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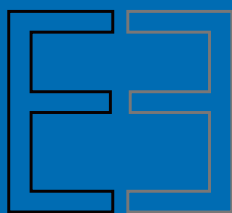
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INTRODUCTION

Performative Stages of the Nordic World

Terry Gunnell

It might be said that the modern approach to the study of “performance” in folkloristics and ethnology has roots in the field of drama and theatre arts¹ which developed in the late 1940s. This new academic discipline, which also involved practical training and experience in the field, sought to break away from the earlier concentration on the preserved literary aspects of works of drama. Its aim was to focus more on the ways in which plays worked within the performance space of the theatre (or street) in close interaction with their audiences. As all theatre practitioners are aware, drama is perhaps the most complex of art forms, communicating with its audience not only through text, but also a range of other media, including the aural (tone, rhythm, volume and silence), the visual (the theatre setting, the stage, the lighting, the appearance, movement and juxtaposition of performers and stage properties), and other senses like the haptic, the olfactory and the gustatory (see further Pfister 1988: 8), along with further external features that work on expectation and interpretation, like posters, reviews and programmes. It is also clear that in live drama each performance is unique (or “emergent”: see Bauman 1992: 42), and perceived uniquely by each and every audience member who, in addition to observing different things to the person sitting beside him or her, will also have a different background and (in varying degrees) a different understanding of the semiotics of the performance (such as the words used or the associations implied by the colours of costumes or scenery or the objects scattered about on the stage)

(see further Foley 1991: 9). Furthermore, the understanding of each theatre performance is uniquely affected by its social, geographical, historical and cultural context, all of which could radically change the meaning of the words from one performance to another (see Gunnell 2006: 11–12). Identical performances (if they were possible) of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* in London in 1601 and Prague in 1968 would thus be received and experienced as very different works, especially if we consider the “work” in terms of its dramatic performance, and the way it was perceived by both the actors and audience jointly involved in the communicative act of the performance rather than just a play text.²

The History and Development of the Study of Performance

The increasing application of this multidisciplinary, multidimensional performance approach to daily life, and thereby to the field of folkloristics and ethnology in the last three or four decades, has involved a gradual meeting of several fields of research. Within drama, and especially in connection with research into the forms of medieval drama, and street theatre like the “happenings” of the 1960s (see, for example, Wickham 1987: 4, and Hunt 1976), it was clear that “drama” had never been restricted to the stage, and that aspects of drama, role play and theatre were also involved in festivals, rituals, sports and play, all of which formed their own performance spaces and periods of special “heightened” realities within these spaces (of course, drama is itself a kind

of festival, ritual, contest and game).³ This connected closely with the concept of play expressed in Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1949; see also Bateson 1978), which suggested that much of human culture could actually be seen as a form of play involving marked-out spaces, different rules and dynamics, a different senses of time, and different kinds of role play. Such ideas were followed up by Clifford Geertz' discussions of the symbolic nature of culture (Geertz 1973). They also found support in Erving Goffman's considerations of the "performances" of everyday life (Goffman 1971), and the concept of "framing" whereby everyday life can be seen "as" a performance, especially if it is "framed" in one way or another (visually or temporally), thereby allowing it to be analysed in the same way in which we analyse a form of play or theatre performance (see above).⁴ In other words, in addition to examining the verbal discourse engaged in by the participants in daily cultural activities, this approach also encourages us to consider the other communicative, contextual and semiotic features that surround this discourse (or any other activities), features that tend to be registered unconsciously and are rarely considered in detail, essentially because – in western societies at least⁵ – we have come to give more importance to linguistic communication than to other messages received by other senses.⁶

For many researchers working within the field(s) of folkloristics and ethnology (their occasional division is, to my mind, unfortunate not least because it ignores the fact that both deal with performance and unofficial tradition), the road towards performance analysis in the modern sense began on one side with the advent of the functionalist approach in anthropology and folkloristics (advocated by Malinowski, Radcliffe Brown, von Sydow, Eskeröd and others). Here, rituals and festivals were collected, described and analysed in terms of their structure, social role and dynamics.⁷ On the other side, it was reflected in the increasing interest in the individual "performances" of oral singers, poets, and storytellers which was spotlighted by the work of Lord and Parry and the Harvard school (see especially Lord 1960; Foley 1988, 1991, 1995, 2002). The focus on individual

performance was then developed from a slightly different angle in, among others, Richard Bauman's examinations of "performance" which, rather than considering the nature of the oral "recreation" of traditional narratives (the examination of formulae, runs and stock scenes), have roots in the sociolinguistic approaches of Labov (1972), Hymes (1977) and others (see Bauman 1975, 1978, 1986, 1992; Bauman & Braid 1998; Foley 1995: 7–11).⁸

With certain exceptions (see especially Foley 2002: 60; Glassie 1975, 1995),⁹ those working on narrative performance in the past nonetheless tended to concentrate on the text,¹⁰ while those analysing traditions and festivals tended to concentrate on visual description rather than on how these festivals actually "worked" multidimensionally. Few prior to the advent of works like Henry Glassie's *Passing the Time in Ballymenone* (1995; originally published in 1982) considered the ways in which surroundings or objects can also be said to "perform" within these performances, or outside "official" performance contexts. Arguably, these other performative factors, the visual, the spatial and the other aural elements, received most attention from those working in the fields of ritual and festive tradition (see, for example, Bell 1997; Turner 1982; Schechner 1973, 1977, 1985, 1988, 1993).¹¹

The meeting of the ways came with the development of "Performance Studies" as an academic discipline first in the United States, and later elsewhere, in the 1970s and 80s, when experimental theatre practitioners like Richard Schechner joined forces first of all with anthropologists like Victor Turner, and later folklorists like Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (see further St John 2008; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Conquergood 2004). Schechner's work on rituals, festivals and theatre has been particularly influential in this area (see works by Schechner noted above, and especially 2002a, 2002b, 2004; see also Bial 2004). For Schechner, performance is not merely "a mode of language, a way of speaking" (Bauman 1978: 11). For Schechner, the key feature is activity, of which speech is just one part. As he states himself, and as other the other authors in this volume have effectively noted, "The underlying notion

is that any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed is a performance” (Schechner 2006: 2), and “... a performance (...) takes place between a marked beginning and a marked end. This marking, or framing, varies from culture to culture, epoch to epoch, and genre to genre – even, sometimes, from instance to instance” (Schechner 2006: 240). Schechner agrees with Goffman that “A ‘performance’ may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (Goffman 1971: 15–16; Schechner 2006: 29). Indeed, as Schechner states himself, “There is nothing inherent in an action in itself that makes it a performance or disqualifies it from being a performance ... What ‘is’ or ‘is not’ performance does not depend on an event in itself but on how that event is received and placed ...” (Schechner 2006: 38). Indeed, “at present, there is hardly any activity that is not a performance for someone somewhere”, and “any behavior, event, action, or thing can be studied ‘as’ performance” (Schechner 2006: 40). In short “... every social activity can be understood as a showing of a doing” (Schechner 2006: 167), which, like performance (conscious or otherwise) is “nested within social, cultural, technical and economic circumstances that extend in time, space and kind beyond what happens onstage” (Schechner 2006: 245).

However, like any other theatre practitioners, Schechner also underlines that performances, which he sees as having seven main functions (“to entertain, to make something that is beautiful, to mark or change identity, to make and foster community, to heal, to teach, persuade, or convince”, and/or “to deal with the sacred and/or the demonic” [Schechner 2006: 46]), are not limited to human activities (especially those in the obviously performative interconnecting fields of ritual and play), but can also be applied to objects and spaces that likewise “perform” as part of their interaction with human beings (and other objects and spaces observed or experienced by these human beings). As Schechner writes:

In performance studies, texts, architecture, visual arts, or any item or artefact of art or culture are

not studied as such. When texts, architecture, visual arts or anything else are looked at by performance studies, they are studied “as” performances. That is they are regarded as practices, events, and behaviors, not as “objects” or “things”. Thus, performance studies does not “read” an action and ask what “text” is being enacted. Rather, performance studies inquires about the “behavior” of, for example, a painting: the ways it interacts with those who view it, thus evoking different reactions and meanings, and how it changes meaning over time and in different contexts; under what circumstances it was created and exhibited; and how the gallery or building displaying it shapes its presentations. These kinds of performance studies questions can be asked of any event or material object. (Schechner 2002b: x)

In short, just as a stage set communicates and “performs” for audiences before a single word is spoken or a move made, so too can a museum, a building or a street “perform” for those who walk through them. In interaction with the observer, they cease being empty spaces and become four-dimensional “places” (also gaining a history) as part of a shared “performance” (see further de Certeau 1984: 117–123; Gunnell 2006, and the various articles contained in this volume).

This new wider multidisciplinary approach to performance is now being effectively applied in a wide range of disciplines ranging from drama, media, folkloristics, ethnology and anthropology to gender and racial studies, politics, sociology, archaeology and the study of heritage and museum studies.¹² Relating well to Lauri Honko’s idea of the analysis of the “thick corpus” (Honko 2000), it certainly deserves more attention than it has so far received outside the United States and the immediate field of dramatic performance (where it still tends to be concentrated). Indeed, it offers some very effective, useful tools for understanding how folklore and other ethnological material function in daily life: Indeed, as Schechner and others have noted, as part of daily life, all folklore and ethnology, all culture can be seen as “performing” multidimensionally in

one way or another, communicating uniquely with the observer or listener (who is naturally not merely observing but also participating in and experiencing the cultural “act” or “event”, whether physically present at the site of the performance or not). The word “perform” underlines precisely this shared act of communication in which a set of signals is sent out and then received, triggering a chain of other influences. And whether the act in question is designed as a “performance” or not, as Goffman and Schechner have underlined, all social “acts” can be seen and effectively analysed “as” a form of performance. In short, we can be seen as taking on different roles (using different but relevant types of communication in each situation) as we move through the various “scenes” of our lives. And the same applies to the objects and places that surround us.

The Performance of the North

In its concentration on the expansion of concepts of the Nordic countries, this special issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* aims to increase understanding as to how transnational communities are formed; that is, how “the North” reaches beyond territorial boundaries to include numerous cultural and educational networks. More specifically it means to identify and explore the role of performance in the reshaping of Nordic life. By focusing on different performances of heritage, the performative aspect of several Nordic Spaces is foregrounded, something which simultaneously highlights the central importance of the embodied experience.¹³

The articles contained in this volume thus effectively demonstrate the potential benefits of the wider, multidimensional performance-studies approach for folkloristics and ethnology, which is employed here in a number of ways by scholars with a range of differing backgrounds. All of them nonetheless relate to questions of the performance of Nordic identity in one way or another. Indeed, as Schechner and others have underlined (see above), the elements of “marking and changing identity” and “fostering community” are two of the key functions of performance. We perform to each other our differences and sense of *communitas* not only in the languages,

dialects and registers with which we express our thoughts, but also in the ways in which we behave, clothe ourselves, decorate our bodies, cut our hair, compete and nourish ourselves, in the objects we make and use, and the ways in which we decorate, traverse and generally deal with our local environments. The works of art and the media that we produce are also designed not only to communicate with local people but also (increasingly in modern times) to pass on statements to the “outside” world about who we are and how we feel. And even though we have now progressed beyond the old nationalistic agendas that directed the folklore and ethnological collections of the nineteenth century, nations and continents continue to promote particular images of the spaces they occupy, not least through the use of “heritage” (something seen particularly clearly from a multidimensional performance comparison of, for example, the opening ceremonies of the Olympics in Beijing in 2008 and the FIFA World Cup in South Africa in 2010 with the Obama inauguration in Washington in 2009).¹⁴ The question of how “Nordic” Space (as opposed to Chinese, South African or American spaces) is and has been performed in the past and present remains both relevant and enlightening.

In his article on the wide-ranging national semiotics of the annual Swedish *Allsång på Skansen* music festival, which now reaches the entire Swedish nation via television, Chad Eric Bergman draws on Schechner’s ideas of performance, modern ritual theory (especially the work of Seligman, Weller, Puett and Simon), and Butler’s considerations of performativity to analyse the different ways in which the festival ritualistically “performs” a modern Swedish national identity. As Bergman stresses, this particular Nordic Space, which works on various levels through different forms of media, regularly maintains its freshness and popularity by blending tradition with reaction to tradition, thereby stressing a continual (if gradual) recreation of Swedish identity.

The idea of the museum and the village festival as a spatial and embodied means of producing and performing ethnic heritage is developed by Ester Vösu and Ergo-Hart Västrik in their article on the re-

invention of Votian identity in northwest Russia in the early twenty-first century. Building on ideas drawn from both performance and heritage studies, the authors examine the materiality as well as the symbolic dimensions of both the festival and the museum, both of which are dynamic and heterogeneous cultural spaces involving encounters between different memories, different types of enactment and differing representations of community members.

Further analysis of the ways in which museum collections and the individual objects within them “perform” in time and space is given in Lizette Gradén’s article on the “Värmland Gift to America”. Utilising Goffmann’s, Schechner’s and Latour’s theories of performance and “actor networks”, Gradén shows how gift-giving can be seen as a means of both materialising relationships and delimiting boundaries between nations, regions, organisations and individuals in the wake of migration. More particularly, she analyses how the presentation to a nation or museum of a heritage collection with a dense biography (in this case the Värmland Gift which has been kept on the move for over fifty years) actually involves a series of ritualistic performances which vary by time and context. As Gradén demonstrates, the differing performances involved in the Värmland “heritage gift” have served to foster a wide range of binding dynamic transatlantic relationships.

Focusing on another function of the museum as a collector and preserver of archive materials, the article written by Hanna Snellman steps back to a different point of time to demonstrate how the performance approach can help bring archive materials back to life. Developing Conquergood’s ideas on fieldwork as a collaborative performance (see Conquergood 2004), and allying them to the approaches of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Schechner, Snellman analyses the unconscious “role-playing” of the Swedish ethnographer and Swedish-Finnish informant, and how the objects the informants were shown to own and the spaces they were shown to inhabit were bound to affect the ways in which the archive material was collected and “read” (both then and now). However, rather than devaluing the archive mate-

rial, this approach actually adds a new dimension to it, and simultaneously added value.

The same applies to the article by Timothy R. Tangherlini which demonstrates still further how insane “burning the folklore archives” would have been, whatever judgement one may place on the methodologies that lie behind the collection processes. Applying de Certeau’s understanding of stories as “repertoires of schemes of action” to Labov and Waletzky’s ideas concerning the structural map of everyday narrative, and his own comprehensive database of the Danish legend collections of Evald Tang Christensen, Tangherlini shows how combining digitally available materials on storytellers, their lives, their movements, and the societies and landscapes they inhabited can help recreate the living context in which these narratives functioned. The article analyses how both the legends and those who told them originally “performed” for their audiences on a variety of levels, many of which we tend to forget about.

De Certeau’s understanding of space and place, now allied to Urry’s concept of the “tourist gaze”, also forms the background of Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch’s article on the “tourist gait”, which underlines not only how landscape (in the form of Nordic city streets), somewhat like a museum, festival or play, can also be seen as something that “performs” for different people in different ways at different times, and not least for the tourist with the guidebook script in front of him. The article also effectively demonstrates how when we stroll through a city landscape, our walks themselves can be seen as particular “performances” designed both for ourselves and for others.

Hanne Pico Larsen’s article on the world-famous Danish gourmet restaurant, *noma*, also deals with spatial performance, but concentrates on a different kind of sensual performance and reception in its analysis of the ways in which food and food ways, like space, can be made to perform for their audiences. Drawing on the ideas of Barthes, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Warde and Fine, among others, Larsen analyses how the taste, smell, appearance and context of food (and the ways in which it is advertised)

can, like museum artefacts, be used to create a multidimensional national image for both insiders and outsiders. Her article underlines how in *noma*, the “foodness” of food, aspects of nostalgia and the emphasis on a particular *terroir* seem to work together playfully to form a particularly Nordic Space and a new kind of Nordic heritage.

As noted above, taken as a whole, these articles dealing with the performances of and within the spaces of the northern Europe serve to underline how the Performance Studies approach can encourage the analysis of a range of new dimensions often neglected in our study of folkloristic and ethnological materials, enabling us to get closer to the various ways in which this cultural material was and is experienced by people in their daily lives. The approach does not only allow us to sense the presence of fresh air running through these old Nordic surroundings; it also encourages to breathe this air deeply and experience a feeling of what Tolkien referred to as “recovery ... a re-gaining of a clear view” (Tolkien 1975: 52–55).

Notes

- 1 I should stress that, unlike some scholars who use the word “drama” to mean a kind of play (see, for example, Schechner 1977: 36–62), I use the word “drama” as many theatre practitioners do, in the sense of a cultural phenomenon that involves the temporary creation of a kind of “double reality” within a particular space and time frame produced by a performer: see further Gunnell 1995: 12.
- 2 With regard to the joint role of performer and audience in storytelling, see further, for example, Bauman 1986: 3; Niles 1999: 53–54; Okpewho 1992: 57–63; Foley 1991, 1995: 6–7, 2002: 109–124, on the “immanent” art of oral performances.
- 3 As Glynne Wickham effectively underlined, “If we are to approach the drama of the Middle Ages intelligently (...) we must first dismiss all our contemporary notions of what a theatre should be, and how a play should be written, and then go on to substitute the idea of community games in which the actors are the contestants (mimetic or athletic or both) and the theatre is any place appropriate and convenient both to them as performers and to the rest of the community as spectators. If the contemporary catch phrase ‘total theatre’ has any meaning, it finds a truer expression in medieval than in modern terms of

reference; for song, dance, wrestling, sword play, contests between animals, disguise, spectacle, jokes, disputation and ritual all figure, separately or compounded, in the drama of the Middle Ages, which was devised in celebration of leisure and for a local community” (Wickham 1987: 4).

- 4 Alongside this, one can place Augusto Boal’s form of “invisible theatre” whereby actors cause a particular situation to occur in real life by putting on a performance in a public setting without telling those not involved that the performance is taking place: see further Boal 1985: 143–147. Here, too, the line between performance and daily life is blurred: see further Geertz 1983 on blurred genres of this kind, and especially pages 24–30 on the way the social sciences have been increasingly making use of concepts of game and drama (drawn from the humanities) as a means of examining cultural behaviour.
- 5 I think it is relatively certain that if Africans had made the original classifications of artistic genres, these classifications would have been very different from those we tend to use today (in the west). In the very least, they would have been more multidisciplinary. For a Kenyan storyteller, for example, movement, rhythm, music and dance are essential parts of a story, along with the words. Similarly, for Kenyans, dance, music and song are indivisible. See further Okpewho 1992: 46–51; Conquergood 2004: 318.
- 6 Similar ideas are effectively expressed in Conquergood 2004.
- 7 One of the best examples here is Glassie 1975.
- 8 For other key analyses of narrative performances and performance traditions which vary in emphases from the socio-linguistic to the socio-historical, the literary and the structural see further, for example, Dégh 1969 and 1995; Niles 1999; Tangherlini 1998; Delargy 1945; Ó Súilleabháin 1973; Zimmermann 2001 (on Irish storytelling traditions); and, with particular regard to Nordic traditions, Siikala 1990; Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1996; Holbek [1987] 1998; Tangherlini 1994; Palménfelt 2007 (among others).
- 9 I refer here to Henry Glassie’s detailed analysis of Irish mumming performances in *All Silver and No Brass* (1975), and John Miles Foley’s important statement that “Any oral poem, like any utterance, is profoundly contingent on its context. To assume that it is detachable – that we can comfortably speak of ‘an oral poem’ as a freestanding item – is necessarily to take it out of context. And what is the lost context? It is the performance, the audience, the poet, the music, the specialized way of speaking, the gestures, the costuming, the visual aids, the occasion, the ritual, and myriad other aspects of the given poem’s reality ... And when we pry an oral poem out of one language and insert it into another,

things will inevitably change. We'll pay a price" (Foley 2002: 60). See further Sándor 1967 on the "Dramaturgy of Tale-Telling".

