemn women's magic which contravened social values but was secret and therefore difficult to criticize directly.

Conclusion

Leivo's and Vauhkonen's narratives represent different kinds of key texts, each providing a distinctive perspective on how magic rites and beliefs were contextualized and understood within rural communities and families. In the early history of folklore collection, folkloric knowledge surrounding magic tended to be treated as discrete episodes, objects, or units suitable for comparison by detaching them from experiential reality and the flow of everyday social interaction. Leivo and Vauhkonen, by contrast, offered broader reconstructions of the flow of social practices within which magic rites and beliefs were situated. Both writers attempted to weave narratives which

would introduce the widest possible variety of different types of magic and the crises which motivated them. In Leivo's text, the discursive flow of social interaction is reconstructed from a single healer's point of view, whereas Vauhkonen's text combines personal embodied experience and reflections on magical knowledge to *reconstruct webs of cognitive association* intended to approximate the ways in which late nineteenth-century rural Eastern Finnish inhabitants understood the world of magic themes, rites, and beliefs to be organized into a meaningful whole.

When seen from the vantage point of Leivo's narrative, the tens of thousands of memorates and folk beliefs on magic and witchcraft in the FLS Folklore Archives become more clearly visible for what they are: mere fragments detached from the *everyday flow of conversation* regarding the supernatural. When seen from the vantage point of Vauhkonen's narrative, these same archived texts appear as isolated pieces of a broader, logically connected and culturally shared *mental web of magical knowledge*. Both narratives draw our attention to the fact that magic was seamlessly interwoven with mundane practice and conversation. From their perspective, magic in nineteenth-century rural Finland looks less like the awe-inspiring secrets of a privileged few and more like daily narrated cultural knowledge subjected to collective deliberation, negotiation, and experimentation.

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[1] The terms *commoner* and *common folk* are used in this study to refer to those individuals who had to perform physical labour for a living, either in agriculture or skilled craftsmanship.
[2] In Finnish: *Kansanomainen lääkäri ja taikuri, eli Pekan Kaisan salaisuudet*.
[3] In Finnish: *Muistelmia lapsuusaikani taikauskosta.*
[4] All quotations from these texts have been translated from Finnish by me. The archival reference for Leivo's text is SKS KRA Nousiainen. 1930. Frans Leivo 25, and for Vauhkonen's text is SKS KRA Kitee. 1921. Pekka Vauhkonen VK 107:1. I refer to both texts henceforth using the authors' last names. Leivo's text is not paginated and for this reason I do not refer to pages in the manuscript when quoting from it.
[5] For more on the use of rumours of counter-sorcery to intimidate thieves, see Thomas 1973: 260; Stark 2006:190–193.
[6] It was typical in the nineteenth century for cows to be allowed to graze in or at the edges of the forest during the day, after which they came home in the evenings to be milked.
[7] For more on this type of love magic, see Stark-Arola 1998:211–223
[8] It was believed that the forest could intentionally trap a person, cow or horse within it so that the lost person could not find their way back to the "world of people" and searchers could not see the lost person or animal even if they walked right past it. A *tietäjä* could release the trapped person or animal by "binding" or "closing" the forest (see Stark 2006:357–380).
[9] For discussion regarding other sections of Vauhkonen's text, see Stark-Arola 1998:207; Stark 2006:113–114, 174–175, 372–373.
[10] For more on this, see Stark 2006:269–275.
[11] As late as 1916, there was still only one doctor per 13,500 inhabitants in the Finnish countryside (Konttinen 1991:151–152). Folk healers remained highly popular in Finland until at least the 1940s (Stark 2006: 315–356).

[12] This is particularly true of Orthodox Karelia on Finland's eastern border, whereas in Lutheran Finland, magic specialists strove to dominate and subdue supernatural illness agents rather than placate them through apologies and gifts (Stark 2002:81–88).

[13] According to Finnish folk belief, snakes gathered to hold their general assembly in a fixed place where there was a round or egg-shaped stone. It was believed that the person who found and took possession of such a stone would have a powerful tool for magic (see Jauhiainen 1998: 319; Stark 2006:190–191).

[14] For more on infection from entities in the natural environment, see Stark 2002:77–110; 2006: 254–281.

[15] Only *tietäjäs* who still had their teeth were considered to be supernaturally or magically powerful (see Stark 2006:280, 287–288, 306–307).

[16] Bathing of persons in the sauna was a common ritual activity and was intended to cleanse persons of supernatural infection and magical harm. Foaming at the mouth was part of the *tietäjä*'s performance of anger and frenzy, which could also include shouting, spitting, leaping and stamping of feet (Stark 2006:290–291).

[17] The non-gendered Finnish pronoun *hän* here does not indicate whether the supposed perpetrator of the sorcery was male or female.

[18] In Finnish: *Mene koira kotiisi isäntäs iltasella emäntäs aamuselle muun perees murkinalle, puremaan, jäytämään, kipeästi kivistämään. Mene syrjin syyttömistä, vierite viattomista, ohi kunnon ihmisistä.*

[19] See Stark 2006:146–223.

[20] The term *lempi* referred to a girl's attractiveness in the eyes of potential suitors, and if she was of marriageable age but no suitors had come to court her, then it was thought that she did not possess *lempi* in sufficient quantity. This could be remedied by a rite carried out in the sauna or near a natural spring, in which a *tietäjä* or older woman versed in the proper incantations could encourage the girl's *lempi* to "rise" and spread over a wide geographical area in order to signal distant suitors to seek out the girl. See Stark-Arola 1998:124–125, 132–138; Stark 2006: 428–431, 441–441.

[21] It was believed that the supernatural force emanating from a woman's genitals would protect her cattle from harm while they grazed near the forest. Such rites were performed when letting cows out to pasture for the first time in spring (see Stark-Arola 1998:166–168).

Meeting Hardship, Illness and Malice

Valter W. Forsblom and His Documentation of Healing Practices in Swedish-Speaking Finland 1913–1917

Catharina Raudvere

Witchcraft and magic may be defined in the broadest sense as beliefs and rituals that attribute skills and insights to some people who thereby are thought to have the ability to master forces of clandestine origin: forces possible to identify through their consequences for everyday life, but not visible or known of in detail by ordinary people. The use of the term witchcraft usually also implies some kind of public denouncement and arouses associations with accusations and trials, while magic has a partly different set of additional associations that also include the world of learning during the Renaissance and the early modern period. The Scandinavian vernacular terminology of witchcraft and magic (*trolldom* or *häxeri*) is in many respects affected by the witch-hunting of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Oja 1999:52–120; Lennersand and Oja 2006), which also introduced the popular use of the word *häxa*/*hexe* that lingered on in popular belief. The effect of a social trauma like the witch trials must be taken into consideration when long-term perspectives on magical practices are argued for on the basis of later folklore records. The vernacular vocabulary for extraordinary insights and abilities to heal and destroy is rich and detailed, and not always possible to translate into general concepts like witchcraft and magic (Raudvere 2002:80–90, 107–108).

As this article attempts to show that – with a Finnish-Swedish example of a collection that is extraordinary in several respects – the moral valuation of cunning knowledge and deeds, as reflected in Scandinavian folklore records from around the year 1900, was never unambiguous.[1] It was highly dependent on the position of the parties involved in the ritual process, and their different intentions and expectations. A major theme of the folklore records about witchcraft concerns attacks of illness against humans and animals, and the methods for repelling these. The same assumptions about illness and the same ceremonies were used with very different intentions and results. In this article I will discuss how illness and misfortune in Nordic folk beliefs were conceptualized in records of ritual practices as the primary point of de-

parture. The emphasis this time is on the recorder as a producer of texts and his analytical framework rather than world view of the informants. Valter W. Forsblom (1888–1960) documented healing practices in Swedish-speaking areas of Finland between 1913 and 1917. Ten years later he edited his material for one of the volumes of *Finlands svenska folkdiktning* (Forsblom 1927), in which he included most of his collected corpus.[2] The material is amongst the most valuable kept in Scandinavian archives, and few other collections can match the collector's sense for coherence in the choice of themes for the interviews, the detailed photographic documentation, and self-reflective summaries in the reports after each field trip. Today, the archive of the Society for Swedish Literature in Finland houses the records and related materials (Steinby 1985:163–169; Wolf-Knuts 1999; Ekrem *et al*. 2014:22–197).[3]

Forsblom's collections will be discussed, not strictly from a witchcraft perspective only, but for how it can bear witness to a world view and a vernacular anthropology that formed the basis for ritual strategies, providing tools to cope with illness, misfortune, and attacks of envy and malice. The material features Christian concepts (some with obvious Catholic origins) and ritual behaviour blended with pre-/non-Christian. To Forsblom and his contemporaries long-term continuity over the centuries was the self-evident perspective on how to read the material over time. The texts and photographs could, however, equally well be read as rural-culture testimony from the First World War era. *Trolldom* is perhaps not the most frequently used term in the cases presented in the material, as the local terminology is varied and often specific when characterizing the disease. Nonetheless, these diagnoses belong to a conceptual framework providing a blend of comprehensible explanations and fantastic elements in combination with elaborate healing practices. The witchcraft theme of this special issue on magic and texts also provides an opportunity to reflect upon one's own discipline: its biases, its pre-assumptions, its links as well as its missed opportunities in regard to interdisciplinary contacts. Alongside the questions about Finland-Swedish healing practices, I therefore also briefly discuss the role of folk belief materials in my own dicipline, the history of religions.

Confronting Evil and Illness

To get a taste of the character of the Forsblom collection, a brief example will be presented as an introduction. In the western, Swedish-speaking parts of Finland, diverse psychological symptoms such as unease, anxiety and fatigue were given the name "mother-illness" (*modersjukan*, refering to the uterus) in the pre-modern era. Forsblom commented on the name and beliefs connected to "mother-illness", noting that it was thought to be caused by sorrow and misfortune, or tapeworms: in both cases it was located in the belly and called for an explanation as to who had sent the malady. Irrespective

of the diffuse symptoms, a tangible sign of intrusion is sought. "Mother-illness" was associated with persistent physical and psychological pain for the helpless victim, and needed the intercession of a third party in the drama: the healer. In the following vocative charm, the speaking voice in the text addresses the ill, and commands the illness that ravages the suffering body to be bound:[4]

Mother-Ill
In your belly
Be in peace
There you shall live
Be content
Like iron and steel
In the name of the Father, Son a. t. H. S. [and the Holy Spirit]
(Sideby 1913, printed in Forsblom 1927:243).[5]

The formula is brusque and straightforward in its tone, and the direct command to the illness is followed by some rather concrete instructions that set the stage and define the roles. Nevertheless, its objective is positive. The focus is on how to correct what has been put in disorder. The source of malice (the act of *trolldom* or *häxeri*) remains obscure and the identification/accusation element of the witch trials is absent. The patient's navel is to be massaged with lard, and the sufferer is also to be offered heated vodka or warm coffee. Local beliefs determine the illness as situated in the stomach, in accordance with the view that the malady was caused by an intruding force leaving some mark on the order. The ritual treatment methods are common and follow the pattern of the geographical area.

As a charm, the formula conforms to a genre that is known from all over Scandinavia and large parts of northern Europe – in both form and content (Klintberg 1965:39–57; 1978; 2000). There is a rich documentation of both similar wording and ritual action, especially from Finland, in both Swedish and Finnish (Wolf-Knuts 2004; 2009). The confrontational method, which also carries an implicit diagnosis of the situation in its subtext, is known in Old Norse literature and in later legends and charms (Raudvere 1993: 157–180; 2003:25–87, 89–94, 157–162). If briefly summarized, the charms in Forsblom's collection could be said to represent a mode of handling a critical situation: beliefs and customary rituals that Forsblom struggled to place in two different categories. The ritual requisites are quite conventional, and it is questionable whether the recorded text should be read as a testimony of an observed ritual event, or if we are encountering a narrative definitely based on actually practised healing ceremonies, or perhaps even a post-ritual narrative reinforced by the symbolism of significant substances present in many folk belief narratives in Scandinavia: for example blood, milk, vodka, urine, iron, the form of a star or a pentagram, or the sign of the cross.

The Forsblom collection not only highlights the zone between narration and ritual, it is a usable tool when asking what kind of religious representations are used by different academic disciplines. The history of religions discipline has in general paid far too little attention to these kinds of expressions of everyday religion. Some would say that the recorded charm quoted is not a religious document at all, but folk poetry; others would perhaps argue that the concluding Trinitarian blessing is merely a formulaic way of ending the reading, not an expression of belief. Or is it a means to integrate the healing ritual within the framework of the Church? Although folk beliefs formed an important part of the early days of the discipline when it grew away from theology and nearer to new disciplines like ethnography and anthropology, the national ambitions to collect folk beliefs never played the same role in the history of religions as more distantly located materials or the study of the holy scriptures of the world religions.

The Study of Religion and Its Use of Folk Belief Materials

In Finland and Estonia the link between the history of religions and folkloristics is unique, as it has been developed in long-term academic work and has thrived to the present day. This interdisciplinary approach is represented by names such as Anna-Leena Siikala, Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, Laura Stark and Lotte Tarka in Finland, Marja-Liisa Keinänen in Sweden, and Ülo Valk in Estonia. It is otherwise, and regrettably, a path untrodden in Scandinavian religious studies, with some exceptions. However, a reawakened, and increasing, interest is evident in Scandinavia, and international research bears witness to a new wave of anthropological studies of Christianity that include conceptions of witchcraft, demons, saints and the dead, without dichotomizing these in relation to institutionalized Christianity. Such a context would give space to the expressions of everyday religion from a historical perspective as well.

In the wake of the linguistic turn and post-structuralist deconstruction that highlighted the value of the fragment as a valuable source in its own right, one would think that the Scandinavian folklore records would find new readers and users. Most of the archive material could not be said to be anything but fragments in relation to their wider cultural and social context, but it does not mean that it is without source value when approaching religious life in pre-modern periods. There are implicit representations of a world view in the kind of material Forsblom collected and the local terminology – with its intricate names for illnesses and healing processes – provided explanations of cause and effect. Analyses of the seemingly banal can actually reveal significant contemporaneous reflection on the human condition.

From this perspective, Marion Bowman and Ülo Valk's (2012) discussion of vernacular religion is most interesting. The term puts the focus on

Åkers mor prepares remedies against a troll shot (*flojest*), Vörå 1916 (SLS 267:17). © Society of Swedish Literature in Finland: The Archives of Folk Culture. (Photo: Valter W. Forsblom.)

expressive forms outside the established religious institutions, ones that can embrace elements of very different origin. As the main purpose of Scandinavian folk religion was not to preach and convince, but to solve problems and provide meaning to what otherwise could not be explained, the broad repertoire was also an advantage for the performer, who could thereby adjust to the situation and audience. The recorded folk beliefs do not necessarily relate to religion or mythology in a structural sense, but conceptions and life-worlds connected to rural life before the mechanization of agriculture and early industrialization – though filtered through the collectors' ambitions and attitudes when turning literature into written archive records classified according to narrative motifs. This must also be included in order to facilitate a broader understanding of how meaning was constructed and existential issues solved not as a parallel religious universe, but in relation to the teachings and rituals of the Church.

Explanations for discomfort, illness and death played a dominant role in Scandinavian folk religion, and it provided instructions on how to cope with misfortune, as well as how to protect the limited resources from distant attacks. These instructions also implicitly transmitted an image of the forces and power relations that defined human contact with the Christian God, the dead, fate and, moreover, the evil desires of cunning people and, conse-

quently, people's dependence on healers. The following was something to be read aloud to both humans and cattle targeted by "shots": i.e. missiles of evil and envy (Honko 1959:83–146) that had entered their bodies:

For in-shot
For out-shot
Through fire
Wind
Water
And earth
(Korsnäs 1915, printed in Forsblom 1927:278).[6]

This incantation that refers to the four elements to strengthen its case provides further ritual instructions for reading it: "To be read three times over freshly-milked milk." Similar charms from the same area have even more detailed instructions and could indicate that the substance had to come from a one-coloured cow or state that the substance in use was to be ingested by the sick person and the remainder to be rubbed into the skin. In its own compact way this charm tells us of an attack that cannot be stopped even by any of the elements. Only direct action based on the same kind of cunning wisdom could reverse the situation.

The Collector and the Collections

Most archived folk belief collections are based on circulated questionnaires: too often with leading questions followed by heavily edited answers that confirm preconceived themes and motifs with little left of the local context. Valter W. Forsblom is different, as his work sprang from an interest in some concrete practices and his recording was done in a limited geographical area and over a (comparatively) short period of time. He nevertheless had time to go back to gather additional material and could thereby refine his methodology. Rather than confirming an established belief motif, his aim was to seek variations of a certain curing practice. The beliefs entered the records as explanations for the action taken.

The fieldwork was done during Forsblom's days as a student and represents his first attempts to interview people. The first collection from the summer of 1913 was handed in to the Society for Swedish Literature in Finland on the collector's own initiative. Later he wrote: "My commitment was to collect the purely folkloristic material, the charms, as well as the ethnographic material, the ceremonies and the practices, that are used when curing illnesses" (1927:VII).[7] Forsblom studied ethnography and worked while an undergraduate at the Ethnographic Museum in Helsinki (Ekrem 2014; Wolf-Knuts 1991:31). Among his tutors were Kaarle Krohn, and this leading folklorist held Forsblom in high esteem and encouraged further fieldwork, as did Ernst Lagus. That said, Forsblom seems to have had an inde-

Valter W. Forsblom with one of his informants, Lurkun, in Oravais during his fieldwork in the summer of 1916 (SLS 267:18). © Society of Swedish Literature in Finland: The Archives of Folk Culture. (Photo: Valter W. Forsblom.)

pendent mind and never pursued an academic career, neither at the university nor at any of the Finnish archives. He graduated from Helsinki University in 1917, but never went on to write a doctoral thesis, which is surprising given the rich materials he had collected. His interest in documenting folk medicine and related beliefs was, it seems, limited to the early years, and he worked as an amanuensis at the Society in charge of its folklore archives from 1927 to 1939. From 1943, Forsblom was employed as an officer at the post and telegraph administration.

Forsblom amassed five large collections related to healing practices. The first was assembled on his own initiative for "ethnographic purposes" as he wrote when submitting it in the autumn of 1913 to the Society, which immediately recognized the quality of his endeavours. He was awarded 200 Finnish marks for his work and trusted by the board to lead an ethnographic expedition the following summer to southern Ostrobothnia, tasked with documenting rural architecture. However, Forsblom concurrently took the opportunity to record folk medicine when finding time, aided by a camera with which the expedition had been equipped. This new tool profoundly influenced his documentation methods, and over the following three years, Forsblom was able to focus on folk medicine with the help of a camera. His

collections relating to healing grew larger for every summer, and he developed an increasingly critical awareness of the limitations to his goal of comprehending all the aspects of a single ritual event: so fugitive and still so complex. Forsblom was highly aware of the fact that the words he recorded had their function in an oral context, and that most often the words were inseparably embedded in ritual practice. This perhaps serves as an explanation for his enthusiasm for photo-documentation, and his struggle with the board of the Society to obtain further funding, or at least be reimbursed for his expenses.

As early as in his first report from 1913, and indeed thereafter, Forsblom repeatedly emphasizes that the old traditions are rejected by young people, who are influenced by school education, newspapers and modern thinking (Forsblom 1913; 1914; 1915). This in turn engenders reluctance by old healers to reveal their knowledge and abilities, anticipating that they might be ridiculed. Forsblom's further correspondence with the Society bears witness to the fact that the board developed an admiration for this student's ability to gain the trust of his informants, to the extent that they could discuss such sensitive topics as *trolldom*-related topics with him. That said, we can discern from his reports that he somewhat strained the limits of their willingness to discuss such matters.

Forsblom admits that he sometimes has adapted to this: he has played along and scorned modern medicine, instead praising old methods, and has promised not to show his collection to the local clergymen or the youth. This rescue work, according to Forsblom, was the fundamental value of the collecting activities. His conviction is that the old traditions are threatened by modernity, and that the defenders of change and development cut their link with the past as a result of pure ignorance. His main criticism is, however, directed at the Church "that has made itself known for its zealous ambition to eradicate superstition [*vidskepelse*] from the world […] but – luckily for scientific research – only with all too limited results" (Forsblom 1914: XLVII).[8] The attacks on the Church from an otherwise quite conservative person could perhaps seem surprising, but are based on Forsblom's experience of the impact of this institution and education on folk medicine. Those who knew and used this rich tapestry of words and deeds he had encountered and admired tended to conceal it (and not only to retain the magic of the secrecy of their procedures) from the eyes of the modern: personified by the priest, the teacher and other educated people. This means that some of the charms are "defective or all together truncated. (Surprisingly enough, these truncated charms have been used with success)" as Forsblom wrote about their fragmentary condition (1913:XLII).[9] He clearly identified himself with an academic position that aimed at recognizing tradition unspoilt by both the Church and modern living conditions.

The work of Valter W. Forsblom should not be idealized; it has its biases

and limitations. He was a child of his time and an evolutionist: the pre-Christian elements are an assumption in his work, not the result of investigation, and they have their given place on a chronological line. Forsblom had a special interest in charms, with their combination of both Christian and pre-/non-Christian elements; and he considered them ancient in form and content, thereby providing insight into the true religion of the folk beyond the institutional influences from the Church. In his own words, the study of these practices was "a unique opportunity to get insight into the opinions and beliefs of the peasantry, precisely in the area where religion and magic meet; an area people today rarely want to expose to everyone's gaze" (1913:XLI).[10] Still, they were distinctly tied to problems and situations in the present. Forsblom's chronological framework for interpretation alternated between the timeless, and in the view of his time the authentic, and the appearance of modern society that put the old remedies and practices in a new light. Even if his comments emphasize the former, it is apparent that he had an open eye for the latter.

The Diagnosis, the Healer and the Performance

Of all the folk medicine terms Forsblom provides in his work, two related concepts are of particular importance. The healer or the performer is an *omlagare*, and the act or technique is called *omlagning* or *omlagelse*; or, used in a verbal construction, *att laga om*. It means to attend, with a certain accentuation of making sure that the wrong is reversed, i.e. putting something back into its original or natural order. From this perspective illness was understood as an erroneous state and the healing process was a method to restore balance. The terminology carries with it a basic comprehension of illness as an outside intrusion into the body. The cases discussed below will confirm how it most often was thought that a tangible object had entered the body (Honko 1959).

As seen in the quotations above, the sender is mostly only an implicit presence in the charms. But in the formula below, a recurring personification is the highly tangible source of illness: Pest ("Plague") himself. In contrast to the above, neither the illness nor the affected is clearly defined. The character seems to represent a strong collective memory of epidemic catastrophes both far back in history and more recent (Honko 1958:151–192). The gendered Pest (in other records Pestborg) is portrayed with corporal features, walking and answering when confronted by Christ. The narrative scene is dominated by the two combatants and their clash.

Christ and Peter came walking along a road
Then he met Pest
Then Christ said:
Where is Pest going?

Into the flesh and bone of people
No, Christ said
Another road you will take
Under an earthbound stone
Where no green grass is growing
There you shall go
And stand
Like Christ stood on the cross
In the name of the Father, and the Son, a. t. H. S. [and the Holy Spirit].
To be read in one breath over vodka or unfiltered milk
(Vörå 1916, printed in Forsblom 1927:269–270).[11]

Only a few lines long, this charm is close to a folk legend with its narrative construction in several sequences and a dialogue. The meeting scene and the confrontation are known from charms all over Europe (Roper 2004; 2009). Christ is depicted as the active healer, the one who confronts the source of the pest shot with a long instruction of where to go instead of entering the bodies of humans. The space under the earthbound stone appears to be a barren place, perhaps in Hell or nearby, and Pest – in contrast to Christ, perhaps even to be identified with the Devil – receives a just punishment.

In his introduction to the printed volume on magical folk medicine, Forsblom emphasizes that *omlagning* was not regarded as an act of destructive intent (*trolldom*), nor was it considered to be a sin. A decisive moral distinction is made by the informants between sending illness and curing. Using cunning knowledge to cause discomfort, bad luck or maladies was thought to be acting under the influence of the Devil. In a contrast, healing performances were regarded as a body of knowledge, and Forsblom presents a rich vernacular vocabulary for knowledge of, or insight into, matters clandestine; taken together, the records provide the contour of an ontology where *trolldom* as cause and effect is reasonable. The bearers of this special knowledge were often identified among the informants as old people and/or wise people; and apparently these two characteristics went together. The proper order of transmission was emphasized to Forsblom: the special knowledge could only travel in one direction; the young could never teach old people. This reflects an age hierarchy that we know was a social fact. Old age in itself was certainly a powerful element, and as such a vital prerequisite for many of the charms, but also conceived as actively transmitted from ancient days. Things old were considered to have a moral value. The healer must be old in order to guarantee that the knowledge is valid; but, conversely, increasing frailty over the years is thereby at the same time a danger to the efficacy of the powerful words. Losing one's teeth, for example, was thought to be a sign of losing command of the insights. Both men and women acted as healers and were met with a combination of fear and respect because of their abilities to offer solutions to critical problems.

In order to defend the practices, the informants made references to the

An attempt to ward off a troll shot (*flojest*), which has targeted the victim and is caused by an evil-minded person. Nedervetil, 1917 (SLS 267:17). © Society of Swedish Literature in Finland: The Archives of Folk Culture. (Photo: Valter W. Forsblom.)

healing acts of Christ, and to the fact that also he passed on these skills to his disciples. The use and correct transmission of special powers is thereby sanctioned in a biblical context. The acts of healing are often declared to be "in the name of the Father…", and the formulas connected to Church ceremonies; they are not, it appears, associated with the performance of any destructive witchcraft. The concluding "Amen", crucial in its Church context, was not supposed to be uttered. The reason given by the informants was that, once pronounced, the concluding vocation made it impossible for the healer to perform another ritual if the first turned out to be ineffective. Some catechisms explicitly defined the source of malicious behaviour as originating from the Devil himself (Wolf-Knuts 1991:117–122; Raudvere 1993: 95–108). However, the attitude is sometimes ambiguous when attributing such powers to the Devil and such an extent of his authority. Did he have such influence over the world of humans or was the very belief in the efficacy of such rituals a sin?

Two kinds of scenes appear in Forsblom's records. The most frequent is the healing scene proper and actors with distinct roles. The ill person has approached the healer and goes to his or her place and the recorded charm text is embedded in a subsequent healing session. Alternatively, the scene is fo-

cused on the cause of the illness: i.e., centred on people with bad intentions: the envious, the lustful, and those with strong thoughts. In his typology, Forsblom emphasizes rituals with and without charms, which goes back to his distinction between folkloristics and ethnography and their different objects of study.

However, many of the charms can offer an implicit narrative. The damage is already done (with clear-cut agents) and the ritual provides methods to put things right again. The wording is condensed and it is up to imagination to construct a before and an after.

Is [it] in flesh
Then it shall go out of flesh
Is [it] in sinew
Then it shall go out of sinew
And is [it] in bone
It shall go out of bone
And thus it shall move
As Peter went
Over the River Jordan
Just behind Jesus Christ
(Korsnäs 1915, printed in Forsblom 1927:294).[12]

The biblical reference here serves as a vague background, more like a simile. The healer, the person with the insights to put things right, is the one who can read for change (*laga om*). The healers frequently received monetary payment or reward in the form of alcohol or another gift. Forsblom's frequent emphasis on age, when summarizing his records, opens for the question of whether the healers were persons on the margins of local society; but this is highly disputable. Rather, they could be argued to have been central because of their abilities. Age is as much a social fact as a symbolic expression of knowledge acquired over a long time and hence trustworthy experience. Read today, Forsblom's identification of the remaining wise people as representatives of a threatened tradition is a partly contradictory argument, in that it identifies the healer at the centre of attention as an important person.

Forsblom underlines the healing words as exclusive and a tool of the few in his description of *omlagning* rituals: "The charms are usually read with a low voice or whispering so that the 'precious words' will not lose their power, which they would if any person present should memorize them during the course of the process" (1927:3).[13] In addition to age, the hands of the healer are said to be forceful, mighty or valuable. The tactile aspects of the ritual are often important parts of the ritual acts complementing the reading of a charm, the latter often formulated as a vocative with a command to the illness to depart. The touch by the healer on the sick person was a concrete way of transmitting the power to cure the illness. The stronger/more solid the knowledge, the more clandestine the source of it. About some healers it

"Gräneby Jaak" (Jakob Lytts), a well-known healer (*omlagare*) and witch (*trollkarl*), reads the cards on a Sunday afternoon outside the inn at Terjärv in 1917. An interested audience is following his interpretation of the cards (SLS 285:16). © Society of Swedish Literature in Finland: The Archives of Folk Culture. (Photo: Valter W. Forsblom.)

was said that they had had contacts with Saami people or even dealt with the Devil. Through this they had achieved the full capacity to send whatever evil they wanted. Some of the healers were real characters, and their names lived on as evidence of the strength of tradition in the old days. In these cases the memory of the ritual practice was transformed into a narrative: and Forsblom himself was aware that he transmitted legends when he commented, regarding some of the strong healers, that the people of Ostrobothnia with the greatest respect mention the names of famous men "whose deeds had grown into fantastic dimensions" (1913:XLII).[14] One of them had not only received his insights "from the Lapp" and could ride as fast as the priest to church on Christmas morning: but could also cure all kinds of illnesses, and he was known to have performed abortions.