- 10 See, for example Bauman 1978: 48, where Bauman describes performance as essentially "the nexus of tradition, practice, and emergence in verbal art." Fourteen years later, this definition was slightly widened to encompass "A mode of communicative behavior and a type of communicative event (...) an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience. The analysis of performance – indeed the very conduct of performance – highlights the social, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions of the communicative process" (Bauman 1992: 41). Nonetheless, it should be stressed that Bauman's analyses of performance rarely involve the visual appearance of the surroundings. They tend to be text based.
- 11 With regard to masking traditions, for example, one can mention Glassie 1975, Bendix 1985, and most recently the various articles contained in Gunnell 2007 (on Nordic masking traditions), all of which attempt to give a more multifaceted view of the performances involved (see, in particular, Larsen 2007). See also, for example, again in more recent times and with particular regard to the Nordic area, Ronström 1992, which deals with the dynamic interconnections between dance, costume and music in Yugoslav immigrant traditions in Stockholm; Gradén 2003; Österlund-Pötzsch 2003; Larsen 2006 on, among other things, the communicative role played by costume and surroundings in Swedish and Danish immigrant traditions in the USA.
- 12 For further reading on modern approaches to performance studies (and a range of case studies), see further Schechner 2002a (rev. 2006), 2002b; Bial 2007; Davis 2008; Auslander 2003, 2008; Carlson 2004; Counsell & Wolf 2001; Striff 2003.
- 13 Nordic Spaces in the North and North America: Heritage Preservation in Real and Imagined Nordic Places is a project funded by Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and include Chad Eric Bergman (USA), Lizette Gradén (SE), Valdimar Tr. Hafstein (IS), Hanne Pico Larsen (DK/USA), and Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch (FIN). To read more about the project please go to www.nordicspaces.com.
- 14 With regard to the performance of Nordic heritage at home and abroad, see further, for example, Klein 1980, 2001; Gradén 2003, 2009; Larsen 2006, 2009; Schram 2009; Ronström 2008; Österlund-Pötzsch 2003. See also the various articles on Nordic identity, space (religious and secular), narrative, and heritage in Siikala, Klein & Mathisen 2004.

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PEDESTRIAN ART

The Tourist Gait as Tactic and Performance

Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch

Our walking as tourists is in many respects different from our “non-tourist” or everyday walking. Building on John Urry’s well-known concept of the “tourist gaze”, I suggest the coinage of the “tourist gait” for describing a type of walking characterized, among other things, by a heightened awareness of sensory impressions and an active involvement with one’s surroundings. In this article, I explore how the tourist gait can be employed as a tactic for claiming and experiencing space in our home environs. By comparing tourist gait practices with the phenomenon of *flânerie*, the performance element contained in everyday pedestrianism emerges. Quotidian walking can demonstrate great creativity and is definitively much more than just a means of transportation.

Keywords: walking practices, performance, everyday life, tourism, *flânerie*

Helsinki is an easy city to explore, as most sights are situated within convenient walking distance of the city centre. (...) Traffic in Helsinki is relatively uncongested, allowing you to stroll peacefully even through the city centre. Walk leisurely through the park around Töölönlahti Bay, or travel back in time to the former working class district of Kallio. (From the brochure “See Helsinki on Foot” – The Tourist & Convention Bureau, City of Helsinki)

Walking is a typical tourist activity – and it is a mode of transportation often recommended to tourists as the perfect way to see and enjoy townscapes. Through guided tours and suggested itineraries in guidebooks, places are linked together by walking to create narratives, experiences and representational spaces. However, the purpose of this article is not to study the walking entailed in tourism proper, but to understand the creative ways in which walking prac-

tices are employed in our everyday lives. My point of departure is that a touristic form of walking can be used as a tactic in our home environments and that these practices, even in their quotidian form, contain elements of performance.¹

Walking a city opens up multifaceted ways of experiencing its environments. We get closer to the sights than we would from behind a bus or car window. Through walking we can engage with the surroundings with all of our senses. As we are making our way through, say, the harbour-side market place, we are exposed to a plethora of odours that can range from the sweet scent of vanilla to the malodour of stale frying oil; we feel the cobblestones under our feet and the sea breeze on our skin, and in the orchestra of city sounds we might distinguish church bells, seagulls, or the rattling of cable cars. We are in the midst of a kaleidoscopic multisensory performance in which we are observers as well as participants.

A walk, then, holds the promise of experiences, but taking a walk can be a vastly different type of experience depending on *how* and *why* we walk. A tourist stroll will often assume a very different character from a walk home from work. As tourists we tend to move more slowly and more erratically, trying to “take it all in”, perhaps making sudden stops to take photographs or look at a map. By partaking in the typical tourist activity of the guided walking tour, we place an authority in charge of deciding the rhythm, pace, route and duration of our perambulation, which will likely make it quite a different affair from our daily walk to the office.

Our tourist walks are, of course, not always as enjoyable as presented in tourist brochures: we might get lost, have to make our way through large crowds, end up walking long stretches along motorways or other “unscenic” routes, get blisters and suffer from ill-advised footwear (thin-soled sandals, sweaty warm sneakers, or heels that make negotiating the quaint cobblestoned streets a challenge indeed). The centrality of embodied experience was forcefully argued by the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who defined the lived body as the subject of perception. Our experience of the world “appears to us in so far as we are in the world through our body and in so far as we perceive the world with our body” (Merleau-Ponty [1962] 2006: 239). Thus, it is our awareness of our body and our senses that enables the perception of *being* in a place, and consequently also the feeling of being somewhere else – of being tourists.

Walk like a Tourist – the Tourist Gait

By considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time) because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them, it takes them up in their basic significance which is obscured in the commonplaceness of established situations. (Merleau-Ponty [1962] 2006: 117)

The relationship between walking and tourism is multifaceted. To a certain extent all walking is travelling and, unless we do our walking on a treadmill,

entails a process that will take us from point A to point B (and, more often than not, back to point A). Throughout history, people have used their feet as their primary means of transportation (see Marples 1959; Solnit 2000; Amato 2004). Walking, however, is slow and taxing. As more people gained access to alternative means of conveyance, travel – and thereby tourism – increased significantly.

Nevertheless, some walking practices are explicitly connected with the development of touristic travel. The medieval practice of pilgrimage, for instance, is often described as an early case of mass tourism.² From its early days tourism was associated with distinction. By the seventeenth century, an extended tour of continental Europe had become a more or less compulsory finishing course in the education of young men of the upper classes. Towards the latter part of the eighteenth century, these so-called “Grand Tours” (or *Kavaliersreisen* in German) were influenced by contemporary Romantic sentiments and began including walking expeditions in scenic landscapes. The Alps became the supreme hunting ground for the hiking travellers’ Romantic quest for the sublime and the spectacular (see, for example, Schama 1995: 478f.; Christensson 2001: 24f.; cf. also Wallace 1993: 19).

During the course of the nineteenth century, the traditional obligatory stops for a Grand Tour, such as Florence, Rome, Venice and Paris, were visited by an ever growing stream of tourists who increasingly not only represented the aristocracy but also the middle classes. Tourism was evolving into an important part of modern life (Löfgren 1999: 7, 161). This process, as Orvar Löfgren has pointed out, entailed that people learned how to be tourists. Through influential books and popular sentiments people were (and still are) taught what to look for and what to ignore, what attitudes and expectations are appropriate for different holiday destinations, but also, importantly, how to describe their experiences (ibid.: 20f.).

The British sociologist John Urry correlated the shift from the “Classical Grand Tour” to the “Romantic Grand Tour” with the emergence of scenic tourism and the development of the “tourist gaze” – a distinct way of viewing one’s surroundings. The

tourist gaze implies anticipation and a way of looking at the environment with interest and curiosity. As tourists we gaze at what we encounter and this gaze is socially organized and systematized (Urry 1990: 3f.). Initially, the tourist gaze was separated from other social activities. However, as tourism is becoming more widespread, the tourist gaze is increasingly bound up with other social and cultural practices. People are, much of the time, tourists whether they like it or not. The tourist gaze is an intrinsic part of contemporary experience, but the tourist practices to which it gives rise are experiencing rapid and significant change. Different gazes and different tourist practices are authorized in terms of a variety of discourses, from education to play (ibid.: 82, 135). In this manner we learn to apply the tourist gaze in a multitude of situations and contexts.

Urry's analysis of the relationship between tourism and a socially constructed gaze can, I believe, be linked to the walking of tourists discussed in the introduction of this article. Building on Urry's much quoted concept, I want to propose the coinage of "the tourist gait" to describe a mode of walking typical of sightseeing and exploring unfamiliar places on foot (Österlund-Pötzsch 2007). Corresponding to the tourist *gaze*, the tourist *gait* implies interaction with the environment and can be defined as a walking practice intended to maximize involvement with one's surroundings. In short, it is a way of experiencing more intensely, and a way of experiencing with both body and mind, not solely with our eyes. Our senses intercommunicate with each other (Merleau-Ponty [1962] 2006: 266) to create the tourist experience. Despite the emphasis on vision (and hence sightseeing) in tourism, the tourist perspective also tends to make us aware of our other senses as we, for example, register unfamiliar sounds and exotic smells. The Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa concurs with Merleau-Ponty's statement that our perception is not a sum of visual, tactile and audible givens but that we perceive with our whole beings. Pallasmaa describes the "contemporary city of the gaze" as one that alienates the body and the other senses (cf. Crang 1999: 238). The haptic city, on the other hand, welcomes us to participate in its daily life:

The mental experience of the city is more a haptic constellation than a sequence of visual images; impressions of sight are embedded in the continuum of the more unconscious haptic experience. Even as the eye touches and the gaze strokes distant outlines and contours, our vision *feels* the hardness, texture, weight, and temperature of surfaces. Without the collaboration of touch, the eye would be unable to decipher space and depth and we could not mould the mosaic of sensory impressions into a coherent continuum. (Emphasis in original, Pallasmaa 2005: 143f.)

Walking is an efficient method of exploring. We circumambulate buildings to experience them from different angles, and as we traverse a locality we physically feel the vastness or the compactness of it. Through moving around in a city we perceive its different rhythms, at the same time as we ourselves become part of the city as lived space.

It has been suggested that tourism is more about particular modes of relating to the world rather than going places (Bærenholdt et al. 2004: 2) and that tourist sites are fluid and created through performance (Coleman & Crang 2002: 1, 10f.). These are discourses with which the tourist-gait concept closely aligns itself. Walking practices are part and parcel of the complex processes involved in producing tourist places. Tourism is embodied practice (Croach 2002: 207f.).

The tourist gait refers both to a *style* of walking and to a *method* of achieving different aims. My premise is that the tourist gait can be understood as performance and that it is often used tactically in our everyday lives.

Tactics and Performance

In his study of the history of vacationing, Löfgren pointed out that tourism to a great extent consists of everyday practices and routines (Löfgren 1999: 9). My assertion in this article is that tourist practices and experiences conversely can be introduced into our lives "at home". Discovering how people navigate and negotiate their environments in daily routines and practices was of prime interest to the

French scholar Michel de Certeau. To describe these processes, de Certeau used the concepts of *strategy* and *tactic* (de Certeau 1984). Whereas “strategy” signifies the way institutions and subjects of power try to control and define spaces, “tactics” stands for how individuals try to find their way around these strategies. Tactics are an art of “the weak”, of the ordinary person, and can be found in mundane practices such as cooking, reading – and walking. A tactic can be compared with trickery since it takes advantage of opportunities to manoeuvre within various power relationships, which, de Certeau contended, gives these everyday “ways of operating” a political dimension (ibid.: xvii, xix, 36f.). While one should be careful not to interpret this as a heroic parable of David vs. Goliath, de Certeau’s point of departure importantly acknowledges the individual as an actor and as a subject, who may go with the tide but also finds loopholes and spaces for creativity.

In his much celebrated essay “Walking in the City”, de Certeau compared the movements of a pedestrian to a speech act or a spatial acting out of the place. Through the act of walking, places are woven together in subjective ways. However, people in the streets follow the lines of an urban “text”, which they themselves are creating without having the overview to read (ibid.: 91–110).

The writings of de Certeau highlight the creativity embodied in everyday pedestrianism. The tactical tourist gait is a method of individualizing space. Its adoption might be subtle and carried out for different reasons, sometimes consciously and sometimes not. One of the primary ways that walking can be used tactically is through its performative quality. As is the case with many deceptively ordinary activities, walking becomes performance in a wide array of contexts (Gunnell, this volume). In the words of performance-study scholar Richard Schechner, “any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed is a performance” (Schechner 2006: 2). What “is” performance does not depend on an event in itself but on how that event is received. Any behaviour, event or action can be studied “as” performance (ibid.: 38, 40). In some cases walking is deliberately performed and framed as art, such as in the work of

Richard Long, Gunther Brus and Bruce Nauman, to mention but a few artists who have used walking as a form of artistic expression.³ Parades, processions, marches, and mumming (Gunnell 2007) are examples of walking performances that are frequently part of sacred and secular rituals. Performance can also be found in everyday walking rituals such as the Italian tradition of the *Passeggiata*, an afternoon promenade that is taken in order to be seen and to see others (Del Negro 2004; for the similar tradition of the *paseo* in Latin America, see e.g. Low 2000). In a broader perspective even a short stroll to buy the evening paper or an after-dinner walk for exercise can contain elements of performance. Going for a walk involves many choices (such as when and where to walk, with what kind of posture and body language, at what pace, for what purpose, with whom, what to wear etc.). Along with other modes of moving and dwelling in urban spaces, walking therefore acts as a lifestyle indicator (cf. Goffman 1959; Giddens 1991; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1996). Performances of everyday life create the very social realities they enact (Schechner 2006: 42). Deliberately or not, walking inevitably communicates messages about who we are or aspire to be. The element of performance need not be constant. In the same way as people might “breakthrough into performance” (Hymes 1975) during oral narration, people might slip in or out of performance when walking.

The tourist gait implies walking with heightened interest in one’s surroundings. It is about exploring places with one’s senses – it is certainly about seeing, but also at times about being seen. This aspect the tourist gait has in common with the specific mode of walking referred to as *flânerie*.⁴ The *flâneur* as an *Idealtyp* is firmly associated with nineteenth-century Paris as interpreted by Charles Baudelaire and, subsequently, Walter Benjamin. The Parisian *flâneur* is typically characterized as a detached observer attracted to bustling crowds and the hectic pulse of city life. A broader definition could be “a person who walks in the city in order to experience it”. The birth of the *flâneur* is intimately connected with the advent of modernity. As a meanderer in the city this figure is at once dreamer, historian and

modern artist. The flâneur's mode of perception has manifested itself in a large number of literary, and later cinematic, texts (Tester 1994a: 1–7, 13f., 18; Gieber 1999: viii, 3). The flâneur consciously adopts the role of a tourist of the familiar.

While the tourist gait is a folk practice and “common” by nature, flânerie is exclusive to the point of elitism and connotes authorship and artistic creation. But the two modes of walking still overlap in several respects. In fact, although it is usually perceived as a poetic and somewhat academic pursuit, I would suggest that there are many aspects of flânerie to be found in quotidian walking practices and especially in the tactical employment of the tourist gait.

The Tourist Gait Applied and Practiced

The following examples of the tourist gait as a tactic are taken from my ongoing fieldwork on walking practices in the Nordic countries. Apart from field-

work data in the form of case-studies and participant observation, the material consists of interviews with people who for different reasons regularly walk, stroll and travel on foot in urban environments in southern Finland. The majority of the interviewees live in the area of greater Helsinki, but I have also interviewed walkers in the towns of Turku and Mariehamn. In the interviews, they described some of their routines, habits and practices in which walking plays an integral part.⁵ It soon emerged that walking can be used creatively in many different types of situations and for different needs.

For example, a tourist gait redolent of flânerie was employed by several of the interviewees both as a method of making shopping more efficient and as a method of making it more personally enjoyable. Ulla uses a systematic walking tactic when dealing with the mad rush at the biggest department-store sales of the year. It is about planning one's visit meticu-



Ill. 1: Examples of the quintessential tourist gait practiced in Stockholm in the summer of 2010. (Photo: Marika Österlund-Jansson)

lously, using one's local knowledge and getting into the rhythm of the event, she explained, and added: "You have to find the needles in the giant haystack, and be able to – it is like a flow and you have to be able to let it flow through you and grab the things when they come."

Like the urban hero of Baudelaire, Ulla manages to go with the flow while still being aware of singular details in order to make the intended purchases.⁶ Anne, on the other hand, mostly goes shopping to look and not to buy things. In the style of the archetypal flâneur, albeit in a more pro-active manner, she takes the role of the observer and enjoys the feeling of being solitary in the crowd:

To look and to watch people. [In the wintertime] instead of going walking outdoors (...) I might go shopping. Definitely alone. I can't do it with someone else. And that is the advantage of a bigger city. It is wonderful to be able to go out and belong, to be surrounded by people, and still to be anonymous.

In the practice of flânerie, seemingly contradictory conditions are integrated. It is possible to simultaneously feel oneself as detached and as belonging, and to adopt the roles of both observer and actor. Indeed, the performance element of moving in public spaces can be very subtle and almost unconscious, perhaps just an awareness of being dressed a certain way. For example, an acquaintance of mine once told me that her favourite method of cheering herself up when feeling down was to dress up and go for a walk in the city centre. Portraying an air of festiveness works wonders for temporary low spirits, she claimed. Some of the contributors to this study admitted that if they intended to go shopping in a more up-market part of town they liked being dressed accordingly, whereas they would opt for more leisurely clothing if they were "only" walking. Dressing differently depending on the "genre" of walking is of course a matter of convenience, but at the same time, how people dress depends on the intention behind the walk; people dress, and so communicate their intentions, differently for different activities such as shop-

ping and exercising even if the environment and the amount of walking involved might not differ significantly (cf. Goffman 1959: 73f.).

By garnering attention a walk can become a performance although this is by no means its original purpose. An example of this could be walking with a pram. Ellinor pointed out that she personally always preferred to walk in secluded places when her children were sleeping in the pram. However, she observed that grandparents, especially, seem to enjoy taking their pram-pushing walks in public areas where there is a high chance of running into acquaintances and friends – a matter of both being and performing the role of the proud grandparent.

Using the Everyday

Some of the interviewed walkers actively employed the tourist gait as a method of dealing with routine and monotony. Hellin described herself as being easily bored. Consequently, she often tries to change her walking routes. To give herself a challenge she has tried walking in unknown areas with the help of a compass: "It was something I really enjoyed when I tried it. I want to do it again. It makes walking more interesting. I like different kinds of walking," she commented. Introducing an element of confusion which had to be overcome added an aspect of play to an otherwise normal walk (cf. Schechner 2006: 82, 84). Successfully finding her way back to familiar territory gave Hellin a sense of achievement. Her play/performance experiment closely parallels a sightseeing tourist's visit to an unfamiliar environment where the task is to find famous sights with the help of the sometimes scanty data provided.

Siv's tourist gait technique, on the other hand, is a travelling in the mind. She started walking extensively for health reasons twenty years ago and has come to appreciate walking without company. Although the routes are often the same, she revels in the freedom of letting her thoughts roam as she is walking:

Sometimes when I am walking by myself I am thinking that it will be exciting to see what I will end up thinking about. What fun! (...) You start associating and suddenly you are thinking about

something and you wonder how on earth did I come to think about this. Then you have to trace back to find what initiated it. Spending time in your own company is not a bad thing.

It is no coincidence that narrative modes such as stream-of-consciousness can be traced to the flâneurs' touristic journalism of bringing together inner monologues and exterior perceptions (Gleber 1999: 18f.). The ability to discover the familiar anew and registering one's impressions and thoughts lie at the core of the art of flânerie, but can also provide a golden shimmer to an "ordinary" walk.

By applying the tourist gait to the more or less daily walks taken for instance by dog-owners and parents with baby carriages, a necessary task can become imbued with a sense of novelty. Henrika is a mother of two. With the arrival of her children a new type of walking was introduced into her life – the pushing of the pram. As it turned out, both of her children required long walks in order to sleep, and as a result Henrika spent many hours per day in the pursuit of this desired condition. She purposefully undertook to explore and learn more about different parts of Helsinki during her walks. She explained: "I did it quite deliberately since it would have been rather boring to walk aimlessly. When you walk every day it would have been boring to walk the same route over and over again."

In selecting her routes she had three main requirements; it had to be a stretch long enough to allow the child to sleep a sufficient amount of time, the environment could not be too noisy and it had to include interesting visual diversions for herself. In other words, it was the performative quality of the landscape that attracted Henrika. This meant that she, at least initially, planned her walks in advance so that she would cover different parts of the city. Henrika described her walking with the pram as distinct from her normal style of walking and more similar to walking in less well-known terrain:

[With the pram] I walk slowly, and if the purpose is to get the child to sleep I might drag my feet in order for it to take a really long time, and I look in

all the shop windows and at other things, which is quite different from my usual walking. So the rhythm is definitely different, and it is much slower when I walk with the pram. If I walk by myself, I am very fast and [then] I'm not good at *flânerie* and I don't look around much. Of course if one walks in an unfamiliar town the rhythm is different (...) and one pays more attention to the surroundings.

Sofia, who walks her dog every day, has similar ideas of how a good walk should be composed. For her, variation is an important element and through her frequent walks she has developed an intimate familiarity with her home town. The tourist gait tactic of exploring and observing lends Sofia's walks with her dog a "flâneuresque" character. She commented:

In this way you become familiar with both buildings, the environment and with people. Perhaps you are more observant as well, as you are walking without a goal in a way, you make stops every now and then, and have time to look around.

Repsho and her friends have taken the tourist gait tactic even further by deliberately posing as tourists in their hometown of Helsinki. They pretend not to understand Finnish and ask for directions in English and perform their parts as archetypal tourists by taking pictures and making comments such as "Oh, lovely, very nice!" when walking around (cf. Bærenholdt et al. 2004: 2). The do it partly for a laugh and to see people's reactions. "It is nice to joke about the role that you live here and that you have to know everything and, like, know the rules and how to move around", Repsho commented. This performative tactic also allows one to see one's everyday environment with different eyes, she added:

Because if you think of everyday life you just go from one spot to another, and you know basically all your addresses – you know where you have to be. But if you spend an afternoon pretending to be a tourist then you sort of look up and you see the buildings. You see more than just a shop on

the bottom floor. So it is a different view, because most of the time I don't have time to look everywhere and try to see.

Repscho's playful and creative inclusion of tourist gait tactics into everyday walking would likely win favour with the British writer Alain de Botton who, inspired by the French sixteenth century author Xavier de Maistre's account *Journey Around my Bedroom*, decided to conduct an experiment of walking his normal route to the nearby London underground station as if for the very first time. By regarding everything as potentially interesting, he discovered, somewhat to his own surprise, many new details in

the familiar landscape. He concluded, as did Repscho, that it might be well worth our while to try to notice what we have in fact already seen (de Botton 2002).

Place and Memory

Experiences are emplaced. As pointed out by American philosopher Edward S. Casey, it follows that our memory of what we experience is place-specific (Casey 1987: 182). The tourist gait is necessarily shaped by place, but can also be a method of creating memories of places. Spending time in particular areas of the city establishes relations with these places. Walking, de Certeau claimed, opens up spaces to memory and provides a substitute for local legends



Ill. 2: Combining a stroll with the enjoyment of beautiful vistas has long been a popular practice. In the nineteenth century, walking was already an established pastime among the bourgeois and the upper classes. This lithograph from 1852 follows the contemporary convention of placing walkers in the foreground of a panoramic town view, in this case Åbo (Turku). (Åbo Akademis bildsamlingar. Lithography: J. Reinberg)

which places nowadays lack (de Certeau 1984: 106f.; see also Tangherlini, this volume). Frequent walks which include an active involvement with one's surroundings build an awareness of the historical layers of places – specifically with regards to recent micro-history, such as reflections of the kind “Last year this was a bakery, now it's a café” (cf. *ibid.*: 108). Sofia makes use of the fact that she has time to look around during her walks. Apart from generally surveying the surroundings, she is also actively looking for enjoyable things for her dog to do, such as walls for balancing and bollards to jump over. Through her daily walks, she becomes aware of changes in the cityscape and has discovered many favourite spots to return to with her dog. She underlined the feeling of being “at home” in the city. As the example of Sofia and her canine walking companion demonstrates, even small everyday actions have the potential of giving rise to place memories and emotional ties to specific places.

The historic layers and palimpsest-like quality of the streetscapes intrigued several of the interviewed pedestrians. Ari, a Helsinki resident who has visited and lived in many European cities, believes that it is no coincidence that tourists from all over the world are drawn to old-town areas where it is possible to see buildings from many different centuries. He described walking in a suburban “concrete jungle” as heartbreaking, whereas walking with one's senses attuned in an old part of town allows one to discern the human touch behind the urban landscape. This is something, he asserted, that, regardless of whether in one's hometown or abroad, people are naturally attracted to.

The tourist gait tactics of Sofia and Ari turn the surrounding cityscape into an arena of performances in which present-day scenes intertwine with historic layers and personal projections. The creative ambulator has a multimedia drama at her feet.

Transgressing Borders and Travelling at Home

Taking the “scenic route” is a typical example of using the tourist gait tactically. It is a matter of choosing a route explicitly for the aesthetic enjoyment it

provides rather than for its practicality. Here the walker adopts the role of a director by linking scenes together to create a cinematic and sensory performance experience. Several of the pedestrians in this study confessed to being prone to taking their walks in environments that they found attractive even if it was not always the most efficient itinerary. Ari has a number of carefully planned scenic routes he likes to walk. But he also finds himself drawn to beautiful vistas even when he has not particularly set out to find them, which frequently takes him on lengthy detours. Hellin pays close attention to visually pleasing environs in the vicinity of her home and often tries to take her walks past houses with gardens she admires. In the wintertime, she restructures her walk to include homes with festive Christmas lighting. Under Hellin's directed gaze, the gardens are on display. They are made to perform the part of an outdoor art gallery. The artistic gardener, in turn, has successfully captivated her audience (cf. Bauman 1992: 41).

Anne, who walks daily for exercise, deliberately visits both familiar and unfamiliar areas of Helsinki in order to explore the cityscape during her walks. She refers to it as a way of giving everyday life a silver lining. For her, walking is both an aesthetic experience and a way of partaking in city life:

In Helsinki there are completely dissimilar environments with completely dissimilar atmospheres and different types of people. And the shops are different and what they are selling. It is like travelling although it is close. You don't need to go that far.

During her walking expeditions Anne ventured into areas of Helsinki she had previously been avoiding. By walking through these parts of town and finding that things were indeed different but also similar to what she was used to, she eventually turned unknown neighbourhoods into more familiar and less intimidating areas. The tourist gait practice became a possibility of conquering new ground as well as of developing a greater sense of security:

Perhaps I was a bit scared before, thought that it was a bit frightening. But when I walked more outside the comfort zone, it no longer felt unsafe and unpleasant. You became more familiar with it. And at the same time I thought the whole of Helsinki began feeling more familiar. (...) I used to think that it was scary to walk around alone, but after having moved around more by myself I started feeling safe (...) I think you can learn to feel safer by spending more time in these places. The border is more psychological than anything, even though it is associated with a particular place.

For Anne, walking became a way to change her emotional relationship to places she had viewed in a negative light. After visiting these areas with interest and an open mind, she was pleasantly surprised to find that she had, additionally, gained more self-confidence.

Feeling at home and feeling comfortable in an environment are not always one and the same thing; both, however, are complex and multilayered processes. Repsho is a young Finnish woman of Somali background. She moves around with ease in Helsinki and knows her city well. She explained that she feels well attuned to her everyday environments: “[I’m] comfortable here, and I’ve been here for so long. And when I walk here I am confident because I know the language very well, and I know somehow how people are and how they behave. So the environment is familiar.” Repsho observed that when she returned to Helsinki after holidays abroad she felt that Finnish nature and the more “down-to-earth” surroundings in Helsinki were something she identified strongly with. However, when answering a question on where she feels most at home in the city she hesitated:

It is really hard to answer because, okay, in the east [of Helsinki] there are more immigrants but I don’t feel like I am like them, or personally I don’t feel like I am a basic Somali, but then if I go to the centre it doesn’t matter how I’m dressed [she wears a hijab], but when I go to the centre I always feel different. Not necessarily in a bad way, but

I always feel different. But then when I come to the east I feel like I don’t really belong. Of course I might fit in better in the east, because there are more black people, more Somali people. But the feeling “at home” – I wouldn’t use that word for me. I don’t know where I feel at home, except in my own room.

External perception and the perception of one’s body are two facets of the same act (Merleau-Ponty [1962] 2006: 237). As we see others and move around in certain environments we also become aware of ourselves as situated. A feeling of “being different” might therefore force us into a tourist gait despite our wishes. Unrestricted and unquestioned patterns of movement are still in many cases only for certain segments of the population and for those in power. However, it is exactly when an individual is up against limitations that the tourist gait’s tactical importance becomes critical.⁷

Walking to Claim and Perform Space

Walking confirms belonging. Paths and routes that we walk frequently become imprinted in our body movements and memory, at the same time as our walking is an outward performance of a connection to place (de Certeau 1984: 108, 110). Many of the people I interviewed about their walking described a feeling of being in tune with certain settings. Here familiarity does not translate to boredom but to a sense of mastery and confidence. Similar to the flâneur’s ability to read city scenes while weaving in and out of arcades, boulevards and side streets, Helin made use of her local knowledge when walking in her old neighbourhood: “I really liked the routes where I used to live and I loved knowing the landscape so well. Knowing all the shortcuts I could take and so on.” For her, being able to follow a mental map and improvise on one’s feet increased the enjoyment of the walk.

In some cases, walking is a deliberate tactic of claiming and performing space. One example of this is a recent project of making a cultural-historical guidebook for the city of Helsinki. The guidebook, which was published in the autumn of 2010, does,

for the most part, look and function as a normal city guide, containing suggested walking itineraries, historical and cultural information as well as maps and illustrations. However, this particular guidebook has a specific theme: It sets out to explore and investigate Helsinki from a female point of view – or, rather, it is a guide to the Helsinki of women: *Kvinnornas Helsingfors*. The initiators of the guidebook project belong to the mailing list of *kulturfeministerna* (“the culture feminists”), an unofficial network for women working with culture in different capacities. The guidebook project was inspired by guided Helsinki-walks with queer and lesbian themes arranged in conjunction with the annual lesbian, bisexual and transgender cultural festival *The Nights and Days of Tribades*. The suggestion of writing a guidebook with a “female theme” was raised on the network’s mailing list not long after the network had been founded in the spring of 2007, and soon a group of people interested in the project had signed up. Although the majority of the large number of contributors to the book have backgrounds in the fields of culture and academia, their articles are aimed at a broad audience and are written in a popular style.

A primary objective of the project is to reinvest monuments and institutions with alternative meanings. Rita Paqvalén, one of the main editors for the guide, commented on this ambition by underlining the importance of seeing new or unexpected things in familiar environments. She described the city as containing a multitude of voices and layers:

If one learns about things one can see the different layers. The more one learns, the more one sees that there *are* layers, and that there is always something seeping out from beneath the present official facade. There are these gaps.

And it is exactly “these gaps” that make this cultural-historical guidebook distinct from most other official guides to Helsinki. Apart from presenting famous buildings and monuments from a different perspective, the list of contents for the guidebook mentions hospitals and shelter homes, graffiti artists and girl groups as well as drifters and prostitutes.

The stories of the “gaps” are treated as being just as worthy of our attention as national monuments and historical people of power.

Alongside the guidebook, the project group also intends to arrange a number of guided walking tours on different themes from the book. The planned tours will follow a more reciprocal model than the traditional guided city walk. Each tour will be escorted by several guides, taking turns in giving short presentations on various subjects along the route. Rita explained that the intention is to transform the walks into an interactive forum for the project in which the tour participants can ask questions and contribute their own knowledge. She added:

I believe the people who take part will have certain expectations and form more of a collective, which is different from anonymous city tours where the participants probably won’t go and have a cup of coffee together afterwards.

The underlying idea is that the tours will lend the guidebook a physical expression, a living embodiment of the book. In this manner, the walk becomes a story in itself, in which different voices and stories communicate with each other and amalgamate into a communal narrative. The walks aim to create a performed – and concrete – sense of community.

The itineraries in the guidebook can of course also be performed privately according to the individual reader’s initiative and inclination. de Certeau asserted that everyday walkers manipulate spatial organizations to create their own rhetoric of walking. Their movements cannot be captured, but the intertwined paths of footsteps are what give shape to spaces (de Certeau 1984: 97, 100, 102). The tactical tourist gait is a way of performing stories and this is precisely how the tourist format is employed by the “Helsinki of Women” project. In one of the guidebook’s articles, artist Heidi Lunabba discusses how people leave traces in the city landscape, and points out that some ways of leaving traces are disapproved of by the authorities and some traces are just left in people’s minds (Lunabba, 2010; cf. de Certeau 1984: 99). Lunabba has provided the guidebook with sten-

cil portraits of some of the women featured in the articles. Through using one of the stencils, for example with chalk on asphalt, the reader reinforces the mark left by the portrayed woman, while simultaneously leaving a trace both of the guidebook and of oneself. Performing space in this manner equates a visible, albeit ephemeral, claiming of space.

In the “Helsinki of Women” project, the employment of the established formats of the guidebook and the guided tour is used as a means of re-interpreting the emotive charge of places. In my interviews with the editors of the book, the example of the notorious Kaisaniemi Park was raised. In recent years, this idyllic park adjacent to the Helsinki railway station has acquired a reputation for being a dangerous place for women to frequent after dark in the wake of several reported rapes and attacks. In 2007, a group of young women demonstrated against this geography of fear by setting up camp in the park and spending several nights there. The guidebook authors have similar concerns about finding ways of dealing with problematic spaces, to which women’s access has been denied or limited due to laws, tradition or fear. In this way, the seemingly passive act of following prescribed walk itineraries becomes a highly active performative tactic of re-reading and reclaiming city space.⁸

Conclusion

As this article hopefully demonstrates, a closer look at contemporary walking practices in the Nordic countries reveals that walking is much more than just a means of transportation. Walking involves place, motion, and embodied sensory experiences (cf. Casey 1996: 23). The term “tourist gait” is a way of describing a type of walking typical of tourism, in the sense that as tourists we tend to experience things more intensely, have a heightened sensory awareness and increase our interaction with our surroundings. Walking is one of the ways in which we learn to practice and perform tourism. Therefore, the tourist gait is pre-informed by expectations and knowledge that will influence how we perceive our experiences.

However, in this article my aim has been to dem-

onstrate that this manner of walking can also form a part of the everyday and the “getting on” of people. Movement is a vital aspect of dwelling, and of how we inhabit space and create places. Walking is a way to produce space (in this case Nordic Space) as lived and practiced. Moreover, the tourist gait acts as a means of communication, containing the whole range of performance modes from deliberate manifestations to incidental expressions of lifestyle.

In his writing, de Certeau highlighted everyday habits and routines as crucial spaces for the individual to move and to act. This is precisely where walking practices can take on tactical uses. Consequently, the tourist gait not only characterizes our walks on foreign shores. It can be employed at home in order to transform daily habits into tactical manoeuvres which may turn compulsory walks into aesthetic and interesting experiences, become a way of conquering personal fears and expanding one’s borders, or even be a method of negotiating, claiming and performing space. This is performance art of a pedestrian kind – mundane perhaps, but definitively creative.

Notes

- 1 It goes without saying that everyday walking is often experienced as, exactly, everyday and rather boring. It is not necessarily a pleasurable experience. My intention in this article is not to romanticize walking but to draw attention to how people may use their walking creatively, sometimes even in less ideal situations. Walking as a field of research has a substantial, and growing, body of literature. Some authors have studied the cultural history of walking practices in a broader sense (e.g. König 1996; Solnit 2000; Amato 2004; Nicholson 2008), but there are also many works which deal with more specific aspects of walking, such as the connection between walking and literature (e.g. Marples 1959; Robinson 1989; Wallace 1993; Jarvis 1997; Parsons 2000). In the fields of anthropology, ethnology, and cultural geography, the recent emphasis on embodied practices is reflected in an interest in walking as a cultural phenomenon (e.g. Ingold 2004; Ingold & Vergunst 2008). Moreover, special “genres” of walking such as pilgrimage (see note 2) and *flânerie* (see note 4) have long attracted scholarly attention.
- 2 Similarities between the two are easy to find. Even if the overarching reasons for undertaking a pilgrimage

- were religious, many medieval pilgrims were further fired by the sense of adventure and the possibility of seeing far away places during their travels (Birch 1998: 116f.; Webb 1999: 199, 235ff.). Another parallel between pilgrimage and the heritage tourism of today can be found in the quest for the authentic and “real” experiences. In the same way that the pilgrim wants to see, touch and experience the actual objects and places associated with saints and miracles, the tourist is attracted to phenomena and places perceived as genuine and charged with an aura of historical or cultural uniqueness (cf. Webb 1999: 71; Bendix 2000). For studies on modern day religious tourism, see e.g. Swatos & Tomasi 2002. Anthropologists Victor Turner’s and Edith Turner’s seminal work (Turner & Turner 1978) described pilgrimage as a liminal phase (a transition between separation and reincorporation) during which participants can experience *communitas*. Turner’s work is still influential. However, newer studies have offered a critique of the Turnerian structural perspective and have, among other things, emphasized the movement aspect of pilgrimages (see e.g. Coleman & Elsner 1995; Coleman & Eade 2005). Walking plays a more important role in some types of pilgrimage than others. The most well known European “walking-pilgrimage” phenomenon of today is the immensely popular Santiago de Compostela, which has not gone unnoticed by researchers. Recent ethnographic studies in which the authors themselves have walked the *Camino de Santiago* include e.g. Frey 1998; Schire 2006; Peelen & Jansen 2007. For the establishing of a new European pilgrimage trail, *Camino Europeo del Rocío*, see Plasquy 2010.
- 3 Richard Long’s landscape sculptures include e.g. the well-known *A Line Made by Walking* (England 1967) and *Positive Negative: A 15 day walk in the Three Sisters Wilderness* (Oregon 2001). Gunther Brus’ performance *Vienna Walk* (1965) consisted of the artist walking around in the centre of Vienna painted all in white with a black line over his face and body. Performance artist Bruce Nauman has many times used exaggerated forms of walking for his work, e.g. his video *Slow Angle Walk* (1969) investigates movements of the human body.
 - 4 Sharing research interest with his colleague Franz Hessel (*Spazieren in Berlin*, 1929), Walter Benjamin made the flâneur a central figure in his writing (“The Return of the Flâneur” 1999b). Benjamin considered Paris the home of *flânerie* and the poet Baudelaire as one of its foremost representatives. The renewed interest in Benjamin’s theoretical writing (such as the unfinished *The Arcade Project* 1999a) within cultural studies in the 1970s also brought the flâneur back as an analytical figure (see Buck-Morss 1989; Osborne 2005). Useful studies on the flâneur that are often referred to are Tester 1994b and Jenks 1995; see also Gleber 1999, for a thorough presentation of German *flânerie*. The existence or non-existence of female *flânerie*, the *flâneuse*, has engaged several feminist thinkers (see Wolff 1985; Wilson 1992; Parsons 2000). The flâneur has been popular as an analytical tool in studies on contemporary society (see e.g. Shields 1994; Bauman 1996; Jenks & Neves 2000).
 - 5 The interviewees (about 25 people) have been found through recommendations and snowball sampling, 2008–2010. The people quoted in the text have been given pseudonyms. Quotes in Swedish and Finnish have been translated to English by the author.
 - 6 In his famous essay “The Painter of Modern Life”, Baudelaire admiringly describes the artist/flâneur: “The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and the water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world to be at the centre of the world and yet to remain hidden from the world – such are a few of the slightest pleasures of those independent, passionate, impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. (...) Or we might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life” (Baudelaire 1964: 8ff.).
 - 7 A related and very important question that unfortunately cannot be adequately addressed within the confines of this article is the ways in which the rights of certain groups of people to move and dwell in the city are restricted and/or controlled through fear, laws, poor design, power relations etc. Regarding the issues of city space in connection with women, see e.g. Koskela 2003, disabled people, see e.g. Gleeson 1999, homeless people, see e.g. Mitchell 2003; Amster 2004, immigrants and ethnic groups, see e.g. Teelucksingh 2006; Galanakis 2008.
 - 8 Another example of how performance and walking practices have been used creatively in order to inspire and initiate social change is the work undertaken by the London-based organisation PLATFORM, which was founded in 1983 as a venue for addressing ecological issues and social justice. Since its inception, PLATFORM has used walking as performance, as a research method, as a political tool and as a medium for sharing information (Trowell 2000). One of PLATFORM’s recent projects has been a series of critical guided walks on contemporary corporate culture during which historical and contemporary ethical issues in trans-

national corporate business have been presented and discussed. These public walks have proved to be immensely popular and have attracted many participants (www.platformlondon.org, accessed May 7, 2010). Jane Trowell, one of PLATFORM's core members, commented on the use of walking as a method and a means of communication: "Walking has been part of PLATFORM's work from the very earliest days. Learning and developing ideas through literally walking the land or city-scape is central to a notion of grounded practice. You need to put your body in the place you are talking about, and move around and through it. (...) We often teach workshops and classes outside and through walks. We are often asked to create a 'walking' response to an issue. Walks and walking work because the issues touch the body, all the senses are triggered. It's a rich experience which cannot be legislated for entirely by the artist/activist. The unexpected happens and the walk has to take that into consideration, even welcome it" (e-mail interview, Jane Trowell May 20, 2010).