The ritual substances play a fundamental role both in the ritual practice and in the formulations of the charms. The elements appear in the charms and several of these end with instructions on how to read (along with possible physical movements), but almost all of them have references to substances over which they are to be read, in order to pass on the strength and

furthermore to be rubbed in or consumed. Substances with strong symbolic value appear: water, salt, blood, alcohol, and a number of less pleasant fluids.

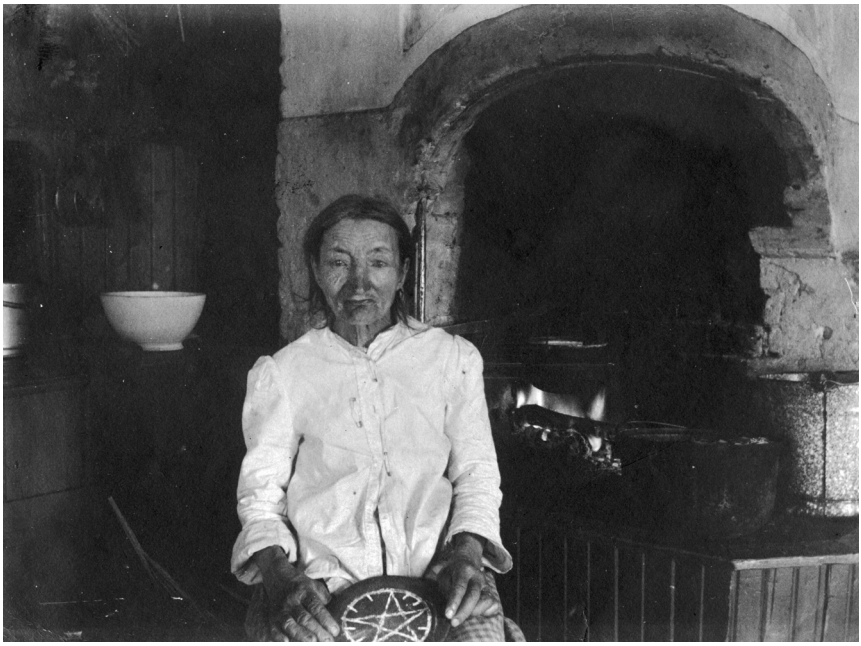
Although the contextual information is scarce, it seems likely that there were audiences at the rituals (and not only those in Forsblom's photographs) and that the healer was not the only one involved in the performance; the active participation of the patient should not be underestimated. It was these witnesses who could help spread the word about effective rituals and whose stories helped to construct the post-ritual narrative where the charms had their given place.

The Search for a Conceptual Framework

In his reports from the five field trips, Forsblom was very explicit about his view of the collected materials as belonging to a coherent world view based on both pre-/non-Christian conceptions and the teachings of the Church. He explained his aim as bringing forward the "logical combination of thoughts" he had observed (as stated in the longer quotation from his study on the attacks of the nightmare hag 1917b:117), and was wary about overusing umbrella concepts like witchcraft and superstition (*trolldom* and *övertro*) instead, he preferred vernacular terminology that carried with it more of the detailed beliefs. The naming of a "shot" or an "arrow" was part of the healing process. The name could define the victim, the kind of suffering, the method of sending, and its material form when dispatched from the source (evil thoughts) towards the body of the victim.

God protect you
From troll-shots
Troll women's shots
And every shot
That flies in the midst of the day
And at all times
I put you
Between farm and gate
From the rise of the sun
To its setting.
To be read over teat-warm milk. To be consumed; the rest is to be rubbed in
(Korsnäs 1915, printed in Forsblom 1927:283).[15]

After reaching its target (where it was thought to sometimes leave a mark on the body, which could be detected by the healer), the shot affixed itself to the victim. No place or time was safe when it came to such attacks from the evil-minded: a person could even be targeted while sitting in church during Sunday service. Sending the "shots" was frequently attributed to the Devil. In contrast to the healers, the senders are less visible as individuals in the records, and the material does not suggest that any accusations or denounce-



One of Forsblom's informants, Kajas Ann, in Terjärv in 1917. In her hand she holds an object with a pentagram inscribed within a circle. Kajas Ann is said to be able to ward off the lady of the forest (*skogsrået*) by the use of the symbol (SLS 285:14). © Society of Swedish Literature in Finland: The Archives of Folk Culture. (Photo: Valter W. Forsblom.)

ments occurred. Rather, the imagined evil sources were embedded in the narratives surrounding formulas and rituals.

This sensitivity to the local understanding of cause, effect and counterstrike was a quite unusual position at the time. On the one hand, the individual records are highly contextualized; on the other hand Forsblom's commentaries on how he could observe a strong cohesion between the belief elements must be placed in the academic discourse of his time (Raudvere 1993:140–141). To Forsblom, medical charms and healing rituals (*sjukdomsbevärjelser* and *omlagningar*) represented two very different forms of activities – the verbal and the ritual – which he connected to the analytical scope of two different academic disciplines. He voiced a sense of a rift between ethnography and folkloristics in his reports to the Society and repeatedly stated that his collections dealt with both. This can perhaps be explained by his academic background: he was an ethnographer coming to folkloristics, whereas other folklorists had a background in Nordic languages or literature and hence a view of folkloristics as mainly a form of literature deriving from the rural population.

Whether concerning narrative or ritual, to Forsblom the supernatural be-

ings are connected to the world of humans. And more than that. In his accounts we can find human desire, envy, and well-wishing as more or less independent forces behind magical action. This implicit definition of religion – as social interaction by means of words, deeds and visual representations – feels very contemporary. This is particularly the case in relation to his other line of reasoning about the evolutionistic separation of religion and magic; something Forsblom repeatedly emphasized. "Magical folk medicine offers in this respect […] a rich and invaluable source for observations. It is certain that it has emerged from an – albeit primitive – logical combination of thoughts, and its application has certainly lived through history and is to be seen in folk practices" (1917b:117–118).[16]

Forsblom continues with a discussion about the layers of belief throughout history, in accordance with the evolutionary paradigm, but adds:

> One will find in the oldest layers of folk beliefs and conceptions a consequence, a law-bound thinking, a primitive philosophy to be present; and one will discern certain fundamental principles according to which this way of thinking has been turned into practice and has generated practices and customs that have been inherited from generation to generation up until our days (1917b:118).[17]

In contrast to many recorders of folklore in this period, Forsblom was not trying to rationalize; instead, he emphasized that the beliefs, narratives and rituals follow their own logic, and that the elements of folk beliefs and healing – no matter how banal or simple they may seem – belong to a totality. It is a mature reflection made by a (comparatively) young man who received his master's degree the same year he wrote the above, 1917. Definitively before Lucien Lévy-Bruhl published his *Mentalité primitive* in 1922, where he claimed the existence of a primitive logic.

The challenge of working with Forsblom's collections is that, no matter how thorough he is in noting the time, place and names of the informants (at least after a while), he organized his records according to the themes that later structured *Finlands svenska folkdiktning*. Forsblom was commissioned to edit a volume on "magical folk medicine" in the series, the last of the five volumes on folk beliefs and witchcraft – a volume which is in many respects a completion of the work he began with his first fieldwork in the summer of 1913. He started the editing work in 1926 and the volume was published late the following year. The original records were not preserved, and the manuscripts by Forsblom's hand now only exist thematically structured by himself. As an editorial principle, he omitted the legendary narratives related to the ritual practices since they were, in his opinion, not first-hand information. The records are arranged according to the various illnesses and to some extent to the symptoms: a few chapters concern the causes behind such phenomena as troll shots or the nightmare hag.

In the preface, Forsblom refers to such scholars as Edward Westermarck, Martin P. Nilsson and James George Frazer, who all influenced his views

on cultural development and taxonomy. Forsblom admits that this is more than was originally planned, "a fully systematic attempt to thoroughly bring together" beliefs about supernatural beings, and he writes that a reason why it is kept in one volume is that there are no suitable grounds on which to divide the material.

Forsblom differentiates, as was the convention of the day, between religion (*folktro*) and magic (*trolldom*). In the first he sees communication; in the latter, attempts to change certain conditions such as illness, bad luck or lack of affection. He notes that it has been impossible in many cases to determine whether the healing practices have "a magical element or not", and the classifications therefore follow the illnesses rather than the ritual action – his clear ambition is to put them in context. In this way, he combined the evolutionary explanation and a search for logical patterns.

Reading Forsblom Today

Forsblom's records are, from the perspectives of Nordic folkloristics, without doubt both unique and extraordinarily rich. The collector's strong emphasis on the beliefs and rituals as coherent within their own framework of logic may sound very contemporary to a modern reader, especially since it is based on highly localized fieldwork, but the theoretical basis is a conception of a "primitive philosophy" in line with the evolutionary academic framework of the time. Nevertheless, Forsblom's records can be used as sources for how adversity was conceptualized among Swedish speakers in Finland at the beginning of the twentieth century. Illness and hardship were met with narrative and ritual strategies, where non-Christian and Christian concepts complemented each other and where both men and women took ritual responsibilities in practices where text and action were inseparable.

Even without statistics on demography and production, the texts Valter W. Forsblom recorded can tell us a lot about the human condition in western Finland in the early twentieth century. Even if the Trinitarian formula is constantly present in the Forsblom collections of healing practices, the focus of the religious universe presented is on humans and their relationship to threatening forces that were very much present in their everyday life rather than the Heavenly Father and the Holy Trinity. The fears described are related both to illnesses and famine and to anxiety and existential reflection.

Folk beliefs assembled in their textual form in folklore archives have long played an inconspicuous role in the study of religion, studies that to a large extent have focused on organized religion, public discourses and identity projects. A collection like Forsblom's can be a tool for working with a broader concept of religion, applicable to contemporary religions as well. Both in his way of reasoning around and in practising his studies, Forsblom's approach was, in a sense, interdisciplinary before the term was

coined and even though the conditions for academic cooperation were different.

When looking for witchcraft, in the sense of intentionally evil deeds and wilful damage, it becomes a question of whether to read the records as verbatim documentation of events or emphasizing the narrative aspects of rituals. In Forsblom's records the performers of *trolldom* and senders of illness and worries stand in the background of the narratives and are mostly implicit presences in the formulas. However, the *trolldom* is definitively there. As Forsblom sensed already as a young student, the words and deeds for how to ward off illness and distress derive their meaning from a coherent set of thoughts that tell of how humans are affected by the will of God, fate and the influence of others.

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[1] Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the conference "Nordic Mythologies" at UCLA in May 2012 and at "Sagas, Legends, and Trolls. The Supernatural from Early Modern back to Old Norse Tradition" at the University of Tartu in June 2014.

[2] The quotations from Forsblom's collections are taken from the volume of *Finlands svenska folkdiktning* on magical folk medicine, volume 7:5 "Magisk folkmedicin" (Forsblom 1927). The printed version strictly follows the archive manuscripts, and the volume is widely accessible in Scandinavian libraries. Forsblom followed the categories he had used to organize his

own records, but he added other Finland-Swedish folk belief sources (mainly printed works and other collections at the Society's archive). It thus became a large volume of 759 pages plus photos and indices.

[3] Valter W. Forsblom's collections are filed at the Archives of Folk Culture of The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland as: SLS 218 (from 1913), SLS 232 (from 1914), SLS 253a and b (from 1915), SLS 267 (from 1916), and 285 (from 1917). See: http://www.sls.fi

[4] All translations from Forsblom's records are by the present author.

[5] "Modersjuk/ Uti din buk/ Var i ro/ Där du skall bo/ Var tillfreds/ Som järn och stål/ I namn Fadrens och Sons o. d. H. A-s" (Sideby 1913, printed in Forsblom 1927:243).

[6] "För inskott/ För utskott/ Igenom eld/ Väder/ Vaten/ Och jord./ Läses tre gånger i nyss mjökad mjölk" (Korsnäs 1915, printed in Forsblom 1927:278).

[7] "Min uppgift var att insamla såväl det rent folkloristiska materialet, formlerna, som även det etnografiska materialet, de ceremonier och bruk, som användas vid sjukdomars botande" (Forsblom 1927:VII).

[8] "har den ju nog gjort sig känd för sin nitälskan att utrota vidskepelsen ur världen […] men – till lycka för den vetenskapliga forskningen – med blott alltför klent resultat" (Forsblom 1914: XLVII).

[9] "defekta eller h. o. h. stympade. (Underligt nog tyckas även dessa stympade formler med framgång blivit använda.)" (Forsblom 1913:XLII).

[10] "ett enastående tillfälle att få en inblick i allmogens uppfattnings- och åskådningssätt på just det område där religion och magi gå samman, ett område som nutidsmänniskan icke gärna vill blotta för allas blickar" (Forsblom 1913:XLI).

[11] "Kristus å Petrus kom gångandes efter en väg/ Så mötte han Pesten/ Så sade Kristus:/ Vart skall Pesten gå?/ Uti mänisjors tjött å ben/ Nej, sade Kristus/ En annan väg skall du gå/ Under en jordfastan sten/ Där intet grönt gräs växer/ Dit skall du få gå/ Och stå/ Som Kristus uppå korset stod/ I namn Fadrens och Sonens o. d. H. A./ Besvärjelsen läses i ett andetag tre gånger i brännvin eller osilad sötmjölk" (Forsblom 1927:269–270).

[12] "Je i tjött/ Så ska e ga ur tjött/ Je i sen/ Så ska e ga ur sen/ Å je i bein/ Så ska e ga ur bein/ Å så ska e far/ Som Petrus for/ Yvi Jordans flod/ Straks baket Jesus Kristus/ Läses tre gånger i nymjölkad mjölk" (Forsblom 1927:294).

[13] "Besvärjelseformlerna uppläsas vanligen lågmält eller viskande, på det att de 'dyra orden' icke måtte mista sin kraft, vilket skulle inträffa, ifall en närvarande person under procedurens förlopp lärde sig desamma" (Forsblom 1927:3).

[14] "I folkets fantasi ha dessa stormäns bedrifter stundom antagit sagolika dimensioner" (Forsblom 1913:XLII).

[15] "Gud bevare teg/ Från trollskåt/ Trålltjälngsskåt/ Å all skåt/ Som flyger om middagan/ Å all tider/ Ja sätter dej/ Mellan gård å grind/ Från solenes uppgång/ Och till dess nedergång./ Lagas om i spenvarm mjölk. Tages in; med återstoden smörjes" (Forsblom 1927:283).

[16] "Den magiska folkmedicinen erbjuder i detta hänseende en rik och ovärderlig källa för iakttagelser. Ty så visst som ett bruk en gång uppstått ur en – om och primitiv – logisk tankekombination och så visst som bruket fortlevat genom tiderna och återfinnes i folkseden" (Forsblom 1917b:117–118).

[17] "Man skall i det äldsta skiktet av folktro och föreställningar finna en konsekvens, ett lagbundet tänkande, en primitiv filosofi vara rådande, och man skall kunna skönja vissa grundprinciper, enligt vilka detta tänkande omsatts i handling samt alstrat bruk och sed, som från släktled till släktled gått i arv allt intill våra dagar" (Forsblom 1917b:118).

Bo Almqvist 1931–2013

Bengt af Klintberg

Bo Almqvist, professor emeritus of Irish folklore at the University College, Dublin, has passed away aged 82 years. With him Celtic and Nordic folklore research has lost one of its most distinguished representatives.

Bo Almqvist was honoured with two festschrifts during his lifetime. The first one, *Viking Ale. Studies on folklore contacts between the Northern and the Western worlds*, was presented to him on his 60th birthday and contains a selection of his own essays. Ten years later he received the second one, *Northern Lights*, containing essays in his honour, written by some thirty colleagues. In both volumes one finds an introduction by Éilís Ní Dhuibnne-Almqvist and Séamas Ó Catháin with biographical informations about the recipient. From these I have got the facts about his early years.

He was born in Alster in the province of Värmland in western Sweden, the place where one of Sweden's greatest poets, Gustaf Fröding, grew up. This was of course a coincident, but it is a fact that he maintained the identity of his home province throughout his life. Like Fröding he had a masterly command of his language and a developed sense of humour, and he made all languages he spoke – which were indeed many – sound like the Värmland dialect.

The most important person in Bo's early life seems to have been his mother, a warm and friendly woman, very religious and storing a treasure of oral traditions. He grew up as a beloved youngest child, eleven years junior to the closest of four elder siblings. When he was sixteen years old his father died, and Bo moved with his mother to the city of Karlstad where he studied at the gymnasium. He was a gifted pupil with a special predilection for poetry. The first essay he got published was about rhyming schemes in Swedish sonnets.

In 1950 he enroled at the university of Uppsala, where he studied Nordic Languages and English. With his innate facility in learning foreign languages he also decided to follow a course of Irish, given at the university by Dr. Kevin Danaher, who later was to become his colleague at the Department of Irish folklore in Dublin. He made his first trip to Ireland in the summer of 1953, having received a scholarship to the summer school of University College Dublin.

The third subject in his candidate degree, which proved to be of decisive importance for his future academic career, was Nordic and comparative folklife research. His professor, Dag Strömbäck, was an inspiring teacher who became Bo Almqvist's mentor and a lifelong friend. Strömbäck was a profound expert on the folklore of the Nordic peasant society but also an Old Norse philologist with deep knowledge about Icelandic medieval literature. Bo Almqvist never ceased to praise his teacher and wrote four lengthy biographic articles about him.

It was also Dag Strömbäck who ignited Bo Almqvist's interest in interpretation problems in Icelandic medieval literature. Strömbäck himself had written his dissertation about the so-called "sejd", a special form of magic and divination, and it was he who suggested magic satirical poetry on Iceland as a fitting subject for Almqvist.

When in 1965 he defended his doctoral thesis "Norrön niddiktning" (Old Norse satirical poetry), he had made himself thoroughly familiar with the two islands in Northern and western Europe whose folklore would later be his specialty as a scholar, Iceland and Ireland. He came to Iceland in 1954 after his graduation and remained there until 1960, during 1956-1960 as a lecturer in Swedish at the University of Iceland in Reykjavík. There he met the learned Einar Olafur Sveinsson, who - like Strömbäck - was an expert on Old Norse literature as well as on folklore. In the summer of 1957 he returned to Ireland and came to know the Irish folklorist whose successor he later became, Séamus Ó Duilearga. The contact with him deepened his interest in Irish folklore, and for many summers – between 1966 and 1972 – he went as a field worker to Co. Kerry. His foremost informant there was Micheál Ó Gaoithín, son of the famous storyteller Peig Sayers.

I became acquainted with Bo in the end of the 1960's, when Dag Strömbäck had retired from his chair in Uppsala and Bo maintained his professorate until a successor had been appointed. It was a time when leading Swedish ethnologists with Nils-Arvid Bringéus as prime mover wanted to exchange the designation Nordic and comparative folklife research for Ethnology, specially European. I remember animated discussions in which Bo Almqvist eloquently defended the existing designation, which in Uppsala had the addition "specially folkloristic". He was aware of the fact that this proposal, if it passed, might lead to the extinction in Sweden of a folklore research such as represented by Dag Strömbäck. In an article in the journal of Nordic students of ethnology and folklore, Nord-Nytt, entitled "Polyfemos och polisen. Några funderingar om folkminnesforskning" (Polyphem and the Policeman: some reflections about folklore research) he defended the historically and philologically oriented approach of his teacher. However, at that time Bo stood alone; the name of the discipline was changed into ethnology, which was the first step towards a marginalization of traditional folkloristics in Sweden.

The professorial chair at Uppsala was filled in 1972. Bo Almqvist was one of the applicants, but had also applied for the chair of Irish folklore at University College Dublin, which was vacant after the death of Séamus Ó Duilearga. He was offered the appointment in Dublin before the competition in Uppsala closed and accepted it, withdrawing his application for the chair in Uppsala. I have wondered many times how things would have developed if Bo had been appointed professor in Uppsala. Had he been able to uphold his historical and philological approach as successfully there as he did in Dublin? What happened in Sweden soon after was that folkloristics changed course. The comparative study of the texts at the folklore archives was abandoned in favour of the analysis of contemporary forms of cultural communication, a research characterized by a heavy theoretical apparatus, borrowed from neighbouring disciplines such as social anthropology and sociolinguistics. There was a risk that he had faced a pressure to abandon the scholarly heritage of his teacher Strömbäck. Now this did not happen. Bo's move to Ireland was a loss for Swedish folkloristics, but on Ireland he managed to create a scholarly environment of importance not only for students in this country but also for folklorists and Old Norse philologists from many parts of the world.

Among his students was Eilís Ní Dhuibhne, who in 1982 became his wife and mother of his two sons Olaf and Ragnar. In an earlier marriage he had a daughter, Marja. Besides being a folklorist Eílis Ní Dhuibhne is a recognized novelist, and the couple soon belonged not only to the community of folklorists but also to that of Irish writers such as Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney. In his article "Of Mermaids and Marriages" Bo has analyzed a poem by Heaney, which is based on an Irish mermaid legend.

The position in Dublin brought with it that Bo Almqvist also became director of the folklore archive and editor of the yearbook of the Folklore of Ireland Society, *Béaloideas* (which means Folklore). In spite of an extensive teaching load and regular field excursions he got time for his scholarly writing. At the beginning of his career it was dominated by his studies on medieval Icelandic literature. His dissertation "Norrön niddiktning" was followed by a second part in 1972. Altogether the two volumes are reputed as a by now classical contribution to the study of medieval Icelandic poetry.

However, a format especially cherished by Bo Almqvist was that of the essay in which a clearly delimited subject was treated. One of his specialties was the search for folklore parallels to narratives in the Icelandic sources. Some of his most readable essays are included in the above mentioned festschrift *Viking Ale*. In one of them his point of departure is a jocular anecdote written down by Snorri Sturluson, called "The Uglier Foot", in another essay it is the Irish story about a secret Viking recipe for how to brew beer from heather which has an Old Germanic parallel in the narrative about the sunken Rhine gold. All these studies are permeated with a scholarly enthu-

siasm and characterized by a fluent, highly personal language which makes reading a pure delight.

My own contacts with Bo Almqvist above all concerned migratory legends, a fascinating and little investigated field. Here Bo made important achievements both as an organizer of international cooperation and as an author of a number of studies. In 1988 he was one of the initiators of a symposium entitled The Supernatural in Irish and Scottish Migratory Legends. For this symposium he compiled a useful pamphlet, based upon Reidar Th. Christiansen's *The Migratory Legends* and entitled *Crossing the Border. A sampler of Irish Migratory legends about the Supernatural*. The proceedings, which contained papers by several of Almqvist's students, were published in Béaloideas under the title "The Fairy Hill is on Fire!"

His next step was to invite folklorists outside Ireland and Scotland who shared his interest in reviving a comparative study of folk legends. At the next meeting, the Nordic-Celtic Legend Symposium in Galway in 1991, the participants came not only from the British Isles but also from Scandinavia and Finland. Five years later the meeting-place was again Dublin, and the name of the symposium had grown into the Nordic-Celtic-Baltic Folklore Symposium, since also legend scholars from Estonia had joined. The proceedings were published under the title *Islanders and Water-Dwellers* (1999).

Legends also was the theme of the 5th Celtic-Nordic-Baltic Folklore Symposium in Reykjavík in 2005. The proceedings, entitled *Legends and Landscape*, were dedicated to "two bridge-builders in international folklore studies, Jacqueline Simpson and Bo Almqvist".

Bo Almqvist's own contributions to this internationally oriented legend research are too many to be accounted for in detail here. He has treated legends about ghosts of murdered newborn children, Nordic legends about waterhorses, the Guntram legend and the Mélusine legend in Irish tradition and the legend "Midwife to the fairies" in Faroese and Icelandic tradition, just to mention some of his articles.

Bo Almqvist was well-known for his never ceasing helpfulness to colleagues, who often could benefit by his wide reading and learning. I personally got many proofs of this during my almost fifty years long work in compiling the catalogue *The Types of the Swedish Folk Legend* (FFC 300, 2010). It is doubtful if the catalogue had at all been finished if not Bo time after time had urged me not to give up. During the final phase he helped me in many ways; among other things he scrutinized the introduction and suggested several amendments. After the book had been published he wrote an extensive, insightful review.

Bo Almqvist will be remembered as a profoundly learned folklorist who all his life pursued his research with youthful enthusiasm, simply because in his view nothing could be more enjoyable.

Book Reviews

Cultural-Science Perspectives on Crisis

Kris och kultur. Kulturvetenskapliga perspektiv på kunskap, estetik och historia. Mats Arvidson, Ursula Geisler, Kristofer Hansson (eds.), Sekel Bokförlag, Lund 2013. 206 pp.

Today it seems as though crisis is everywhere. There is a crisis in the relations between Russia and the West, a crisis in Syria and one in Iraq, a crisis in how people in the European Union are comfortable with being part of a union with big financial and big "moral" problems, as regards questions of inequality within itself and concerning the idea of foreigners trying to get access into this Fortress Europe, as it is called. The American president Barack Obama has defined contemporary American history in terms of crisis: "We are in the midst of crisis," he has been reported as saying. And then there are crises of a personal kind, existential, economic, social, human crises, sickness, fears, anxiety, threats, risks leading up to states of crises. And there was even a sophisticated Swedish cultural journal active for a decade or so, in the so-called postmodern phase of cultural history, called *Kris* (Crisis in English), with prominent Swedish critics and authors connected to it. This latter aspect of crisis is also highly relevant, because critical and critic are words derived from this root of crisis, a word of classical Greek and Roman provenance. And critique is of course also of great importance here, since this is a review of a new book on crisis and culture, the title of which means "Crisis and Culture: Cultural-Science Perspectives on Knowledge, Aesthetics and History", written by a group of scholars at Lund University, working under an umbrella called K, as in the Swedish words *Kultur*, *Kunskap*, *Kris*, or in English Culture, Knowledge, Crisis.

So, to begin with, two questions which are both important for an understanding and appreciation of this new volume. What might be the meanings and applications of this multifaceted, highly unstable word, crisis? And to what use can they be put in cultural investigations of the kind these scholars are performing here? The first question is mainly concerned with the semantic aspects of the word, the second with the usefulness of the word in cultural analysis and cultural studies, although the field these scholars are defining is cultural science, which in its focus seems to be broader than both cultural analysis and cultural studies.

If one looks at the meanings of the word crisis in, for example, Webster's online dictionary there are five main meanings of the word, grouped in three. In the first group there are: a. the turning point for better or worse in an acute disease or fever, and b. a paroxysmal attack of pain, distress, or disordered function. In the second group there is: c. the decisive moment (as in a literary plot). And in the third group there are: d. an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending, especially one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome, and e. a situation that has reached a critical phase.

There is also a fundamental bifurcation at work in the word. There are crises which uplift, redefine and cleanse something, throwing away what is of little or no use and lifting up what is essential, for example, in personal life narrative, and there are crises which are depressing and ultimately morbid, leading to death and annihilation, something like the catastrophe scenarios in relation to questions of the environment and future of the globe and mankind.

Looking at the Greek roots of the word, *krísis*, there are meanings of "a separating, power of distinguishing, decision, choice, election, judgment, dispute", derived from the Greek word *κρίνω* (*krínō*, "pick out, choose, decide, judge"). As noted by the anthropologist Janet Roitman, who has performed a semantic and semiotic analysis of the concept, the very etymology of the term suggests a definite decision. She adds that the significance of the word historically has been mainly in the domains of law, medicine and theology, but it was initially used in medicine, by the Hippocratic school in Antiquity. As part of a medical grammar, crisis denoted the turning point of a disease, or a critical phase in which life or death was at stake, something which calls for an irrevocable decision. And, significantly, crisis was not the disease or illness per se, but the condition that called for decisive judgement between alternatives. This etymology can also be said to link the two concepts of crisis and critical (and also criticism). Or to put it in other words: this linkage is an ancient one, and one which precedes some other notions of the word crisis.

This short excursion into the semantic and historical roots of the word is perhaps enough to throw some light on the multivalency of the concept, and thereby also the difficulties occurring when trying to handle it, for example, in a scholarly fashion.

There is a solid discussion of both the word and concept crisis in the introduction to the volume, written by its editors, the musicologists Mats Arvidson and Ursula Geisler and the ethnologist Kristofer Hansson. The discussion of the keyword is derived mainly from the German conceptual historian Reinhardt Koselleck's oeuvre, and it is concerned with the transformations of the word historically, in the tradition of cultural studies and especially Raymond Williams. The editors speak about an exchange between categories and subjects: people who are experiencing an inner turmoil of some kind can find help in that condition by its being categorized as a crisis. Doing that, they say, legitimizes the concept from a psychological point of view and at the same time gives the institutions and practices connected to this science its valency. The word crisis is thus never in a blank position, but part of a whole cluster of words (this in conjunction with Raymond Williams' trend-setting keywords examinations). And it is also related to actual objects in our world. This leads up to an understanding in which the exchange between man and concept is highlighted as a hermeneutic cultural concept, one concerned with understanding how this exchange between concept and world takes place.