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PERFORMING A PRESENT FROM THE PAST

The Värmland Heritage Gift, Materialized Emotions and Cultural Connectivity

Lizette Gradén

Drawing on actor-network theory and theories of performance, this article discusses gift-giving as an expansive form of materializing relationships and delimiting boundaries between nations, regions, organizations and individuals in the wake of migration. Initially, I discuss *gift-giving* as a way of materializing relationships and building networks. Thereafter, I map out the social life of the Värmland Gift to America, a collection donated by the Värmland province in Sweden to the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis in 1952. I suggest the coinage of *heritage gift* as a term to describe gifts with dense biographies which contain and enact multiple performances that simultaneously create and recreate the idea of gift-giving in its role as an activity that binds people together. The analysis of the Värmland Gift shows how such a heritage gift kept on the move over time involves not one but a series of performances which have fostered dynamic transatlantic relationships for over fifty years.

Keywords: gift-giving, heritage gift, performance, transnational relationships, emigration

On April 1, 2009, the *Värmland Gift to America 1952* took center stage as an exhibition at the royal inauguration of the Swedish American Center in Karlstad, Sweden. Among the participating guests were politicians, museum directors, representatives of municipalities, representatives from the US embassy, and cultural organizations commemorating emigration from Sweden and Norway to the United States. The exhibition presented an example of transatlantic heritage; 300 objects, 250 books, and 3,000 greetings were assembled by 1,000 individuals in about 100 parishes, coordinated by the Historical Association of Värmland, debated in the Swedish press, and eventually presented to the American

Swedish Institute (ASI) in Minneapolis in 1952. The gift was made with the intention of providing the 140,000 people from Värmland who emigrated to the United States between 1850 and 1930 and their descendants with “in-depth material history that they lack in America”¹ – a goal that indicates a perspective of the United States as a place of modernity where history is to be provided from back home, and provincial Sweden as the provider of such. In addition to gifts selected by each parish – fine art, craft, design, utility objects, literature and photographs – the Historical Association of Värmland had included a bridal crown as a gift from the province as a whole. The exhibition in 2009 restaged this 1952

gift-giving performance. The restaged 2009 version contains multiple performances. These raise questions about the malleable relationship between object, giver, recipient and the “thing” at stake.

Material gift exchange becomes important when Nordic cultural heritage takes center stage as a commodity for sale. Central premises for this study are that cultural heritage can be described as culture selected in the present and projected into the past (Kirshenblatt-Gimlett 1998: 7, 149) and that materializations are stylized expressions of who we are (Miller 1987: 215, 2005; cf. Damsholt 2009: 9–39; Otto 2009: 143–174). Based on these premises, heritage solidifies contemporary perceptions of our past into *material culture* and such *materialized heritage* is apt to reconfigure processes of inclusion and exclusion as relevant to present circumstances.² In relation to discussions on regional identity in the Nordic countries (cf. Aronsson 1995; Håggström 2000; Olwig & Jones 2008), I take an interest in how communities such as the national and Nordic are challenged or strengthened by gift-exchange. The Värmland Gift collection emerges as a particularly interesting case as values, by definition, are condensed in it through careful selection, a process amplified when the collection is presented as a gift.

The purpose of this study of the Värmland Gift is to analyze gift-giving as part of a cultural economy, where the performance of cultural difference becomes an enrichment, and the tension between the local, regional and national an asset. What do cultural gifts actually do? How does gift-giving connect people and locations that are separated geographically? How do gift-giving performances delimit cultural boundaries over time? These questions have guided my inquiry into the poetics and politics of gift-giving propelled by kin and migration.

Cultural gifts are more meaningful than other gifts because they are invested with emotion, consideration and imagination. Tangible gifts are more meaningful than other gifts because they literally change hands and therefore have the potential of emotionally touching the lives of people who handle them. These notions of materialized gifts are true to people I have worked with in this study. Whereas the

subject of gift-giving is vast and includes organ donation, birthday presents as well as loaves of bread, my aim is to provide a study of gift-giving as the nexus of ordinary people whose donations are kept in museums, the museums themselves and their staff. The example of the Värmland Gift is drawn from my ongoing research on gift-giving as an expansive form for materializing relationships. This particular study has grown from my experience in curatorial work and previous studies of transfers and transformations of material culture through transnational journeys (Gradén 2003, 2004). Here I engage new theoretical perspectives.

Drawing on new theories of materialization, actor-network theory and performance, I suggest the term “heritage gift” to describe gifts that are singularized by reproduction of their specific biographies. The presentations I have observed show that heritage gifts are carefully selected. These objects invoke multifaceted emotions and aspirations in series of performances. These performances in turn create and recreate the idea of gift-giving as an activity that binds people together. In this exchange of gift-giving performances, the selected things are transformed into potential objects of identity through their (*inter*)acting that incorporates and constitutes the building of transnational networks. In their most tight-knit forms these networks take on an air of clubs or fraternities.

Grasping Things: Gift-Giving and the Materialization of Relationships

There is a profound relationship between “the material” and gift-giving.³ That things, just like humans, have biographies is stated by anthropologist Igor Kopytoff. He shows that these biographies are longer and more complex in cultures where barter and recycling is common (Kopytoff 1986: 67). He also points out that an object may be viewed as a commodity in one situation but not in another, or viewed both as commodity and object of exchange in the same situation. I build on this perspective when I study gift-giving.

On a general level, gift giving is an act that holds the promise of furthering relationships. Gift-giving

has a long history entwined with ritual performances as well as everyday life through mundane acts. Between these two types of gift-giving there exist many other forms of gift-giving situations. These share the feature of being defined by the givers and recipients who participate, but also by powers beyond the immediate participants. Thus, gift-giving plays a role in shaping and regulating relationships between individuals, families, regions, and nations in macro-economic structures in the post-industrial era, as the American economists Cele Otnes and Richard Beltramini (1996; cf. Komter 1996) demonstrate in their research overview.

However, the idea of gift-giving as a means of furthering relationships is not new. The idea of reciprocity, in particular, has its own heritage. Within the Nordic realm, the principle for generating relationships through reciprocity appears for example in the *Poetic Edda*. It says: "with weapons and weeds should friends be won, as one can see in themselves, those who give to each other will be friends once they meet half way" (*The Poetic Edda* [1928] 1962: 40).⁴ In a similar vein, anthropologist Marcel Mauss' analysis of the relationship between gift and community demonstrates that reciprocal gift-giving maintains and furthers moral relationships, builds trust, and fosters solidarity (Mauss 1990: 39–46). In the view then held, the gift stands in opposition to the commodity, the aim of which is to create financial profit. As mentioned earlier when stating that things may have biographies, this distinction has become a little blurred. Commodities are understood not as a particular category but as things moving through various *regimes of value*, an approach that makes the relationship between gift and commodity more fleeting and flexible (Appadurai 1986: 3–63; Kopytoff 1986: 64–91; Miller 2001: 91–118).⁵ Although anthropologist Marcel Mauss' analysis of the relationship between gift-exchange as a moral act and the making of community has been questioned (Derrida 1992: 14; cf. Miller 2001: 91–118), I suggest that his idea can be fruitfully applied to the relationship between cultural institutions and their donors, as discussed in the introduction to this article. Mauss' work shows that there is a myriad of reasons

for exchanging gifts but that the ultimate reason is to create a cement for society (Mauss 1990). When applied to the Värmland Gift, the ideas conveyed by Mauss shed light on the *strategic* and *competitive* aspects that the exchange of *heritage gifts* seems to entail. By giving more than their American relatives have given them, the inhabitants of Värmland may expect to win increased respect both from the recipients and from their competitors.

The art of gift-giving is also culturally specific. It matters how the gift is packaged and presented and by whom.⁶ Many studies on gift-exchange are concerned with social distinction and notably, several recent studies have been carried out in Japan, where gift-giving is highly elaborate and an overt part of professional relationships. The anthropologist Katherine Rupp, for example, demonstrates how gift-exchange plays an important role in people's social mobility in contemporary Japanese culture, and that there is a very fine line between bribery and gift exchange that one needs to master to move in a desired direction (Rupp 2003). Studies carried out in Europe show that gift exchange has furthered relationships among the British aristocracy (Rosenthal 1972; Ben-Amos 2008). In Scandinavia the studies of gifts seem limited to baptismal, betrothal and wedding gifts, which played a key role with regards to social recognition in peasant culture (Hagström 2006; Kjellman 1979). Drawing on objects from a region marked by migration cultural diversity, the Värmland Gift seems to have successfully fostered a long-term relationship between its givers in Värmland and its recipients in Minnesota through repeated exhibitions and ritual performances.

When the donors in Värmland selected the American Swedish Institute as the host for their eclectic gift, they both tapped into and contributed to a long history of giving gifts to museums. Gifts were instrumental in the founding of *the cabinet of curiosity*, collections of objects whose categorical boundaries were yet to be drawn by scientists. Insofar the Värmland Gift resembles such a collection. The objects of these collections were theatrically presented and the visitor could walk through the display, making his own path and conclusions. A well-known example

from northern Europe is the collection created by the Dane Ole Worm (cf. Hafstein 2003). Following the cabinet of curiosities as a form of collection and display, many collections in museums of cultural history in northern Europe were originally gifts. In Sweden, some of these were expensive treasures from residents of authority and monetary wealth and donated by philanthropists in commemoration of their owners. Other gifts, however, had divergent biographies, as reflected by the lists of gifts published in the Nordic museum's annual *Fataburen* until the 1970s.⁷ One of the most prominent examples of gift-generated collections is Livrustkammaren in Stockholm, a repository for official and unofficial gifts to the Swedish royal family, such as the wedding presents to Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel Westling.

It is interesting that the same gesture of gift-giving is chosen to strengthen ties between emigrants and their homeland. While gift-giving continues to play an important role as an extension of the giver in phi-



Ill. 1: The bridal crown is a replica of the bridal crown in Karlstad Cathedral and was commissioned by the Historical Association. It was designed by the artist Oscar Jansson and crafted by goldsmith Thure Ahlgren, both from Värmland. Its material is silver with gold filigree and inset gemstones. (Photo: Lizette Gradén)

lanthropy (White 1995), commissioned gifts seem to be an expansive form of materializing relationships in the business of culture. The giving of gifts associated with heritage may therefore be understood as part of a cultural economy where the performance of cultural differences becomes enrichment.

Networks and Heritage Gifts

Moving from the view where it is obvious that people attribute meaning to objects (see Appadurai 1986) to the performative approach, allows me to unfold *how* gifts that people compose also compose people. When the Värmland Gift appears before an audience at the ASI and at the Swedish American Center, this activity is preceded by earlier acts. To speak in the words of Bruno Latour, one of the promoters of actor-network theory, social meaning is produced in networks of human and non-human actors. According to Latour, “anything that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor” (Latour 2005: 7, cf. 1998), and he continues: “even though it might mean letting in elements which, for a lack of a better term, we would call non-humans” (Latour 2005: 72, cf. 1998). Thus, human and non-human actors together create the reality we are part of and relate to. If we follow Latour, the gift may be seen as an actor – an entity with agency to set further action into motion. For example, when the Värmland Gift collection generally hosted in Minneapolis was turned into an exhibition in Karlstad, the selection of exhibited objects was based on conservatory conditions, the size of the gallery, and available funds for shipment and exhibit installation. Moreover, the selection of the Värmland Gift to play the role of the inaugural exhibition at the Swedish American Center was generated by the fact that it once originated and was put together in this province.

Thus, when the glass vase plays the star role in the Värmland Gift exhibition at the royal inauguration of the Swedish American Center in Karlstad it should be viewed as a *consequence* of a collective effort, not as the cause of such collective work (Latour 1998: 45). When the ASI gives the vase as a return gift for the bridal crown of 1952, it also evokes the role of the bridal crown as a return gift. The docu-

mentation that accompanies the Gift in 1952 bears witness to thoughts of transatlantic space, created through acts of reciprocity. According to the gift-givers, the Värmland Gift and its bridal crown are to be viewed as return gifts to family and friends overseas in exchange for the numerous American packages (*Amerikapaket*) consisting of coffee and other goods that were rationed in Sweden and Norway during the Second World War. The idea of reciprocity is articulated in this thought, which gives the collection exchange value (cf. Appadurai 1986). Thus, on one level, the collection is equated with the huge number of coffee cans which came to play a central role in the everyday life of Swedes and Norwegians during the war years. If the ASI did not provide the Värmland Gift collection for the inaugural exhibition of the Swedish American Center and present the glass vase as a return gift for the bridal crown, the story of close connectivity through gift-giving in the past and present would lack content.

Viewed as a collective effort to connect places by materializing new spaces, the Värmland Gift collection resembles diplomatic gifts extended from one nation to another. Many monuments (cf. Frykman & Ehn 2007) are gifts. Perhaps the most recognized gift is the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World, a gift of friendship from the people of France to the people of the United States and a universal symbol of freedom and democracy. The Statue of Liberty was dedicated on October 28, 1886, designated a National Monument in 1924 and restored for her centennial on July 4, 1986. A regional example is the kinsmen monument in Rottneros, Värmland, as a symbol of the Finnish immigration to Värmland in the 17th century and the emigration from Värmland to the United States. The inscription on its base reads: "In commemoration of the connection with our kinsmen to the west and to the east of the waters."⁸ The monument was dedicated on June 22, 1953, and remains a site for ritual performances commemorating emigration.⁹ These diplomatic gifts come with more or less overt expectations of receiving something in return. One European example where the expectations of return-gifts are more overt is the Palace of Science and Culture in Warsaw, extended

by the Soviet Russians to the Polish people. Giving and receiving heritage gifts is thus a performance that can be potentially used to strengthen a variety of relationships, and show that the distinctions between heritage gifts, bribes and patronage may be complicated.¹⁰ Whereas these gifts are monumental and single, collections are assembled over time and across space, suggesting multilayered relationships.

In the United States, several institutions performing Nordic culture can be described as effects of gifts. The Turnblad Mansion, which became the American Swedish Institute in 1929, was explicitly a gift to the "Swedish people in Minnesota and their descendants" from Småland immigrant and newspaper publisher Swan J. Turnblad.¹¹ The mansion, originally Turnblad's home, was reframed as a space where Swedish culture – literature, arts, crafts and music – could be developed, and later as a place where Swedish American culture would be collected. In a similar vein, Artur Hazelius, founder of the Nordic Museum and the open-air museum Skansen in Stockholm, Sweden, presented the collections as a gift to the "people of Sweden" (Medelius, Nyström & Stavenow-Hidemark 1998). Turnblad and Hazelius both envisioned their institutions as monuments of Swedish culture but also as spaces where their deeds and dedications could be reproduced and reciprocated as performances.

In a less overt way, gift-exchange also plays a role in materializing sister-city relationships. Founded in 1956 as a result of President Eisenhower's call, sister cities were an attempt to assist US cities reaching out to communities in enemy countries during the Second World War. Cities in the Nordic countries were among the first to embrace the idea of sister-city relationships.¹²

The Värmland Gift, however, challenges the idea of a monument or permanent symbol of recognition such as sister-city agreements. Instead its continued movement and cumulative biography emerge as central. Building on Marcel Mauss' concept of the gift as a thing that can bind people together, and combining this thought with the assumption that objects become inalienable through appropriation and socialization (Appadurai 1986; Miller 2001), this par-

ticular heritage gift enables a shared transregional space to emerge through repeated performances. Like diplomatic gifts, this heritage gift communicates specific cultural competence, including local knowledge. Such sensitivity to context amplifies cultural recognition, connectivity and collaboration. It enables the smallest community or institution to establish an international profile.¹³ The gift-giving acts as performance emerge as a method of negotiating reciprocity.

Gift-Giving as Performance

Knowing how to give and receive gifts in transnational relationships is to be understood as performances of intercultural competence. The exhibiting of the Värmland Gift takes place in two different locales, Värmland in Sweden and Minnesota in the United States, and the exhibitions and their two central objects, the bridal crown and the vase, may be viewed from the viewpoint of performance. Drawing on the works of Richard Schechner, I understand performance as an activity that is framed, presented, highlighted, and displayed (Schechner 2006: 2) – an activity marked by a physical and temporal beginning and end. Understood as such, any event and action can be studied “as” performance (ibid.: 38, 40; cf. Goffman 1990: 15–16; Gunnell, this volume), and this is also the case for gift-giving. Thus there are two kinds of performance at work here: the cultural institution where objects interact with viewers and then the fact that gift-giving is an act, here approached as a ritual performance, which integrates thought and hands-on action (Schechner 1993, 2006: 57). When studied as performance, gift-giving and gifts both reflect and generate social, cultural, technical and economic circumstances beyond what takes place on stage. As this framing varies with context and situation (Schechner 2006: 240; cf. Gunnell, this volume), it is fruitful to study gift-giving and gifts because these contain and enact multiple performances presented in various places, at various times and in various situations. I understand the Värmland Gift exhibition and collection as two kinds of practiced performance.¹⁴

To further understand these two senses of per-

formance in the two locales, I draw on the studies of performance-scholar Richard Bauman, who characterizes performance as displays of *expressive competence*. This sense of performance focuses on form and composition (Bauman 1992), in this case on how gifts and gift-giving are carried out, and how they relate to life outside of the performance itself (cf. Patraha 1999: 91).

Performance is also understood here as stylized communication that takes place front stage, following Goffman (1990), that is, in rooms that are accessible to the public to a greater or lesser extent. Museum exhibitions and the public events that are linked to them are obviously part of the front stage. In this study, however, I also consider performances that take place in other areas where the objects are handled – rooms considered backstage for the museum visitor. In these backstage areas, participants in the study and I, the researcher, take on roles as collaborating actors (cf. Snellman, this volume) performing on stages, adding yet another dimension to the drama studied.

A further understanding of performance is where activities are repeated over time to the point that they are taken for granted. This understanding builds on Judith Butler’s concept of performativity, defined as an endless effect of practice, which also defines the position from which it is being performed (Butler 1993; Damsholt 2009; cf. Schechner 1993). Viewing people’s actions as performative allows us to see that the same process of making meaning as in explicit performance is present also in the continuum of everyday life. The ASI and the Swedish American Center take responsibility for how the Värmland Gift is framed, while the institutions’ physical and financial circumstances and conventions affect the selection and framing. Over time the stylized and repeated gift-giving performances emerge as performative, as actors that set people, objects and organizations in motion. In this sense the Värmland Gift can be understood as a network of performances; the objects are gifts that serve to underline the fact that the exhibition is in itself a gift, with an added meaning that it is not limited to the locale, but also includes the givers.

Performing a Transnational Bond – Being Part of the World

The reproduction of the Värmland Gift's symbolic value takes place in complex processes of re-charging. The collection may be understood as inalienable through the act of repeated performances. When the Värmland Gift was given to the ASI in Minneapolis in 1952 and exhibited before an audience, objects such as grave markers from Ekshärad, ceramics from Arvika, glass from Eda, birch-bark shoes from Ritamäki, linen from Klässbol, Easter witches, spinning wheels, folk costumes, statues, photo albums from the local Coop store, the collected works by local authors Erik Gustaf Geijer, Selma Lagerlöf and Gustaf Fröding as well as the bridal crown appeared in a novel light.

While these objects bear witness to their makers, users and givers, the collection itself and its exhibition perform the current relationships at the institutions that host them, articulated through the physical assemblage and conceptual framing of the objects (cf. Butler 1993). Collected by local historical associations in the parishes and assembled by the Historical Association in Värmland into the Värmland Gift collection, these objects drew up connections between networks of for example, craft, art, manor culture, peasant culture, Christian and pre-Christian culture and created something new. The donors' objects that people had crafted, inherited or lived with, anchored the gift on an individual level. In a Swedish-American museum setting, these objects become potential symbols of identity to the visitors and staff who interact with them. There were probably a multitude of emotions involved in making the Värmland Gift in Värmland. Suddenly, individuals in every parish could feel like actors on a global stage when selecting and sending a concrete object across the Atlantic. The gift-givers' overarching state of mind was summed up in the letter of intent that accompanied the gift. The letter of intent reads as follows:

Inhabitants in all parishes, cities and towns of the province of Värmland in Sweden send greetings with a gift to citizens of Värmland lineage in the

United States of America. The gift is a mark of friendship from the old home of the forefathers. It is an expression of the wish to maintain the affinity between American and Swedish citizens of the same origin.

The letter of intent may be interpreted as the gift-givers' performance of fear to be left in oblivion by relatives and friends who had created new lives for themselves in the United States. After all, Värmland had lost a quarter of its population to emigration between 1869 and 1930, an emigration that divided families and households. The letter of intent also conveys an image of the United States as the hub of modernization and novelty, in need of a material history with roots that run deeper than that provided by the American soil. The Värmland Gift materializes an image of such roots.

As recounted in the exhibition in Karlstad in 2009, the stories about how the collection came about vary. One of the most cited versions say that Carl Fredrik Hellström, the Swedish Consul General in Minneapolis, and Sigurd Gustavson, secretary of the Historical Association of Värmland, together conceived of the Gift as a way to demonstrate the good relations between Värmland and the United States. The idea captivated Värmland's governor, Axel Westling, and in October 1951 he invited every parish in the province to participate. The friendship gift became a popular movement throughout Värmland. Coordinated by Sigurd Gustavson, the committee of representatives from Värmland's approximately 100 parishes collected the Gift, having involved more than 1,000 individuals in materializing the Gift through making and selecting objects. The objects selected from the parishes became actors in the play of heritage and reflected the complexity of life in Värmland on a global stage. In hindsight it is noteworthy that in a similar manner objects from provinces were selected as building blocks when Artur Hazelius conceived of what later became the Nordic museum to reflect the Swedish nation internationally.

The Värmland Gift was not without controversy at the outset. People involved in making and collecting the objects, of course, appreciated the concept of

the Gift, including its complexity. As the exhibition in Karlstad demonstrated, some promoters of Swedish culture, including those working abroad, reacted strongly to the initiative of the Värmlanders to provide their relatives and friends in the United States with the collection of artifacts from the province. According to, for example, Albin Widén, a collection from Sweden in America should promote fine art and craft and downplay peasant culture, as a performative act favoring high-brow culture and a modern nation state.¹⁵

The altercation over the Värmland Gift thus reflected different performances of heritage. In the mid-twentieth century, museums in the Nordic countries often presented their collections from a nineteenth-century view of “peasant” and upper-class cultures. For example, provincial costumes, everyday pottery, and religious objects were classified by region and unattributed to maker or donor (“man’s folk costume, Östervallskog Parish, Värmland province”), whereas objects from the upper class were classified chronologically and always identified with owners and donors (Bronze statue, “The Sheaf Binder”, Christian Eriksson, bequest 1952 of Ölme Parish). The Värmland Gift includes objects from both spheres, which made it an intercultural performance (Schechner 2006: 315) that became a cause of controversy at the time (cf. the project of Samdok 20 years later; see Snellman, this volume). Regardless of where the idea for the Värmland Gift originated, the organizers simultaneously drew attention to Värmland in the past and present performed as a place different from the rest of Sweden based on its cultural diversity and migration history.¹⁶ Through ritual performances based on kin, Värmland was expanded beyond the province’s physical borders to include Värmlanders in the United States.

Small Things Matter – the Art of Performing Return Gifts

For its givers in Värmland, the Värmland Gift played a key role in materializing feelings both of loss and debt of gratitude. It also expanded Värmland beyond its physical borders to include kin in the United States. In the United States, the same gift has played

a key role as performance of pride and appreciation to the recipients. Once the Gift arrived in Minneapolis in 1952, it was given a room of its own on the top floor of the building where it was displayed in its entirety, organized by parish, and accompanied only by object labels, seemingly needing no further explanation.

Presented at the ASI, the Värmland Gift appeared as a collection of examples. In a similar way as we may walk through a cabinet of wonder or a city (cf. Österlund-Pötzsch, this volume), the visitor to this version of the Värmland Gift exhibition could meander from one object to the other, from parish to parish and connect them and creatively make them part of their own individual performances of the past.

Upon receiving the Gift in 1952, the museum hosted a gathering of Swedish Americans and invited guests from Värmland who had coordinated the Gift. The ceremonies included a presentation of the Gift in the Turnblad Mansion, a banquet, private parties, and receptions, and culminated in the visiting Värmland delegation being featured at *Svenskarnas Dag* in Minneapolis, a performance within a performance of one of the major festivals in the United States for Swedish immigrants and their descendants. It also involved a wedding in which the crown played a key role as performance of embodied heritage (Gradén 2010). While these performances are effects of the Värmland Gift, these performances simultaneously play key roles in solidifying the Värmland Gift’s status as a heritage gift; they add to the singularization of the crown and growing biography of the Värmland Gift.

At the ASI, the Värmland Gift has since the inauguration in 1952 been displayed throughout the Turnblad Mansion. Restaged in 1996, the exhibition presented the province of Värmland instead of each parish and labels recounting the gift-giving ceremony were added. In 2002, the ASI organized the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Värmland Gift in Minneapolis. The three-day celebration brought together 120 artists and official representatives from Värmland and thousands of Swedish Americans for a renewed exhibition of the Värmland Gift. The



Ill. 2: Display of the Värmland Gift at the American Swedish Institute in 1952. (Photo: The American Swedish Institute collection)

Värmland Jubilee can be seen as another return gift, a performance that revitalizes the ties between Minnesota and Värmland, and augments networks by including descendants of those who once gave the Gift, such as ceramicist Ulla Nilsson from Värmland in Sweden. About her encounter with her relative Samuel Johansson's pieces in a display case at the ASI, she said:

At the time I didn't know anything about the Värmland Gift. It was like a review of all the parishes in Värmland, of all parish names in Värmland. And there were pieces that had been donated which I recognised. From Arvika, there were lots of ceramic pieces that my relatives had made (...) So we were standing there in front of the display cases. Yes, there are lots of ceramics here. I knew that [Värmland's Governor] Ingemar Eliasson was moving through the exhibit with his wife. He

was standing there and I came over and probably yelled out loud, which he found amusing, "Look, here are Samuel's pieces!" I was in wonder. I had many questions. How did this happen? Who had made the selection? The Värmland Gift was completely new to me!

In ceramicist Ulla Nilsson's depiction of her encounter with the display of her relatives' ceramic pieces, the Gift invoked wonder, like in a modern cabinet of curiosity, through which she made her own path based on kin and material expertise. Moreover, her depiction demonstrates that the descendants of the artists who once contributed to the Värmland Gift had lost contact with it. The exhibition of the Värmland Gift in Minneapolis in 2002 re-charged this relationship by showcasing the objects. Thus, the objects were made to perform in a new way.

Taken together these acts can be understood as

return gifts to descendants of people in Sweden who took part in assembling the Gift in 1952 and an extension of networks that participants have spun around them. In the Swedish-American museum setting, these objects from Sweden are transformed into symbols of ethnic identity. For emigrants from Värmland and their descendants, the Värmland Gift is a tangible reminder of their old homeland. When exhibited and viewed, the Värmland Gift is transformed into symbols of provincial or local identity, a sense of history that is both foreign and familiar and that gives contour to peoples' identification as Swedish. To visitors from Sweden the objects are reminders of the Swedishness of their American cousins as well as their own materialized presence in the United States. To ASI visitors in general, the Värmland Gift displays analogies of their own migration stories whether being first generation immigrant or descendants of immigrants, primarily from northern Europe.

Among the leadership, members and staff of the ASI today, this fifty-year-old gift remains a topic of conversation. In his speech at the inaugural dinner of the Swedish American Center and the exhibition *Värmland Gift to America 1952*, Bruce Karstadt, CEO of the American Swedish Institute, said:

The Institute's relationship with Värmland took on a very special meaning in 1952 with the presentation of *Varmlandsgåvan*, the Värmland Gift. This "friendship gift" of more than 300 objects and books constitutes the largest donation ever made to the Institute's collections. Its presentation in June 1952 by a delegation from Värmland led by Governor Axel Westling was a singular milestone in the history of this museum. (...) over the years, the Swedish American community has changed. This is inevitable, as the distance between the early immigrants and later generations has grown in length. One could fear that this distance, coupled with the dramatic social changes happening in America and throughout the world, constitute a threat to the close ties between Sweden and those of Swedish descent. However, there is much evidence to support a different view, being

that Swedish-Americans today feel an even greater need for even closer connections with their roots in Sweden. As this world grows increasingly more complex and operates with quickening pace, there is a growing yearning among Swedish-Americans for this connection.¹⁷

While Karstadt's scripted speech marked a climax of the Värmland Gift inaugural dinner, its content seemed to sum up emotions and spontaneous performances that permeated the entire process of making the exhibition.

When preparing the Värmland Gift's pilgrimage and homecoming to Sweden, a volunteer at the ASI made a point of telling a staff member that he looked forward to the Gift returning from Värmland. He thought the celebration over there would strengthen many museummembers' ties to Sweden regardless of where their families came from: "A gift so large, so unusual, and so heartfelt must be taken into account."

When summing up the installation of the exhibition of the Värmland Gift in Karlstad, several performances backstage (Goffman 1990) highlighted pride and honor on being selected part of the team and trusted to work with these objects.

Joel Pieper, contractor with ASI for 15 years, said:

Being asked to go to Sweden with this particular collection was an acknowledgement of my aesthetic and technical skill (...) and being in Sweden gave me a rare opportunity to get to know a culture outside my own, work with Swedish people as part of the same team, with the same goals, challenges and deadlines and work as a group to accomplish our shared mission to display this unique collection again.

Curt Pederson, curator at ASI, described his involvement in this way:

Although I do not share a direct lineage connection to Värmland [indirect by marriage] or the gift, I was pulled in by the gravity of this entire

piece. I look back on my involvement, directly working with the gift itself for many years at ASI and installing it at the Swedish American Center, and relationships formed as a result. Yes, this gift has a greater capacity than a gift in general. I suspect the in-depth-value, and potential, of such gifts are not always realized, utilized and appreciated.

After more than fifty years, the Värmland Gift continues to play a central role for the museum leadership, the members of the museum, its staff and related contractors. The Gift invokes feelings of thankfulness, pride, honor and connectivity. As the curator and contractor point out, the Gift generates increased knowledge about location, extends networks and create new relationships. This also applies to me as researcher of the Värmland Gift and member of the exhibition production team.¹⁸ As the largest donation ever to the ASI, the Värmland Gift becomes a leading actor in the play of transnational heritage which the museum is to perform. It shows how a gift given in 1952 has generated multiple performances, which create and recreate relationships over time and across geographic distances.

The ritual performances of gift-giving seem to emerge in times marked by ambivalence, when relationships are at stake. In the United States, and due to the frosty relations between the United States and Sweden during the Second World War, the Värmland Gift was granted a particular cultural and diplomatic status. Moreover, the time when the Värmland Gift was donated to the ASI coincides with a time of expansion for the museums established by immigrants themselves to collect and display mementos of the great emigration from the Nordic countries. As highlighted in the ASI eightieth anniversary exhibition in 2009, “between 1941 and 1945, the Institute’s ability to interact with Sweden was made difficult by the war. Its image was complicated by the reactions of some to Sweden’s (so-called) neutrality. Many Americans and Swedish-Americans alike could not understand how the country could stand outside the struggle against the Nazis.”¹⁹ Taking the strained relationship between Sweden and the United States into

consideration, the choice to “perform” the province of Värmland rather than Sweden probably contributed to the Värmland Gift’s success at the ASI at this time. Framed as regional, the Gift included craft specific to the descendants of Forest Finns who settled in Värmland in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, textiles from the Norwegian border and books about the activity at Bofors, a weapon industry in the province.²⁰ In hindsight, the Värmland Gift, as the largest donation to the ASI, contributed to the institution’s growing role as a museum, where people could experience universal themes such as migration and places of home. As such the ASI performed the heritage of Swedish descendants in America, whereas the donation of the Värmland Gift performed glimpses of *contemporary culture* in the areas from which their parents and grandparents had come.²¹

Keeping the Gift on the Move

A gift must be reciprocated to advance relationships. When applied to the Värmland Gift, the question becomes what reciprocation of such a gift requires. If someone receives a gift and refrains from giving something in return, it will be a choice that creates an unfavorable position in the eye of the one who first extended a gift (Mauss 1990). In other words, to accept gifts means to take on an obligation of also giving a gift, to foster solidarity. I have suggested that ASI’s caring for and exhibiting the Värmland Gift can be viewed as a return gift, understood as an act of solidarity with the donors, and an act of respect towards immigrants from Sweden and their descendants, for which the Gift was explicitly intended.

While having the collection on show creates a degree of reciprocity, leaving it at that would keep the relationship at the status quo. Developing a relationship into a dynamic and long-lasting one requires further acts that can be observed and recognized by both the Swedish and the American sides. The following performance is thus an effect of previous ones.

At the inauguration of the Swedish American Center, the ASI ceremonially presented a 60 cm tall glass vase to “the people of the province Värmland”.

While all other gifts to the Swedish American Center were presented following the inauguration speeches in the auditorium, the presentation of the vase was reserved for when His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia were ushered through the inaugural exhibition. The presentation, carried out by the ASI's President and CEO, highlighted the vase as a return gift for the Värmland Gift to the ASI in 1952, and as an attempt to match the artistic quality and symbolic value of the bridal crown, the key object of the original gift; this can be seen as an incantation in which gift-giving as a ritual performance emerges as a creative force in the dialogue between two time periods, two countries, two places, two cultural institutions, two objects.

The vase took center stage in the 2009 exhibit. As a result, a long series of complex and symbolically charged ritual performances unfolded.²² One of the stories brought to the fore was materialized in the room next to the vase and dedicated to the bridal crown, the key gift from 1952, described as "an emblem of a desire that the ties between American and Swedish citizens of the same tribe shall be joined generation after generation."²³ The crown was positioned at the center of the room, surrounded by labels and photographs presenting its American biography highlighting the gift-giving act in 1952 as a wedding ceremony. Along with its placing in a display case lit by fiber optics, the exhibition's presentation of the crown's biography singularize it (Kopytoff 1986; cf. Gradén 2010), renews it and contributes to its aura of being "different" from other objects in the exhibition. When brought together in the same exhibition, the bridal crown and the vase underline that the exhibition in Minneapolis in 1952 and the exhibition in Karlstad in 2009 were both seen as return gifts.

The vase itself brings to mind the characteristics of a kaleidoscope or a concretized slideshow, which recompose selected images and highlights the artists' practice as performance. In 2008, when the glass designers Warren Olson and Andrea Blum were commissioned to create a vase for the people of Värmland, they thought the vase should clearly illustrate the multiple connections between Värmland

and Minnesota, involving both nature and objects from the collection. They chose to work in the grill technique because according to them the technique itself, the layered glass technique, best emphasized the heritage-making process. Its layers, separated yet merged, highlight the vase's materiality, creating depth, representing time and space, with the past encapsulated in the present. In Andrea Blum's story about the selection process of making the piece she declares that:

On the interior, a clear layer incorporates expanded silver and gold leaf, symbolizes the promised richness of the new land. The background color of deep blue symbolizes the lakes common to both Värmland and Minnesota. In the next interior layer symbols are drawn from objects in the collection: the eagle, the wrought iron cemetery cross, the folk art horse, and the family tree representing the Värmland Gift and the life left behind when the Värmland emigrants moved to Minnesota. The exterior incorporates trees, wheat and corn, representing the timber and farming industries, the two predominant occupations of the emigrants upon arrival in Minnesota.²⁴

The artists' close study of both of the collection of objects and the landscapes gives this gift a particularly rich potential to perform long-lasting relationships through which places are connected. Just as the bridal crown was created out of silver and gold filigree and gemstones, the vase is created from material that is transformative. Made from sand, water, fire, and air this particular glass vase is simultaneously transparent and opaque, sustainable and fragile. Shaped into an object, the gift from the Minnesotans to the Värmlanders is rich in visible symbolism, created in layers compressing space and time – characteristics that were also true for the crown. Although the crown and the vase were created to be used as gifts, they refer to performances of different kinds. Furthermore, just as a play has a climax, the climax of the 1952 gift was the crown, a ritual performance that is repeated in the ASI's giving of the glass vase.

The invocation is the core of the work of the artist according to the curator Lewis Hyde as he discusses pieces of art as gifts (2007: 4). This is evident in the *performance of gift-giving* as well. Cultural competence goes beyond professional skill and artistic talent and includes intuition and emotional presence. The crown and the vase, both commissioned pieces of craft, are transformed into inalienable objects through their detailed personification (Miller 2001) and socialization into the network of Värmlanders in Sweden and the United States. Similarly, the attention to detail, including when selecting artists, demonstrates the gift-giver's degree of cultural competence.

There seems to be two ways of returning the Värmland Gift: the on-going honor of displaying a gift and the concept of echoing the original gift. A third way is to keep the gift on the move by commissioning brand new return gifts which echo the artistic quality and materiality of previous gifts. In the light of Marcel Mauss' theory of gift exchange, the glass vase emerges as a catalyst for a phase in the reciprocal exchange and cultural competition between two institutions, two regions and two countries to expand their networks and strengthen their positions within the increasingly global cultural economy.

Recent studies have suggested that commissioned art should be viewed as commodities because such art is exchanged for money (Timm & Waade 2010). This view is challenged when commissioned art and craft is entered into the cultural economy of gift-giving. Although the time, skill and invocation invested in art and craft may make them popular presents, it is the gift-giving performances that transform commissions like the bridal crown and the vase into heritage. The attention to details here demonstrates the gift-giver's degree of (inter)cultural competence. This competence in performance, ultimately, produces the inalienable heritage gift. Although it was never articulated as such by the ASI, the institution and its staff demonstrate reflexivity when they select artists whose heredity goes back to Värmland, frame the vase as a return gift, and organize the gift-giving in the Värmland Gift exhibit in Karlstad so

that it is witnessed by Swedish royalty and invited guests. Such multilayered ritual performance fosters connectivity (Schechner 1993, 2006: 57). For both parties – the ASI and the Swedish American Center – the receiving and returning of the Värmland Gift is a competitive act that strengthens the ties that bind, and each exchange seems to offer the possibility of furthering the networks invoked when the Värmland Gift was originally made. According to the director of the Swedish American Center, the choice to “perform” the Värmland presence in Minnesota in Karlstad was a success. The exhibition attracted more than 5,000 visitors in 2009 of which a great number were descendants to the original gift-givers.²⁵ While the Swedish American Center performed the Värmland Gift as part of a Värmland heritage in America, the Värmland Gift performed gift-giving as an emerging form of contemporary cultural economy, connecting cultural institutions and ordinary people in the United States and Sweden.

Materializing Emotions: Composing and Recomposing Cultural Connectivity

In this article I have suggested the term “heritage gift”, exploring the role of material gift-giving as part of a cultural economy. This specific part of such an economy reaches beyond a market with visible transactions of sponsorship and grants, to a form of exchange where gift-giving performances take center stage. The purpose has been to draw attention to heritage gifts and exhibitions and rituals as gift-giving performances, aiming at an understanding of the role these have in furthering relationships between museum institutions, its donors as well as collections and audience.

Utilizing theories of materialization, performance and actor networks and applying these to the Värmland Gift to America, I show how gift-giving becomes a means of both materializing relationships and delimiting boundaries between regions and nations. Moreover, I demonstrate how the presentation to a region or a museum of a heritage gift with a dense biography actually involves a series of ritualistic performances. Drawing on these multiple per-

formances of the Värmland Gift I suggest that cultural differences become enrichment, and tension between the local, regional and national becomes a flexible and creative asset in relationships developed in the wake of migration.