Taking their cue from Koselleck, the authors discuss four ideal types, or rather ideal typological fields in which the semantic history of the concept takes place. These fields are: (1) the medical- political-military field, with chains of action moving towards a decisive point or moment; (2) a historical endpoint with the consequence that the quality of history is changing in a fundamental way; (3) a condition, a process or some recurring critical situations; (4) a history-imminent transitional concept, in which the diagnosis determines the length of the phase and whether it leads to something which is better or worse.

Although the discussion of crisis as a theoretical concept is in a way apt and relevant here, there is in my view some-

thing missing, something which could be said to be part of what, for instance, the ethnologist Thomas Højrup has been concerned with in his work on "life mode" concepts, what he calls the laboratory, in which the researchers are working towards "intensional terminal concepts", or conceptual endpoints which have the important objective of locking the free play of concepts in the theory, in a concept laboratory in which the main concepts of the theory are set up to be cleansed from a historicist or relativistic background by testing them as to their potential value for the theory.

Reading this volume on crisis and culture from this point of view, I find the introduction and whole book, although both interesting and quite solid as to the individual texts, somewhat lacking in rigour and radicality, especially with regard to the investigation of three different but connected aspects of crisis as a concept and phenomenon.

The first one is concerned with the character of the term as almost a universal (*universalia*), with applications so different that it can be a problem to see whether the various texts of the volume really are connected from a theoretical point of view. The broadness of the keyword is such that this is not at all guaranteed *per se* by the use of the term. A thorough discussion and deconstruction of the word would have been necessary, something I don't think this book lives up to.

This leads to another concern specific for this volume, which has to do with the "crisis" or tension between crisis on one hand and culture, the other central concept here, on the other. While crisis favours the moment, questions of decision making and ethics (the central question being: what is the right thing to do in this situation?), culture is in this respect quite a different beast, concerned with *longues durées*, tradition(s), transformations, patterns of human behaviour. Thus it operates in an altogether different way and time scale than crisis. This inner dilemma of the two quite different keywords in the volume is not lifted vigorously enough to the forefront in the introduction or the book as a whole, the question being to what extent the two concepts are actually implicated by each other? Are they, to use Koselleck's terminology, symmetrical or asymmetrical concepts? This lacuna in the centre of the book leads to other problems concerning the handling of the concepts of crisis. Their *de facto* multiplicity might somewhat paradoxically be overlooked when one sees the concept as constantly changing, transforming, but ultimately lacking a semantic centre. In such a view crisis is to be found everywhere and nowhere. It becomes elusive to the point of collapsing as a distinct analytical tool. When the authors say that crisis can be used as a method I begin to wonder if it should not also need a theory underlying this method and what such a theory might look like. As they now stand, most of articles in the book are quite interesting in themselves, but they do not attack the question of crisis head-on. Rather they treat it more as a signifying background force, with the reader not easily being able to decide precisely what internal value or forcefulness the concept has theoretically in the given context. The question of action and subject in relation to the word is to a considerable extent missing in the volume. Also, the internal split between active and passive modes in relation to crisis, which is such a characteristic feature of the concept – much in the same vein as another pair of important concepts, action and reaction, are analysed at length by Jean Starobinski – is largely left out of the discussions in the book.

This can be contrasted with the much more focused view of crisis which can be found in Janet Roitman's discussion, in what she calls a critical lexicon of political concepts. Roitman looks at how crisis is constituted as an object of knowledge. She says that crisis is mobilized in narrative constructions to mark

out a "moment of truth", or as a means to think "history" itself. Such moments of truth might in her view be defined as turning points in history, when decisions are taken or events are decided, thus establishing a particular teleology. They might also be defined as instances when "the real" is made bare, such as when a so-called financial "bubble" is seemingly burst, thus divulging alleged "false value" based on speculation and revealing "true value," or the so-called fundamentals of the economy. And she goes on to say: "As a category denoting a moment of truth in these ways, and despite presumptions that crisis does not imply, in itself, a definite direction of change, the term crisis signifies a diagnostic of the present; it implies a certain telos – that is, it is inevitably though most often implicitly directed toward a norm. Evoking crisis entails reference to a norm because it requires a comparative state for judgment: crisis compared to what? That question evokes the significance of crisis as an axiological problem, or the questioning of the epistemological or ethical grounds of certain domains of life and thought."

Crisis in Roitman's reading might be seen as a structuring idiom. In this sense it constitutes almost in-and-of-itself a singular mode of apprehending (and hence narrating, or living) immediate agonies: "The crisis also operates as a figure of rationality and an existential device. In other words, by relegating the crisis to the realm of the inexplicable, people likewise simultaneously circumscribe a field of both constraints and possible, reasonable and legitimate action."

The rest of this review will be a discussion of the eight individual contributions to the book with special regard to how they deal with crisis as a theoretically informed and heuristic concept.

The archaeologist Björn Magnusson Staaf in his text gives a well-informed and well-balanced account of how various types of emplotment function as a vehicle in historical and archaeological theory. Adapting the literary scholar Hayden White's narrativist theoretization of history for his own purposes, Magnusson Staaf is able to show how different archaeological scholars use the crisis concept when working with what could be called the fundamentals of history and archaeology writing. To put it more succinctly: in problems of periodization, questions of crisis are almost always present. Without some kind of crisis or unbalance in the "system", no such periodizations seem to be possible. What is of great value in this text is the understanding of the factual situation of the history writer, trying to understand processes and events in the past, and at the same time pointed towards the future, by way of something the philosopher Richard Rorty has called hope. The intellectual process of the history writer is in this context also a political one and one involving truth values. By making hypotheses which are plausible from a pragmatic and empirical point of view, crises can be handled and lead to an intellectually responsible discussion about the meaning of crises, something which is of the utmost value in a democratic society. The question Magnusson Staaf is asking is: which crises and which descriptions of crises are trustworthy, an important and intriguing question indeed! Theoretically this contribution is one of the key texts here.

In the historian of ideas Jan-Eric Olsén's text on the nutrition crisis of the First World War, questions of a kind of body politics are central. Olsén discusses body as a metaphor connecting society and the individual, when seen from the point of view of nutrition and the lack of it in the times discussed. When society is seen as a biological body, different kinds of viewpoints and metaphors emerge, something which Olsén analyses competently and at length, arriving at the conclusion that the various ways of describing this kind of "political body" are really a way of

understanding a highly complex situation about both the physiological and the economic problems of the era, including reports, prognoses, illustrations, tests of merchandise and products concerned with the human body and how to avoid hunger in a nation's population.

Ursula Geisler's text about the German youth music movement and the crisis of the 1920s and 1930s is a well-informed survey of a crucial phase of European history, between the two world wars. The intriguing thing about the cultural movements she describes, the youth music movement which seems to have been historically the first one in which the concept of a youth as a separate cultural category was recognized, and its parallel and predecessor, the German *Wanderfogel* movement, is that they are both concerned with a healthy lifestyle and an appreciation of song, movement, Germanness and national sentiment. Both in their different ways became an important stomping ground for the subsequent Hitlerjugend, a movement which became highly influential in the build-up of a policy of aggression performed by the Nazis. Geisler is able to show how this youth music movement was built upon a feeling of communion, medievalism and subjugation under a leader, something the Nazis took over and used in their ideological system. The potential of destructivity in this development is, I think, best described by way of the philosopher Ernst Bloch's concept of non- simultaneity, a dream of something real and authentic which, as we know, would lead to a catastrophe on a global scale. But at the same time, as Geisler notes in passing, something like the sing-alongs of the German youth music movement was passed on to a country like Sweden, imported, and from there transmitted and to some extent also transformed, for example, in the *Allsång på Skansen* phenomenon as seen on Swedish television. Geisler is able to show that the question of crisis in the German youth music movement of the 1920s and 1930s did not concern the music in itself, for example, questions of tonality or composition technique, but was more of a general experiential background force among the actors in question. Contemporary culture was here seen as connected to a youth crisis, an urban crisis, a moral crisis, a crisis in society at large. Geisler's conclusion is then rather paradoxical: the concept of crisis used by the German youth music culture has only a limited relevance, the times are seen in a light of crisis, but without the researcher being able to show that a crisis is at hand. The movement was political and ideological but did not acknowledge this, something which makes this paradox possible.

Mats Arvidson's text on what he calls the Apollonian dream of a happy future, dealing with questions of a crisis in both culture at large and art music in Sweden after the Second World War, is set up much in the same vein as Geisler's, as a cultural-historical account, rich in detail and quite illuminating as a discussion of questions of myth in modernity, seen from the angle of the old philosophical divide between an Apollonian and a Dionysian approach to life (refreshed by Nietzsche) – between rationality and irrationality and between freedom and security (or bureaucratization and depersonalization in a mass society). These are complex and intriguing questions we are familiar with not only from the Swedish example but more generally in modern Western societies. In Arvidson's account crisis as a heuristic concept is pushed further into the background. But when read through the lens of a recent sociological discussion, by the German sociologist Hartmut Rosa, on modernity, social acceleration and a strong sense of desynchronization/fragmentarization of society, Arvidson's text seems to address a series of important contemporary questions as to the value of high art generally and Swedish avant-garde music specifically. Arvid-

son is interested in showing how different concepts of culture can be seen at work in such a context. He shows how aesthetic and ontological forms of culture in this case are linked together, by showing how the actors – composers, critics, philosophers, psychiatrists – can function in different roles in the practices performed in culture, and especially in relation to contemporary art music.

A text which addresses crisis more head-on, as a concept used in psychology and psychiatry, is Kristofer Hansson's essay about psychic crises and the idea of a developing human being. Hansson notes that crisis is an abstract concept which is made more concrete in the texts he studies by metaphors used to describe the crisis in question. He compares two different eras and fields in order to be able to highlight the metaphors used to arrive at an understanding of, in this case, individual crises. The periods he discusses are the years around 1900 and the years at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s. In the first period he looks at metaphors of crisis in two authors, August Strindberg and Wilma Lindhé. In the second period the writings of the Swedish psychiatrist Johan Cullberg (both scientific articles and an autobiography) are the object of his inquiry. When in the earlier period the writers describe personal crises as a question of finding one's way after being disoriented in life, in the latter case the question of crisis is addressed as more of a radical personal growth process. Whereas Strindberg and Wilmé describe crises as forms of being lost and an inability of the individual to connect his or her past life to the present situation and to the future, overcoming this obstacle by some kind of Christian conversion or framework, crisis in Cullberg's texts is concerned above all with inner growth, maturity and a better understanding both of oneself and of others.

The ethnologist Jessica Enevold shows in her text how a popular television show, the American reality show *The Biggest Loser* (with more than twenty local adaptations in different countries around the world), can be read from a ludic point of view. She indicates in quite a convincing way how the format itself, with its playful character, offers people in great distress, with serious health problems, problems of overweight, a chance to come to grips with their obesity, the reality show thereby functioning as a form of positive intervention and a tool for transformation where other interventions have failed. The key to the show's success is, in Enevold's conception, its ongoing negotiation between two discourses, one ludic and the other reality-based. As a reality show the format is open to both these discourses, leading up to a paradox where the ludic elements are mixed into a metaphorical mishmash where game at one moment is an important norm, and at another moment something to avoid as much as possible. Using the multivalency of the words play and game as an interpretative tool, Enevold is able to lay bare a highly complex semiotic field in which a concept with a special significance is brought onboard, the play historian Johan Huizinga's *magic circle*, with play seen both as frivolous and as progress, and with the world and the play/game seamlessly overlapping and crosscutting into each other.

Three different kinds of actors emerge: *homo crisis*, *homo sapiens* and *homo discriminans*. This third form is analytically a synthesis of the two earlier ones. The term *homo discriminans* is a wordplay on the Latin word *discrimen*, for a crisis other than one connected to sickness, and it can be understood as a turning point or a cutting edge, a point where something is bifurcating. The *homo discriminans* is a person at a turning point in life, situated between obesity, sickness and defeat, or health, success and community. The reality show marks out a sacred liminal phase with a

ritual experience leading up to a sensational transformation, a crisis resolution and communitas building, a kind of phoenix, where what is broken is being fixed, as the motto on the wall of one of the show's coaches says.

The library and information scientist Karolina Lindh, in her short and highly descriptive text on heart-lung emergency routines, is concerned with how these kinds of procedures are described, mediated and performed in various media and contexts. She is also interested in how documents concerning these actions function as cultural objects which in their turn create and coordinate practices. At the same time they highlight the importance of risk-preventing actions and practices in late-modernity. From a theoretical point of view her text is not one of the most central in this edited volume.

The concluding text, by the art historian and visual culture researcher Adam Brenthel, on the presentation of the climate crisis beyond a crisis of representation, stands apart in this collection in several respects. What it tries to do is to show how a climate visualization theatre in Norrköping, Sweden, the Domteatern, might be seen as an interface between several philosophically interesting concepts. The concepts are ordered in three groups of dichotomy. The first one is the dichotomy between virtual reality and real virtuality, as he calls it, the second between representation and presentation and the third one between the visible and the visual. It is, I think, the third dichotomy which is crucial here, the division between aspects of visibility and of visuality. Brenthel's argument, anchored theoretically in the French philosophers Bergson's and Deleuze's ideas about virtuality, is that we can think about pictures which are not representational, but may give us the ability to imagine the unpredictable and the continuously transformative. The global climate system is too complex for the human capacity to predict what will happen with it and through it. Therefore any attempt at visualizing the emerging climate crisis is bound to be marred by flaws, Brenthel argues. By seeing time as primary in relation to space and by fusing pictures, bodies and movement, in accordance with Bergson's philosophy, a representation theory which is both radical and useful for thinking about climate visualization is possible, Brenthel points out in his theoretically challenging and fascinating article. Quite interesting as it is, this text too is somewhat outside of the given focus of the book, if that is to theoretically come to grips with the concept of crisis.

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The Role of Storytelling

Therapeutic Uses of Storytelling: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Narration as Therapy. Camilla Asplund Ingemark (ed.). Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2013. 288 pp.

Camilla Asplund Ingemark's edited volume *Therapeutic Uses of Storytelling: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Narration and Therapy* represents the collected papers of a conference of similar title, held at Åbo Academy University in December, 2012. The conference brought together folklorists, cultural historians, scholars of media studies, social workers and psychotherapists to discuss the ways that storytelling plays a role in personal identity and events in people's lives and the ways in which therapists seek to harness these roles for specific healing purposes. Varied in intellectual groundings and research methodologies, the articles present an interesting and enlightening aggregate of contemporary approaches to narration in modern humanities, social sciences, and therapeutic contexts.

The collection consists of an introduction and eleven individual articles, grouped under three broad rubrics: Identity and Therapeutic Narrative, Coping with the Past and the Present, and Narrative and Therapeutic Methods. These groupings do not coincide with disciplinary boundaries but rather place articles with differing scholarly methodologies alongside one another for comparative insights. The overarching introductory chapter by Camilla Asplund Ingemark surveys the broad array of different perspectives covered in the conference and the volume and provides valuable guidance to the reader regarding the study of narrative more generally. Each of the subsequent eleven chapters focuses on a single disciplinary perspective and a single set of materials as case studies.

The first section − Identity and Therapeutic Narrative − consists of three papers, two by psychologists and one by Estonian folklorist Moon Meier.

Scholars of folklore and ethnology will likely be irritated or nonplussed by the article by psychotherapist Donald E. Polkinghorne in which the author presents a psychologist's understanding of the history of narrative analysis and uses a modern rendition of the legend of Little Red Riding Hood to illustrate his points. Polkinghorne's characterization of culturally shaped narratives as essentially limiting negative impositions that the therapist must help the patient reject and replace with "more expansive" stories seems to illustrate precisely the kinds of unsettling professional hegemony Diane Goldstein warns against in her recent (2013) presidential address to the American Folklore Society on the relations between folkloristic approaches to narrative and the healthcare industry's uses of the "narrative turn." Norwegian social worker and family therapist Geir Lundby presents some examples of the kinds of letters he writes to children and their families as part of a family therapy practice. The letters illustrate the kind of therapeutic moves made within the narrative therapy framework advanced by Michael White and David Epston. It is not clear from the presentation whether or not these letters were effective in addressing the issues facing the children and families to whom they were addressed, but the article − as a practitioner's documentation of his current practice − serves as valuable primary evidence for anyone wishing to examine the assumptions and methods of professionals in this area of family therapy today. Moon Meier's paper explores the art of staged storytelling as illustrated by two folk revival performers, András Berecz of Hungary and Terje Lillmaa of the Seto region of Estonia. As Meier demonstrates, the tellers perform stories to reconnect audiences with a sense of heritage and a time, seemingly lost, in which events unfolded with more leisure and reflection than in an audience's experience of the frenetic urban life of today. Meier locates storytellers' motivations within the framework of folk revival and Hobsbawm and Ranger's ideas of invented traditions.

The volume's second grouping − Coping with the Past and Present − consists of five papers. Camilla Asplund Ingemark and Dominic Ingemark present an analysis of the possible therapeutic meanings of ancient tales of child-killing demons in Greek and Latin literature, suggesting possible parallels with White's notions of externalization. Sofie Strandén-Backa explores her own positionality as an ethnographer collecting narratives of war, some of which she found easy to identify with and others of which she found repugnant. Strandén-Backa reflects on the subtle but powerful ways in which such personal reactions color ethnographic analysis and call into question the usefulness of studying traumatic situations which lie outside of the ethnographer's own range of personal experiences. Nordic folklore

studies have long emphasized the value of first-person written accounts in the preservation and archiving of traditional culture, and Andreas McKeough surveys such material in his examination of four written accounts of the Finnish Civil War of 1918, demonstrating their deeply evaluative tendencies and artistic shaping. Tuija Saarinen looks at Finnish magazine articles from the 1970s and 80s as exemplars of Cold War yellow journalism and as therapeutic responses to the societal trauma of the Finnish Continuation War and its aftermath. A moving essay by cultural historian Kyrre Kverndokk chronicles the ways in which public expressions of grief and solidarity emerged through social media and organized commemorations in the aftermath of the Utøya terrorist attacks of July 2011. Kverndokk employs the notion of "convergence culture" to suggest that through social media the events of the attacks and their commemoration became intertwined into a single media event, led not top-down by Norway's authorities but by ordinary citizens employing social media to suggest, plan, and implement commemorative actions. Overall, the articles of this section illustrate well the willingness of modern folklorists, cultural historians and ethnologists to grapple with narratives of highly traumatic situations and the interesting insights as well as ethical conundrums that can arise as a result.

The third grouping of the volume − Narrative and Therapeutic Methods − consists of three articles. German palliative care specialist Piret Paal describes the ways in which narrative – "therapeutic emplotment" − is used to help manage the transition for patients and their families between the curative healthcare setting of the hospital or clinic to the palliative or hospice care facilities designed to ease passage toward death. Karoliina Kähmi examines the ways in which group poetry writing, and metaphor more particularly is employed in therapy in Finland designed to rehabilitate persons suffering from schizophrenia. Risto Niemi-Pynttäri examines the ways in which melancholic Finns describe, perform, and hopefully alleviate forms of depression through the composition of online blog diaries. Both anonymous and yet public, such diaries allow writers to express feelings openly and describe their views of themselves and their situations.

As a whole, the volume demonstrates the interesting work going on among Nordic ethnographers and other scholars today in the area of narrative practice and the sustained scholarly attention to the complexities of narrative meaning and interpretation in the field. The volume affords the reader excellent opportunities to observe and appraise the considerable methodological differences underlying the various disciplines' approaches to narration and the ways in which these tie into professionals' aims toward the people they listen to. Asplund Ingemark is to be commended for creating an anthology that gives voice to both early-career and well-established scholars in this broad area of research and brings into focus Nordic approaches for a wider international audience.

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Atlantic Currents

Atlantic Currents: Essays on Lore, Literature and Language. Bo Almqvist and Liam Mac Mathuna (eds.). University College Dublin Press, Dublin 2013. 464 pp.

"Folklore knows few borders, and […] it builds cultural bridges between the most unlikely places."

I borrow these words from Terry Gunnell (p. 241) because they not only powerful-

ly describe the field of folklore studies, but also pertinently summarize Séamas Ó Catháin's lifework as illustrated in *Atlantic Currents: Essays on Lore, Literature and Language.*

The book is a rich collection of essays in honour of Séamas Ó Catháin on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Ó Catháin is probably best known for his work in the field of Irish folklore studies, but his contributions to the field of folklore in general includes extensive international collaborations with scholars not only in folklore but in the fields of language and literature as well.

The volume includes a wide range of high-quality contributions from a number of international writers and scholars. This review does not give a thorough summary of the 30 chapters and should, therefore, rather be seen as an appetizer for the reader.

Most chapters are in English, but there are several essays in Irish, Scottish Gaelic, and Swedish that are summarized in English. An introduction provides a biography of Ó Catháin's impressive career and inspiring life. The personal tone of the editors reflects a dedicated and appreciated scholar not only in Ireland but in all of the various geographical areas that have found themselves as stops along Séamas Ó Catháin's wide-ranging research path.

The volume is divided into five parts: (1) Folklorists and Folklore Collecting; (2) Tales, Legends, Proverbs and Song; (3) Folk Beliefs, Folk Customs and Social Organisation; (4) Gaelic Mythology and Early Literature; and (5) Celtic Languages.

Part 1 places Séamas Ó Catháin in the context of the field of research that he helped to shape and broaden. Seven contributors depict in their writing how the field of folklore studies developed through the lens of key scholars and their achievements. The accounts of these researchers exemplify different ideological strains at play in the emergence of the academic field of folkloristics.

For example, Bo Almqvist, himself a scholar of great significance for folklore studies and whose recent death leaves an empty space in the field, contributed with a chapter dedicated to Séamus Ó Duilearga's (1899–1980) work in the Faroe Islands. Swedish ethnologist Nils-Arvid Bringéus provides a chapter that compiles letters written by Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878–1952) recounting his experiences in Ireland in 1920. Arne Bugge Amundsen's contribution gives an insightful account of the study of folklore in nineteenth-century Norway and the ideologies and tensions at play in the context of the development of the field.

Part 2 deals with presentations and studies of classic folklore material. This extensive section includes essays in a variety of genres and on several different topics. For example, Bengt af Klintberg's chapter is an insightful study of the classic legend of a witch who transforms a man into horse and rides him. This is a rather well-documented tale, but here it is uniquely discussed from a comparative perspective. In another interesting chapter, Estonian folklorist Ülo Valk discusses the authority of tradition through the contextual study of memorates. American folklorist Henry Glassie contributes with a chapter that highlights the role and significance of oral and spatial history through an analysis of songs as a way to learn and retrace history, i.e., an "alternative and critical" history (p. 209).

Part 3 on beliefs and customs includes, among others, a chapter by Terry Gunnell on wedding guising traditions in Norway, Shetland, and Ireland from both an historical and contemporary perspective. It is a great study on mumming traditions in northern Europe, which is Gunnell's area of expertise. In a chapter about whale hunting in the Faroe Islands, Joán Pauli Joensen discusses tensions between tradition and modernity

by examining recent transitions in Faroese society in relation to fishing.

Part 4 includes contributions by specialists in Gaelic mythology and early literature. Part 5 on Celtic languages is similarly a collection of studies of specialist knowledge. However, these will be of great interest to a broader readership interested in the interrelation between the linguistic and cultural aspects of folklore, not the least of which are those concerning minority and heritage languages.

At the end of the volume, a list of Ó Cathain's works provides an overview of his prolific career. The book also contains photographs of Ó Cathain's achievements in different countries and in various contexts that add depth and give life to the accounts of the contributors.

The contributor list in the volume is a largely male-dominated crowd, and this reflects the social and academic structures that predominated throughout most of Ó Cathain's career. This imbalance suggests that certain topics and themes have been prioritized and preferred ahead of others, and makes visible the changes that have taken place in folklore studies in recent decades.

The editors Bo Almqvist, Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Liam Mac Mathúna, Séamus Mac Mathúna, and Seosamh Watson have succeeded in compiling a collection of essays of the highest quality. More than a festschrift, *Atlantic Currents. Essays on Lore, Literature and Language* also illustrates the variations in genres and topics that make up the field of folklore studies. Moreover, it gathers together in one place scholars whose works have significantly contributed to shaping the field of folkloristics.

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An Ambitious Comparative Scandinavian Study

Mattias Bäckström: Hjärtats härdar. Folkliv, folkmuseer och minnesmärken i Skandinavien, 1808–1907. Gidlunds förlag, Möklinta 2012. 372 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss.

It must be stated from the start that Mattias Bäckström's dissertation is impressive in size, showing that the author is thoroughly familiar with a wide range of source material, and his research project is ambitious. The theme of the dissertation is central, relevant, and positioned in a large and important research landscape. Not only historians of ideas, but also historians, cultural historians, and museologists have long been interested in the nineteenth-century museums and their founders. By studying Scandinavian museums in the nineteenth century it is possible, for example, to view nation building as a cultural practice – with all the details, complexities, and changing networks of acting and thinking people that this perspective entails. This museum-related cultural practice involves education, journalism, aesthetics, art and design, literature, and university work. Through his choice of individuals and institutions, Bäckström succeeds in conveying this complexity and all the relations that have existed between the different cultural spheres and between the individual actors.

Precisely because the dissertation has such a broad and ambitious approach, there is good reason to begin by asking where exactly in the problem-landscape Bäckström is located. It is not entirely obvious whom he is actually discussing with or which research tradition he is following. To tell the truth, it is never completely clear who the discussion partners in this book really are. This may have to do with the fact that Bäckström starts by declaring that he does not wish to reduce the diversity of his material or his perspectives, "to established catego-

ries in theory or tradition" (p. 11). Of course, Bäckström refers to other authors and their works, but without a fixed focus through the whole dissertation – or for that matter in the concluding analyses.

Bäckström introduces a few slightly surprising categorizations – partly to describe different intellectual positions and partly to explain the differences between these positions: ideal-realistic naturalism and naturalistic real-idealism (p. 17). He uses these terms fairly consistently to discuss his findings and his actors, but this reviewer at least can never quite grasp what insight this conceptual pair gives in relation to the complexity of the empirical material.

Another central question is the chronological demarcation on which Bäckström bases his study: 1808–1907 may be a well-founded choice, but the problem is that the reader is never told the reason. It is possible that these two dates represent concrete (and important) events in museum history, but this does not answer the question about the periodization on a more general level. What began in 1808 and what ended in 1907? The Danish Society of Antiquaries of 1807, for example, was created by men who were born in the period 1750–1770, and although Artur Hazelius died leaving his life's work in 1901, his Norwegian counterpart, Hans Aall, lived and worked at his Norwegian Folk Museum until his death in 1946. Tracing the background to or the effect of the ideas Bäckström studies can thus not be restricted by the choice of dates like these. In my opinion, the author ought to have problematized this himself.

This rather superficial question raises a more fundamental question, namely, whether the period 1808–1907 witnessed any real watersheds, new phases, or changes that shed light on the shifting debates, the different structural choices, or the general processes taking place in work with museums and culture in Scandinavia. Of course it did, and in practice Bäckström operates with relevant sub-periodizations, changes of generation, and innovations. The dissertation would have gained from greater clarity in these dimensions of the analysis. As it is now, it is instead built up around separate topics and thematic analyses – monuments, folklife, and folk museums. Given Bäckström's interest in following certain ideas and processes through nineteenth-century Scandinavia, this arrangement makes sense, but it does not solve the periodization problem.

Mattias Bäckström's main project is to work in a comparative nineteenth-century Scandinavian context. This is a good choice, but not the only possible one. In fact, the dissertation derives much of its weight from this choice and the way it is implemented. It takes considerable energy – and not least patience – on the part of a researcher to work through the amount of source material that this choice entails. Here Bäckström has a distinct strength, and his large note apparatus with discussions and references will make his dissertation an important reference book for later researchers. Yet this admittedly good choice brings some new challenges. One thing is that it would have been an advantage if the author had stated more explicit reasons for his Scandinavian comparison. Comparison can have different objectives: As a method it can reveal both similarities and differences, it can set up contrasts, and it can indicate both limitations and possibilities available to the actors. Ignoring language aspects and the size of the material: Why is Finland not included? And what about other European countries which used the establishment of museums in the nineteenth century to mark their newly won or ardently desired cultural independence? And given that the choice of the three Scandinavian countries is justified (as it is of course), it would have been good to see an account of how relations between these three countries underwent different phases in the course of

the nineteenth century. Relations between Denmark, Norway, and Sweden had their ups and downs, to put it mildly, during this period. Scandinavism as an ideology and cultural practice peaked in the middle of the nineteenth century, and it undoubtedly influenced several of the central museum founders in all three countries. At the same time, however, it was obviously significant that relations between the three countries in the early nineteenth century were affected by war, conflict, victory, and defeat, a situation that laid the foundation for cultural mobilization and cultural isolation. The same thing happened as a result of Denmark's crushing defeat and degrading in the time around the death of Frederik VII in 1863: Europe's oldest royal family died out, Denmark became a decimated state as a result of Prussian aggression. There was a similar situation at the end of Bäckström's period: Norway and Sweden were on the verge of full-scale war after several decades of heated political antagonisms concerning the formal and the real meaning of the personal union that had been imposed on Norway. Clarifying these circumstances would probably have made Bäckström's concrete analyses more dynamic and also enabled a clearer periodization of the processes he describes. The ideas and motives that he considers came into existence and acquired their meaning in a political and cultural space. It is not sufficient either as a method or as a concrete analysis to point out relations between ideas or actors (p. 16).

Yet another question about the research design deserves to be raised. Once again, it is Bäckström's ambitious approach that is the starting point. The problems he has chosen, the implementation of the study, and the concrete arrangement of the book have the result that the research object itself appears enormous: we are provided with themes (in museum history), institutions, actors, ideas, and processes in a rather shapeless composition. It is perfectly clear that Bäckström's primary interest is in following the relations between the concrete actors, the museum institutions, the surrounding society, and the public sphere in Scandinavia, but that could have given reason to discuss the methods, perspectives, source selection, and theories that would have been best for analysing this relationship. And the definitive question then is this: Can the highly diverse sources withstand the pressure of the ambitious questions and perspectives?

If we move from this broad, general discussion of the research design, theory and method of the dissertation, and instead look at where the real centre of gravity lies, the conclusion is quite clear: Bäckström studies the museum projects of the Dane Bernhard Olsen (1836–1922), the Swede Artur Hazelius (1833–1901), and the Norwegian Hans Aall (1869–1946) and the relations between these men. The chronological emphasis in the dissertation is thus on the last third of the nineteenth century. The three museum founders had – to say the least – very different backgrounds, both socially and culturally. They nevertheless ended up with cultural and museum projects that had many features in common.

How could this be? This brings us to the crux of Bäckström's dissertation. He is not a devotee of any one specific theory, instead eclectically testing different theoretical perspectives. This is acceptable and not uncommon. But when one approaches his concrete analyses, one can occasionally be mystified. Bäckström mentions several times that, when he wants to capture and analyse the ideas and strategies that his main actors express, negotiate about, share, and translate into practice, it seems as if what constructs and explains connections and relations (between the ideas and/or the actors) is "nearness". Perhaps this proximity of ideas in some cases is of a more superficial or non-relational character? A cultural historian looking

more closely at the kind of source material in which Bäckström detects this closeness of ideas would be struck by how different they are – in their evidential depth, rhetoric, level of ambition, and genre. Here we find works of cultural philosophy alongside poetry, letters, opening speeches, and exhibition catalogues. It is hard to see the clear connections and close ideas that Bäckström assumes. One may perhaps *suspect* that there are connections, but often it is no more than this.

Bäckström's dissertation would have gained by an additional focus on the combination of rhetoric and mentality, as a way to explain the concurrence in museum and culture projects across the national borders in Scandinavia. When Bernhard Olsen, Artur Hazelius, and Hans Aall – seemingly without any long-term contacts or alliances – nevertheless ended up with concepts that that had a great deal in common, it was not due to the nearness of ideas, a proximity which can easily be taken as evidence of influence or relational processes. The similarity in the concepts may just as well have to do with the fact that the cultural rhetoric that arose in many fields, and under the influence of different forms of social, political, and cultural changes in the late nineteenth century, gradually made some museum models possible and others impossible. It was possible and acceptable to elaborate some conceptual models and gain support for them, while others became antiquated or politically impossible to peddle.

If Bäckström had followed sidetracks like this, some of the thematic fields that he shows so clearly to have been shared by central actors in the Scandinavian museum world would have stood out more distinctly. Here are some concrete suggestions for some of these tracks:

At several places in the dissertation Bäckström shows how *religion* and a religious rhetoric follow museum thinking closely through much of the nineteenth century. The Norwegian and the Danish material is almost over-explicit in this respect. In Norway many central actors who set the premises for the shared national cultural memory were either theologians or closely connected to a religious and ecclesiastical way of thinking. Eilert Sundt (1817–1875) – who is, quite rightly, an important figure for Bäckström – was a theologian, clergyman, and a leading actor in the church. In Denmark Bäckström highlights N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872), who pursued theology and church politics in all his actions, thinking, and influence. For both Sundt and Grundtvig, politics and culture were of crucial ecclesiastical and theological relevance. In this perspective it makes good sense to look for the (secularized) religious rhetoric in the next generation of cultural ideologues and institution founders as well. The whole thinking about the national spirit, collective memory, the national communion, and how this was developed or terminated in law, has an unmistakable dimension of theological and religious rhetoric. The same can be said about much of Hazelius' rhetoric, for example. If this is correct, it should be possible to set the development of Scandinavian museums into a larger context of ideas and projects concerning the transition of the Protestant countries from confessional unitary states to complex, conflict-ridden class societies. Ecclesiastical religion no longer had any good answers at the time of this transition. Instead some people tried to find the answers in new institutions which would conserve the national memory and the collective spirit, identifying community-building places, narratives, and objects which united people across social and political differences. It is clear that this was the position of both Hazelius and Aall.

Going further, one can also ask what happened to *politics* in Bäckström's dissertation. If we follow Bernhard Olsen's Danish museum project, it is perfectly

clear how his political actions were downright revanchist. Not only the national culture was to be included within the borders of Denmark after 1863–1864, but also the culture of the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein and the increasingly independent Iceland had to be incorporated in Olsen's Danish Folk Museum. In contrast, it is striking how both Aall and Hazelius seemingly tried to manoeuvre between opposite political poles in their cultural projects: the museums they established were supposed to bridge the differences.

One theme which Bäckström repeatedly touches on, and which is fascinating and ripe for further research, is the relationship between the Scandinavian museum projects and the *economy*. In the practical activity there was a close relationship between the three countries' central museum founders and the increasing and professionalized trade in antiques. Here we come to what is perhaps the most interesting and novel aspect of Bäckström's dissertation, namely, his study of what he calls "museum economism" (a new term which he introduces along with several other concepts, rather abruptly in the middle of the dissertation, pp. 164ff.). The Scandinavian folk museums developed at the intersection of a private collector's market and a public-legal field linked to an understanding of cultural community and shared ownership.

To conclude, it is important to state that Mattias Bäckström has delivered a massive and impressive scholarly work. In printed form the dissertation consists of 285 pages of text in two columns followed by 970 notes which alone fill 50 pages. This alone is enough to show that the dissertation is a result of a systematic will to undertake an ambitious comparison on a Scandinavian basis. And the work has been done with great learning and an interest in details. As regards research design and potential alternative interpretations, Bäckström's dissertation nevertheless seems rather self-enclosed. This reviewer would suggest that Bäckström could have explained more by opening his project more towards other research, towards more clearly defined perspectives and connections between the phenomena, processes, institutions, and individual actors he discusses. This critique, however, should not conceal the fact that Mattias Bäckström's dissertation impresses by the way it puts the nineteenth-century Scandinavian museums into a broad intellectual perspective. This ambitious project has given new insights while simultaneously inspiring new research.

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Autobiography of the Ethnologist Nils-Arvid Bringéus

Nils-Arvid Bringéus: Örkelljungapåg och Lundaprofessor. Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi CXXVIII, Uppsala 2014. 216 pp. Ill.

Nils-Arvid Bringéus was born in 1926 and has been active in ethnology in Lund since 1947. His list of scholarly publications is extremely long and multifaceted. He has for a long time been a leading figure in Nordic ethnology and folkloristics. For his 88th birthday he published his most recent book, which is autobiographical, based on the author's own recollections as well as diary entries and letters. A rich collection of privately owned pictures is well used here. The book is number 128 in the Acta series of the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy.

The first half of the book covers the time before the author became an ethnologist. This part is mostly concerned with his family. His academic work is presented in broad outline in the second part of the book. Here the author could have gone into greater depth by shedding more light on the scholarly context

of his studies and describing how he experienced and handled it. The reader is not told anything about whether recent academic discussions of reflexivity, auto-ethnography, the researcher's role, and subjective interpretations have contributed to the genesis of this book.

The author's work as head of the Department of Ethnology in Lund, where he chaired the research seminars, is not treated in any detail. During his time as professor from 1967 to 1991, Bringéus was head of the department and of the Folklife Archives in Lund. In the 1970s, moreover, he was inspector and examiner for the Department of Ethnology in Gothenburg, which was then being built up from scratch.

I first made the acquaintance of Bringéus as a history student in autumn 1965 when he lectured on cultural history at the Kulturen museum in Lund. For my fellow student Gösta Arvastson and myself it was the inspiration that stimulated us to switch to folklife studies, the subject that became ethnology in 1970. A characteristic of Bringéus has been his ability to inspire students and young researchers. He supported them in their progress, first to a doctorate and later to various positions in universities, museums, or archives. I suppose this is a topic he cannot write about himself, but it is something which many pupils have experienced and which ought to be emphasized here. The research seminars chaired by Bringéus were inspirational and forward-looking. There was always something constructive in his viewpoints, not only criticism of a dissertation text. He praised and blamed as needed. After every seminar the doctoral candidate had a clear idea of how to move forward. During my time as a doctoral student in the early 1970s, minutes were kept of the seminar discussions. There must be material there to shed light on the contemporary ethnological discussion in Lund.

Yet another matter that ought to have been highlighted is Bringéus's role in forging international networks, an achievement of lasting value. The food congresses that began in Lund in 1970 are still held every other year. The SIEF commission on bildlore has been active since 1984, and the commission on folk religion since 1993. Bringéus was careful to ensure that we research students established international contacts in Europe, at conferences, symposia, and through excursions. If he had not encouraged me in this early on, I would probably not have built up my own international contact network. The outward face of Nordic ethnology was the journal *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, started by Bringéus in 1971. It still informs the world about what is happening in Scandinavia. In the present century Bringéus has also been a central source of inspiration for a renewal in the disciplinary history of Nordic ethnology and folkloristics. He took the initiative for both a Swedish and a Norwegian anthology about formerly active ethnologists and folklorists.

The book reviewed here gives information about many encounters with people over the years. Bringéus gives us a generally bright picture of his life. He mostly avoids touching on the rivalries and controversies that occurred. Perhaps it is best for the author's well-being and for posterity that the bright sides of life are given most prominence. Bringéus is not a person who has willingly engaged in scholarly polemic. Bringéus, who has been such a productive author during his emeritus years, has probably much more to give.

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Everyday Life in Nineteenth-century Denmark

Dagligliv i 1800-tallets Jylland. Evald Tang Kristensen om mennesker og land-

skaber. Palle O. Christiansen (ed.). Hovedland, Copenhagen 2014. 213 pp. Ill.

The Danish ethnologist and cultural historian Palle Ove Christiansen has devoted great energy to an in-depth study of the Danish folklore collector Evald Tang Kristensen (1843–1929) and his extensive work. A book that appeared in 2011 was devoted to the people who provided information during the collector's fieldwork (reviewed by this reviewer in *Arv* 2012). In his next book, published in 2013, Christiansen concentrated on Tang Kristensen as a person and the milieu in which he lived (reviewed by this reviewer in *Arv* 2013).

The book reviewed here appeared in 2014 and deals with Tang Kristensen's publications about everyday life in rural Jutland in the nineteenth century. These books were based on material which he collected during his fieldwork, chiefly in the 1870s and 1880s. Christiansen's book consists of nine chapters which deal with different themes of everyday life. The author starts each chapter with an explanatory commentary both on the content of the texts and on archaic words that are now difficult to understand. This is followed by a reproduction of parts of Tang Kristensen's own texts, which appeared over a period of 45 years. The book is richly illustrated with drawings and photographs from the nineteenth century, including a number of sharp photographs of Tang Kristensen's informants, taken in 1895 by the photographer Peter Olsen.

The first chapter provides a survey of working life, homes, foodways, clothing, and gatherings to mark festive occasions of the calendar or the life cycle. The presentation primarily concerns simple people who lived and made their living in the meagre heathlands of northern Jutland. The second chapter considers how the peasants raised and sold castrated bulls (steers) on the Jutish estate of Viskum.

The third chapter concentrates on peasant life in the parish of Brandstrup, where Tang Kristensen grew up in the 1850s, and where he also spent some time as a teacher in the 1880s. The text that is reproduced here was printed in 1923. By that time Tang Kristensen could look back on the great changes that had taken place since he had grown up in the countryside where he later collected his material. The roads in the latter part of the nineteenth century were simple and inadequate. The houses were often in a dreadful state. The old folk costumes of homespun were still being worn. All children, regardless of sex, wore skirts up to the age of three or four. Food was simple or frugal. In the evening people ate porridge made from rye or barley with wooden spoons, and there was no coffee. Lighting was very poor and there were no oil lamps. This was before the heath was cultivated and before the implementation of a reform which redistributed the common land among the farms. The poorest people had to beg. Beggars could rove around in large groups, acting importunately and maliciously towards the local people. At the same time, some beggars were good at telling stories and singing songs, which Tang Kristensen documented. Some descriptions of people who lived in very primitive conditions are also included in this chapter. There were men who were alcoholics and some who swore like troopers. It is a veritable history of poverty that is served to the reader.

On the margins of the peasant community were the people who wandered around, known in Denmark as *kæltringer*. They swept chimneys, ground knives, and slaughtered and skinned horses, dogs, and cats. The latter work was held in great contempt. Some of these travellers could act in a threatening manner towards the local populace and they had a reputation of being thieves. They not infrequently got into fights with each other. For that reason, people

were often afraid when the *kæltringer* came visiting.

One chapter in the book deals with legends that Tang Kristensen heard. There were stories about ghosts in the form of animals or people without heads. Tang Kristensen discusses the basis of these beliefs but does not arrive at any sure interpretation. Beliefs and customs associated with Christmas, on the other hand, could go back to pre-Christian times, in his opinion. Tang Kristensen declared in his later years that the folk beliefs of bygone times, which he had once been able to document, had ceased to exist. To his disappointment, people were now more interested in materialism. Younger people no longer listened to the older people's stories and songs.

Palle Ove Christiansen's three books about Evald Tang Kristensen give posterity a detailed picture of a man who amassed a huge and unusual collection of folklore in the nineteenth century. Tang Kristensen was a gifted fieldworker who listened carefully to his informants' stories and songs. At the same time, he was a good observer of what he saw on his many field trips over several decades. Tang Kristensen's field collecting and his writings are a unique contribution to our knowledge of simple people's living conditions in a part of rural Denmark in the nineteenth century.

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Swedish Archives in Finland

Carola Ekrem, Pamela Gustavsson, Petra Hakala & Mikael Korhonen: Arkiv, minne, glömska. Arkiven vid svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 1885–2010. SLS, Helsingfors 2014. 490 pp. Ill.

The title of this book means "Archive, Memory, Oblivion: The Archives of the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland 1885−2010". We have here almost 500 pages covering the 125-year history of the archives maintained by the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS). The archives in question consist of the Archives of History and Literature, the Archives of Folk Culture, the Archives of the Swedish Language (all in Helsinki), and in Vaasa the Ostrobothnian Archives of Traditional Culture and Finland's Swedish Folk Music Institute. The SLS organization also includes the library of the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland.

The book describes the development of the archival work at SLS from its foundation to the present day, the general guidelines for the collection of folk traditions and linguistic material and for the accession of donated private archives. In this way we are given a picture of how the archive organization and the library activities have grown and evolved since 1885. The main aim of the book is to describe "how and for what purposes the archives of the Society of Swedish Literature were founded and how the material in the archive was collected and developed in different times". The authors also want to bring out the values and deliberations that governed the Society's early collecting activities, as regards both language policy and ideology.

The material is rich and interesting; it consists of printed minutes, correspondence, postal questionnaires, prize competitions, grant applications, field instructions, collection directives, forms, field diaries, notebooks, photographs, travel accounts, etc.

In the introduction the former director of the archives, the historian Mikael Korhonen, has an interesting discussion of memory and power in relation to archival work. He points out that, in order to make a thorough analysis of the SLS archives, it is necessary to consider the selection process as well as questions about how and why the archives were founded. Korhonen says that it is a ques-

tion of control over our collective memory and the power to affect how this memory is used and how history is written.

Under the heading "Elucidation of the Mental Life of our Swedish Peasantry: Tradition Collecting in the Society of Swedish Literature", the folklorist Carola Ekrem describes how the collecting of folklore was dictated by ideological values concerning the Swedish-language traditions. In this respect the publication of the monumental work on Swedish folklore, *Finlands svenska folkdiktning*, dictated the guidelines for what was counted as genuine Finland-Swedish tradition.

The linguist Pamela Gustavsson describes how the collecting of linguistic material, dialects, and place names was started by the Society. This work was interwoven with the collecting of folklore and shared the same ideological foundation. In the third empirical part of the book, the historian Petra Hakala describes the archives and the material the Society accepted and discusses the ideological deliberations that governed these accessions.

In the concluding part of the book, Mikael Korhonen returns to cover the history of the SLS archives in the years from 1985 to the present. He discusses the activities, the organizational developments, and the collecting methods.

The Society of Swedish Literature was founded in 1885. The educated Swedish-speaking class were worried that high culture was becoming Finnicized and that the Swedish language would die out. The task of the Society was to collect and study evidence of Swedish culture from different periods, and testimony about the men who had worked to maintain this culture, as a way to increase people's knowledge of and feeling for "the work and deeds of the fathers". The scholarly interest went hand in hand with the political mission of arousing national sentiment by finding the soul of the people.

In the 1960s and 1970s the collecting of folklore and linguistic material was influenced by new perspectives; instead of rescuing the vanishing peasant culture, attention was focused on contemporary cultural diversity.

At the end of the 1990s and the start of the present century the activities were broadened and new positions were created. The number of permanent posts was doubled over two decades. The work was characterized by diversity and continuity, fieldwork with participant observation, interviews, and photographic documentation, new communication channels, digitization of material, questionnaires on the Internet, and a new website in 2010. Korhonen writes that it is considered important today to build on old collecting methods and thus ensure the continuity of the archival material. The sphere of interest must be extended, however, he says, to include the entire archival field in Finland, and there also has to be a continuous discussion of the conditions for visibility and the dissemination of knowledge offered by the Internet.

There are many vivid examples in the book: the reader meets informants and officials, zealous ideologues and proud nationalists, proponents of popular education and students on scholarships; we learn how best to persuade old men to pick up the fiddle and get old women to tell of olden times doing the washing and the baking. A fascinating and informative picture of Swedish-speaking Finland builds up as one reads.

The empirical wealth and the variation in the size of the different parts of the book (from 10 to 200 pages), does however make the book unnecessarily inaccessible. With a better thought-out arrangement, a summary after each chapter, and an expanded introduction with a clearer description of the outline of the book, it would have been easier to penetrate the five hundred pages of interesting reading.

I would also have liked to see a dis-

cussion of how the book fits into the memory process that reproduces nationalism as a masculine concern and perhaps also a masculine ability. Of course, this has to do with the fact that the build-up and development of the archive was the work of a few men, and that a description of the archives and their collections inevitably becomes a description of the lives of these persons. Nevertheless, in the introduction we are promised a problematization of the power dimensions of the memory process, but this is not entirely fulfilled, and above all it is not related to today's activities. With an analysis like this, the reader would have received explanations of why it is still important for the authors to preserve the Swedish cultural heritage so that, as Korhonen writes, it "is not isolated and marginalized in the future".

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Broadsheets as Bygone Mass Media

Hanna Enefalk: Skillingtryck! Historien om 1800-talets försvunna massmedium. (Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia 51). Uppsala, Historiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet 2013. 176 pp. Ill.

Broadsheets as source material have long interested ballad scholars, primarily those with an interest in the texts. Research on this topic was started by the historian of literature and art Ewert Wrangel, with a now classical article in *Samlaren* 1894. Ulf Peder Olrog took up the thread in the licentiate dissertation in Nordic and comparative folklife studies which he submitted at Uppsala University in 1951. Olrog had a broad approach. He went through all the then known collections of broadsheets, seeking to show the distribution of the ballads by means of frequency studies.

Olrog's study remained unprinted for a long time – paradoxically in view of the fact that he was studying prints. In 2011 Svenskt Visarkiv published the dissertation and his other ballad studies as *Studies i folkets visor*. The welcome publication of Olrog's pioneering works has actually been a boost for broadsheet research, despite the fact that the dissertation was written in a completely different research climate. But Olrog was dealing with questions that have seen hardly any study at all in the sixty years and more since he left the seminar room with a pass grade.

The positive effect of Olrog's printed study is coming at the right time, because in recent years the interest in broadsheets has spread to researchers other than ballad scholars. One of those who has shown how the potential of broadsheets can be extended is the Uppsala historian Hanna Enefalk. In her doctoral dissertation (2008) she studies nationalism and patriotism as these idea systems are reflected in broadsheet texts during the long nineteenth century.

What was refractory but rewarding source material in the dissertation is made the centre of the work reviewed here. Enefalk grapples with this elusive genre of prints and gives us a handy book that is both an introduction to broadsheets and a study of the broadsheets published in a particular year. The book is written with an infectious enthusiasm for the material, which may mean that this work will give further momentum to broadsheet research. Just like Olrog, Hanna Enefalk has devoted a lot of time to the copious contents of the archives. She has leafed through the material and read it time and again, thus acquiring an overall grasp that few can match.

The introduction to broadsheets as a print genre fills roughly a third of the book. Enefalk discusses how these can be defined and designated, she describes the graphic design of the prints, the history of the printing houses, the cases of censorship, the print runs, and other matters, all of which will be of interest

to an inquisitive reader. The history of broadsheets in Sweden is supplemented with Nordic comparisons, and Enefalk's use of relevant literature in Finnish is particularly praiseworthy. Her introduction can be warmly recommended to anyone who wishes to join the growing research on broadsheets. This section ends in exemplary fashion with accounts of the tortuous routes to this source material: useful and not-so-useful bibliographies, card catalogues, archive indices, subject catalogues, databases, etc.

She makes an important correction to the history of broadsheets. The first known Swedish broadsheet did not appear in 1583, as the authority Bengt R. Jonsson claimed and many ballad scholars after him have continued to state – this reviewer must confess to being among those who have uncritically repeated the claim. Hanna Enefalk asserts, on good grounds, that a print from 1536 containing anti-Catholic ballads is Sweden's oldest extant broadsheet-like print. "This shows how closely the Swedish history of the broadsheet medium follows the German and Danish" (p. 18), which is an important explanatory association.

She also helps to tidy up the general knowledge about broadsheets by counting those preserved in the Royal Library (KB) in Stockholm and in Uppsala University Library (UUB). The figures circulating hitherto – like the statement about the oldest surviving example – have been regarded as reliable by many authors. After a careful count, however, Hanna Enefalk can say that the UUB collections are larger than previously stated, with just over 11,000, to be compared with slightly more than 13,000 in KB. She calculates that there are around 35,000 broadsheets in public ownership, a figure which certainly underlines the importance of these prints for the spread of folk ballads. It also tells us that the broadsheets are a virtually inexhaustible source of material for scholars with a mind to investigate them.

Enefalk goes on to present her thoughts about the fact that so little of this truly mass medium has been preserved. (This must be what is meant by the "vanished mass medium" of the book's subtitle.) This may sound strange in the light of the figures above, but in view of the large print runs, more copies of the broadsheets ought to have survived all the wear and tear, the division of inheritances, and other things that threatened to reduce the amount. But some kind of use must have taken a heavy toll of the print runs. Use as toilet paper or as wrappers for food could be conceivable explanations. Hanna Enefalk puts forward the suggestion that many broadsheets were used to revive fires that were in danger of going out. Broadsheets were cheap prints which people could afford to treat in this way after they were read.

The next part of the book presents the author's actual study. To be able to say something about the content of the flow of broadsheets, about the producers and the authors of the texts, Hanna Enefalk has selected the total production for one year. She has taken the prints for her study exclusively from the main series in UUB. This does not, however, include broadsheets with religious texts, which an earlier generation of librarians chose to save in a separate series. This is the methodological weakness of the study, since it means that religious ballads and songs are under-represented. Although religious texts gradually became less common in broadsheets, they were still part of the range on offer to buyers. That the broadsheets come solely from UUB is of less importance, since Enefalk has established that the legal deposit requirements of the time meant that the collections in KB and UUB mostly coincide.

Enefalk has chosen all the broadsheets produced in 1851, a year when "nothing happened" that affected the tendencies of the texts. The material comprises 100 broadsheets from 22 prin-

ters, containing 387 ballad texts; after the omission of identical texts in different broadsheets, she is left with 287 unique ballads. She studies this material in several ways. She notes that the leading producer of broadsheets that year was J. P. Lundström in Jönköping. The most common subject was relations between men and women. And the ballad that occurred most often was "Ensam i skuggrika dalen" (Alone in the Shadowy Valley), sometimes entitled "Herden Fingal" (Fingal the Shepherd), which continued to be frequently printed for a long time to come.

Most interesting of all, however, is the result of her attempt to trace the most frequent authors. It turns out that the authors who provided the texts are dominated by a specific circle of *littérateurs*, all working in Stockholm, who met in the home of Johan Gabriel Carlén and Emelie Flygare-Carlén. (The husband wrote for broadsheets, but not the wife.) Since these authors also wrote for the theatres in Stockholm, there is a link, not previously demonstrated, between the ballad texts of the broadsheets and the songs performed on the stage at the same time. Sometimes songs that had become hits in the theatre were published in broadsheets; at other times songs that were already popular broadsheets were added to the stage shows.

Hanna Enefalk uses the broadsheets from 1851 for several subsidiary studies. It is noticeable occasionally that she has not read all that can be expected of a ballad scholar. Understandably, she cannot detect everything that an experienced ballad researcher would see in the material, nor does she have the ballad scholar's set of explanatory terminology. Someone who knows the field will therefore notice a certain superficiality. But it does her credit that she did not restrict her study to the safer territory of the historian. An all-round examination of this amount of printed matter requires more scholarly tools than a single discipline can provide the researcher with.

Although Enefalk thus encompasses most of what these selected prints can yield, she has not considered the references to the tunes that stand alongside many of the ballad texts. A reviewer should never, of course, criticize an author for what he or she has not done, so I shall content myself with this information to readers of this review.

To sum up, Hanna Enefalk has written an introduction to broadsheets as source material. It will almost certainly be found in the reference lists of anyone in future who takes an interest in this genre of print.

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Making Things Visible

Tingenes tilsynekomster. Kulturproduksjon, materialitet og estetikk. Anne Eriksen, Mia Göran & Ragnhild Evang Reinton (eds.). Novus forlag, Oslo 2013. 235 pp. Ill.

Material culture is an unusually rich research field. It has developed in different directions in recent years, and nowadays many scholars are inspired by the world of film, theatre, and literature. The stage is once again amongst the ethnographer's stock of metaphors. One of the central concepts in this Norwegian edited volume about the visibility of things is "staging".

The book is a result of multidisciplinary cooperation. The authors have their base in the humanities. In a joint research programme at the University of Oslo they developed their interest in the materiality and aesthetic of culture production. The conversations in the programme served as a source of inspiration and pleasure. Soon they discovered the need for interdisciplinary work and "long discussions".

In ten articles the ten authors write about material objects in society and

culture. Meaning making is a recurrent theme, and things are ascribed meanings that vary over time, but also depending on situations and events in everyday life. People create relations to them. The focus of the book is on how things are made visible, as this is determined by "practices, systems and strategies for staging". Obviously there are several psychological and sociological perspectives within reach which could contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic, but they have to take a back seat. Here it is humanist thinking that dominates, concentrating on the visibility of the objects, their presence and their aesthetic. The editors believe that the aesthetic perspective can give us new insights into the process of materialization, but not without reservations. First the boundaries for the aesthetic gaze must be extended, far beyond classical distinction which concerns the doctrine of beauty. Such ideas about aesthetics are revised in the introduction to the book. Here it is a matter of discovering new areas for cultural research.

The articles are disparate. The topics range from the seventeenth century to the present day. In some of the articles the authors concentrate on early times while others write about cultural phenomena in modern society. This makes the book a methodological collage with several humanistic sciences involved. The editors, Anne Eriksen, Mia Göran, and Ragnhild Evang Reinton, have their scholarly roots in cultural history, musicology, and comparative literature.

The book is divided into three parts with the following headings: "Things", "Installations", "Systems". With this the editors seek to convey some "examples of literary and philosophical" ways of looking at objects. Under the first heading we are presented with some literary interpretations of things. Modern literature with its detailed descriptions of the objects, homes, and settings around the characters functions extremely well as a reminder of the multidimensional material culture. With examples from Borges, Kafka, Benjamin, Balzac, Stevens, and Proust, the transformations of things are analysed by Ragnhild Evang Reinton. In the literary text they served as markers of social divisions and thus became a lasting part of the novel's interpretation of the world. Unlike the worker, who was concerned with the utility and function of things, the author had to be a person who could be described as a deliberate collector of the forms and beauty of things, writes Tone Selboe in her studies of literary London. The literary production of presence presupposes that objects are created and recreated in words – even when their real forms have been ruined or have disappeared completely. The boundary between literature and science was still fluid in the seventeenth century, as Helge Jordheim notes in his contribution. With inspiration from Enlightenment ideas and Bernhard Fontenelle's philosophy he studies how the world was changed, made visible, and began to be perceived as objects.