The point is that heritage gifts – as in the case of the Värmland Gift – with their dense biographies, have a particular capacity to act on human emotions: to anchor them, transfer them and connect them into networks, over time amplifying them, strengthening the position of the heritage gift even more. For example when the ASI in Minneapolis lent the Värmland Gift to the United States in 1952 to be the key exhibition at the royal inauguration of the Swedish American Center in 2009, the institutions on both sides invested in transatlantic networks through the collective performance of locally anchored material culture. As a result, the differing performances involved in the Värmland heritage gift have served to foster a wide range of binding dynamic transatlantic relationships. Even the smallest community or institution, family or artist is able to establish an international profile, and infuse a feeling of being part of a larger network – one that spans generations and physical locations in Sweden and the United States.

Moreover, the heritage gift illuminates how the real homeland and the imaginary are not easily separated. A location is not only material; it is also spiritual and emotional. Whereas territorial boundaries define where Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland or Denmark begin and end, the ritual performances of gift-giving demonstrate how emigrants in the United States and people in the old homeland *together* create a *transatlantic space* that circumvents such boundaries. The transfer of heritage gifts from Värmland to Minnesota, and from the country to the city, is deeply symbolic, challenging the limits of solidarity both within and between nations. This is explicit in border regions in the Nordic countries such as Värmland.

The regional connotation of the stars of the collection – the bridal crown and the glass vase – means they are uniquely Swedish, viewed as an area of folklore and authentic heritage, but they are also apolitical, non-nationalistic or partisan, and open to

broader and inclusive cultural uses. Not all regions in Sweden are equally usable in this sense – the provinces of Värmland, Dalarna and Småland are used more often than Sörmland, Östergötland, Halland and Öland (see Aronsson 1995; Haggström 2000; Olwig & Jones 2008; Turtinen 2006). When the same regions are highlighted in the United States, such performances may be interpreted as mirroring the activities in Sweden. The situation is, however, more complex. As the gift-giving performances involving the stars of the collection show, the bridal crown and the vase are reproduced as heritage gifts.

Similar to an actor on stage performing emotions for an audience to perceive, the heritage gift performs affection, allegiance, honor, submission and diplomacy and more. Although there are lots of differences in size and scope, there are parallels between the collective effort of Värmland extending the provincial Gift in 1952 and keeping it on stage as a star of the ASI and other cultural institutions, whose appointed heritage sites can be seen as presents from the past – performances staged in the present (Schechner 2006: 28) and an alternative modus of exchange from looting and repatriation. This is a much discussed topic among museum scholars (Cooper 2008), including those in the Nordic countries (see Reinius 2007; Kuoljok 2007; Grønnow, Gabriel & Dahl 2008; Svanberg 2009; Skrydstrup 2009). Small or large organizations, in their authoritative lead role in the drama of heritage making, legitimize, maintain and amplify the values of gifts into heritage gifts. Because of their capacity to contain and enact a multitude of performances, heritage gifts have a greater capacity than a gift in general to act on us as human beings and make us perform accordingly. As such, these presents from the past are returned to givers and distributed to various audiences in the form of preservation, ceremonies, performance and exhibitions to be carried on into the future, performances that reflexively also explain the performances.

To regard gift-giving as ritual performance (Schechner 2006: 57, 1993) and network (Latour 2005, 1998) means to emphasize the capacity of objects to act on us, to invoke emotions, to maintain

existing relationships and to generate new ones. The Värmland Gift and the rituals surrounding these objects all play parts in multiple performances of intercultural gift-exchange, spanning more than fifty years, sustaining relationships between gift-givers and their descendants in Värmland and Minnesota, the ASI and the Swedish American Center, despite changes of directors, staff, members and visitors and despite the changes in municipality, inhabitants and geographical landscape both in Värmland and Minnesota, Sweden and the United States. Instead, these objects expand individual as well as institutional networks based on kin. These processes of stringing performances together suggest that heritage gifts and gift-giving should be seen as an expanding form of the cultural economy, exploring how materializations sustain and compose relationships and close and open doors to new spaces in the world.

Notes

- 1 Letter of intent, Värmlandsgåvan, ASI archives.
- 2 In his analysis of consumption focussing on the objectification of mass-produced goods, Daniel Miller underlines that “The authenticity of artefacts as culture derives, not from their relationship to some historical style or manufacturing process (...) but rather from their active participation in a process of social self-creation in which they are directly constitutive of our understanding of ourselves and others” (Miller 1987: 215).
- 3 Even if material culture was put on the back burner as the theoretical interest in discursive models began to grow in ethnology in the 1960s, interest in it continued, viewed in semiotic terms or as products of discourses. This focus changed in the early 2000 with a new approach to materiality (see for example Damsholt 2009), sometimes referred to as the “material turn”.
- 4 I would like to thank folklorist Lena Norrman and translator Ylva Høllerud for pointing me in the direction of this particular translation of the *Poetic Edda*.
- 5 French Philosopher Jacques Derrida, however, has claimed that there is no such thing as a free gift (1992: 14) and criticises Mauss by saying: “Mauss does not worry enough about the incompatibility between gift and exchange or about the fact that an exchanged gift is only a tit for tat, that is, an annulment of the gift” (Derrida 1992: 37). As Katherine Rupp has pointed out, Derrida writes about giving from his own culture’s position where gifts and exchange are not conflated, whereas Mauss is trying to understand giving and receiving from a perspective in which gifts and exchange are not separated (Rupp 2003: 179–181). In a similar vein Daniel Miller points out that it is the actual exchange that makes things happen (Miller 2001: 94). In other words, the gift has agency and gift-giving as performance is an effect of a previous performance.
- 6 Although receiving and giving gifts remain an important activity at the museums in the Nordic countries, this activity has been largely overlooked by recent scholarship on museums (see for example Svanberg 2009).
- 7 When the Nordic museum introduced Samdok, its department for documentation, curators sometimes gave packages of coffee as gifts to people they interviewed in exchange for their time and information (cf. Snellman, this volume).
- 8 “Till hugfästade av sambandet med stamfränder västanhavs och östanhavs.”
- 9 Another example of monumental gifts in northern Europe are the Nordic cultural houses Hanaholmen in Helsinki, Voksenåsen in Oslo, and Shaeffergården in Copenhagen. These are all cultural spaces that were performed as gifts from one nation to another to maintain friendly relationships with northern Europe in the wake of the Second World War (Gradén & Larsen 2009: 7).
- 10 Besides monuments, many museums may be viewed as results of gift-exchanges. Some of these gifts have been ambiguous as they are exchanges of goods as the effects of missionary work and anthropological research and expeditions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The assembling of these goods has evolved into for example ethnographic museums. In recent years, these objects have generated acts of repatriation, and re-contextualizations in countries from where they once came. In hindsight the acts of repatriation for museum purposes may be understood as translations into a space where Nordic versions of colonialism is performed.
- 11 www.americanswedishinstitute.org.
- 12 For examples, see Gradén 2003. Compared to the quite similar restitution process (Skrydstrup 2009), the heritage gift is less oriented towards the juridical rights to the object.
- 13 As the Värmland Gift shows, the heritage gift’s value increases with reciprocation.
- 14 I view the exhibition as the result of the researchers’ and curators’ selection and connection of things into meaningful entities. Each exhibition, here of the Värmland Gift collection, is therefore understood as a new collection, which adds another layer to an ongoing performance that takes place in a museum.
- 15 Albin Widén writes in the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* on April 4, 1952: “Tanken på att Minneapolis-institutet och liknande institutioner i Amerika ska

fyllas med gåvor av snidade träsaker, trasmattor och modeller öppnar svindlande perspektiv. (...) Man ska inte överdriva det sentimentala värdet som allmogesakerna kan ha för emigranterna. När en svenskamerikan går på museum vill han hellre se konstverk av klass som ger honom en känsla av stolthet att vara svensk – visar man honom en spinnrock av det slag han minns från sin barndom blir det för honom en påminnelse om det Fattigsverige som han ville slippa ifrån när han reste till Amerika. (...) Nu måste det sägas ifrån: svensk-amerikanska institutioner är icke avsedda att bli avläggare av rikssvenska hembygdsmuseer. Från museal synpunkt är det orimligt att blanda upp de samlingar av svenskamerikas nybyggarkultur som hopbragds i Minneapolis och på andra håll med sändningar av allmogesaker från Sverige. Exportera konst och konsthantverk, men låt allmogesverige stanna hemma!”

- 16 The project was granted cultural and political approval through collaboration with all parishes and municipalities, which in turn collaborated with businesses, churches, folklore association, artists and artisans.
- 17 CEO Bruce Karstadt’s speech was also performed in the form of a label in the exhibition.
- 18 This article can be viewed as yet another performance generated by the Värmland Gift.
- 19 Perhaps to ease this strained relationship, some of the Institute’s activities in this period were designed to offset the criticism and included programs and exhibits on wartime Sweden and participation in fund raising efforts to aid victims of the war. Exhibits featuring Swedish and Swedish-American themes included “Sweden’s War Preparedness: An Exhibition” (1943), Swedish-American art (1941), and the immigrant community of Bishop Hill (1943).
- 20 For further readings on immigration from Savolax, please see literature by Gabriel Bladh.
- 21 The so-called pioneer museums performed heritage just as the tilled and ploughed landscapes of the prairie, had become popular venues at the turn of the twentieth century, as manifestations of the successful development of settlements to townships. The new museums were formed by urban immigrants.
- 22 Presented in the third gallery, yet visible when the visitor entered the exhibition, the vase was encircled by other objects: pewter plates, brass candle holders, a manor house chair, folk costumes, iron candle sticks, and oil portraits of the local authors Selma Lagerlöf, Gustaf Fröding, and Erik Gustaf Geijer. For the staff and members of the organizations involved and for visitors to the exhibition in Värmland, the presentation in the center of the gallery, with all other objects circulating around it, made the vase a lead actor.
- 23 “Den är en sinnebild av en önskan att banden mellan amerikanska och svenska medborgare av samma stam

mätte förbliva fasta släktled efter släktled” (official gift letter, ASI archives).

- 24 Interview with Andrea Blum, Minneapolis, February 12, 2009, and label based on Warren Olson and Andrea Blum’s artists’ statement.
- 25 Director’s report to ASI, September 2010.

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PERFORMING ETHNOGRAPHY AND ETHNICITY

An Early Documentation of Finnish Immigrants in Nordiska museet

Hanna Snellman

This article discusses the first project of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, dealing with immigrants. It was carried out between 1972 and 1990, and it produced material based on interviews, participant observation, photographs and other written and visual sources. The article first examines why and how this extensive research project was carried out and then discusses the documentation project as performance. The project was an early attempt to document the contemporary lives of people through fieldwork, although the original aim of this pioneering project was merely to create and preserve ethnic identity by documenting “authentic” Finnish characteristics. Thus, it is a good example of changing paradigms in ethnological research.

Keywords: immigrants, fieldwork, museums, Finland, Sweden

The Nordic Museum (Nordiska museet) in Stockholm provides a Nordic perspective on the question of performance and ethnographic praxis raised by Dwight Conquergood. In his *Rethinking Ethnography* (1991: 190) he asks, “What are the methodological implications of thinking about fieldwork as the collaborative performance of an enabling fiction between observer and observed, knower and known?” He also wonders, how thinking about fieldwork as performance differs from thinking about fieldwork as the collection of data? As the reading of texts? He further asks how the performance model shapes the conduct of fieldwork? “The relationship with the people? The choices made in the field and the positionality of the researcher?” For a performance, there is always a starting point, one or more proto-performances. Proto-performances can be found in the performing arts, rituals and sports, but also in many occupations such as those of the lawyer, doc-

tor and policeman. Ethnologists as professionals are not clearly distinguished by special clothes or insignia, but nevertheless they also surely perform their jobs: they too have prescribed tones of voice and professional vocabularies, and their conduct is likewise marked by the visible exercise of authority. The informants can also be seen as performers: they are given a role by their researchers, and they are observed in that role. Richard Schechner argues that identifying what is emphasized and what is omitted is important for understanding both the performance process and the social world that contains and is also shaped by particular performances. Any behaviour, event, action, or thing can be studied “as” performance (Schechner 2006: 40, 208, 226).

This article describes the Nordic Museum’s first project dealing with immigrants to Sweden and discusses why and how this extensive research project was carried out.* The performers in this research

were people of Finnish origin living in Sweden, as well as returnees and potential immigrants living in Finland. The researchers of the museum were interested in their informants' performance in everyday life: the informants were expected to perform "Finnishness", using a certain Finnish grammar and vocabulary – a Finnish choreography – designed by the researchers (cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991: 397; Schechner 2006: 19). A touch of Swedish influence was also anticipated as a result of immigrant experience. I am not concerned here with traditional museum material – artefacts that were first incorporated in the museum's existing collections and later exhibited in the museum, conserved and possibly used as source materials for research or teaching (Hein 2000: 4–5). Rather, this article is concerned with documentary collections that have resulted from interviews and participant observation. Such documents are, however, also artefacts of ethnography (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991: 394).

The Nordic Museum's pioneer project experimented with old and new approaches in trying to change the ethnological research agenda. However, even though the research was intended to focus on identity, ethnicity and culture, the approach was still a traditional one that focused on materiality. Materiality back then was seen more or less as cultural traits and symbolic objects, not as practice, as Maja Povrzanović Frykman suggests (Povrzanović-Frykman 2008: 18).

The Migrationen Finland-Sverige Project

The Nordic Museum's annual report for the year 1974 states that a research project on Finnish immigrants entitled "Finland-Sweden after the Second World War" had been initiated with funds provided by the foundation Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.¹ The project was, according to the report, to be carried out in cooperation with the Department of Geography of the University of Umeå in Sweden and the Department of Ethnology of the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. Its primary objective was "to examine the assimilation and ethnic identity of Finnish immigrants, in other words the extent to which the Finns had adapted to Swedish society." Research had,

in the course of the year, been carried out in Virsbo in the municipality of Surahammar and Upplands Väsby near Stockholm, in other words "in a small mill community and on the outskirts of a city" (Nordiska museet under år 1974 1975: 160). There were at the time of the documentation thousands of Finns living in Virsbo and Upplands Väsby. The project continued the following year. According to the annual report for 1975, the ethnological part of the study was completed as the result of fieldwork and compilation carried out during that year. The fieldwork had continued in Upplands Väsby and had begun in the Finnish districts of Karstula, Närpes (Fin. Närpiö), Nokia and Borgå (Fin. Porvoo). Finnish-speaking Karstula and Swedish-speaking Närpes had been chosen because emigration from these localities to Sweden in the 1950s and 1960s had been particularly marked. Finnish-speaking Nokia and Swedish-speaking Borgå had in turn been chosen because their populations included many returnees from Sweden. In Karstula and Närpes, the project sought to determine the factors influencing the decision of emigrants to return, and to obtain interview material concerning the time before the decision to emigrate was made. The aim was then to monitor the history of the migrant families for the next five to ten years. In the case of the returnees, the project was interested in the Finns' assimilation into Swedish society and their re-adjustment to a Finnish environment. The researchers conducting the interviews published surveys of the research localities. The collection of material was also expanded to take in Finnish children who had been evacuated to Sweden during the Second World War and Finns who migrated to the province of Värmland in Sweden. The experiences of these evacuees might, it was thought, be of significance in subsequent decisions to emigrate. Värmland was chosen because the researchers were interested in whether the Finns' identity differed in regions where there had been Finnish settlements for centuries. The publication of the research results also continued. In 1990, 18 years after the funding application had been submitted, the final report, *När finländarna kom* [When the Finns Came], was published. It combined both ethnological and geo-

graphical perspectives, with an emphasis on the latter (Hägström, Borgegård & Rosengren 1990).

Why Was the Material Collected?

In 1975, Sweden changed its official immigration policy from one of assimilation to one of integration. Whereas the policy had previously aimed to assimilate immigrants into Swedish society, it now sought to permit – and even encourage – immigrants to preserve aspects of their prior culture. To what extent the change in immigration policy affected the implementation of the Nordic Museum's project is not known, but it may be assumed that the ongoing socio-political debate had a positive effect on the decision to provide funding. After all, the ethnologists in the museum's employ would make excellent detectives in ascertaining the special characteristics of Sweden's immigrant groups – characteristics that were possibly worth encouraging.

In an article published in *Fataburen* in 1972, Göran Rosander, the initiator and leader of the project, pointed out that in the collections of the Nordic Museum there were no artefacts belonging to the Roma or to the immigrant labourers arriving in Sweden after the Second World War from Finland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. According to Rosander, these groups were just as much members of the Swedish people (Swe. *svenska folket*) as the Swedes themselves, and their lives needed to be documented. He stated, "Museum pieces derived from the latter group should concentrate on festive customs, clothing, religion and perhaps toys and household effects" (Rosander 1972: 166). Since Finns were by far the biggest immigrant group in Sweden and constituted a group that could be characterised as a minority,² it was natural to begin the documentation with them. Nonetheless, according to Barbro Klein, it was not until the mid-1990s that the Swedish government enjoined all cultural institutions, including those in what is now known as the heritage sector, to take into consideration the fact that the country was now "multicultural". The Agenda Cultural Heritage programme, as the government called its project, was then expanded to embrace an idea of cultural diversity that included gender, generation, social class,

disability and sexual orientation in addition to ethnic diversity. The broadened notions of "cultural diversity" and "cultural heritage" have become official ideologies and governmental responsibilities, and perhaps also bridges to integration (Klein 2006: 9).

Government identity policy was, however, not the only reason for the Nordic Museum's extensive project. The collection of material on Finnish immigrants would at the same time address the challenge of investigating contemporary life. Whereas the main emphasis in museum documentation and acquisition had previously been on the past, the focus was now on the present day. When the Nordic Museum arranged a conference under the heading *The Possibilities of Charting Modern Life* in 1967, however, no consensus had been reached even on the definition of "modern life". For some it meant the 1870s, for others the 1960s (Silvén 2004: 152). There was severe pressure to expand museum documentation towards the present day. Almost next door, the ethnologists of the University of Stockholm had already partly changed their focus: Knut Weibust had conducted fieldwork in Portugal for his maritime ethnological study entitled *The Crew as a Social System* in 1958, and Mats Rehnberg had shifted the focus to rather more contemporary times in his 1965 Ph.D. dissertation on lighting candles on graves (Daun 1993: 333–334). Åke Daun's study (1969) dealing with the closure of a sawmill in Båtskärsnäs in northern Sweden close to the Finnish border broke new ground and in a way started a new era in Nordic ethnological research (Löfgren 1996: 54). The actual paradigm shift took place in the 1970s, when altogether three Ph.D. dissertations in ethnology focusing on modern life in some form were submitted in Sweden: Åke Daun's study dealt with a suburb (1974), Billy Ehn's with immigrants (1975) and Orvar Löfgren's with a fishing community (1978). Only Ehn's work was exclusively synchronic, the others tending more to examine change over a longer period. It is no coincidence that the name for the Chair for Ethnology at the University of Stockholm was changed from Folk Life Studies (Swe. *folklivsforskning*) to European Ethnology (Swe. *etnologi*) in 1972. The times were truly changing.

The documentation of modern life at the Nordic Museum began with *Samdok* (a system of documentation of contemporary society) slightly later, officially in 1977. The above-mentioned Göran Rosander was again a key figure (Rosander 1980). In 1972, in the same article in which he proposed his idea to document the everyday life of post-war immigrants, he pointed out several shortcomings in the Nordic Museums's collection policy (Rosander 1972: 166). In that article, Rosander gives credit to Professor John Granlund, who a few years earlier had outlined his programme for documenting contemporary society by establishing research stations in different locations in Sweden where ethnology students would carry out fieldwork using modern anthropological methods. Granlund ends his article by saying: "It is time to update 1800s ethnology classics and their research questions. How far were they just pseudo problems in functional formulations? To what extent did they become open problems to which research should be directed? We have a responsibility to this research continuity" (Granlund 1967: 255).