The next section, "Installations", discusses the relationship between nature and culture. Brita Brenna analyses the aesthetic composition of nature experiences which was a part of the eighteenth-century thematization of the world. Mia Göran writes about the ideal of the English park and the aesthetic thinking developed by Rousseau, Kant, and Schiller. Kyrre Kverndokk writes about monuments, a highly conscious way of making something visible. In the nineteenth century it became common to honour prominent citizens with monuments to commemorate their lives. Democratic ideas broke the long tradition of monuments marking the presence of religion or political power in everyday life. In a beech forest in Halland there are some stones with texts and aphorisms, as Eivind Røssaak tells us in his chapter. They were erected towards the end of the nineteenth century by the politician and estate owner Alfred

Bexell at the manor of Torstorp. This was possibly a form of information technology, correspondence with the future, an expression of the new individualism, a manifestation of moral values, or an attempt to break the flow of modernity. The properties of stone, lying or standing, as a reminder of eternity, enclosed in the nineteenth-century fascination with mysterious ruins and remains of temples, is something I myself have analysed in detail in "Det monumentlösa landskapet" (in *Minnesmärken: Att tolka det förflutna och besvärja framtiden*, ed. Jonas Frykman & Billy Ehn, 2007, p. 325).

In the final part, "Systems", Anne Eriksen discusses the special conditions for making things visible that prevail in institutionalized cultural heritage management and museums. The museum stores are a closed world to which only professionals are admitted, whereas exhibitions are aimed at the public. The museums developed their potential to work with exhibitions as a form – large areas and small details, large projections and minimal collages, and the visitors were an audience who had to learn to see the things in the right way. The contradiction between inside and outside, preserving and making visible, is obvious and functions as the starting point for her article, while Inger Johanne Lyngø studies the process of musealization, based on a small object, a foetal membrane which the owner preserved as a good-luck caul until it came to the Norwegian Folk Museum. The way to the collections represents varying perspectives on making visible and preserving. Anne Birgitte Rønning studies the story of a female Robinson Crusoe in the Amazon jungle and her sudden reappearance. Via the scanty information from the catalogue card in the university library she found reason to check out a popular modern legend with powerful ingredients – shipwreck, heroism, and tragedy – which was widely spread in eighteenth-century society.

Material culture was defined as a research field at the end of the nineteenth century. Many ideas about objects have seen the light of day since then. The profusion of objects available in modern society, and the advertising that stages pleasure, desire, and curiosity, is a well-known theme in cultural studies. People's sense of experience, rather than function, has gradually increased. Design is one of the growing niches in society. The historical articles are of some interest, and I read them with great pleasure and inspiration, but I would like to read more about the late-modern aesthetic which has several points in common with film, theatre, directing, and acting. That would be a weighty contribution to the idea of staging.

People's relationship to artefacts is one of the recurrent questions in ethnological research. Materialization, performativity, meaning making, and interaction are some of the fascinating issues, along with the social and cultural value of objects. In material culture, resetting at zero plays an important part. It is a feature of the life cycle of objects that they are freed from all values, including the aesthetic ones. The last journey is to the recycling station. Researchers stuck for a long time to linguistic analogies, in the belief that things should be perceived as text, and we have heard critique of that limitation many times in recent years. This book is no exception. The editors put forward their ideas about things as activity, action, and doing, but they forget that the same idea was developed in the ethnology of the 1970s, not least in Norway. The architect behind Norwegian ethnology, Professor Knut Kolsrud, who was at the authors' own University of Oslo between 1961 and 1986, claimed that things are not static objects but activities. That comment guided many scholars of material culture in Nordic ethnology.

Yet I would not easily dismiss the framing of the ideas in this book. The more I read, the more interested I be-

come. It is thoroughly well done. The editors' introduction about the history of making things visible and about aesthetics is nicely written and inspiring. As they say: "When we choose to use the concept of making visible rather than materialization, it is because we want to place special emphasis on certain dimensions in the materialization process, namely, the aesthetic ones." In the border zone between the aesthetic and the culture-theory perspectives, there are ample opportunities to expose the complex interplay between the materialization of life's values, making things visible, and attention.

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Reading the *Millennium* Trilogy

Millennium. Åtta genusvetenskapliga läsningar av den svenska välfärdsstaten genom Stieg Larssons Millennium-trilogi. Siv Fahlgren, Anders Johansson & Eva Söderberg (eds.). Forum för genusvetenskap/Genusstudier vid Mittuniversitetet, Rapport 4. Sundsvall 2013. 131 pp.

In the last few years, Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy has generated a great deal of academic interest, both nationally and internationally, resulting in a multitude of studies aimed at a broad audience as well as countless scholarly articles in edited volumes and academic journals. The latest book of this kind, containing eight gender-focused readings of the Swedish welfare state through the lens of Larsson's trilogy, has been produced at Mid Sweden University, edited by Siv Fahlgren, Anders Johansson, and Eva Söderberg. It is positioned somewhere between the popular and the scholarly, but the essays in it can only partially be classed as popularizing.

The aim of the volume is said to be to discuss Larsson's trilogy and the picture it paints of Swedish society, considered from a multidisciplinary gender perspective. The articles are by Swedish researchers from Mid Sweden University and Umeå University (along with one Finnish researcher) in ethnology, comparative literature, gender studies, public health, and law, all with an interest in gender issues. To my knowledge, however, it is only Annelie Bränström Öhman who has previously devoted any research interest to crime fiction. It is thus not a knowledge of the genre that is the point here, but that researchers from different disciplines with different perspectives approach a work of crime fiction which has achieved such widespread popularity, so that the ideas it contains and the image of Sweden it conveys have reached, and presumably affected, a huge number of people all over the world. For the most part it is successful, despite the absence of genre knowledge.

The volume is divided into three parts, dealing with: criminality and violence in the Swedish welfare state (Niemi, Gillander Gådin, Berglund-Lake); how the character of Lisbeth Salander should be understood in a Swedish and a feminist context (Söderberg, Bränström Öhman, Fahlgren); and images of Sweden and Swedishness (Ljungström, Johansson). It seems odd that the editors decided to publish the articles in Swedish, with one exception, when the aim of the volume is to examine the questions that Larsson's novels have generated abroad. Research on Nordic crime fiction, not least the *Millennium* trilogy, is a growing international field, offering an excellent opportunity for Swedish humanists and social scientists to participate in the debate in the international research community. The fact that half of the articles have already been published in Swedish makes the choice of language even less comprehensible.

The only article in English, "All the Adults in Noisy Village: Constructions

of Post-Modern Identity in the Welfare State in the Millennium Trilogy", would have benefited from having the language checked. In this article the Finnish scholar of law and gender studies, Johanna Niemi, draws parallels between the function of the welfare state in the *Millennium* trilogy and the idealized adult society in Astrid Lindgren's novels about Bullerbyn (Noisy Village in the US) and Saltkråkan, arguing that one can explain the popularity of the trilogy against the background of Lindgren's idyllic society. Niemi's article, however, is permeated by a troublesome gender conservatism and a moralistic perspective, where especially women from the upper class – "Erica Berger and Harriet Vanger with their liberated sexual habits [who] behave like men" (p. 15) – are virtually said to have themselves to blame when they suffer violence and threats. Niemi also claims that it is less credible when these women incur violence than when other women in the novels do (p. 17). Yet as far as I know, most of the violence against women in Sweden today takes place within the family (Harriet), and there is the growing problem of net hate and stalkers who attack women in positions of power (Erika). Luckily, however, according to Niemi, there are some characters in the trilogy who are "closer to real women, as there were in Astrid Lindgren's books" (p. 23). The opinion expressed in the article is that, to be a proper woman you have to come from the working class or middle class and preferably devote your life to bearing children, otherwise it is not surprising if you get into trouble – but "real women" also get into trouble in Larsson's novels. And how anyone can say about the *Millennium* trilogy, with Salander in mind, that "The female characters have assumed their emancipated or exceptional gender roles naturally and without fear of rape, sexual harassment, discrimination, or prejudice" (p. 24), is completely incomprehensible, showing a serious lack of understanding of today's Swedish reality. Sweden today is not a secure Bullerbyn society, and Niemi's comparison between the welfare state and the Bullerby community (where people certainly stuck to the traditional gender roles), which could be a basis for an interesting analysis, thus leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

"Violence, Equality, and the Millennium Series" by Kajsa Gillander Gådin, a public health scientist, is by contrast an excellent article which presents much of the facts and the statistics on equality and violence against women in Sweden underlying Larsson's novels. Gillander Gådin takes the *Millennium* trilogy as a starting point and an excuse for explaining, in an accessible way, what Swedish society looks like. It is a pity that this article is not in English, because it would certainly have been very interesting to international researchers who may find it hard to get at the facts. The author also experiments with regarding Salander both as a warrior and as a dandelion child, but without really succeeding in placing her in either role. The article ends with one of the better summaries I have seen of *why* the figure of Salander fascinates so many people: "No one would want to change places with her, no one would want to have grown up as she did, but perhaps we would like to have a little of her total lack of submission and adaptation to anything for which she does not feel sympathy? Perhaps we would even like to have a little of her unique talent, the strength with which she refuses to be broken by oppressors, and her ability to cope with solitude?" (p. 35).

The ethnologist Håkan Berglund-Lake's "Saving Oneself from Nothing" likewise takes the *Millennium* trilogy as a starting point for presenting other knowledge. Based on Salander's relationship to her apartment and her traumatic adolescence, he discusses what a home is, what function the home has in our lives, and how we as humans always

handle traumas by acting: by trying to regain control over our lives. This too is an article that is interesting in its own right, even without the link to Larsson's novels. It simultaneously illuminates the trilogy and lets the reader see new depth in the text and understand the characters and their actions better.

In the article "'Little Sister Is Watching You!' On Pippi Longstocking, Lisbeth Salander, and Other Pippi Figures", Eva Söderberg emphasizes that it is important to see how Larsson's portrayal of Salander is related intertextually not only to Astrid Lindgren's books from the mid-twentieth century, but also to the transformations of the Pippi figure in different contexts since then. As a background to the comparison between Pippi and Salander, the author provides a survey of the history of this development. The major part of the article is devoted to a discussion of similarities and differences between Salander and Pippi. Many interesting parallels are drawn – although some of them are rather strained – and Söderberg finds that there are more differences than similarities between the two figures, but that the point of the similarities is perhaps chiefly to highlight the differences. The conclusion is that in Larsson's trilogy – as in other contexts where Pippi is used – the way it works is that "based on the Pippi figure, productive questions are posed about what it was like to be a strong/different/seeing girl and woman yesterday, and what it is like today" (p. 63). The Pippi figure thus functions as a means to discuss the role of woman in different times, contexts, and societies, and Söderberg emphasizes how Salander helps the reader to catch sight of many problems in contemporary Swedish society.

In "Salander's Theorem: Lisbeth Salander as the Riddle of the Millennium Trilogy" the literary scholar Annelie Bränström Öhman likewise concludes that Salander is not a Pippi figure. Instead she suggests that the references to Lindgren's world have a function resembling "the pebbles and the breadcrumbs in the tale of Hansel and Gretel: they are small, perishable clues carrying a hope that there will be a path out of the darkness and back into the positive story of a Swedish childhood, adolescence, and life as an adult, with all the rights and equality of a citizen in the country of Sweden" (p. 73). Bränström Öhman's starting point is distinctly feminist. She regards the title of the first book, "Men Who Hate Women" as a guide to how the whole trilogy should be read (a guide that is lost in many translations – it became *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* in English) and argues that the fundamental question running through the novels is *why* men hate women. Unlike many of the other contributors to this volume, Bränström Öhman engages in dialogue with some of the earlier research on the *Millennium* trilogy. Among other things, she criticizes scholars who dissociate the figure of Salander from the overall course of events in the novels. Salander, according to Bränström Öhman, embodies the plot and thus carries Larsson's message: through Salander the reader is shown the powerful gender-power order in Swedish society. Based on the titles of the novels and in the quotations that serve as epigraphs, Bränström Öhman shows the multifaceted character of Larsson's work and emphasizes many of the internal and external parallels from which the message of the trilogy is constructed.

The gender scholar Siv Fahlgren, in "Lisbeth Salander – Feminist Answer or Provocative Question?", shows that today's Swedish society displays a powerful contempt for the feminine, as expressed, for example, in the net hate aimed at women, but also more generally in the male cultural dominance. The article circles around the question of whether Salander is the answer to a society where men hate women, and if so whether she is a feminist answer. Fahlgren believes that Larsson's novels help

the reader to catch sight of the scorn for the feminine and to see that it is not just a matter of a few individuals' hatred, but an institutional and structural problem. Salander is perhaps not a female role model, but she offers a "norm-critical position" and an "attempt to break traditional binary gender categories" (p. 89) – which in itself can be regarded as feminist, according to Fahlgren. She nevertheless points out the risk Larsson takes in portraying Salander as the opposite of the stereotype of what a "real woman" should be like, and the ambivalent position in which this puts the figure of Salander. The conclusion is that Salander is not a feminist response, but that she helps us to see the central feminist question.

The ethnologist Åsa Ljungström begins "Coffee, Class, and Gender – The Drink of Equality in the Millennium Trilogy" by noting that the international reception of Larsson's trilogy sometimes displays an ignorance of Swedish habits and traditions. Then she gives a survey of the history of Swedish coffee drinking from a gender and class perspective. For a Swedish reader, however, most of this is self-evident; we already know what a Swedish open sandwich is and that it is more common to boil coffee in Norrland. The *Millennium* trilogy – where coffee occurs frequently – is used by Ljungström as an excuse to cite earlier research on Swedish coffee culture. This could be relevant for an international audience, but the article is in Swedish. Unfortunately, Ljungström adds nothing new to research on Swedish coffee culture or to research on the trilogy. It is possible that a researcher in a hurry may have some benefit from the survey of what is eaten and drunk in the trilogy, but nothing more.

In "The Good Men and the Strong Women: On Communities Based on the Millennium Suite" the literary scholar Anders Johansson reads the trilogy as a classic crime mystery: the democratic state and its legal security is threatened by evil elements (there is a state of emergency), the heroes save society by using force and breaking the law (which is legitimated by good intentions and the state of emergency/the threat to the social order), the good heroes/rebels (Salander and partly Blomkvist) get redress and can be incorporated into the community of the good society where the rule of law prevails. With the help of scholars such as Giorgio Agamben, however, Johansson points out that it is problematic in this course of events, not least from a gender point of view, that the norm of the good society is masculine and the woman (Salander) is, so to speak, rendered harmless, by being incorporated into the "normal". Johansson also argues that the critique of society risks losing its edge when there is no kind of collective responsibility for the problems and everything is instead ascribed to a number of evil individuals (men) who are portrayed as the Other. The fact that it looks like this in Larsson's trilogy can of course be explained to a large extent in terms of the conventions of the crime genre, although this factor is not included in Johansson's analysis.

To conclude, it should be said that this collection of articles has many good points. The main problem, however, is the choice to publish in Swedish, which means that the texts will not be of any use to international scholars, who make up the majority of those doing research today on Larsson's works. If the idea was to offer a corrective to the lack of knowledge about conditions in Sweden that we sometimes see in international commentators on the *Millennium* series, then the purpose is defeated. Another problem when a research topic suddenly becomes popular is that much research goes on in parallel in different places and people cannot – or sometimes just do not bother to – read other scholars' results. It is a little short-sighted when everyone has to reinvent the wheel. The introduction to this volume mentions a

couple of the many other collections of texts about Larsson's novels which have appeared in recent years, and it is said of one of them, which was published as recently as May-June 2012, that it arrived so late that "not all of us had the opportunity to enter into dialogue with [it] since our texts were in principle finished when it was issued" (p. 6), and another volume – mainly Swedish-produced, actually – which appeared at the start of 2013, is only mentioned. None of the contributors to this volume engage in dialogue with the former, and one author has the latter among the references but never uses it.

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The Music of Danish Cultural Radicalism

Michael Fjeldsøe: Kulturradikalismens musik. Museum Tusculanums forlag, Copenhagen 2013. 832 pp., Ill. Diss.

In this grand volume, a thesis for the Ph.D. degree, the musicologist Michael Fjeldsøe delves deep into the music of the interwar culture radicalism in Denmark. After the human catastrophe of the First World War, the 1920s and '30s saw a vigorous growth in ideas about how to change culture and society on the national and international levels. Democracy, new technology, reform pedagogy, psychoanalysis, sexual emancipation were all parts of a modernization where function was a relevant measure of evaluation, and secularization and demilitarization were necessary processes in the making of a new and better society. These were international intellectual currents, yet they could take distinct directions and be articulated in different constellations in different countries, and they have also undergone different retrospective evaluation and conceptualization. In Denmark, *kulturradikalism* has been used since the mid 1950s as an overall concept when speaking of this interwar constellation of phenomena and discourses – which points to the contemporary need in the 1950s at least to speak of an intellectual climate where "broad-minded liberalism and the focus on social inequities were not contraries but were considered instead to be the same thing", as Fjeldsøe puts it. (In Sweden, this was instead spoken of as the possibility of a "third stance" between the systems the USA and the Soviet Union stood for, without so much reference to interwar radicalism.) He also speaks of the cultural left wing – not identical with and yet not independent of the political left wing; and of the many artists we meet some are organized communists, social democrats and liberals, some are excluded communists, and some are independent yet active in progressive endeavours.

Fjeldsøe states that the study concerns "modern music", but not all kinds of modern music, rather "the specific variants that live up to the ideas that make cultural radicalism stick together". This means "an idea of a progressive, committed and emancipating music that connects the idea of progressivity to artistic as well as social progress, the idea of commitment to filling social needs and communicating a serious content, and emancipation to spiritual and bodily release of fantasy and creativity".

Fjeldsøe divides the interwar period into two phases. The first part of the 1920s is characterized as one of openness and interest in new and experimental artistic forms, new views on culture and society, new scientific theories. Many organizations and journals were established in order to present and promote the new culture. In music, this primarily meant introducing the new methods of composing, promoted by German composers such as Arnold Schönberg, which meant a radical break

with the nineteenth-century romanticism that dominated art and popular music. However, the introduction of modern forms was not enough. Fjeldsøe poses two problems that the culture-radical composers had to face. First, the need to reach out to a greater audience and not repel it, which led to the question of the roles and uses of culture in society. One answer was to embrace the ideas of functionalism. In music there was also around 1927 a re-evaluation of the expressionism (of Schönberg) and Dadaism of earlier decades, that now were interpreted as the last phases of romanticism rather than the beginning of something new. The resulting efforts, which are the subject of the greater part of the book, included interartial collaborations (especially with theatre), influences from popular music including jazz, and music for and in educational programmes. Kurt Weill's cooperation with Bertolt Brecht and Paul Hindemith's concept of *Gebrauchsmusik* were important influences.

There were some organizations that played important roles in promoting and initiating the new currents, and they are given quite some space. One influence was the Monde group that started in 1928, a self-elected avant-garde team of Marxist intellectuals like Carl Madsen and Rudolf Broby Johansen. Apart from producing the eponymous journal, they initiated and had a strong influence on Forsøgsscenen, an experimental scene where radical films, plays, and marionette theatre were staged. However, the scene soon split into two because of conflicts about economy. The growing influence of the Communist Party on the Monde group gradually isolated it and eventually led to its closure in 1932. During the remainder of the 1930s, there were instead a manifold of organizations and individual efforts that would effectuate the radical culture. This also included the more official institutions like Det kongelige Teater, Det ny Teater, and established commercial stages.

A good part of the book is dedicated to presentations of different shows and projects including music, among them Poul Henningsen's PH revues, Lulu Ziegler's cabarets, Storm P's and Knudåge Riisager's modernist ballet *Benzin* and the communist agitprop groups. Several chapters deal with the introduction of Bertolt Brecht's plays and of Brecht's work in exile in Denmark, including the "theatre war" in 1936 when Det kongelige Teater was accused of playing communist propaganda and Brecht's and Weill's ballet *The Seven Deadly Sins* was taken off the programme after two performances. One chapter gives a thorough description of the state-produced information film on Denmark that was made in 1932–35, with a screenplay by Henningsen and jazz big band music by Bernhard Christensen.

Christensen is one of the major actors in the large part of the book that deals with jazz music. From being one of many popular music forms, jazz from the late 1920s was ascribed certain emancipating qualities, and interpreted as a thoroughly *modern* music. A starting point was Poul Henningsen's 1928 appraisal of Josephine Baker's artistry, which marked a breakthrough of the idea of African American culture as genuine, natural and exemplary. Christensen, a young composer who had studied non-European music, would elaborate in writing on rhythm and swing – a 1930 article shows remarkable insights – and together with the music pedagogue Astrid Gøssel and the writer Sven Møller Kristensen introduce pedagogy of "rhythmic music" that had a strong influence in Danish music education. One form Christensen worked with was "jazz oratories" – song cycles in jazz style for and about young people. *De 24 timer* describes a school day, including anxiety about exams and evening joys. In 1934, he wrote *Trompetkvadet*, a

paraphrase on the Old Norse *Thrymskvadet* where instead of Thor retrieving his stolen hammer from the giant Thrym, Trompetkvadet deals with how Louis Armstrong has his trumpet stolen by Richard Wagner and eventually wins it back. In 1935, a jazz music school started with Christensen, Kristensen and Gøssel as leading forces, giving weekly lessons for amateurs and professionals, to be followed by others. This was quite an extraordinary development in comparison with how jazz was evaluated in other countries. However, with the rise of the swing craze from 1935, the emancipatory pedagogy would be marginalized within the dominant jazz discourses where a more traditional romantic art view grew dominant.

Indeed, the dominant image of the music of the interwar cultural radicalism has been that of the jazz influences. Fjeldsøe devotes much space to this, but as stated above there is a manifold of forms, uses and situations that were chosen as ways to make new music that would live up to the expectations and programmes of the radical currents, not just accompany them. Thus, the point here is not so much about the trajectory of jazz in Denmark per se, but rather how jazz discursively and practically was construed as music well suited for the modern and emancipatory ideas.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the outbreak of war, and finally the occupation brought much of contemporary radical culture to a halt (even though jazz music attained special significance as a sign of resistance; hence the early 1940s have been named "the golden age of Danish jazz"). Fjeldsøe does not go into the occupation period in any depth, but as an epilogue one chapter deals with the post-war period and how the space for an independent radicalism diminished. The composers Finn Høffding and Knudåge Riisager are put forward as examples – two former fellows that now took stood for the Communist Party and the CIA-financed Society for Freedom and Culture, respectively.

An interesting theme that surfaces here and there is the role of ethnomusicological theory and research. Béla Bartók is referred to as an inspiration and role model for composers, and folk music is ascribed a role as a source of psychological, rather than historical, authenticity.

Fjeldsøe has not only focused on the musical works as remnants from the period, which would be a standard way of writing music history. By also going into the organization building, the writing and publishing of texts, the conflicts inside and outside the radical networks and the wider reception of their works and performances, the book also functions as a form of "studying up", a sort of ethnography of how radical ideas are put into practice and how actors make choices with long-term ideals and short-term circumstances as a framework.

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Women's Violence against Men

Tove Ingebjørg Fjell: Den usynliggjorte volden. Om menn som utsettes for partnervold fra kvinner. Kjønnsstudier. Akademika forlag, Oslo/Trondheim 2013. 168 pp. Ill.

Women's violence against men in heterosexual relations is an unknown and unresearched phenomenon. Society, like research, has for decades focused on men's violence against women, while women's violence against men, as Tove Fjell's title indicates, has been made invisible. The attention paid to men's violence against women is not, however, the only reason why violence against men has been concealed. There is a resistance in society to acknowledging men as victims of female vio-

lence – a resistance that is also expressed by the men who suffer this violence: "real men" do not let themselves be abused by women. Cultural ideas and expectations of masculinity prescribe that men should be mentally and physically strong and able to control their female partner. Another reason for the invisibility is that there is a resistance to seeing women as users of violence in general, but especially in close relations. Traditional ideas of femininity and masculinity are an important aspect of the invisibility.

Internationally, chiefly in the USA and Britain, there has been some research since the 1970s about women's violence, whereas in Sweden the academic discussion is virtually non-existent. There is no consensus as to how the question of women's violence should be formulated, investigated, and theorized. One controversial issue is the extent of women's violence against men and whether it really is a social problem. Two "positions" have been established in research, advocating partly contradictory stances: family violence (FV) and violence against women (VAW). Representatives of FV claim that women's and men's use of violence is symmetrical, that is, equally frequent and reciprocal, and that women initiate violence just as often as men. Representatives of VAW think that the violence is asymmetrical, that it is men's violence against women that is most frequent, has the most serious consequences, and has other motives and contexts. Women's violence against men, according to VAW, is almost always in self-defence, to protect themselves and the children from the man's violence.

Feminist critique of the symmetry position (FV) chiefly concerns the methodology. These studies are mainly quantitative, using lists to measure the number of conflicts and acts. The measurements usually concern only the last year and they do not bring out the systematic nature of the violence, according to the critics, who advocate a life-cycle perspective using questionnaires and interviews, in other words, a qualitative approach. Qualitative studies show that far more women than men suffer violence in close relations. Quantitative studies, in contrast, show only minor differences in the extent of men's and women's violence and that women's violence against men is increasing.

Tove Fjell's book is one of the few studies to take a qualitative approach to women's violence against men, and it is an important contribution to our knowledge about men who are subjected to violence. The aim is to make the violence visible and to challenge the one-sided picture of a male perpetrator and a female victim. The study has a feminist perspective and the author seeks to nuance previous research by demonstrating the complexity of the research field. Men's narratives about violence against them and the men's own understanding of their experiences are analysed partly with the aid of masculinity theory. How do men talk about the violence committed against them? How do the men react to the violence and how do men break out of a violent relationship? What consequences does the violence have for health and quality of life? Does women's violence against men differ from men's violence against women? The study is not comparative, but the existing knowledge about men's violence against women is used as a point of reference.

The study is based mainly on interviews with men who have been exposed to violence from women, a total of eleven ethnic Norwegian men, eight of whom had an ethnic Norwegian partner. Seven of the men are in their forties, while the others are younger or older. The men have all experienced violence over a long period, and the majority have been in contact with the public assistance system in connection with divorce and custody disputes. The author established contact with the men by ad-

vertising on the website of "Reform", a resource centre for men. Fjell has not interviewed or been in contact with the men's female partners or ex-partners.

The author is well aware of the difficulties with the interviews, of which she has a serious discussion. What the men say is not used as testimony or as truth but as narratives about the informant's experiences and understanding of himself as a partner exposed to violence. The author provides copious quotations and summaries of the narratives, but I see a danger in the way they are presented to the reader. Fjell mostly manages the balancing act of letting the men's understanding of the violence emerge from the text while constantly pointing out that this is the men's perception of the event, not what might really have happened. In the quotations and paraphrases, however, the men's descriptions of the violent partner are left without comment or question. The women we meet in the book are screaming, yelling, hitting, scratching, kicking, throwing frying pans or crockery, gabby, hysterical, crazy, erratic… By excluding the violent women from the analysis, Fjell's own text reproduces and confirms this traditional negative female stereotype. I shall return to this.

So what does the interview study show? Fjell is able to present results similar to those of other studies of men exposed to partner violence. The violence to which men are subjected is mostly mental, such as verbal abuse, isolation, jealousy, controlling behaviour, threats of injury, physical abuse, threats of divorce, damage to personal property, etc. Some of the men have had to endure physical violence, but not one of them has suffered sexual violence. As with women who are victims of violence, the man does not leave the relationship at the "first" blow; he stays on. Another shared theme is that the man has feelings of shame and wants to keep the violence secret, finding it difficult to identify himself as a victim of violence.

The comparison with partner violence against women shows that the similarities are greater than the differences. An important feature in men's narratives that is not found in the case of violence against women is that the men never state economic reasons for staying on in the relationship, which is the most common reason for women. Another difference is that the men, unlike women who are exposed to violence, do not say that they fear for their lives and health. They refer to their superior physical strength and tone down the violence, something that is confirmed by other studies. These differences – economy and quality of life – between men and women exposed to violence are crucial to a feminist understanding of violence in close relations since they can be directly linked to an overall gender-power order where violence is merely one aspect of the repression of women.

Fjell believes she can discern a new pattern as regards men's practices in responding to the violence. Several of the men say that they did not defend themselves or hit back. They did not want to, even though they could have. In the men's narratives Fjell sees a passive man emerge. The passive attitude – not putting up resistance to a woman who uses mental or physical violence – "the new passivity", as she calls it, is interpreted with the aid of masculinity theory. The passivity is viewed as an attempt to shift the content of the traditional hegemonic masculinity towards a new masculine ideal. The new passive masculinity is described as a local Norwegian or Nordic variant, characterized by ideals of equality, where all forms of partner violence are regarded as illegitimate. A man who perceives himself as equal does not practise violence against women without infringing this ideal.

Can a new, equal masculinity really be detected in the men's narratives? My "reading" gives the opposite picture. The motives the men themselves state

for not returning the violence indicate that they are governed by a traditional masculinity rather than an equal one: fear of not being able to control oneself and possibly killing the woman, and the belief that a man should not hit a woman who hits him. Moreover, the men make fun of the woman, finding her ridiculous and comical. This shows that it is the "property" of control and fear of not being able to restrain oneself that explains why the men do not hit back, and the fact that they do not take the woman's violence seriously. The men exposed to violence construct themselves in the narratives as being self-controlled and responsible, in contrast to the violent woman, who is constructed as uncontrolled and emotional.

Why are the women violent? Fjell does not consider this question, which I consider absolutely crucial for understanding the violence and the men's actions. The men themselves say that they do not understand why their partner uses violence, which came out of the blue, unexpected, unprovoked, for no reason, or as a response to "he didn't do what she wanted". It is clear from the narratives, however, that the woman's violence was not infrequently triggered by quarrels about money or other matters to do with the family's shared concerns: the woman wanted to have a say in how the family's resources should be used, or have access to the family car, or the woman wanted the man to help out with the housework and the like.

The family situation that emerges from the men's narratives is that of an unequal family where the man is the main breadwinner, if the wife earns any money at all; he takes the car to work and leaves all the housework to his wife. The man is the one who thinks he is entitled to have the last word on economic matters. He calls it "taking responsibility" for the family economy and accuses the woman of being wasteful. The women are dependent on the men's good will to have their wishes and priorities satisfied – the men sometimes use expressions like "manipulation" or that she "squeezes money out of him" to describe the situation. Through their practice, then, the men construct not just gender but also power, gender power. Merely because men refer to the equality discourse, it does not mean that they want to be equal men, or that they perceive themselves as such.

My interpretation is hypothetical since I do not have access to the entire material, but it is scarcely a "new" masculinity that we see if the whole context is considered in the analysis and not just the situation in which the violence occurred. Violence is exercised in a social and situational context, and this context is significant for understanding both the violence and the response to it. Violence must therefore be analysed relationally, contextually, and in its totality. In my reading of the material I see a highly traditional hegemonic masculinity and a woman who puts up resistance to the gender power by resorting to violence, possibly as a response to the man's violence. To protect anonymity, Fjell can reveal little data about the interviewed men. Apart from their age and civil status, further details are scattered in the text and in the appendix which are of interest for my discussion above and which can help to fill out the context: four of the men have alcohol problems, as many as nine have experienced violence in an earlier relationship (as both perpetrators and victims), and of these nine, two have experienced violence in several previous relationships; some of them have been charged with incest and some have been reported to the police for violence against the partner. A large share of them are or have been involved in acrimonious custody trials. I believe that these factors are not without significance when interpreting and theorizing about these men's narratives of their actions. The men here can be on both

ends of violence, as was clear from international studies.

The women's violence is presented in the study as being emotionally driven and individual, not as intentional or as a response to repressive structures. What the women who use violence are doing is to breach the norms for female behaviour by being violent, regardless of whether they initiated the violence or acted in self-defence. The violence must be understood in a larger context of gender inequality. Women's violence may be a response to lack of equality. Unequal power relations are the root of violence, and this applies not only to gender relations. Class, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. are other power orders that are repressive, where violence is used as a tool, affecting women's experiences of violence, and also affecting how and why they choose to or feel the need to use violence. The men's picture of the violence is allowed here to serve as a basis for far-reaching conclusions about structural changes. The shift in the understanding of masculinity towards a new equal masculinity, according to the author, will influence the content of the hegemonic masculinity and the repression of women will no longer be so obvious.

Finally, I would also question the many gender-neutral terms that are used here: crossover violence/categories (violence can be used by both sexes), episodic partner violence (a form of violence without a distinct gender profile, less serious violence), intimate terrorism (violence with a distinct gender profile, mainly perpetrated by men, resulting in severe physical injury), violent resistance (both parties involved, one of them responding to violence), and so on. These derive from the symmetry position and conceal both men's violence against women and women's violence against men. They are therefore not good concepts with which to make violence visible.

(This review is based on a chapter in a forthcoming book by Gabriella Nilsson and Inger Lövkrona, *Våld, genus och kultur.*)

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Affected

Jonas Frykman: Berörd. Plats, kropp och ting i fenomenologisk kulturanalys. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2012. 176 pp.

Jonas Frykman does not need any further introduction. It is also well known that his research has taken a phenomenological and affective turn during the last two decades. In 2001, he and Nils Gilje edited the book *Being There*, where they suggested a new phenomenological programme for cultural research. In his new book *Berörd* (Affected, 2012) he looks back on how phenomenological research has been performed in Scandinavian ethnology and formulates a broad argument for the relevance of phenomenology for further cultural research.

"Even researchers are driven by their emotions." This is the opening sentence, and it sets the tone for the book. In the introduction Frykman explains his personal motivation for writing the book. In the 1990s he travelled between war-ravaged Croatia and Sweden. The contrast between the collective trauma of the people he meet in Croatia and academic life in Lund was enormous, almost like two different worlds. Academia offered few analytical tools to describe or understand what people had experienced in Bosnia and Croatia. In the 1990s, Frykman writes, culture was regarded as a question of text, not practice – of head, not of body. What about the life, the practices and the experiences beyond the symbols, he asks. Is it even possible to discuss evil, suffering and death without taking emotions and experiences

into account? This experience and these questions, he explains, led him into phenomenology and non-representational theory.

Chapter two is about the affective turn. In this chapter, Frykman argues that the linguistic turn has worked reductively for ethnological research, simply because language does not cover every aspect of the world. Frykman remarks that we do not only relate to our surroundings cognitively, we experience the world through our senses and emotions. Hence, the senses and the emotions have to be taken into account in cultural analysis.

Chapter three is an ethnographic description of how a place can simultaneously be experienced as rather different kinds of meaningful spaces. The chapter is based on fieldwork in the Bosnian town of Višegrad in 2009, done in cooperation with Dragan Nikolić. The fieldwork centred around a ceremony on the bridge over the river Drina commemorating the 3,000 Muslim war victims of the city. Frykman shows how personal memories, history, the materiality of the bridge and the famous novel *The Bridge on the Drina* by Ivo Andrić (1945) were intertwined in the set of parallel experienced spaces incorporated into the life-worlds of different actors and ethnic groups. Hence, he describes the process that makes the place emotionally loaded with different and even conflicting meanings.

Then follow three chapters on body, materiality and culture. Frykman asks why we tend to interpret the meaning of things, rather than examining what things do. With the use of Norbert Elias's work on the civilizing process, classical ethnological examples from the pre-industrial agrarian society and also by a personally-experienced example of cutting down a tree, Frykman argues that the experience of objects is tactile, and not verbal. According to Frykman, culture is not an abstract category, but something every person carries with him/her as something experienced. The body is loaded with tactile and sensorial cultural meaning, he argues. In line with actor-network theory, he argues that our surrounding objects generate meaning. He exemplifies this point by discussing how we experience the meaning of softness and hardness. With reference to the work of Sarah Holst Kjær, for instance, he discusses how the softness of the sofa forms the *chilling* of contemporary everyday life, in sharp contrast to the bodily education of hard wooden furniture of the 1930s.

The last chapter is about fieldwork. Frykman quotes Gadamer: "I would say there has been too much talk about phenomenology, and not enough phenomenological work." The challenge, says Frykman, is for the fieldworker to hold back the prejudices and to attain a naïve curiosity about the surroundings – in the anthropologist Michael Jackson's term to *disremember*. Frykman emphasizes the importance of intersubjectivity as a fieldwork approach. Intersubjectivity is, for him, using oneself to understand others, thus feeling empathy and being a fellow human.

Frykman's ambition is to give an overview of cultural-analytical phenomenological practices that will serve as inspiration for further research on lived experiences. I appreciate this attempt. Not all of the phenomenological attempts in ethnology have so far succeeded in overcoming the gap between complex and abstract philosophy and detailed empirical descriptions, apparently of *den Sachen selbst*. As Nils Gilje pointed out some years ago, there is a chance that phenomenological approaches simply work as superficial colouring of the empirical analysis. Sometimes such empirical analysis works perfectly well without the use of advanced philosophical terminology. Frykman has, however, succeeded in his demonstration of how phenomenological approaches to emotions, bodily experiences and materiality could work productively as cultural analysis. The short

(and small) book *Berörd* is well worth reading, maybe not because it is groundbreaking academic work, but because it is a wise and admirably well-written book. I especially enjoy how fiction is actively used throughout the book, not merely as literate illustrations, but as arenas for theoretical thinking.

The fundamental questions Frykman raises about emotions, language and analytical tools are truly important. I have personally experienced the imminent lack of an analytical language and analytical tools several times as a fieldworker. One of the most striking experiences was when I did fieldwork among the ruins of the Birkenau death camp. The feeling of walking on soil mixed with small pieces of human bones and the distinct smell of ashes was impossible to fully grasp analytically. The only way to cope with such an experience is as an emotional being, not as a distanced and analytical scholar. Yet, I later wrote about this experience, with doubt and with an awareness of the insufficiency of my analytical language. Therefore I appreciate Frykman's book, and his discussions of emotions, senses and cultural analysis. The book is fascinating, and almost seductive. Yet I am not fully convinced.

To pay attention to affects, emotions and senses is presented as something new – as a turn. But is the affective turn really a turn for the fieldwork disciplines? Are not affects and emotions incorporated in the act of doing fieldwork? Does not every scholar have to be a fellow being to succeed as a fieldworker? Is not fieldwork, so to speak by definition, a kind of bodily practice and sensory experience? The qualitative difference between the kind of phenomenological fieldwork Frykman describes and other kinds of fieldwork is still not totally clear to me after reading the book. For instance, does a scholar snowboarding down a Norwegian hillside not experience the fieldwork bodily (see Olav Christensen's dissertation *Absolutt Snowboard,* from 2001)? Or was the severe malnutrition Fredric Barth experienced during his fieldwork among the Baktaman not also a sensory and bodily experience? During his fieldwork he lost ten kilos while his waistline grew 10 cm. To me this seems to have been a bodily experience of the life conditions of the Baktaman. By stressing the novelty more than the continuity of the phenomenological aspect of fieldwork, Frykman tends to undercommunicate how all kinds of thoroughly performed fieldwork must to some extent be bodily, perceptual, sensory – and phenomenological.

Frykman further tends to undercommunicate how cultural representations – symbols, texts, and media representations – also are able to generate experiences by being intertwined with our senses and emotions. Technological development in the last decade has blurred the distinction between real-life practices and online practices, and hence, also media representations. The public grief practices in Norway after 22 July 2011 clearly show how spatial practices, online practices and media were intertwined in ways that make it analytically reductive to separate experiences and media representations. I would have appreciated if Frykman had discussed how phenomenological approaches could work productively, not only as non-representational theory, but also in the analysis of the intertwining of bodily practices and media representations.

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Cultural Contacts in Coastal Regions

Anders Gustavsson: Resident Populace and Summer Holiday Visitors. Cultural Contacts between Harmony and Conflict in Nordic Coastal Regions. Novus Press, Oslo 2013. 96 pp. Ill.

This book is an English compilation of texts about one of the author's lifelong interests, which makes it a very interesting ethnological *and* longitudinal study of contact and conflicts between holiday visitors and local residents in coastal areas of Sweden and Finland. This means that the fieldwork material was collected by the author himself from (presumably) the 1970s to 2013, which provides for deep knowledge and analyses of the behaviour and contacts among residents and visitors in these areas, along with a classic cultural history of summer vacation in the Nordic archipelago. Hence, the book is lavishly illustrated with photos from the author's fieldwork from the 1980s till now, as well as from archives giving historical insight into vacation life in these areas from the beginning of the twentieth century.

Three localities and topics are presented: the history of encounters between summer visitors and local residents in Bohuslän, the western archipelago of Sweden, from the end of the nineteenth century until today, a brief presentation of a similar story from the Finnish archipelago, the islands of Pellinge, and finally, a newer study from the Swedish archipelago close to the Norwegian border, with a focus on Norwegian holiday visitors and home owners who are returning residents.

In all three studies the focus is on interaction between the two categories of residents, and these contacts and conflicts are presented from both sides with the use of interviews, press cuttings, observations and photos from the present, as well as archive material. The first study is probably the most extensive one, showing how class differences and value differences have shifted in historical time and influenced interactions between visitors and residents, even leading to political initiatives of local as well as national character, for instance in trying to prevent outsiders from buying property in these archipelago areas of Bohuslän, which seem to become increasingly crowded during the twentieth century, leading to competition for space and rights of residence.

The study from the Finnish archipelago is smaller and focuses primarily on the 1970s, when the area did not see much conflict between visitors and residents, as simultaneously the conflicts were peaking in Bohuslän even on a political level. According to the author, this could be due to more space being available, and summer visitors actually spent their holidays helping the farmers at their work, viewing the primitive life there as an ideal way of living, so the foundation for conflicts was not as evident at the Pellinge islands.

The final study about the current encounter between Norwegians and Swedish residents is fresh and full of photos in colour. The analysis concerns real estate and market, related to the wealthier status of the Norwegian population and nation, and traditions such as flag flying and celebrations of the Swedish Midsummer Eve and the Norwegian National Day, 17 May.

In his very short concluding remark to the book, the author states that after all these years he seems to find a greater tolerance between local residents and holiday visitors. However, this conclusion is primarily established on the basis of the material concerning Norwegians' encounters in the Swedish archipelago, since the two other studies do not include much newer material after 1980s. There are some recent media cuttings from Bohuslän which testify to a still lively debate (and conflict) between residents and holiday visitors.

The book represents ethnological insight from extensive studies among the populations in question, and it is very interesting to read, especially with the *authentic* longitudinal perspective of the author's knowledge of this field. As such it documents the value of lifelong interest in a topic which is beneficial for

insight into the development of the topic's character and impact. This profound knowledge would have been worthy of a better editorial service from the publisher in order to avoid some repetitions and especially regarding the arrangement of the book, where one final chapter seems like a reprint of an assessment of a thesis about international mass tourism, which might have been integrated in a discussion also including other works regarding mass tourism, globalization and relevant concepts for this – if such a metaperspective was the intention behind the book. As a cultural history of encounters between local residents and holiday visitors in recreational areas in the Nordic countries, it is certainly valuable as it is.

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Wartime Correspondence

Sonja Hagelstam: Röster från kriget. En etnologisk studie av brevdialoger mellan frontsoldater och deras familjer 1941−1944. Åbo Akademis förlag, Åbo 2014. 389 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss.

"Voices of War" is about personal correspondence between soldiers at the front and their families during the Second World War in Finland, more specifically during the Continuation War of 1941−1944.

I share Hagelstam's interest in trying to understand how people could live in such life-threatening and abnormal circumstances as those prevailing in times of war. It is through correspondence between sons and parents, and between man and wife, that Hagelstam describes how front soldiers and their families experienced the war and everyday life in wartime.

The dissertation is based on unique and rich source material, over four thousand wartime letters written by and to five Finnish soldiers at the front. Letter writing is understood here as a social and cultural practice which front soldiers and their families used as a way to cope with the strains of war.

The main theoretical inspiration draws on theories by Mikhail Bakhtin, through which the letters are regarded as a dialogical space "where the writers' relations and affiliations are constantly constructed, actualized, and answered" (p. 6). This leads Hagelstam to examine how a kind of intermediate space is constructed between the writer and the receiver, and how human relations, belonging, and identity are created and shaped jointly by the letter-writing parties (p. 34).

Letters are a special genre. Hagelstam is well aware of this and expends great effort in describing and analysing the external circumstances in which the letter dialogues arose (chapter 3). Apart from the material and technical constraints (paper, pens and pencils, costs, postal delivery systems, field post), she discusses the effect of wartime postal censorship on the form and content of the letters. Hagelstam shows, however, that postal censorship is not the only explanation why certain aspects of life at the front are toned down in the letters; instead she emphasizes that euphemisms and circumlocutions can be explained by a "strategic silence" intended to protect the next of kin from shocking details about life at the front.

The dialogical aspect of the correspondence is analysed carefully, and Hagelstam shows how the form and content of the letters is affected by the family relationship (parent−son or husband−wife). Moreover, she shows how the soldiers' military rank, duties, positioning, and social and cultural background (age, occupation) affect the content and form of the letter dialogues (chapter 4).

The scene of war at the front, and the soldiers' experiences of combat, de-

struction, and death are the theme of the fourth chapter. In this highly impressive chapter Hagelstam demonstrates the difficulty of finding words for war experiences, especially since the front soldier fighting for his life knew very little about what was happening around him, and knew even less about the operative and strategic situation in general at the front. Furthermore, describing the battlefields, a world governed by alien, distorted, and abnormal values and acts, was no easy task. The accounts are affected by the nature of the dialogic relation. Married men, for example, afraid to question notions of courage and manliness, were more sparing in their descriptions of the combat, the violence, and the destruction.

Despite these difficulties and restrictions, the front soldiers were able to communicate comprehensible accounts of their experiences of fighting and fear of death to their loved ones.

Articulating one's experiences in a letter undoubtedly had a therapeutic function, but as Hagelstam shows, it was also a way to share things between family members. By conveying images of life at the front, the family could share in the alien experience of everyday life at the front and understand what the war meant for the man. Moreover, the letter was an important instrument for confirming the new identity as a front soldier and creating continuity between soldier life and civilian life. In this way the letter dialogue helped to maintain a connection between the earlier and the later parts of the self (p. 145).

Letters were also an important way to bridge the chasm in experience between the war front and civilian life at home. The correspondence created a sense of continuity and community and thus reduced the distance between the different spheres (p. 161).

The fifth chapter, "The War and Space", deals with the different spatial and material aspects of the war. It studies the way the front soldiers experienced the landscape of war, an abnormal space permeated by destruction. With the concept of "territorialization" taken from Deleuze and Guattari, Hagelstam examines the processes through which front soldiers transformed the chaotic and unfamiliar into something recognizable. She carefully analyses the different cultural strategies the soldiers used to "normalize" and "culturalize" the destructive, foreign space at the front and turn it into a safer and identifiable territory. The different processes undertaken to occupy the unfamiliar space (building and furnishing dwellings at the front, making gardens) were not just a means to transform the front from space to place, but were also a way for front soldiers to include the family in their military life. This reduced the gap in space and experience between soldiers and families. Finding points of contact between the military and the civilian made everyday life at the front more bearable and had a calming effect on the families at home. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome, Hagelstam shows how movements and verbal connections are created in the space that is the front and between the military and the civilian spheres. She skilfully analyses the strategies used by the writers to create togetherness and points of contact despite the separation. In this way the letters try to bridge two different realities, the front and the home sphere. The fact that the military and the civilian spaces are continuously interwoven in the letter dialogues shows, according to Hagelstam, that the front and the family sphere were not supposed to be regarded as each other's opposites.

Chapter 6, "The War, the Family, and Civilian Life", examines in more detail the significance of letters for maintaining the soldiers' civilian roles and relations during the long, enforced separation.

The constant and intensive letter dialogue proved to be a crucial strategy for creating continuity between the soldiers' lives before and during the war,

and for bridging the painful spatial separation. Through the letters, a husband and wife could keep contact and maintain their relationship not just emotionally, but also on a practical and everyday level (which could facilitate the return to life together after the war). The fact that the letter dialogue between two generations, between parents and sons, was based on an asymmetrical or vertical relation did not reduce its role in the confirmation and maintenance of the sons' civilian affiliations.

The special perception of time that prevails during a state of war is considered in the last chapter, "The War and Time". Time during the war was perceived as a time of exception, a period marked by discontinuity. This phenomenon is clear in the letter dialogues, in which the writers continuously positioned themselves between different experiences of normality and abnormality, of civilian and military, and of war and peace (chapter 7). During the war, normal, civilian time stopped and a distinctive quotidian wartime, an alternative normality, took over. Through a cultural learning process, the writers adapted to the new living conditions (for example, by imitating the milestones and rituals of their life as it was before).

By writing letters about topics from civilian life, the soldiers on the front were able to create an illusion of normality and a sense of continuity with life before the war. In this way the soldiers could adjust to the abnormal circumstances. Moreover, the letter dialogue represented a space for "normal" civilian life – a space in which the past could still be experiences, and a space where civilian roles and everyday life could be maintained. The letter writing thus had a therapeutic function, as a way to handle the mundanity and strains of war.

The dissertation is fascinating to read. In addition, it not only fills a scholarly lacuna in our knowledge of the Swedish-speaking people's experiences of the war in Finland, but also contributes to universal human knowledge about life in abnormal and stressful times.

The source material of the dissertation, wartime letter collections, is exciting and unique. Our knowledge of war experiences mostly comes from autobiographies, literary works, and memoirs or interviews. These sources are created on completely different conditions than the letters analysed here. Most studies of Second World War experiences thus focus our attention on the way in which experiences of war are remembered and how they are recreated in the light of today's needs. Here we are instead given images of the war as they were created in the course of the war, without today's filter or any knowledge in hindsight of how the war would end. The letter dialogues offer lots of trivial everyday details which are seldom retained in memoir material. Such details are highly valuable for the analysis of war experiences and everyday life in wartime. Through the letters the reader is perhaps as close as could be to the events.

Hagelstam displays great skill in analysing dialogic intermediate space and the limitations of the letters. I was particularly impressed by her discussion of the increasing experiential gaps between the *initiated* and the *uninitiated*. These gaps also explain why soldiers prefer to share their experiences with other soldiers, and survivors with other survivors.

I would however have liked to see a more extended discussion of the difficulties of finding words for experiences of combat, destruction, and death, especially concerning the strategies used by front soldiers to articulate traumatic experiences. Hagelstam's analysis would have gained from a discussion of the difference between "experience" – the temporal flow, the individual experience as received by consciousness, and an experience – "the intersubjective articulation of experience, which has a beginning and an ending and thus becomes trans-

formed into an expression" (Turner 1986:35), since the letter dialogues show precisely how the soldiers transformed experiences into an experience. Is it not in this process that the therapeutic effect arises?

For those who are interested in questions of how worry and fear are handled by families and individual soldiers in wartime, Hagelstam's dissertation will be a central reference in the future.

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The Folklorist Lauri Honko

Theoretical Milestones. Selected Writings of Lauri Honko. Pekka Hakamies and Anneli Honko (eds.). FF Communications No. 304. Helsinki 2013. 338 pp.

In Nordic ethnology and folkloristics, studies on the history of the discipline have had a renaissance in the 2010s. In both Sweden and Norway, collections of articles about a number of now deceased ethnologists and folklorists have been published. Monographs have also been published about individual scholars, such as Nils-Arvid Bringéus' book about the folklorist Carl- Wilhelm von Sydow. In this genre a book appeared in 2013 about the cultural theory of the internationally renowned Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko (1932–2002), written by his pupils Matti Kamppinen and Pekka Hakamies (reviewed by me in *Arv* 2013, pp. 237–239). As a continuation of that work, Pekka Hakamies and Lauri Honko's widow, Anneli Honko, have published the collection reviewed here. It consists of selected writings in English with a theoretical orientation, from different parts of Honko's large scholarly production. They have previously been published in various journals or edited volumes. The fifteen essays span a time from 1964 to 2002, the year of Honko's death. There are one to three essays per decade and no fewer than six from the 1980s. The editors have written a twenty-page introduction presenting the main features of Honko's scholarly work. Before his death he himself had plans to update and reissue some of his important older essays. In selecting texts for this volume, the editors have proceeded from the list left by Honko.

The studies in the book are not presented in chronological order; they are arranged according to seven themes that were prominent in Honko's research. The first section is genre analysis, which aroused his interest early on. One topic of discussion at the time concerned whether genres were real or constructed as tools for research. The second section consists of studies of the meaning that can be read in folkloristic texts and in performance settings between the performer and the listener. Beliefs constitute yet another distinct research field. Honko's starting point in this respect was studies of memorates.

One section in the book is devoted to the concepts of functionalism and the ecology of tradition. An important part of this involved studies of context and the associated variations, and the adaptation of traditions. This has been one of the foundations of Honko's studies. The next section in the book deals with the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*. In this connection Honko devoted great attention to comparative field studies, starting in the 1960s among various Finno-Ugrian peoples in present-day Russia. He was keenly interested in the traditions concerning female professional mourners in connection with deaths, funerals, and ceremonies in cemeteries.

Honko's comparative interest also found expression in periods of fieldwork in India from the 1980s onwards, with the emphasis on epic songs. In this con-

nection he undertook performance studies using the concept of "mental text". This refers to the singer's own notion of the text as a whole in his mind. The last section in the book concerns Honko's discussion of the concepts of tradition, culture, and identity and the differences between them.

The theoretical perspectives in this book were not an end in themselves for Honko; they always had to be linked to empirical investigations. The theories were aids for analysing the empirical material collected in archives or through fieldwork.

As a concluding reflection, one may wonder about the broader significance of assembling and publishing a scholar's works several years after his death. Collections of this kind have been published as a festschrift or the like, to celebrate the birthday or retirement of an appreciated scholar. I believe that it is meaningful to have a collected volume in English where one can follow central features in the comprehensive work of an internationally respected scholar like Lauri Honko.

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Indexing a Song Collection

Register över visor och ramsor från norra Södermanland. Upptecknade 1860–1890 i Åkers och Rekarne härader av Gustav Ericsson. Katarina Hammarström (ed.). Institutet för språk och folkminnen. Uppsala 2013. 165 pp. Ill.

The aim of this publication is to improve an existing index of songs collected by the soldier's son and "metalworker" Gustav Ericsson (1820−94). For this purpose a total of 1,540 items have been examined and identifiable text variants have been investigated. This solid effort led to a more manageable – but still impressive – figure of 630 different song variants and singing games, and just over 160 rhymes, jingles, and games, a considerable number of these derived from the collecting work of a single person in two districts. Now the songs are presented by their first lines and in alphabetical order, apart from the ballads, which are grouped according to the designations used in *Sveriges medeltida ballader* (1983−2001). In the original index the songs are instead listed in order of accession. Between 1989 and 1994 Magdalena Hellquist at the Dialect and Folklore Archive in Uppsala published five volumes of Gustav Ericsson's nineteenth-century records of folklife and customs in the districts of Åker and Rekarne in Sörmland. The present index should be viewed as an introductory work to a possible future edition focusing on the songs collected by Ericsson.

The book begins with a presentation of the project, along with a brief biography of Gustav Ericsson (also called "Käck-Pelle") and a background to his collecting activities. The reader also gets some insight into who Ericsson's informants were. Moreover, Hammarström makes an effort to divide the ballads into tenable groups. To a certain extent this is done according to accepted practice, as in *Sveriges medeltida ballader*. Someone might possibly react to the category of "Miscellaneous songs", which includes those that are considered difficult to place. In this group we find, for example, a couple of "political songs", which might have deserved a group of their own. The archival material is mostly stored in the Dialect and Folklore Archive in Uppsala; otherwise there are references to some papers in the archives at the Nordiska Museet, Riksantikvarieämbetet, Svenskt Visarkiv, and Varberg Museum. Among the references we also find Sven Bertil Jansson, who has done research on the topic.

The material is interesting in the light of the tendency at the time to try to document and rescue "bygone folk

culture". Gustav Ericsson's contribution to this effort seems to be based in large measure on actually getting close to the people who provided him with material, apart form the songs he knew himself. He can be compared with, say, the better-known August Bondesson and his songbook, although that also includes the tunes. The songs Ericsson collected lack any form of musical notation, which makes it difficult to know what the songs were supposed to sound like.

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The Virgin Mary in Folk Names of Plants

Ritwa Herjulfsdotter: Mariaväxter i folktron. Skara stiftshistoriska sällskaps skriftserie, no. 73. Skara 2013. 119 pp. Ill.

The ethnologist Ritwa Herjulfsdotter took her doctorate in 2008 with the dissertation *Jungfru Maria möter ormen – om formlers tolkningar* (Virgin Mary Meets the Snake: On Interpretations of Charms). She has demonstrated a keen interest in folk medicine, including charms associated with the Virgin Mary. For these research efforts she was awarded a scientific prize by the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy on 6 November 2013. In the book reviewed here she concentrates on plants which are called after Mary in folk belief; the emphasis is on Sweden but with sidelights elsewhere in Europe. The copious illustrations in the book mostly come from a German flora published in 1611; old images of Mary come from woodcuts. In Sweden there are about sixty plants which have at some time borne the name of Mary.

In popular piety, the Virgin Mary had a strong position in the late Middle Ages, and this continued for a long time after the Reformation. Traces of this can be followed in nature and in folk medicine. This tradition was chiefly passed on by women. In the Middle Ages Mary was called "the flower of flowers". Saint Birgitta described the Virgin Mary as a lily that produced the most beautiful of flowers. She was also compared to a rose, and her seven joys were called seven roses. In the Middle Ages the lily of the valley was regarded as a symbol of the innocent Mary, an idea which survived in Scandinavia long after the Reformation. A Norwegian name for it means literally "Virgin Mary's wreath". The oldest Swedish plant name referring to Mary is recorded in the fifteenth century; it means "Our Lady's bedstraw" (*vårfru sänghalm*) and was applied to wild thyme and other fragrant herbs. Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem was known in the eighteenth century as "Lady Day leek" (*vårfrudagslök*). In folk medicine the juniper bush was associated with the Virgin Mary. Several berries are linked to the Virgin. Stone bramble has been known in Swedish as "virgin berry", "Mary berry", or "Virgin Mary's currant". Great mullein, with its shining yellow flowers in bunches like ears of grain, is called "Virgin Mary's church candle" (*Jungfru Marie kyrkoljus*). The cuckoo is associated with the Virgin Mary in Nordic folk belief. Both Mary and the cuckoo symbolize spring, the start of growth, and several plants associated with Mary in Sweden are prefixed with *gök-* (cuckoo). The creeping bindweed has been given names after the Holy Virgin's clothes, such as "virgin chemise" or "Virgin Mary's skirts". The most common orchid in Scandinavia, the heath spotted orchid, is the plant with the most names alluding to Mary. A widespread name means "Virgin Mary's keys", which should be seen against the background of an old belief that keys are symbols of fertility and protection from evil. Prayers said for women in childbirth often include keys as an attribute of the Virgin Mary. The cowslip too has

been called "Virgin Mary's keys" and the plant was used for women in labour. Many folk names of plants refer to the Virgin Mary's skill with textiles. Harebell has been called "Virgin Mary's thimble" (*Jungfru Marie fingerborg*) and tufted vetch has been called "Virgin Mary's carding combs" (*Jungfru Marie kardor*). "Virgin Mary's flax" or "virgin flax" is a low-growing plant with blue or white flowers.