It is worth remembering, however, that the Nordic Museum had actually been sending out agents, equipped with notebooks and cameras, to document Swedish life in the country ever since the 1930s, and that contemporary life had also been recorded by the Nordic Museum on a small scale since the 1950s (Nilsson 1999: 98; Rosengren 2006: 104–105). Thus, the most important point about the change was not the period of time examined but what was studied. Eva Silvéen crystallizes the idea behind the change when she writes that the aim of ethnological research oriented towards modern life was to foster an understanding of the times in which we live. The objects of ethnological research were no longer flails, folk costumes, watermills or tools for slash and burn, but people and society. The new winds of change blowing from the anthropological research communities were accompanied by new practices in museum archiving. Material obtained in the field was no longer chopped up thematically and topographically; instead, from 1965 onwards, it was examined holistically. The goal of museum acquisition was very clear: "The aim was no longer objective description but the

way the people themselves understood and defined their own reality, and how society looked from their perspective" (Silvéen 2004: 156–160, 181). Instead of mountains of artefacts, museums wanted narratives and photographs. Alongside the artefact-oriented museum there now emerged the narrative-oriented museum (Hein 2000: 7).

A couple of decades later, Annette Rosengren, one of the interviewers on the Migrationen Finland-Sverige project, was, however, more critical of the way the migration project had been conducted. According to her, the most important thing was not so much analysis of the material but getting it ordered and written up in the archive. The purpose of the interviews and photographs was, she said, rather to create a context for the museum's artefact collections. The primary objective of the interviews was to counterbalance the superficial picture of contemporary society given by the media, which tended to seek out its unusual aspects (Rosengren 2006: 105).

How was the Material Collected?

The ethnographical project of the Nordic Museum consisted mainly of interviews conducted in people's homes and participant observation (Rosengren 2006: 105). Officials were also interviewed, and various events were documented. The project did not even include a collection of objects. I have not yet come across any research plan or even any interview forms, so any conclusions as to the questions asked can be drawn solely from the material collected. In short, we know the interviewees' replies but not the questions. There are plenty of answers: the Nordic Museum's archives contain 60 folders of written-up interviews, photographs, ground and layout plans, brochures, press cuttings, school essays and other material.³

The interview transcripts, in accordance with 1970s practice, rely mostly on hand-written notes and were not taped. After the interview, the interviewer wrote a report and a transcription of his/her notes (Tyrfelt 1977: 2). The interviews were generally conducted in the interviewee's mother tongue, that is, either Finnish or Swedish. The Finnish transcriptions have been translated into Swedish. Birger

Grape, a speaker of Meänkieli, a dialect of Finnish spoken along Sweden's northern border with Finland, conducted his interviews in Finnish and made transcriptions into Swedish. He best understood the nuances of the interview language and thus frequently added the Finnish expression in brackets after the Swedish translation. He also stresses in his interview report that the interviewee was, if necessary, asked to repeat the same thing several times so that something particularly important could be recorded word for word on paper. Among the interview transcriptions made by Grape in Virsbo are some questions translated into Finnish to which a specific reply was sought in the interview.

The interview reports describe in detail how the interview was arranged and in what conditions it was conducted. Reading them enables us to step into the shoes of the museum researcher of the mid-1970s, to see how she or he performed his or her role as an ethnologist with a new research agenda. We can read how Birger Grape, for example, rang a doorbell in Upplands Väsby on December 10, 1974, and the door was opened by the family's 10-year-old daughter. She fetched her mother, who, according to the interview report, gave a friendly smile as she said hello; she is reported as having curlers in her hair. There on the doorstep an interview was fixed for a day in the near future. In his reports, Birger Grape repeatedly complains that it is difficult to ask personal questions right at the start of an interview. Documenting modern life in a brand-new suburb was a new world for the museum researcher.

An account by Annette Rosengren gives us some inkling of the interview context and the interviewer's attempt to describe the world of the interviewee – a Finnish immigrant in Sweden – as precisely as possible:

On Wednesday October 9, 1974, I came to conduct a second interview. It was a little past 7 when I arrived, and I apologised for being late. It came out that they had been expecting me at 6 and wondered why I had not come. There had been some misunderstanding. But everything was OK, and we were able to continue our interview where we

left off the previous Friday. The evening was a repeat of the previous one, and at the end we had coffee and home-baked bread. We had fun, and I took a few photos. During the evening, Alfons [the interviewee] went out to buy the evening paper. He put on a jacket that was on the rack for outdoor clothes in the hall, a blue track-suit top made in Finland. His brown trousers were made in Finland.

The people for the interviews conducted in Finland were chosen because they had either lived in Sweden at some point, were intending to emigrate there or were of a suitable age for emigration. They had been found with the help of the parish office and employment office officials or by the snowball method. The names of people and places in the transcriptions made by Swedish researchers in Finland are accurately recorded; at least there are no obvious errors in the way they are written. The interviews were autobiographical and covered the same themes with each interviewee. The interviews made in Sweden were equally precise and observed the same research ethical code as today: the interviewees were assured that the material would be used solely for research purposes, that their anonymity was guaranteed and that no photographs would be taken without permission. The interviewers also debated questions of research ethics in their reports. This often amounted to no more than a note that the interviewee was given a packet of coffee by way of thanks after the interview and sent a Christmas card and a free ticket for the Nordic Museum – in other words, the project did not wish simply to use people; it also contacted them later on. In some instances, however, the interviewers have reflected on the significance of the information obtained and on problems of preserving anonymity. Although there were hundreds of Finns living in the research localities, their networks were very dense (cf. Gradén, this volume), so maintaining confidentiality was a challenge.

In Upplands Väsby, the interviews were made in collaboration with the geographers who were involved in the project. People were selected from the geographers' material to give ethnological inter-

views. Some of the interviewees were found by the snowball method. In both Upplands Väsby and Virsbo, those chosen for interviews were people who had moved to Sweden either between 1958 and 1963 or between 1970 and 1972. In addition to interviewees of Finnish origin, native Swedes were interviewed in Virsbo. The latter were designated as the “control group”. The aim of interviewing them was probably to filter out “Swedish” traits in order to find the truly “Finnish” characteristics in the material. In Värmland, the Nordic Museum researchers sought interviewees who had moved to Sweden immediately after the Second World War, in the period between 1945 and 1955.

In addition to the interviews, the material includes photos of the interviewees’ homes and living environments. There are also ground plans of the

homes with inventories of furniture and in many cases layout plans. Both verbal and visual descriptions were made of the research localities. There are also some surprises, such as some fine photos of the former lockup at Lovisa police station. This documentation well reflects the fieldwork environment: a researcher from the Nordic Museum called on the Lovisa authorities in order to find the names of people to interview. On hearing that the Swedish visitor worked at a museum, the police wanted to show him their lockup. The researcher was very keen to photograph it, even though it did not directly tie in with the subject of the project.

The Swedish researchers acted according to the same logic elsewhere as well: they documented everything they could. This obsessive approach to fieldwork is similar to Konstantin Stanislavski’s method acting, where the behaviour onstage is based on ordinary life, and the actor “disappears into the role” (Schechner 2006: 176, 179). In Virsbo, for example, the researchers noticed people milling around a kiosk in the evenings, and they asked the kiosk keeper how the growing number of Finns was reflected in the everyday life of the kiosk. The everyday lives of Virsbo people – in the bank, post office, local shop, library, restaurant, school, factory, church, dance hall, sports contests, the Finns’ Mother’s Day celebrations and trade union meetings – were also recorded in photos. Not even the sauna, washroom and changing room were out of bounds to the photographer. Orvar Löfgren has described this passion for documenting as follows: “Sometimes, while gazing out of the window of a train and seeing some functionalist villa or cottage flash past in the landscape, I remember being fascinated by the idea of knocking on the door and getting yet another new perspective on Swedish everyday life” (Löfgren 1996: 53). We can then read in the memoirs of Åke Daun how he became so immersed in life at Båtskärnäs that he even changed his outward appearance. Snuff was the only thing he drew the line at (Daun 2003: 83).

Early ethnological studies of both workers and immigrant communities dealt mainly with men; in this project, too, men were the norm and women exceptions. Couples were interviewed together, but



Ill. 1: Relaxing after sauna bath in Virsbo. (Photo: Birger Grape, 1974, Nordiska Museet)

the husband was always entered as the main interviewee. This even applied to cases where the wife had more to say than her husband. Children were not interviewed, but they would sometimes act as interpreters in interviews. In the case of women and children, the picture of Finns in Sweden is fortunately made clearer by photographs. There are, for example, some photos in the material taken in Upplands Väsby in late autumn 1974. The seven-storey blocks of flats in the centre of Upplands Väsby that nowadays dominate the landscape, and which at the time were the homes of many Finns, had just been built when the photos were taken. The photos taken in the yards, playgrounds and car parks supplement those taken in the homes. The documentation of Virsbo Bruk, the biggest employer of Finns in Virsbo, in turn shows women employed in the metal works. Dressed in overalls, they differ little from the men to look at, but the title *Fru* (Mrs) in the photo captions indicates that they were women. At least in the photos, men and women did similar work, married couples often working side by side.

“The Family has no National Costume or Knife”

Richard Schechner argues: “One asks performance questions of events: How is an event deployed in space and disclosed in time? What special clothes or objects are put to use? What roles are played and how are these different, if at all, from who the performers usually are? How are the events controlled, distributed, received and evaluated?” (Schechner 2006: 49). It could be argued that in the fieldwork described above there were actually various layers of performance, intended or not, taking place within the fieldwork encounter. The ethnologists performed their ethnological function, and they expected their interviewees to perform certain “Finnicisms”. We can see from the interviews done in Sweden that the ethnologists tried to bring out any particularly Finnish traits of the Finns living in Sweden. This is clearly evident from a statement that is common in the transcriptions: “The family has no national costume or *puukko* [sheath knife].” One person was offended at being asked about the tango, a particu-

larly popular dance in Finland. She said she was sick of the Swedes saying, when she mentioned she was going to Finland for a visit, that of course she would be listening to tangos; next, no doubt, they would start talking about knives. The returnee migrants in Finland, for their part, were asked whether they had learned any new food customs in Sweden. For example, a vocational student who had previously lived in Sweden was asked whether he had learnt any new recipes while living in Sweden. At least, this may be deduced from the relatively laconic note: “Veli-Matti has not learnt any new recipes in Sweden.”

On another level of performance, it is noteworthy that the interviewers also paid special attention to the home interiors. If there was a *täkänä* (a woven wall cloth) or a *rya* rug hanging on the wall of the living room, this was mentioned as a special Finnish feature. Spinning wheels, horse collars, churns and flails brought from Finland and used to decorate the home were carefully photographed. The researchers also picked on various symbols of Finnishness, Finnish design (for example, vases and tableware), the Finnish flag and blue-and-white (the colours of the flag) in general. Interviewees were asked which of the items in their homes were from Finland. If an item did not look particularly Finnish, this was mentioned. For example, three blue china plates on the dining room wall of one family received the verdict: “Do not look particularly Finnish.” For some reason, the researchers were always eager to report it if the interviewee had a copper coffee pot as an ornament; these seemed to be common. It is not known whether the museum was perhaps planning to acquire some copper pots or was simply seeking links with an agrarian background. While interviewing a woman who had been in Sweden as an evacuee during the war, Annette Rosengren almost apologized for categorizing the interviewee as Finnish in her research report because the woman spoke Swedish with no Finnish accent whatsoever.

Finnish immigrants in Sweden also voluntarily performed “Finnishness” on certain occasions by wearing national costumes on formal occasions and happily showing off their ethnic textiles. There is, for example, one photo in the material taken at

a Finnish Culture Day event held in 1974 for which the caption reads: "Finnish girls in national costume acting as ushers in the foyer." Handicrafts constituted a special category of their own in the competitions held on Finnish Culture Days. A photo taken of this section shows both *rya* rugs and *täkänä* wall cloths – and a Finnish woman dressed in national costume displaying textiles. Judging from a photo taken of the shop window, the local store sold litala vases and sauna requisites. The performance of "Finnishness" culminated in the evening: the caption of one photo taken at a Culture Day dance says that no one was very drunk and there were no fights – both drunkenness and aggression being stereotypically associated with Finns. It then goes on to say that some shouting in Finnish could nevertheless be heard in the course of the evening.

Birthdays, anniversaries, marriages, funerals and the like were of particular interest to the researchers. The Finnish interviewees living in Sweden were asked where they wished to be buried. Other church customs also interested the interviewers. Did the interviewee go to church? Did their children go to Sunday school? And what sort of Bible did the family possess, the Finnish or the Swedish version? The interviewers also asked about citizenship, and especially whether the male interviewees had changed citizenship in order to avoid Finnish military service. Detailed questions were asked about how the annual festivals were celebrated. With regard to May Day, the researchers were especially interested to know whether the interviewees customarily lit bonfires. No questions were asked about the workers' May Day, though the custom of celebrating this day as a festival of the workers came out in the replies. Under the heading of "folklore", the interviewees were asked about Finnish *sisu* (meaning grit or determination), heavy drinking and violence. They were also asked about co-habitation and homosexuality under this rubric. It was assumed that Swedes were more liberal than Finns.

A Peep into the Archives

Fieldwork material reflects the life of the researchers just as much as that of the community they study. I

now wish to create an overall picture of the corpus as a whole: I have read every third set of interview materials in each of the folders to be found in the archive of the Nordic Museum in autumn 2006.⁴ The material is so vast, amounting to dozens and even hundreds of interviews, that rather than being a cross section the survey barely scratches the surface.

The interviewer usually began by briefly running through the interviewee's life history before going on to ask questions about housing, education, emigration to Sweden, plans to stay in Sweden, language skills, leisure activities and hobbies, annual festivals, food and stimulants. The majority of the questions are about annual festivals and food: bread, pies, casseroles, oven-cooked dishes, soups, meat, sausage and fish dishes, blood foods, cheeses, porridges, gruels, various types of flour, beverages with meals, vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, spices, cakes and buns. The same terms recur from one interview to another, especially in the case of annual festivals and food.

Annette Rosengren, who was one of the researchers from the Nordic Museum doing fieldwork in western Finland, had met a shop assistant aged about 30 in the shop one morning and she agreed on an interview. The shop assistant had undoubtedly mentioned in the course of the conversation that her excavator-driver husband had spent five months working in Stockholm when he came out of the army. The couple were interviewed together. Keywords have been added in the margins of the transcription, again in accordance with ethnological tradition in the early 1970s. These words referred to the following categories: biography + occupation, dwelling, children and marriage, plans for the future, language, social network, special customs, Christmas, Christmas parties, St. Lucia's Day, New Year, Shrove Tuesday, *våffeldagen* (Waffle Day), Easter, May Day, Mother's Day, Whitsunday, Ascension Day, Midsummer, All Saints' Day, Independence Day, birthday, name day, wedding day, leisure time, holiday trips, summer cottage, Sundays, reading habits, courses, societies, firewood, berries and mushrooms, sport, hobbies and dances, the cinema, the theatre, restaurants and bingo. The transcrip-

tions are accompanied by a drawing and description of the interviewee's home.

A Finnish ethnology student interviewed a 25-year-old man working at a paper mill in southern Finland whose name had been obtained from the employment office. The young man's working career was probably typical of the early 1970s: compulsory military service, work at a paper mill in Sweden, back to Finland after a couple of years, back to Sweden and another paper mill after a year, then to the Saab-Scania automotive works in another Swedish location the following year, a rubber factory in Finland the year after that, then after a couple of years there, a paper mill in another town in Finland, and from there fairly quickly back to live in the town where he was born and where he had started his journey.

Annika Tyrfelt from the Nordic Museum interviewed a couple of which the husband had been born in southern Finland and the wife in Ingria, a region surrounding St. Petersburg. Both were born just before the outbreak of the Winter War between Finland and Russia in 1939. The husband was an electric fitter and the wife a housewife. They had just moved back to Finland after nearly ten years spent in Sweden. The man had been an evacuee in Sweden during the war, so the decision to immigrate to Sweden later had, he said, been easy. The reason why they had come back to Finland was that after 1972 it was not possible for foreigners to receive bank loans in Sweden. They consequently had to give up their dream of buying a house of their own, and they moved back to Finland. The reason for their return emerged when the interviewer asked whether they dreamt of buying a summer cottage. The man replied that "only the bosses can afford a summer cottage; workers dream of a house of their own" and told her the reason for their return. At the time of the interview, they were living in a flat, and the interviewer did not go back to the house theme – possibly because there was no question about this on the interview form and the interviewers felt that they had to stick to the script (Schechner 2006: 145).

With the wisdom of hindsight, we might say that in this case today's ethnologist would have thrown the interview form away and let the interviewee

speak, thereby allowing for a more in-depth analysis of the connection between being an evacuee and the decision to emigrate, and of the position of workers and Finns in Sweden. Instead, the 1970s ethnologist stated in her report that she was sorry the interviewee had wandered from the topic and that, when she prepared to photograph the home and draw a ground plan of it, the interviewees had picked the children's toys up off the living room floor despite her request not to. On the other hand, the interviews did, after all, take place in the homes of the interviewees, and even in their role as informants, they had the right to perform in the way they wanted to. Having a messy living room was not something they wanted to perform.

When interviewing return migrants, the interviewees were still first asked to give a brief life history before going on to questions about family, language, emigration to Sweden, return to Finland, social networks in both Sweden and Finland, reading habits, purchase of a car, other consumer goods bought in Sweden, differences between Finland and Sweden in interior-decoration styles, annual festivals, food, differences and expectations in both Finland and Sweden, and leisure activities. The last of these topics covered questions about holiday trips abroad, summer cottages, entertainment, socializing with friends and television.

The Nordic Museum has seven folders of interview materials from Upplands Väsby, amounting to dozens of interviews. Birger Grape from the Nordic Museum interviewed a man of about 30 and his wife, who was five years younger than him, in Upplands Väsby in December 1974. The man had just been on a course for caretakers but was unemployed at the time of the interview. The wife was a day nursery supervisor. They had two children. The couple had moved to Sweden in 1970, and had lived in two towns before moving to Upplands Väsby a year ago. The keywords in the interview transcription again summarize the course of the interview: context, people, environment, dress, annual festivals, food, contacts with Finland, leisure, study and culture, symbols, contrasts, folklore, opinions and values. The interviewer contacted the couple again a year or

two later. He phoned them at home and asked them whether they had made use of their right to vote in Sweden's municipal elections on September 19, 1976. This was a new right, which the interviewees had used. Other interviewees were asked the same thing; doubtless, the museum was already at this stage keen to answer the call of integration policy.

In October 1974, Annette Rosengren interviewed a family of Swedish-speaking Finns living in a terraced house in Upplands Väsby: a fitter of about 40, his wife of about the same age employed as an evening supervisor, and their two school-aged sons. The couple had migrated to Sweden in 1961. Some years earlier, the wife's brother, both parents and her sister and family had migrated to the same town along with many other Swedish-speaking Finns from Ostrobothnia in western Finland. The "Ostrobothnian traits" are marked in the material; the family's circle of acquaintances consisted of Ostrobothnians in their new home municipality, Upplands Väsby. They attributed many of their habits, such as stinginess and reserve, to the fact that they were "Ostrobothnian". They had had nothing to do with Finnish-speakers, possibly because they could not speak Finnish. Nor did they much like talking to Swedes because they spoke a different dialect of Swedish.

The following year, in November 1975, Annette Rosengren interviewed a Finnish-born auxiliary nurse living in Värmland, who had been in Sweden for over 20 years, since she was 13. The keywords in the transcription are familiar from the interviews made in Virsbo and Upplands Väsby. There is, however, one difference: the interviewee was asked what her attitude was to "the Forest Finns",⁵ and whether she in fact knew anything about them. The interviewee, oblivious to the meaning of the term, replied that she had even cared for elderly Finns from Finnish villages!

Creating and Preserving an Identity

A fish only notices it is a fish when a fisherman lifts it out of the water, says the Norwegian anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen in his book *Rötter och Fötter* (Eriksen 2004: 95). By this he means that people

often discover or become aware of their ethnic identity only when they feel that their status is insecure or even threatened. Ethnic identity is created and expressed in various situations when people belonging to different groups come together. Fredrik Barth and his school demonstrated in the 1960s that rifts between groups derive not so much from cultural differences as from the assumption that such differences exist. Ethnic identities are created through discourse about differences with both insiders and outsiders, and identities become crystallized as fixed antitheses where once there were just grey zones and nebulous transitions, says Thomas Hylland Eriksen in a discussion of the research of his fellow Norwegian scholars (Eriksen 2004: 86).