Herjulfsdotter has expended a great deal of labour to find folk names of plants alluding to the Virgin Mary and put them into their context in cultural history from the Middle Ages onwards. The folk names differ from the names in the floras and are therefore harder to trace. The folk names show differences in both time and place. Moreover, the same plant can have several different names associated with the virgin Mary. Herjulfsdotter has registered regional differences within Sweden and demonstrated similarities and differences with respect to the other Nordic countries and much of Europe. The book can be recommended to botanists, folklorists, and ecclesiastical historians, and indeed to any general reader with an interest in cultural history.

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Sikh Identity

Laura Hirvi: Identities in Practice. A Trans-Atlantic Ethnography of Sikh Immigrants in Finland and in California. Studia Fennica Ethnologica 15. Finnish Literature Society, SKS, Helsinki 2013. 183 pp. Ill.

Laura Hirvi's book is an ethnographic study of Sikhs living in two different geographical locations: the metropolitan area of Helsinki in Finland and the semi-rural area of Yuba City in California (USA). The study focuses on Sikhs' identity negotiations and concerns first-generation male and female immigrants and their children. The text, which is addressed to scholars and also to a wider audience of readers, focuses on three main research questions: the reasons for migration, the ways in which cultural identities are negotiated through everyday practices and the impact that different contexts have on these processes. The arguments presented are based on the qualitative analysis of a reasonable amount of empirical data, collected by the author in different periods and with an ethnographic approach. The methods used include participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal interviews, field notes, and so on. Given the research questions, the study adopts a "contrastive" cut based on non-systematic comparisons, which allows her to highlight some specificities linked to the different contexts analysed.

The basic premise of the book is that the processes through which people negotiate their identities manifest themselves in daily practices (such as dressing, eating, working), during religious and cultural festivals and in those practices linked to important life-cycle events (birth, wedding, death). The author focuses on the cultural identity of the subjects, by adopting a definition of culture as a fluid matrix of meanings that guides people by providing them with values, norms and patterns of behaviour, but that presupposes an activity of reinterpretation by subjects themselves. Consistent with this approach, Hirvi adopts a postmodern definition of identity, assuming that it is not something fixed, but rather that it is flexible, fluid and situational, negotiated in relation to others and therefore subject to dynamics of power and control. Therefore, culture is presented as a structural plan in relation to which subjects' agency manifests itself through actions performed. These practices may reproduce and pass on cultural frameworks as they

are, but may also introduce possible reinterpretations and negotiations, thereby fostering cultural change. Throughout the book, and through the study of empirical materials, the author successfully demonstrates the validity of these theoretical premises. Hirvi contextualizes the data analysis also with respect to the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism, showing that the practices through which people may renegotiate their identities may be multi-sited.

In the first chapter of the book the author explains her premises and the adopted methodology, circumscribes the object of analysis and reflects on her position as a researcher, demonstrating attention to issues such as reflexivity, power relations between interviewer and interviewee and the effects of these relational dynamics on data. The second chapter analyses the reasons for migration and the main features that Sikh migration assumes in different contexts. Although there are some recurring aspects (such as the desire to improve the family's standard of leaving as a basic motivation, or the fact that the first migrants to arrive in both countries are males and that the reasons for migration are gender-dependent), the analysis shows other differences between the USA and Finland, also due to the different historical moment at which the migration from the Punjab has taken place and to the specific national legislation. Chapter 3 explores the relationship between processes of identity construction and work. The different socio-economic contexts explain the diverse and prevalent productive insertion among Sikh first migrants in the two countries (farming in Yuba City and working in restaurants in Helsinki). At the same time, Hirvi demonstrates that, in order to carve out positive identity positions for themselves in their respective contexts of settlements – claiming to be good Finns/Americans and therefore the right to be accepted –, Sikhs refer to their religious and cultural values related to the work ethic ("work is worship") which are compatible with local moral principles about work. The Sikhs then present themselves as people who base their success on hard work alone (this combines well with the American Dream and with the idea of the "self-made man"), and as people who do not exploit the welfare system of the host (Finnish) country, in fact contributing to the wealth of the state. In Chapter 4 the author analyses identity negotiations through dressing. Practices in relation to clothing are considered, ways in which subjects position themselves with respect to the cultural references of origin and of the context of acquisition. Special attention is given to the turban, meant as external marker of religious identity, which is given a different importance over time by respondents, also as a result of political events such as the civil war in the Punjab and 9/11 in the USA. Chapter 5 studies the role that religious and cultural sites have for Sikhs in both Yuba City and Helsinki in maintaining and transmitting their own religion and traditions to the next generation, as well as in making tangible and visible the largely imagined, scattered and not numerous Sikh Finnish community. These sites may be stable (as for example a gurdwara or a Sikh pre-school) but also of a more fleeting visible nature (like the annual Sikh parade or *Nagar Kirtan*). Again, data analysis shows that, although they claim their peculiar identity, Sikhs try at the same time to demonstrate to non-Sikhs that, despite religious difference, they also identify with the country in which they have settled. In chapter 6 the author analyses the transnational practices that may originate from life-cycle rituals. These practices concern childcare and naming of children, choice of spouses and organization of wedding ceremonies, retirement, possible choice of return to the country of origin and ritual practices surrounding death. The last chapter contains some final reflections.

Hirvi's book adds a significant element to the literature on the Sikh diaspora. This is an original text that provides the first insights on the Sikh community living in Finland, which is still little studied. The author accurately defines her analytical limitations, the object of study, the methodology and the conceptual references adopted, accompanying the reader clearly in her arguments, also with a clever use of quotations. The analysis uses an inductive method by which the practices studied are traced to the theoretical concepts outlined in the first part of the book. In addition, one of the book's major strengths is the comparative/contrastive approach between the data collected in two different settings of migration, with the intention to evaluate the influence of contexts on the identity practices of Sikhs.

Future analysis should further investigate the role that other structural plans (besides the cultural one) may have, affecting identity practices of Sikhs. Above all, future studies may point out more clearly the ways in which the legislative framework of a country (which affects the migratory choices of subjects and which sometimes forces them into transnational practices) rather than the transnational social and kin networks in which people are embedded (that can affect people's life choices through bonds of affection, debt and reciprocity) may intertwine with subjects' agency, resulting in innovative practices from the point of view of culture. These arguments are also highlighted in Laura Hirvi's book but marginally, because they do not constitute the analytical focus of the author. In addition, the question of power should be deepened, not only with respect to the majority population in the different countries of settlement but especially among the Sikhs; in other words, the question of power related to agency regarding cultural practices should be further investigated with respect to gender and to the generational affiliation of respondents.

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The Middle Ages in Words and Pictures

Sigurd Kværndrup & Tommy Olofsson: Medeltiden i ord och bild. Folkligt och groteskt i nordiska kyrkmålningar och ballader. Atlantis, Stockholm 2013. 250 pp. Ill.

Alongside fairytales and legends, the Nordic ballads were once the core of folkloristic studies. Ballads were considered to have special aesthetic values which we were expected to be proud of. Moreover, the ballads were believed to have their roots in the Middle Ages, yet another source of pride. Admittedly, they were closely associated with the courtly culture of Central and Southern Europe, but because they had been "collected" by folklorists among "the folk", they were regarded as folklore. The idea was that, with the aid of these artfully constructed dance-songs, it could be demonstrated that we too in the North had had a highly civilized culture. From the 1960s to the 1980s there were several studies which questioned the old theses. The works of Bengt R. Jonsson and Iørn Piø, for example, deserve mention for their unusual approaches.

Now ballads have been rediscovered by non-folklorists. Sigurd Kværndrup, a medievalist, and Tommy Olofsson, whose subject is literature, tackle the task of detecting ballads in Swedish and Danish churches in this work, the title of which means "The Middle Ages in Words and Pictures: Folk and Grotesque in Nordic Church Paintings and Ballads". The authors present a thorough analysis of the imagery that can be seen on walls and ceilings of churches in a large number of murals, provided the

viewer "knows the codes", or has the frame of reference of a medieval person. The authors' perspective is intermedial, which they regard as a completely new angle in the analysis of murals. They try to find out how the pictures on the walls once spoke to the people attending services, assuming that (post)modern people have "forgotten" how to interpret them. The researchers' approach is that of cultural history, but this is supplemented with perspectives based to some extent on the findings of performance studies concerning the receiver's (viewer's, listener's, reader's, etc.) ability to interpret according to the situation and his or her own needs.

The book opens with an exquisite and highly promising section about the meaning of shoes in ballads and pictures. The authors claim that shoes or wet feet are widely known images alluding to sexuality and intercourse. It would have been even more delightful, however, and above all beneficial for future research, if the authors had also given a reference to their source for the statement that shoes are a symbol of virginity.

Ingierd Gunnarsdotter sang ballads in the seventeenth century. Her repertoire is the main corpus in the study. The content of the ballads is analysed in detail so that a supposedly ignorant reader will gain some idea of what a ballad is. The authors are inspired here by Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas about dialogue, and Albert Lord's and Milman Parry's studies of the significance of formulae for the composition of long epic poems. Intertextuality and formulae are therefore central intellectual tools, but disguised in the term *krets* or circle, which at least in folkloristics appears to be a new and possibly useful construction. The authors draw attention to the balladesque chronotope and its set of characters, to the ballad's forms of communication, to the significance of love and the family, to the roles played by weapons and hunting, to the role of the champion, and to the outlook on fate and the significance of Christianity in the ballads. The authors point out the ambiguity of the imagery and demonstrate how a concept like forest can have different meanings in different ballads, or that the concept of hunting can stand both for shooting animals and for men's attempts to find a woman. The singers and dancers of the ballads, just like people today, still reckon with a pagan concept of fate while simultaneously referring to motifs (circles?) from both the Old and the New Testament. Although the authors chiefly want to describe the content of the ballads through this analysis of circles, they also touch on provenance and believe that this can be sought in Arabic-Byzantine influence on Roman Catholic culture. Old Norse influence can also be demonstrated. The authors deserve special praise for remembering all the time that the ballad is a narrative that was both sung and danced. This is a type of intermediality. Another can be seen in the fact that a secular art form can be found in a sacred setting, at least as we view it today.

The second main chapter goes through the balladesque motifs that occur in Danish and Swedish medieval churches. It has undoubtedly proved difficult to find direct ties between ballad and painting, but there are plenty of fragments which correspond, in the authors' view. The balladesque world is full of the same figures, animals, humans, plants, instruments, gestures, and the like as found in the churches. The symbolic and iconic universe of the two genres (ballads and murals) corresponds, but fortunately the authors are cautious enough not to claim that one derives from the other. In fact, they manage to make the reader aware that there may be a shared background. In this chapter we find once again the term *krets* in the *kretslopp* or cycle of the church, the parish, the monastery, and of literature. Through this way of dividing society, the authors perhaps also want to

point out the channels for the dissemination of knowledge during the Middle Ages in Europe, which may have provided the conditions in which the church and the "world" met in the balladesque in the northern parts of Europe.

After an interesting concluding chapter about jokes in ballads and church paintings, the authors end up in Bakhtin's study of carnival, laughter, and the significance of the grotesque in the Middle Ages. Bakhtin, however, is considered by some historians to be too extravagant in his analyses, but even a meticulous scrutiny of his ideas (e.g. by Olle Ferm) has shown that they were largely acceptable to work with. This is also borne out by the last chapter in this book.

It is a great pity that the authors do not seem to be familiar with the folkloristic literature. That a concept takes on its meaning in its context, and in the situation of the narrator or the receiver, is a recurrent theme in performance studies. That the same figure can be charged with different values in different genres has been shown by Jan-Öjvind Swahn concerning rats and mice in tales and legends. Jochum Stattin's study of the *näck* or water horse is in large measure an investigation of folk topography and geography. Nils-Arvid Bringéus's studies of the production of folk pictures would also have been worth closer acquaintance. Peter Burke's book about folk culture in Europe up to the nineteenth century would have brought an awareness that the differences between high and low, ecclesiastical and secular, nobles and peasants, women and men, the wise man and the fool, were not perceived in the same way in the Middle Ages as today. The relation of the ballads to fairytales, legends, spells, and proverbs is a topic to examine in the next book, which I hope will be as beautiful as this one, but in a format that is better suited to a private bookshelf. Then perhaps we will soon be able to see that folklore is the substratum that is common to much of Europe, which produced and captivated people's thoughts and therefore has served as a foundation for illustrations and practices for hundreds of years.

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The Wild Hunt

Claude Lecouteux: Phantom Armies of the Night. The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead. Inner Traditions, Rochester VT & Toronto 2011. 309 pp., ill.

Claude Lecouteux is a former professor of medieval literature and civilization at the Sorbonne. He is the author of numerous popular books on medieval and early modern folk beliefs; among the topics that he has treated are books of black magic and beliefs in revenants, vampires, poltergeists and household spirits. Common to all books is a wide perspective as regards time and space and the delimitation of their topic, which sometimes results in too generalized conclusions. With their rich exemplification from many less well-known sources, however, all the books have a folkloristic interest. Being a Germanist, the author is well acquainted not only with Latin and French texts but also with sources and scholarly treatises from German speaking areas.

An obstacle to a wider dissemination of the books has surely been that many people interested in folklore have difficulties in reading French. One is therefore thankful that a publishing house in the USA has had no less than seven of his books translated into English. Of special interest to Nordic folklorists is the book which will be reviewed here, a study of the European belief and legend complex known as "The Wild Hunt". It was published in French back in 1999 under the title *Chasses fantastiques et cohorts de la nuit au Moyen Age.*

The popular belief that during stormy nights one can hear a supernatural hunting party passing by over the treetops and see it pursuing a running female creature has given rise to an extensive scholarly literature by Scandinavian folklorists. Studies especially worthy of being mentioned are Axel Olrik's "Odinsjægeren i Jylland" (1901), Hilding Celander's "Oskoreien och besläktade föreställningar i äldre och nyare nordisk tradition" (1943), Åsa Nyman's "Odens jakt" in *Atlas över svensk folkkultur* II" (1976) and Christine Eike's "Oskoreia og ekstaseriter" (1980).

In several cases the Scandinavian scholars have referred to German parallels to the Scandinavian tradition, but as a rule they have not included source material written in Romance languages, which has more to offer from antiquity and medieval times than that from northern Europe. In Claude Lecouteux's book these early sources have been given much space.

By way of introduction the author gives his definition of "The Wild Hunt". It consists of a band of ghosts who at certain times of the year are heard passing through the air, often with a leader whose name varies in different regions. Lecouteux mentions the Devil, the French Hennequin and in German tradition Wodan, Frau Holle and Perchta. From Scandinavia one can add different name forms of Odin, found in Danish and southern Swedish records, the Danish king Valdemar and the Norwegian *oskoreien*, the riding party from *Asgård*. Lecouteux's objective has been to let the texts speak for themselves, so that the reader can form his or her own opinion, and one of the merits of the book is in fact that he presents a great amount of previously neglected texts which throw light on the fascinating belief complex "The Wild Hunt".

The earliest texts discussed in the book are from late classical and early medieval times. They deal with women worshipping Satan who fly by night to a meeting place under the command of Diana or Herodias. These legends are, as rightly remarked by the author, forerunners of conceptions which later developed into the great witch persecutions. They lack the most characteristic trait of the legends about the wild hunt, namely that the band in the air produces noise when passing. Instead the flying women carry children with them or steal grain, that is, they act like the witches of recent folk tradition.

None the less one notes that especially Herodias was to live on in legends about cohorts of dead who at certain times of the year visited their former homes, and for whom food was put on the table. Both the band of witches in the air and the dead who are offered food seem to have been mixed up with the wild hunt during the Middle Ages. They are, however, separate belief complexes; the similarity between them is that all three are about supernatural bands which rush through the air by night, commanded by a named leader.

The wide scope adopted by the author means that the book contains traditions which have to do with the wild hunt only marginally or not at all, for instance legends about cocks crowing by night, Icelandic revenant legends, Norwegian traditions about the *julebukk* and *julegeit*, the southern Swedish ghost pig *gloson*, the legend about the midnight mass of the dead, the tale called "Friends in Life and Death" (ATU 470), the legend of the jug filled with tears (ATU 769) and visions of colliding armies in the sky which are portents of war.

More relevant are the texts dealing with nocturnal hurricanes, consisting of devils carrying the souls of unblessed people to hell, and texts from the eleventh and twelfth centuries about wandering or flying bands of unblessed dead. Here the author especially dwells on the French tradition about Mesnie Hellequin. In these early narratives one does not yet meet any cohorts of horsemen chasing a running supernatural

creature. The first certain proofs of the legend complex about a diabolic huntsman are a version of the legend which Lutz Röhrich has called "Die Frauenjagdsage", written down in the thirteenth century by Cesarius of Heisterbach, and an episode concerning the forest ruler Fasolt in a song about Theodoric the Great from the same century. The complex later was to be enlarged with various stories about the punishments of sinners after death, especially those who had been hunting on a Sunday.

To sum up, it can be stated that Claude Lecouteux has not given a definite answer as to how the belief and legend complex of the wild hunt originated and developed. But he presents many good suggestions and, above all, he presents a number of interesting medieval texts which belong to the legend complex and which might be useful for future research.

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Ballads from Oral Transmission to Net Publication
Gamla visor, ballader och rap. Från muntlig förmedling till publikation på nätet. Boel Lindberg (ed.). Gidlunds förlag, Möklinta 2013. 366 pp. Ill. English summary.

This volume marks the close of the research project "Digitization and Net Publication of Medieval Ballads". The project has been run with the aid of "infrastructural funding" Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. This type of support is given to enable research, for example, by making important collections in archives and libraries accessible. The "important collection" at the centre of this project is the set of hand-written records by the antiquarian and philologist George Stephens which were rediscovered in 2005 after having been buried deep in the archives of Växjö City Library. The collection consists of over 1,000 items, including medieval ballads, recorded by Stephens and left by him to the Växjö Diocesan and High School Library in 1893.

Stephens' collection was the starting point for an earlier research project, "Intermediality and the Medieval Ballad" (2006–2010). This project has resulted in publications such as the volume of ballad studies, *En värld för sig själv: Nya studier i medeltida ballader* (2008), and studies from an intermedial perspective, *Intermediala perspektiv på medeltida ballader* (2011). Now a third volume of studies has been published based on the George Stephens collection. We may also mention the web publication of conference texts, *I fråst och i kålle: Texter från nordiskt balladmöte* (2008) and a book about gender in jocular ballads, *Om kvinnligt och manligt och annat konstigt i medeltida skämtballader* (2011). As a whole, this was a highly productive find in the library archive!

The present volume, the title of which means "Old Songs, Ballads and Rap: From Oral Transmission to Publication on the Net", comprises 366 pages with seven articles, indices, author presentations, and an English summary. Five of the articles are scholarly inquiries while two are more technical descriptions – Lennart Carlsson's "Ballads on the Web: On the Project 'Digitization and Net Publication of Medieval Ballads'" and Boel Lindberg and Elinor Andersson's "Revised Index of the Ballads in the George Stephens Manuscript Collection". The other five articles have a research focus with links to Swedish ballad studies on a general level and, in varying measure, to Stephens' collection. Magnus Gustafsson conducts a thorough analysis of the concept of ballad and of song collecting in general from a comparative European perspective. Gustafsson's stating point is the research on ballads conducted at Svenskt Visarkiv, and Bengt R. Jonsson's works in particular, when he follows the development of the concept in folk epic song.

Boel Lindberg contributes two articles to the volume. In "The Patriarchate's Song of Songs: The Ballad the Beggarman's Bride" she does a close-up reading of the different attested variants of the ballad (SMB 236). She sees the ballad as an expression of the medieval outlook on women and does an interesting analysis of how the ballad manifests stereotyped male and female behaviour and values. In the article "'And Little Karin Served': Epic Folksongs in The Earliest School Songbooks" Lindberg examines the ballads that were included in the songbooks used in the national school system up to 1920. In the article "A Collection within the Collection: A Presentation of the So-called Västmanland Collection in the George Stephens Manuscript Collection", Karin Eriksson takes the reader on a somewhat unusual journey. Eriksson presents her work of reconstructing and understanding the genesis of the "Västmanland Collection" within Stephens' collection of manuscripts. The idea behind Eriksson's was to determine who noted down these ballads and in what context the collection arose. But this proved impossible – the project failed! But perhaps this is precisely what makes Eriksson's article so interesting. It gives insight into the practical work of source criticism and shows that the analysis of the records gives rise to new and interesting knowledge.

As a whole, this is an interesting volume from several perspectives. The find of Stephens' collection gave new energy to ballad research, which in many ways seemed to have been concluded with the publication by Svenskt Visarkiv of five volumes of ballads, *Sveriges medeltida ballader*. The project at Svenskt Visarkiv ran from 1983 to 2001. The research project on the Stephens collection has continued the work of Svenskt Visarkiv. In particular, the relationship between the Växjö collection and other collections in Sweden and Denmark has been meticulously examined. The final chapter in the volume, "Revised Index of the Ballads in the George Stephens Manuscript Collection", describes how new knowledge has led the researchers to correct their own initial categorization of the collection.

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The Siren of the Norwegian Women's Political Project

Synnøve Skarsbø Lindtner: "Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen": Kvinnebladet Sirene og det utvidete politikkbegrepet (1973–1983). Avhandling for graden philosophiae doctor (ph.d.), University of Bergen. 416 pp. Ill.

This dissertation by Synnøve Skarsbø Lindtner explores how the slogan "The personal is political" was expressed in the Norwegian feminist magazine *Sirene: Tidssignal for kvinner og menn*, published during the years 1973 to 1983. The purpose is to analyse how politics is presented in the magazine's articles during these ten years. Skarsbø Lindtner reads the magazine as a polyphonic text, marked by different voices that negotiated about what it meant to make the personal political.

The theoretical inspiration is taken from Michel Foucault's discourse analysis in combination with hermeneutics from Clifford Geertz and Quentin Skinner. In accordance with these influences Skarsbø Lindtner argues that a text can be read as an expression of one or more speech events within a specific discourse. The analysis comprises a series of comparisons of different political expressions (such as feminisms, ideologies and mentalities connected to the political sphere) in *Sirene* and elsewhere, both in Norway and in other places.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters that vary considerably in size, from eight to eighty pages, as well as in level of analysis. In chapter one the magazine

Sirene is placed in a thematic and historical context. Skarsbø Lindtner argues that the women's political project of *Sirene* has been marginalized within the Norwegian history of the women's movement. This is discussed in relation to the political understandings of women's movements and politics, as well as in relation to the research field.

In chapter two Skarsbø Lindtner describes the research aim and objective, as regards both theory and method. In the chapter she also explores how the practices of the women's movement have shaped the perspectives on the movement itself. The aim is to gain insight into the mentalities, ideologies and ways of understanding that enabled a series of new ways to talk about, understand and practise politics and feminism in parts of Norway in the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter three draws the background for the starting of the magazine, and outlines the specific social, political and media context that made *Sirene* possible. Skarsbø Lindtner argues that the magazine articulated politics from beneath and that it was a radical enlightenment project, which had a broad influence on Norwegian society.

The next chapter concentrates on the different roles that psychology and psychoanalysis played in the magazine. Skarsbø Lindtner compares *Sirene* to American magazines of the same time and to key feministic publications in Norway during the 1930s and 1940s. She argues that psychoanalysis had impact on the debate about sexuality in Norway in two ways: in the shape of Ingjarl Nissen it was understood as a conservative ideology in opposition to the *Sirene* project, but while this was the case psychoanalysis still influenced the magazine, but in ways that differ from the American feminism at the same time. Skarsbø Lindtner relates the scepticism about the Freudian knowledge to the central role of Marxism in Norway during the 1970s and argues that psychoanalysis therefore played an implicit rather an explicit role in the shaping of the magazine.

In chapter five Skarsbø Lindtner explores how the conditions for a feminist magazine such as *Sirene* changed during the 1970s. She writes that while new feminism had a wide breakthrough in the seventies, there were many who changed their opinion of how the women's movement should continue, how equality could be achieved and what politics should be about. In time the differences became so large that many women turned away from *Sirene*.

In chapter six Skarsbø Lindtner continues to explore how the magazine articulated feminism when it was no longer published by Cappelen. At this time *Sirene* appeared as a more openly feminist political project that Skarsbø Lindtner terms an existential feminist liberating projects. Women's liberation was defined in a new landscape where emotions gained greater space, but where the political questions were relegated to governmental institutions. Skarsbø Lindtner writes that during the early 1980s there was a transition in *Sirene* from a women's room to a forum for critical debate about women's liberation.

The dissertation ends with an eight-page conclusion. Skarsbø Lindtner writes that *Sirene*, instead of creating contact with the established political apparatus, turned to the female public arena. In *Sirene* politics were understood as a public project and as a personal existential process of liberation. *Sirene* insisted that almost everything was political in the sense that everything could be discussed publicly. At the same time, some themes were considered more political than others, for example the body, sexuality and subjectivity. Skarsbø Lindtner declares that this was a consequence of that fact that the established politics before *Sirene* had marginalized women's autonomy by rewriting and silencing sexuality.

The theme of the dissertation is in-

teresting and the close and thorough analysis of articles in *Sirene* in chapters five and six is highly informative and nuanced. Pictures of the front covers of several issues of *Sirene* add to the analysis and bring the reader close to the analytical work. Skarsbø Lindtner's analysis touches upon numerous important aspects of feminist political debates. Unfortunately, this also makes the thesis somewhat disparate and hard to follow. In addition I find the scope too wide and the theoretical influences too many, besides being not thoroughly defined.

Skarsbø Lindtner writes that her object of study is the whole of the public, cultural and political realm that *Sirene* was part of. This raises questions about demarcation and the differences between the cultural and the political, questions that Skarsbø Lindtner does not address. Instead she argues for the necessity to study *Sirene* as a concrete expression of different ways of thinking about, and practising, politics and feminism, without defining theories of politics, feminism and women's periodicals. Although this ambition is admirable, in my opinion, it leads to difficulties in keeping the line of discussion and to several questions, such as about the differences between feminist doctrine and discourse or between debate and discussion. The most problematic question concerns the many feminisms and public spheres and their differences and relations. In the text I have counted eleven different feminisms and fourteen public spheres. The consequence of Skarsbø Lindtner not wanting to define concepts and analytical terminology is that her line of argument is often lost and the reader fails to enter into a discussion with her. In my opinion this is a loss, since Skarsbø Lindtner has put a lot of work and engagement into a very interesting field of inquiry.

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Housewives in the Fifties

Lena Marander-Eklund: Att vara hemma och fru. En studie av kvinnligt liv i 1950-talets Finland. Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, Helsingfors 2014, 296 pp. Ill.

Nowadays an increased interest in issues relating to the 1950s is noticeable. Especially young men and women without personal experience of this decade are paying great attention to it. They look for characteristic design objects at flea markets and for clothes in vintage shops. In their spare time some of them also enjoy cruising events and rockabilly parties. Questions about everyday life during the 1950s have also been raised, in particularly the skills and duties of the housewives. This is one starting point for the folklorist Lena Marander-Eklund's study. Another is the third wave of feminism which questions female emancipation from the home as a way to improve identity, as the second wave of feminism had proclaimed. The third wave has emphasized that the second wave valued the husband's work outside the home as the norm and as a consequence placed the housewife as the "other". In Finland, as in other European countries and the USA, the norm encouraged women to become housewives, although Finland and Austria had the lowest number of housewives during the 1950s.

The aim of this study is to investigate the experiences of women who were housewives during the 1950s. How housewives who belong to the urban middle class narrate and relate themselves to the ideal image of housewife behaviour is the main issue for the study. The material consists of life stories which have been collected by different archives in Finland; interviews and ladies' magazines. The study is focused on Finno-Swedish women who often used to read Swedish weekly magazines, and the researcher has chosen *Hemmets Journal* and *Femina* with articles ad-

dressed to housewives during the 1950s. Lena Marander-Eklund seeks to compare the descriptions in articles and advertising with the housewives' oral and written narratives.

In this study the narratives are not only analysed as linguistic discourses; instead individual experiences and narratives are related to social relations and collective narratives. The researcher emphasizes that this project is not based on a realistic point of view but on new materialistic perspectives. The investigation shows that several housewives who answered the archives' questionnaires in general did not write about their home duties. Lena Marander-Eklund's interpretation is that previous researchers and the employees at the archives had not emphasized questions about the housewife's everyday life and the narrators had also neglected to describe it. As a matter of fact, most of them thought it was too trivial to make any expressions of everyday duties. Finally, Lena Marander-Eklund found twelve written narratives that could be used for in-depth analysis and conducted six interviews about housewives experiences in the 1950s.

Even though these women called themselves housewives, it is obvious that they also had work experience during the 1950s. Some of them continued to work after they had their first child, but became full-time housewives when they had their second or third child. Others carried out some tasks for their employer in their homes. One main question in this study was how the narrators viewed their possibilities to choose between working on the labour market and being a housewife. None of them express any regret for their time as a housewife during the 1950s, as they were just fulfilling the norm. Some of them started to work outside the home when their children got older, others continued to be housewives. A wife of a diplomat described her difficulties getting a suitable job when the family moved back to Finland. Another woman who was living in an industrial village with one big employer explained that the job opportunities were better for lower-middle-class wives than for upper-middle-class women with higher education.

Lena Marander-Eklund has not had any ambition to make a deeper analysis of class aspects, although she collected narratives from the urban middle class. But even though the women belong to the same generation and were born during the 1920s and 1930s, their everyday life was not shaped in the same way. With reference to etic perspective, Marander-Eklund has declared that she could not reveal more detailed information about the housewives' family and socio-economic aspects. In my opinion the anonymity has gone too far. I presume that readers will find it difficult to understand the differences between the narrators when the descriptions of social background are so thin, with the exception of the two examples mentioned above. The Finno-Swedish population is big enough to make it possible to write about these families more substantially without disclosing their real identities.

This book shows the limited amount of collected housewives' narratives, and Marander-Eklund has supplemented them with contextual descriptions concerning the 1950s by references to other researchers. Even though she repeats the same quotations from the life stories, she illustrates different aspects of the housewives' everyday lives. The text is well written with an interesting structure related to the functions of different rooms in the home. She also compares the narrations in her interviews with written life stories. Generally the oral presentations are more positive than the written ones. Lena Marander-Eklund describes in a self-critical way her own behaviour during her interviews, for instance, about questions she never asked. She also discussed the expectations the women had when they were writing

their life stories addressed to the Institute for Women's Studies in 1995. One important statement in this book is that it is not enough to compare individual life stories with collective narratives. Therefore the investigation must also include the relationship between informants and researchers, between writers and archives.

This is an important book, which will be very useful in education because it describes in different ways why the urban middle-class housewives did not have a luxurious time. Nor is it a valuation with reference to the second wave of feminism, which depreciated the housewife's skills and duties. Lena Marander-Eklund is also critical of the third wave statement about the individual possibilities to choose housewife experiences or abandon them. She wants to highlight that some women enjoyed being housewives during the 1950s while others did not. The women have retold their recollections many years afterwards and related their expressions to expectations of what researchers, archive employees and younger generations ought to know about women's life. Their request is to be respectfully treated for what they did during the 1950s, when it was a norm to be a housewife with professional skills and duties.

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Memory, Politics, and World Heritage

Dragan Nikolić: Tre städer, två broar och ett museum. Minne, politik och världsarv i Bosnien och Hercegovina. Lunds universitet, Avdelningen för etnologi, Lund 2012. 304 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss.

Memory, politics, and world heritage in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina is the topic of Dragan Nikolić's dissertation, the title of which means "Three Cities, Two Bridges, and a Museum" An introduction and a brief concluding discussion frame three chapters, one about each city. First Mostar and its famous bridge, then Višegrad with its no less famous bridge over the Drina, and then Jajce, a small city with a large heritage of political memory, from days of ancient glory and from more recent and problematic times, Yugoslavia, the war, and the new state of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The express purpose of the dissertation is to "study how people use world heritage sites and memories of the past, how UNESCO's policy on cultural heritage is taken up, reassessed, and reinterpreted, and how international intentions meet post-war conflict-filled reality" (p. 20). It is about how people remember and handle the past on a local level and the consequences it has, and how ceremonies, monuments, and memorials can create meaning for the past, the present, and the immediate future.

The study is based on qualitative interviews and conversations with informants, or "narrators", along with photographs, video recordings, and participant observation between 2007 and 2011, carried out during sporadic visits and longer stays. As regards method, it is rooted in a tradition of ethnological fieldwork that emphasizes the importance of presence and participation, and in present-day phenomenology, with the focus on situated practice.

Nikolić's premise is that monuments are remarkable material, which can be used as a kind of peephole into social and cultural processes. The idea is that the monuments themselves, like their everyday use and the ceremonies around them, can be understood as heavily charged actors, with an ability to trigger chains of actions and give rise to interpretations.

A core of the problem is the relation between memories, representations of memory, and space/place. It is a relation which the author seeks to explore using

Hannah Arendt's concept "spaces of appearance", where people appear to each other not only as objects, but also make their presence explicit as living people. The bridges in Mostar and Višegrad and the museum in Jajce are analysed as such "spaces of appearance", which together with rituals and ceremonies "become pedestals from which important questions can be articulated" (p. 17).

The central problem is the struggle over whose memory is to count and how one should remember, a struggle about what should be elevated to become generally acknowledged cultural heritage on the one hand, and a struggle over local ethnic groups' and individuals' memory and history on the other. A number of conceptual pairs are used for the difference between established institutional public remembering and locally living communicative memory from below: "shared memory – common memory"; "cultural memory – communicative memory", "commemorating from above – commemorating from below"; Pierre Nora's "lieux de mémoire – milieux de mémoire". Here too belong de Certeau's "strategy", which refers here to the attempts by rulers to stage history and territory in specific ways, and "tactics", which refers to the daily use and incorporation into people's lives. Altogether this makes up a powerful but also problematic dichotomous relationship, between, on the one hand, ideology, rhetoric, politics, and on the other hand everyday use, or if you wish between ideal and practice.

The war is the background that gives the dissertation its resonance, on several levels. "Seldom has the nomination of individual objects as global sites of memory happened among people who are in such a deep state of confusion and powerlessness as here" (p. 8), the author writes. It is a confusion and powerlessness that requires discussion of fundamental agreements and concepts in the field of cultural heritage. Memories are profoundly problematic in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, but oblivion is also problematic. Orders came from different quarters to remember, just as orders came to forget. There is no given shared memory, no common historiography or cultural policy. Nikolić takes this extremely heated and fragmented situation as his methodological point of departure, his idea being that it can clarify and demonstrate processes and phenomena that are otherwise elusive.

The author's presence in the field is also framed by his experiences as a seventeen-year-old war refugee from Bosnia to Sweden. On the one hand, he has been able to use these experiences as an asset. By being open about his Yugoslav and Bosnian background, he found it relatively easy to get into conversations with Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. On the other hand, this background was also a problem, in that he was constantly asked to display his cultural ID. As a Bosnian Serb, according to the extreme principle of ethno-national affiliation, there was no neutral outsider position for him, no observing research role to escape into. If the insider position, the command of the language, the cultural affiliation was an asset, it soon also became "an almost unbearable torment" (p. 14).

The first of the three central chapters is woven around Stari Most, the old bridge in Mostar, built in the sixteenth century, destroyed by Croatian forces in 1993, and recreated and reopened, with international help, in 2004. The theme of the chapter is how experiences and memories of the war relate to the bridge as a cultural memory. From UNESCO's distanced global perspective, the restored bridge can be presented as a symbol of multi-ethnic co-existence, tolerance, and cultural development. On the local, regional, and national level, it seems like a bizarre joke. The bridge stands there instead as a monument to division and the chasm of unbridgeable differences that has led Mostar to fall

into two ethnically separate parts, one on either side of the River Neretva.

This chapter dramatizes the discrepancy between different perspectives on cultural heritage. Like bridges, the cultural heritage is often used rhetorically to symbolize community and solidarity across a divide. But just like bridges, cultural heritage often produces the opposite, by focusing on boundaries, dramatizing difference, and manifesting relations between radically different horizons of meaning. For the people of Mostar, the bridge, together with the big cross on Hum, the mountain nearby, stands as a monument to the ethnic conflict that divided the city. The monuments and the ceremonies around them help to create, maintain, and express an ethno-nationally homogeneous territory, while simultaneously dramatizing the difference between international, national, and local perspectives. The memorials "symbolize the endlessness of war and conflict", the author writes, "they are the watchtowers of the panopticon, visible landscape markers which embody the presence of a continuous state of war" (p. 64). The idea of memorials is to give form to an idea, to communicate a message. In practice, however, the idea and the message are influenced by the meanings ascribed to them by the local people. In this way they also become memorials to an affiliation to the local community and identity and thereby help in the control and disciplining of the inhabitants. "The monuments thus exercise at once a symbolic force over their surroundings – and are open for reinterpretations", Nikolić writes (p. 68). Monuments are thus places where meaning is constituted; this is the fundamental idea in the study and in Hannah Arendt's concept of "space of appearance". The old bridge in Mostar is a dissonant cultural heritage, which "makes different sides of the city's history visible, but also makes different interpretations of the destruction take shape" (p. 78).

What the chapter seeks to elucidate is how the right to place is constituted. In the case of Mostar we see that it is distributed via the right to the city's memory and history, which creates a struggle about whose memories it is and who can control history. The memories and the history are not the starting point or goal of the war; they are means to acquire the right to the place. The author argues that it is the right to the place that defines the city, and when the memories, the memorials, the monuments are related to the place, this reinforces the meaning of the memories. In this way memories and history, in Mostar and elsewhere, become instruments for creating place, taking place, and establishing the right to a place.

Some 130 kilometres east of Mostar is Višegrad, which for 600 years belonged to the Ottoman Empire, then was in Yugoslavia, and as a result of the war is now in Republika Srpska. In the middle of Višegrad there is yet another disputed memorial, Mehmed Paša Sokolović's famous bridge over the Drina. Through legends and literature, not least of all Ivo Andrić's novel, the bridge had already been assigned an important role in the narrative about the past, as a monument to the Ottoman oppression of the Bosnian Serbs. There could therefore be only limited negotiations about the interpretation of the bridge.

In 2007 UNESCO inscribed the bridge on the World Heritage List, obviously as a way to make it serve the purpose of reconciliation. A good deal of the chapter about Višegrad is devoted to the question of why this has not been the outcome. One reason is, of course, that the city was subjected to particularly cruel ethnic cleansing during the war. During several massacres in the spring and summer of 1992, Serbian police and military killed over 3,000 Bosniaks. The bridge was a central theatre of war, as many of the victims were thrown into the river. If the bridge had previously been a symbol of Ottoman repression of

the local population, for the inhabitants it now also became a symbol of the Serbs' injustice to the Bosniaks. By emphasizing the earlier history of the bridge and simultaneously actively ignoring the recent war history of the bridge, the UNESCO nomination as world heritage was intended to make the bridge into a symbol of peace and reconciliation. The globally spread interpretation thus collided with the interpretations by the local people. As in Mostar, the bridge became a dissonant cultural heritage, a symbol of difficult and still unresolved conflicts. The result is not oblivion, but silence. The memories are painful, enforced, and the inhabitants are afraid, Nikolić writes: "Today Višegrad is the city where only the monuments, not the people, want to talk about the period 1992–1995" (p. 97).

Those who do not know their history have no future, as people sometimes say, but it is obvious here that even those who remember the past can find themselves without a future. What the author saw in Višegrad was an everyday life of silence, where things were hushed up and actively ignored, a strategic oblivion as a kind of self-defence, because it is so difficult for people "to cope with their own burden of guilt if they lack mechanisms to confront and deal with the past" (p. 98).

The weightiest part of the chapter is an analysis of a ceremony where women throw roses into the Drina, to conjure up memories of the war and make them concrete. In the ceremony the bridge was held up as the scene of the gruesome war crimes, and of the punishment that has not yet been meted out. The ceremony was designed as a concrete invocation of all those who had disappeared and been killed, but also as a concrete invocation of the perpetrators, some of whom were still living in the city. The bridge became a "space of appearance", a "commemorative arena", a stage and an altar for Bosniak martyrs.

In this chapter too, a central question is how remembering is linked to the right to place. But here it is also a matter of who may be a victim and why. After the war, the bridge became an instrument in a struggle over which victims we should remember and which martyrs we should pay homage to: those who fell hundreds of years ago, under the Ottomans, or those who fell during the Višegrad massacres in 1992.

Citing Paul Connerton, the author points out that the risk of forgetting engenders memorials, while the building of memorials engenders oblivion. In Višegrad the risk of forgetting gave rise to a memorial celebration and the memorial celebration gave rise to oblivion. In the ceremony on the bridge the women publicly staged their personal traumatic memories as a way to make them part of their own group's collective memory and its "official" history. Thus the dead were also brought in as ethnic representatives in a struggle for identity and the right to place. While remembering was a duty that was practised by local and visiting Bosnian Bosniaks, the local Bosnian Serbs devoted themselves equally dutifully to forgetting, silencing, and denying. In Višegrad there was a collision between a war to remember and a war to forget, a struggle over territory. In both cases the bridge was the starting point which made this possible.

North-west of Višegrad is Jajce, the old seat of the Bosnian kings, filled with memorials, and as a totality a candidate for UNESCO's World Heritage List. In November 1943 Tito's partisans gathered in Jajce for a joint anti-fascist conference (AVNOJ) and proclaimed the socialist republic of Yugoslavia. In addition to Jajce's many memorials from ancient times, it became the birthplace of the new state, commemorated in the AVNOJ Museum, a place of pilgrimage for schoolchildren and loyal citizens for half a century. During the war in the 1990s, however, Yugoslavs were pitted against each other, now as Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. As they waged war on

each other, they simultaneously waged war together against the old state. The Yugoslav heritage was attacked and placed in cultural parentheses. After the war the AVNOJ Museum stood empty of people and objects, and also emptied of meaning. As one of the informants in the study put it: in the war Serbs and Croats destroyed mosques and Muslims destroyed churches, but the AVNOJ Museum was destroyed by them all. It was a place of memory which was transformed during the war into a standing provocation. What Nikolić seeks to discuss with the museum as a basis is "the conditions for remembering the federal republic of Yugoslavia after a war where the soldiers of the former republic faced each other and where the very construction of the state was one reason why the war broke out in the first place" (p. 46).

In Jajce we follow the process by which a place, a city, and a museum is first totally colonized with one specific memory, how this memory is then erased, to be finally regained, piece by piece, and simultaneously become something new and different. If the AVNOJ Museum had previously been a monument to Yugoslavism, it was now becoming a monument to anti-fascism and a non-ethno-national stance. Buses from different parts of the former Yugoslavia brought people who wanted to display an alternative to the prevailing ethno-nationalism, but without necessarily embracing all the goals and values of the old state. The active exercise of "anti-fascist remembering" surrounding the AVNOJ Museum, according to the author, should not be regarded as an expression of "Yugonostalgia" but as an attempt to actively confront the past by people who had their memory confiscated through the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The starting point for the events around the museum in Jajce is thus different from the case in Mostar and Višegrad. After the war, memory could no longer be monopolized, whether by contemporary nationalists or people nostalgic for Yugoslavia. The local people and certain individuals now had a greater say than ever before in what was worth remembering. What happens then is the bearing question of this chapter: of all the things that have happened, what should gain the status of collective memory, and what kinds of memories are actually capable of winning international recognition?

The question is framed by a particular difficulty, according to the author. In Jajce there is not only a lack of institutionalized agreements about what should be remembered; a culture of oblivion prevails. The erasure of the memory of everything that aroused associations of Yugoslavia also created a notion of a new beginning, which had the consequence that the museum remained on the other side of the border, in the past. Here we find one of the main points of the dissertation: it is not only a matter of how one can create narratives that can gain legal force, but also of how narratives can be used to establish a beginning, a middle, and an end, which in turn establishes a relation to the place which has to do with rights. By creating a beginning and ignoring what went before, the space is drawn out and ascribed a specific order. It is obvious in Jajce how the remembering, the ceremonies, and the cultural heritages combine to establish and legitimize boundaries in time and space, thus instituting territories which can then be distributed in terms of rights.

The discussion leads to the conclusion that the inhabitants of Jajce are divided – by acts of war, unemployment, demographical changes, and political animosity: "The people of Jajce and the material cultural heritage did not live together but beside each other" (p. 257). Two distinct cultures of memory were ritualized in the city, two different histories. What was taken for granted as true by older people in Jajce was viewed by the young as a myth. The older people

thought that the younger people's experiences were shaped by a false political doctrine. "In one and the same setting, two states lived in the awareness of two generations. This psychological condition is also shared by the inhabitants of Mostar and Višegrad" (p. 257.) Are there no alternatives, one wonders. Yes, there are in fact. One is represented by the hardened hotel owner, in a city that used to attract thousands of tourists, but now has very few by comparison. His attitude, more pragmatic than ideological, is that anything that attracts visitors is good. Remember what you want – just come and stay in my hotel!

In global contexts and from the UNESCO point of view, cultural heritage/world heritage tends to be portrayed as a resource in the work for peace, reconciliation, and understanding in areas afflicted by crisis. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, cultural heritage is in much greater measure a source of conflict and a resource in warfare. The author says that it is because the past has not come to rest and because the memorials are such powerful weapons. Even when the military war is over, the hostilities can still continue, with bridges, museums, and other memorials as weapons. The cultural heritages are dissonant, their meanings on different levels are difficult to reconcile. In Mostar and Višegrad, on the international level, they stand for peace and reconciliation, on the national level for conflict, while on the local level they stand for a combination of pride, poverty, and endless difficulties. The war made the monuments into marks of cultural distinction, into rostrums from which people could preach. That is why the bridges in Višegrad and Mostar became trouble spots. They were used to burn fast the memory of historical injustices and to maintain a victim perspective in the collective ethno-national recollection. In Jajce, Nikolić finds something partly different, a surprising mixture of interpretations, uses, and commitments. Whereas people in Mostar and Višegrad handled the cultural heritages and the memorials instrumentally, to draw attention to something other than local matters, in Jajce they could not be monumentalized and instrumentalized in the same way.

Summing up, Nikolić writes that the analysis of how cultural heritage and world heritage are regarded in Bosnia-Herzegovina demonstrates dramatic tensions and multifaceted uses. On the global level a world heritage is recognized as something wholly positive, something that unites people. This gives them potential to be used for other purposes as well. On the local level they are not so much national memorials as tools in a struggle for power and influence in a reality that is difficult to handle politically and economically.

The world is now seemingly obsessed with remembering, with monuments and the production of cultural heritage, according to the human geographer David Lowenthal. If so, this is something at once very old and fundamentally new. If the bridges in Mostar and Višegrad and the museum in Jajce are examples of how local phenomena can be detached from their context and brought out on to global motorways to become available for worldwide consumption, then the institution of world heritage is an example of the reverse, of how globalized structures and production apparatus can be relocalized and made locally present. In this way the things that Nikolić discusses are examples of the late modern society's perhaps most productive tension, that between the globalizing and homogenizing forces on the one hand, and the localizing and diversifying forces on the other. His dissertation clearly shows that it is not a matter of forces from separate worlds that just happen to be brought together in a war-torn land; instead we see here two sides of the same fundamental process, sides that constitute each other and therefore can only be made comprehensible together.

Much of the dissertation is about the local conditions for cultural heritage and memory. But just as much is about place, rights, and victimhood, and about how all this goes together. What gives the study an extra dimension, of course, is the war in the 1990s, and the fact that it is still going on in its own way. The strength is the nearness to the informants, to everyday life, that the perspective is not from above or from outside. Yet it is not a plea on behalf of those without a strong voice of their own, as so much ethnology and anthropology has been over the years. If there is a tendency running through the text it is rather a sense of sorrow that the alternatives to ethno-politically motivated violence, hate, and mistrust sometimes seem so far away.

Another strong side of the dissertation is the ever-present analytical attitude, which proceeds from nearness but produces distance. It is an attitude that is not unproblematic in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it makes the almost unfathomable events during and after the war somewhat more comprehensible. The strength of the study does not lie in any coherent, stringently implemented method, nor in a consistently applied conceptual apparatus. If anything, Dragan Nikolić fits into an ethnological tradition that uses a "mobile searchlight" as a method, an eclectic combination of theories and methods which might seem objectionable to researchers in other disciplines. How it works is hard to say, but it does work. With two bridges and a museum as peepholes, with ceremonies and rituals as wide-angle lenses, with a bus trip, a gigantic cross, a cultural association, and a street as prisms, the author succeeds in throwing many kinds of light over a complex reality. It thereby becomes more complex rather than less so. But at the same time it becomes more comprehensible.

Of course there are deficiencies. I would have liked to see a more theoretically considered use of the many concepts that are introduced. It would have been easier for the reader if the concepts had also been more clearly related to each other, so that it might be possible to understand how the conceptual apparatus hangs together – if it does. Many of the concepts come in pairs; I have found no fewer than nineteen examples. With a less dichotomous conceptual apparatus it would have been easier to represent and analyse more complex processes than memory-oblivion, individual-collective, and ideal-reality. One way to achieve this would have been a more powerful emphasis on action. A more detailed performance analysis of the ceremonies and the rituals surrounding the bridges and the museum, based on the many hours of video recordings made by the author, could have worked. As it is now, the recordings are more legitimation and verification in the background. I would also like to have seen a more elaborate theoretical discussion of the results, especially of the relationship between memory and oblivion, and between memory and the representations of memory. There is plenty of red-hot empirical material to provide a foundation for such a discussion.

I am nevertheless quite satisfied with what I get. For this is a dissertation that has a great deal to teach us about how memories and monuments can be used and abused, and how memories always proceed from and create oblivion. It also has a great deal to teach us about how memory and oblivion are activated and used in war, and not least of all in everyday post-war life, filled with wounds, losses, and sometimes also hate. In addition, the dissertation also has something to teach us about courage. For it takes courage to venture into such a complex academic landscape as that concerning memory, monuments, and cultural heritage. It also takes courage to tread in a minefield like post-Yugoslavian Bosnia and Herzegovina. And it takes courage to do this as a Bosnian Serb, courage to confront not just everything one can en-

counter in such a heated field, but also to confront oneself. And not least of all, it takes courage to do it in Swedish, at a Swedish university and in a subject that has for so long devoted itself so much to purely Swedish matters.

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Cultural Monuments as a Research Field

Å lage kulturminner – hvordan kulturarv forstås, formes og forvaltes. Grete Swensen (ed.). Novus forlag, Oslo 2013. 370 pp. Ill.

The Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (Norsk institutt for kulturminneforskning or NIKU) has published a volume about cultural heritage edited by the ethnologist Grete Swensen. The essays illuminate, from different angles, how the past is used in the present through both material and intangible remains. The contributors are chiefly Norwegian scholars but there are also representatives of other Nordic countries in this interdisciplinary collection.

An example of how the intangible cultural heritage is made relevant in the present is the revival of old pilgrim routes from the Middle Ages, which are studied here by the folklorist Torunn Selberg from Bergen. The cultural heritage in this case consists of narratives, and the author conducts a special study of the old pilgrim route from Oslo to Trondheim which was officially opened in 1997. In 2010 it acquired the status of a European Cultural Route. The journey itself, often on foot, has become the important thing in our days, not the destination as was the case during the Middle Ages.

The creation of cultural heritage can also be prompted by motives of regional policy and not solely on nationalistic grounds. This is elucidated by the archaeologist Torgrim Sneve Guttormsen when he discusses the background to and effects of the raising of a monument in 1872 in memory of the heroic Viking Age king, Harald Finehair, and the battle he won in 872 at Hafrsfjord near Haugesund. The Foundation for Norwegian Cultural Heritage, which was established in 1993, seeks to safeguard local and regional heritage, unlike the public administration of ancient monuments which deals with the country as a whole. The latter focuses on things of national interest, and it previously had sole right to decide what was to be protected as cultural heritage.

The ethnologist Anne Sætren sheds light on how environmental efforts in Norway have been linked to the protection of cultural monuments during the present century. She concentrates on agricultural buildings which have received renovation grants from the government. This has raised questions of authenticity and identity in connection with restorations.

The archaeologist Elin Rose Myrvoll discusses how the cultural landscape becomes an issue in relation to ancient monuments. One difficulty with fieldwork is finding ancient remains in the landscape. Camilla Brattland and Einar Eythórsson likewise discuss ancient monuments in relation to the cultural landscape in areas of North Norway where the Coastal Sami live. Political aspects are brought in as we learn that Sami names of fishing places on nautical charts have been made invisible by being Norwegianized as part of the process of assimilating the Sami from roughly 1860 to 1960. It was not until the passing of a Placename Act in 1990 that Sami names were given the same status as Norwegian names on maps.

The editor of the book, Grete Swensen, examines what happens when objects from an older problematic history, in the form of disused prisons, are given a new function and simultaneously be-

come cultural monuments. Swensen conducts an in-depth study of this process at three selected prisons, which have been transformed into hotels and an exhibition gallery with studios for artists. New contexts of meaning have thus arisen, far removed from the origin of the buildings as places of punishment. The negative history tends to be toned down or hushed up.

The Swedish archaeologist Anita Synnestvedt has selected the ancient site of Pilane in the Bohuslän archipelago in western Sweden as an example of how prehistoric sites are interpreted by archaeologists while they are simultaneously brought to life in the present through new art forms and commercial interests on the initiative of a new landowner, a former television producer.

The Swedish cultural scholar Bodil Axelsson has elected to concentrate on the ruins of the medieval abbey at Alvastra and a vanished industrial landscape in the city of Norrköping, formerly a city known for its textile industry and paper mills. The question is how these sites of memory are transformed into cultural heritage in our time. On the one hand, this has been done through an annual amateur theatrical performance in Alvastra that has been running since 1987, and on the other hand through an artistic video installation in Norrköping which started in 2008.

Lothar Diem, whose field is architecture and design, discusses the character of the intangible cultural heritage in the sense of actions in the present which are repeated over time. This concept was highlighted by a UNESCO convention in 2003. Here, in my opinion, we can relate to the folkloristic concepts of tradition and custom. The actions can consist of dance or the performance of a craft that is documented through video and audio recording. As examples Diem uses the activities in a square in Morocco: storytelling, water selling, and acrobatic performances. Moreover, Diem links the intangible cultural heritage to the concept of re-enactment, which means that an earlier event is revived through role play.

The conservation researcher Joel Taylor deals with the question of the relationship between material and intangible cultural heritage. As examples he chooses two international prehistoric sites, a temple in Japan and Stonehenge in England. These illustrate two different conservation strategies, one in the eastern world and the other in the west.

The ethnologist Knut Fageraas is writing a doctoral dissertation about the Vega Archipelago in Northern Norway, which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004. The fisherwomen's work of collecting eider down is held up as an old way of life which was unique in the world. In his article in this book Fageraas concentrates on the effects of the new status as a World Heritage site. What changes have occurred in these islands as regards lifeways and perceptions? The study is based on the author's own fieldwork in 2008 and 2009, with interviews and observations. A noticeable effect has been that the eider down business, which was declining, has been revitalized since 2004. It has simultaneously attained a higher status in the local community. Dwellings, boathouses, and jetties have also been renovated. Optimism has taken the place of the earlier sense of marginalization. Tourism has enjoyed an upswing. It has been perceived as a positive resource by the majority of the local people. Both the eider down business and tourism have strengthened the position of women.

The archaeologist Carsten Paludan-Müller reflects on how the selection of World Heritage sites and historic monuments in Europe takes place. In the nomination of conceivable World Heritage sites there is sometimes a noticeable desire to strengthen the national identity, which Paludan-Müller deplores.

One example is the Israeli fortress of Masada, which became a World Heritage site in 2001. In contrast, host nations do not suggest places that represent a negative history. Germany, for example, has not nominated any concentration camps, but Auschwitz in Poland was nominated by that country and later adopted as a World Heritage site. Nor do nations often nominate sites which represent foreign influences. One exception is the Bryggen area in the Norwegian city of Bergen, which reflects the heavy influence of German trading culture in the age of the Hansa.

The Danish ethnologist Lene Otto argues the thesis that the administration of history and heritage in Europe must be put into a political context where the aim is to strengthen integration and counteract conflicts within the EU. Then the totalitarian history with the crimes committed under Nazism and Soviet communism can be held up as negative opposites of what the EU is striving for. Memorial days such as Holocaust Day on 27 January are supposed to remind us of this. The history of cruelty should not be forgotten if we want to build a better life with respect for human dignity, freedom, and democracy.

The essays in this book are freestanding, and there is no discussion summarizing the prominent features that have emerged. As a whole I find that the concepts of cultural monument and cultural heritage are elucidated from many angles for all those who work with these matters, whether theoretically in research or practically by looking after monuments which in some cases have attained the status of World Heritage. The book ought to have been given an English summary since the discussions concern principles which are of international relevance, not just Scandinavian. The English-language book that is cited most frequently in the discussions here is *Uses of Heritage*, 2006, by the theorist of cultural heritage Laurajane Smith. The book also reminds me of a commission entitled Cultural Heritage and Property within the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, SIEF. A conference in Bergen in 2014 discussed the topic of "The Transformations of Culture into Heritage" and my paper there was about "Grave Memories as Cultural Heritage".

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Books Received by the Editor 2014

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