The Migrationen Finland-Sverige research project of the Nordic Museum was like a colouring book in which the aim was to identify the grey areas of Finnishness and tinge them blue and white, the colours of the Finnish flag. In order to penetrate to the heart of the Finnish ethos, the researchers on the project interviewed Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Finnish immigrants in a suburb of Stockholm and in a small factory community in Central Sweden, returnees from both Finnish and Swedish language groups, war-time evacuees and Finnish immigrants in an area with a long tradition of Finnish settlement. In order to bring out contrasts they also interviewed native Swedes living in the same areas and Finns who had no experience of living in Sweden and certainly no intention of emigrating there. The interviews concentrated on annual festivals and food customs. These were areas that most clearly revealed group boundaries and differences between Finns and Swedes. This objective was made very clear in a paper read by Göran Rosander, the leader of the project, at the seminar *The Documentation of Immigrant Cultures* held at the Nordic Museum in 1979. According to him, the aim of the museum's documentation of the lives of immigrants was to create and preserve an ethnic identity (Magnusson 2006: 134–135).

Even though there were attempts to follow new trends of ethnology in the project, there was much of the "old ethnology" in it. Finnish culture was seen

as if it was in a box, as a collection of characteristics, customs and objects. Ethnicity, culture and national identity were treated almost as something people were born with. The traditional approach had traces of the “Cartographic Method” that Tim Tangherlini discusses in his article elsewhere in this volume of *Ethnologia Europaea*. Yet the project acknowledged the fact that a new Sweden was emerging and that museums and ethnology as a discipline had to face the challenge it presented. In fact, it was not only a question of a new Sweden, but of a new Nordic Space of migration and hybrid cultures as well. The new Nordic landscape of migration, adaptation and integration was documented like the old one, and the new and old paradigms co-existed in the project.

The project did not include a collection of objects or plans for an exhibition, just texts, drawings and photographs. Nevertheless, the material is so extensive that it alone would serve as the basis for almost any museum exhibition focusing on Finland in the 1970s. For Swedish researchers, it is a peephole into the physical and social environment of the early 1970s. This is undoubtedly one reason why the folders are neatly archived for researchers to use them. A number of research reports on the material have been published, but as far as I know, none of them has ever covered the entire corpus. To some extent, the reasons are no doubt connected with the ethics of research: the interviewees can still be recognized from their photos and narratives. In other respects, however, the material does not, to my mind, pose any ethical problems: the Nordic Museum has not greedily appropriated any material that really belongs elsewhere or the presentation of which would be unethical. Nor can the material ever, for reasons of research ethics, be made openly accessible to all (see Henning 2006: 151–152). Should the material be widely disseminated, the promise of anonymity might cause distress to people for whom the figures in the photos are not just women, men and children but friends and even loved-ones, complete with their names and personal histories (see Clifford 1991: 120–232). The contemporary urban Finn might further be annoyed or amused by the way the “typical” or “authentic” Finn is presented, the man with his

sheath knife and the woman at her spinning wheel (cf. Bendix 1997: 7; Lionnet 2004: 93). However, the Finnish interviewees do not come across in the material as comic figures any more than their Swedish interviewees – if anything, rather the contrary is true.

A similar project today would begin with a different premise. The Finnish interviewee now living in Sweden would not be asked whether he possessed a sheath knife or a national costume, because the questions would now be directed more at processes, cultural encounters and the construction of ethnic identity and the virtual community. Today’s ethnologist does not understand ethnicity as something people have but rather as something they do (Pripp 2002: 20). In the Migrationen Finland-Sverige project, the elements that determined the Finnish immigrant identity were chosen by the museum researchers, not by the Finnish immigrants themselves. Had the interviewees been given an opportunity to talk freely about their everyday lives, about what they did, then the picture of the typical Finnish immigrant in Sweden would undoubtedly have been different. The fact that the data would – of course – nowadays be collected using a different research strategy does not to my mind lessen the value of the extensive material in the Nordic Museum’s archive. The greatest merit of a large corpus of material is ultimately the unique information contained in the folders. Once the information supplied by the interview reports and transcriptions has been combined with the photos taken in the interviewees’ homes and at work together with the ground plans and detailed furniture inventories, we almost have the feeling that we have been personally sitting in an interviewee’s living room asking questions after an exhausting bike ride. People we have never met grow familiar as we read the interviews. Here are facts, events large and small: human fates at turning points in history and decisions taken at different stages of people’s lives, all together.

Richard Schechner states that anything and everything can be studied “as” performance (Schechner 2006: 1). This article studies performance in two ways, as performing ethnicity and performing

ethnography. Those who performed ethnicity were Finnish immigrants who were living in Sweden or who had returned to Finland after living there for some years. Why were they willing to perform Finnishness even though they sometimes were critical and felt like animals in a zoo, supposed to act in a certain way? The interviewees were promised that their interviews and photos would be preserved for future generations. It appears from the transcriptions that this was important to many of the interviewees; they wanted the Finns to have a visible place in the history of Sweden (Grele 2005: 44) and thus they were willing to “perform Finnishness”. Traditions are known to be important to immigrants everywhere in the world: repeated expressions and performances, images of the past are “stored” in bodily memories such as gestures, lullabies and food traditions, and passed on to following generations (Klein 2006: 10), and in this case, to museum archives.

Richard Schechner also writes that performances are actions, and behaviour is the object of performance studies (Schechner 2006: 1). This article has shown that it is fruitful to analyze ethnologists as performers of ethnography. Because every possible detail was documented in the fieldwork notes, one can actually follow the actions of the researchers quite well as they described what they did and also what they were thinking. Schechner also argues (2006: 30) that performances exist only as actions, interactions, and relationships. Several phases in the performance of ethnography have been traversed in producing this article: the first phase took place when the ethnologists of the 1970s conducted their fieldwork; the next phase when the museum curators decided and carried out the filing of the material in the archives of the Nordic Museum; and the last when I, as an ethnologist, myself performed ethnography and analyzed the field-work material produced by my colleagues from the past. “The struggle to write history, to represent events, is an ongoing performative process full of opinion and other subjectivities”, concludes Richard Schechner (2006: 257).

Notes

- * This article is a part of my Academy of Finland-funded project Happy Days? The Everyday Life and Nostalgia of the Extended 1950s (2004–2007), Dimensions of Sway: The Meaning of Social Networks for Finnish Immigrants in Sweden (project number 137923).
- 1 Riksbankens Jubileumsfond is a Swedish foundation with the goal of promoting and supporting research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.
- 2 Finnish has been defined as a minority language in Sweden since 2000. See SOU 2005:40.
- 3 From here on, the material referred to is Migrationen Finland-Sverige, sign. KU 10583, located in the archive of the Nordic Museum unless otherwise stated.
- 4 Folders 6, 16, 21, 25, 27, 29, 42, 49, 52, 54 and 55 could not be found in the archives in October 2010.
- 5 The “Forest Finns” is the name given to Finnish immigrants to Sweden and Norway mainly in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Many of them settled in the province of Värmland.

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PERFORMING VOTIANNES

Heritage Production, the Votian Museum and Village Feasts

Ergo-Hart Västrik and Ester Vösu

This article investigates how Votian identity has been staged and performed in the context of the Votian Museum and in the course of the Luzhicy village feast. Our analysis concentrates on performative aspects of cultural heritage and ethnic identity related to the creation of specific cultural spaces. The Votian Museum is examined as the setting of the village feast, reflecting the display aspect of heritage and identity production. We focus on the key elements – the opening ceremony, the communal meal, and carnivalesque aspects – of the feast, which involve various embodied practices and articulate the manifestations of traditional culture chosen by the organisers of the festival, as well as contemporary enactments of village life.

Keywords: cultural heritage, ethnic identity, local museum, performance, village feast, Votians

Among the variety of ethnic minorities living in the Russian Federation, the Votians are the smallest indigenous group in the Leningrad Oblast of northwest Russia (cf. Viikberg 2001). Today the Votian language has been listed among the endangered languages of the Russian Federation (Ageeva 1994), and since 2008 Votians have had the official status of a small indigenous people of the Russian North (*Regnum* 2008). A demographic survey in the middle of the nineteenth century documented the number of Votians as exceeding 5,000 (Köppen 1867) but, after the changes in the Soviet nationality policy of the 1930s (cf. Slezkine 1994: 414), until the turn of the millennium they were not counted as a separate nationality in censuses. Long-term non-recognition and even ethnic stigmatisation during the decades after the Second World War brought with them assimilation and even a conscious repudiation of Votian identity. According to the all-Russian census of

2002, no more than 73 people declared themselves as belonging to this ethnic group (*Perepis* 2002), but evidently there are people of Votian descent who deliberately listed themselves (or were forced to list themselves) as ethnic Russians.

Today Votians live in two villages – Luzhicy and Krakolye – in the Kingiseppski District of the Leningrad Oblast, by Luga Bay. These villages of about 250 inhabitants are situated next to the multipurpose merchant seaport of Ust-Luga, which has been developed rapidly since 1995 by the federal authorities, and has been described by the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin as “one of the largest infrastructure projects of European scale in Russia” (*Ust-Luga* 2008: 2). According to the official construction plan, publicised in 2007, the intention was to replace both villages with a modern town of 35,000–70,000 future port workers and their families. After protests by the villagers, articulated and disseminated by the

scholarly community from Moscow research institutes (*Regrus* 2008), this idea was abandoned but, nonetheless, the expansion of the port constantly threatens traditional communities in a zone of sizeable construction.

Paradoxically, the process of developing the Ust-Luga port (i.e. the threat to the Votians from outside the villages) has occurred in parallel with a considerable ethnic revival inside these villages since the end of the 1990s. The core institution in this process has been a private Votian Museum in Luzhicy, which has mobilised a group of cultural activists from nearby urban centres, as well as from Luzhicy and Krakolye. These people, altogether 15–20 in number, have different ethnic and educational backgrounds, including schoolteachers, linguists, artists, musicians, engineers, students etc. Some of them have roots in Votian villages, but they reside mostly in Kingisepp, the regional administrative centre, and in St. Petersburg.¹

The establishment of the museum instigated a number of other activities connected with the production of Votian identity that included, for example, classes on native language and cultural history in the Krakolye Basic School, the foundation of the Society of Votian Culture, two Internet sites, and the small Votian newspaper *Maaväci*. However, the most viable manifestation of the revival movement, closely related to the Votian Museum, has been the local village feast *Luzhickaia sklachina*,² celebrated as a joint community festival since 2000. This celebration is based on a traditional religious feast related to the Orthodox village chapel. In the re-invented feast, the religious function of the festival has been abandoned, with the emphasis being laid on the production of Votianness, and the celebration of the ethnic past and cultural heritage in a variety of forms.

This article investigates how the ethnic identity of an endangered minority group has been staged and performed in the context of the community museum and through the village feast. Our analysis concentrates on performative aspects of Votian heritage in those cultural spaces where the heritage of the group is produced individually as well as collectively. In the first part of the paper, we examine what kind of

museum the Votian Museum is and how this institution, based on an individual grass-roots level initiative, is used in heritage production. Consequently, we will study the ways in which official history has been questioned in a museum exposition expressing a vernacular viewpoint. Our research questions also concern the strategies of building up the museum display by relying on personal memories and particular materialities of exhibited artefacts. Finally, the reliability of the actual museum space as a memory storage is discussed.

The Votian Museum is examined as the setting of the village feast, as the latter explicitly demonstrates performative aspects of heritage and identity. The aim of the study is to analyse the key elements of the feast, such as the opening ceremony, the communal meal and carnivalesque enactments. We articulate the manifestations of traditional culture that have been chosen by the organisers of the festival to represent the Votian cultural heritage and how different understandings of Votianness are reflected in the aforementioned embodied practices. Our study demonstrates how the museum and village feast, considered as public cultural performances, are important components in the process of the revitalisation and constitution of local identity on a grass-roots level, combining traditional culture and the ideas of the present-day Votian cultural activists.

The Performances of Ethnic Identity: Heritage Production in Museums and Community Festivals

As a conceptual tool, *performance* emphasises the importance of culture as a process enacted in embodied encounters of people as active agents, either in mundane practices of everyday life or in more “staged” events, such as cultural performances of different kinds. *Performance*, for us, constitutes a methodological lens for analysing the village feast and the local museum as performative practices, although they are not described as performances by the organisers and participants (cf. Taylor 2003: 3; Schechner 1990: 19). As outlined by Edward Schiefelin, performance is a phenomenon related to “habits of the body more than structures of symbols, (...)”

with the social construction of reality rather than its representation” (Schieffelin 1998: 194). When seen from this perspective, cultural space is constructed and created in particular performances, perceived multisensorily in action and participation, and experienced in emotional identifications with the community involved in the events, emerging *hic et nunc*. Cultural performances are situated in certain tangible locations and, at the same time, the performance space is created when the existing materialities are transformed into a symbolically rich space, into something that is more than what is visible. These are cultural performances that give traditions and heritage an embodied form, even though, paradoxically, they are themselves transient. Cultural performances may be considered to be restorations of culture, though they are never merely representations (e.g. of ethnic identity, heritage etc.), but are also enacted presentations, pleasures of doing, and celebrations of being.³

Village feasts, for instance, are repetitive in the sense that they restore certain events regularly in time and, yet, they have a rather open structure that leaves space for personal interpretations. As a form of cultural performance the village feast “embodied ideas and enacted interpretations” that provided opportunities for increased and intensified experiences, and for reflections on both individual and social identities (Stoeltje & Bauman 1988: 590). The village feasts, which once had a predominantly religious meaning, are nowadays mostly secular celebrations, as in the case of the Luzhicy. However, the traditional feast and re-established festival share the function of creating in-group cohesion in the village community. The village feast provided, and now provides, an opportunity for the participants to feel a transient personal experience of togetherness. The re-established Votian village feast can thus be interpreted, with some reservations, as an example of “invented tradition” (cf. Hobsbawm 1983; Handler & Linnekin 1984); as here too elements of past peasant culture are selected and placed into new contexts, these elements gain new meanings that help to constitute (and support) ethnic identity, and these traditions are reconstructed in the present.

According to Turnbridge and Ashworth, heritage production is the process in which “the present selects an inheritance from an imagined past for current use and decides what should be passed on to an imagined future” (Turnbridge & Ashworth 1996: 6). So for a group, heritage may become the connection between its history and its current life, and reinforce its attachment to its dwelling place. From the community perspective, heritage production includes processes involving “performances of remembering” (Smith 2006: 47), either in the form of (re)invented feasts or museum-making processes. Those performances both explicitly and implicitly express what is valued by the group and what is worth displaying publicly. In these events, the community makes use of symbolic and imaginary realms of “collective myths and history” and creates opportunities both for confirming and transforming existing values and traditions (MacAloon 1984: 1). Heritage is what gives material reality to the community’s identity and makes it observable and perceivable in the form of material artefacts, significant places, mythologies, memories and traditions (Ashworth & Graham 2005: 4).

Furthermore, cultural performances, as enacted forms of heritage, may become an important device of the identity politics of a group (and sometimes also expressions of resistance). The museum is a public space where a community’s memory becomes mediated: produced, explored and performed. Museum artefacts have come to be seen not just as mere representations of the past but as objects that may acquire the status of agents in the process of remembering. By the selection of what to exhibit in community museums, the group controls the display of themselves and attempts to manage how others see them (Crooke 2010: 27–28). Festivals, in turn, may be considered public “commemorative ceremonies” that revitalise stories and images of the past, represent “collective autobiography” for a community, and “convey and sustain” them through ritual performances (Connerton 1989: 70–71). The village feast as a commemorative performance and the museum as a site of commemoration may both be related to the cultural *archive*, as well as being *repertoire* medi-

ated by the “process of selection, memorization, and internalization” (Taylor 2003: 20). However, nowadays one cannot ignore the fact that heritage performances are often deliberately staged, as traditions are transformational and people who want to keep them alive are trying to (re-)create means for keeping certain cultural knowledge and practices alive and educating younger community members. Performing commemorative events “engenders strong emotions, as collective memories and identities are either maintained and transmitted to younger generations or contested and remade” (Smith 2006: 69). This emotional involvement may become an important criterion for individually meaningful heritage experiences, yet it also struggles over whose heritage representations better express the community’s past.

Museums, which were traditionally related to official histories and narratives of nations and ethnicities, have become places for heritage negotiations, “contact zones” (Clifford 1997: 192–193) in which different meanings of a community’s identity are exhibited, perceived and interpreted. Furthermore, an increasing number of community museums have come into existence in recent decades as part of grass-roots initiatives by those groups who were formerly represented by public state- or municipality-run museums. Often, there are particular individuals behind these initiatives who are not trained as museum professionals but feel the need to create their own story of their heritage, together with community members. These museums facilitate the idea of community heritage as “a forum for alternative histories, voices and experiences”, which can be used to “express local identity” and to work “as an educational tool” (Crooke 2009: 421–422). In the context of small indigenous communities, it has been noted that these museums usually emerge as the result of the interest of one or a few community members, and often they survive as long as this person or group is in control of the museum-making process (Bolton 2003: 47). Thereby, the process of museum making may become a performance of both the individual and collective dimension. The same can be said of the museums established by endangered ethnic groups after the collapse of the Soviet Union

in the territory of Russia: quite often elderly community members who perceive themselves as the last carriers of community heritage feel the responsibility to organise this heritage somehow into a museum display for the younger members of the ethnic community (cf. Leete 2008; also Olsen 2000).

Analysing performances of ethnic identities as they are expressed in the museum-making process, as well as in the village festival, provides an opportunity to understand where and when, how and for whom those identities are publicly created and negotiated by different community members. Additionally, we may see what elements are considered representative and appropriate for the public display of the group’s heritage, and to whom they are directed. We argue that ethnic identity, in order to be sustainable in the changing cultural space, requires manifestations, restorations and collective celebrations, either in the form of a museum or a village feast. Both these cultural phenomena bring ethnic Votians and Votian activists, who otherwise are geographically dispersed, together into one locality and give them opportunities for spatially shared and joint embodied experiences of Votianness. Yet, a museum and a village feast can both be considered as heterogeneous performance spaces in which supportive as well as more critical voices are co-articulated and publicly staged, as well as spaces in which personally perceived identities are enacted.

The Votian Museum: Creating and Contesting the Space for Votian Heritage

In his study of the museums of British Columbia, James Clifford (1997) made a distinction between “majority museums” and “tribal museums”. He outlined the basic characteristics of majority museums and compared these with the agendas of Native American museums. According to Clifford regarding the latter, (1) they are to some degree oppositional, as their exhibits reflect excluded experiences and current struggles; (2) the distinction between (fine) art and (ethnographic) culture is for them often irrelevant; (3) the notion of a unified History is challenged by local and community histories; and (4) they have no intention of including their collections

in the patrimony of the nation, of great art etc. (Clifford 1997: 121–122).

The characteristics of the tribal museums in British Columbia correspond in some respects to specific traits of the Votian Museum, and a similar opposition can be seen between the regional “majority museum” in Kingisepp, the nearby administrative centre, and the local “minority museum” in Luzhicy. Despite the fact that the municipality museum, dedicated to the history of the region, was founded in the 1960s, an exposition of the archaeology and ethnography of indigenous peoples of the area was not opened there until 2000. Therefore, the very fact of founding a “grass-roots level” Votian Museum in Luzhicy in 1997, without any institutional and financial support from local or federal authorities, can be considered to be an oppositional activity, a form of performative resistance, with the aim of drawing attention to the non-recognised ethnic group.

The Votian Museum was established as a private venture of the Efimov family, who furnished, for the sake of the exhibition, one room of their summer cottage. The *primus motor* of the museum has been, since the very beginning, Tatiana Efimova (born in 1956), a chemical engineer by profession, whose husband Sergey is a Votian from Luzhicy, where the Efimovs have spent their weekends and summers in the old wooden house inherited from Sergey’s parents. Tatiana Efimova has since then taken the leading role in the Votian revival movement and has dedicated, with short intervals, her entire energy to “Votian affairs”. As revealed repeatedly in our interviews with Tatiana Efimova, her self-awareness was closely attached to Luchizy despite the fact that she was a Russian newcomer in the village and the Efimovs officially lived in Kingisepp. However, in 2006 they moved to Luzhicy and have since then been permanent residents of the village.

According to the hostess of the museum, the reason for the exposition was to educate her children by documenting and sharing the local history of the village she became acquainted with at the end of the 1970s. Tatiana was fascinated by the customs and attitudes she came across in Luzhicy, which differed considerably from those traditions she had been

used to in her Russian home village in the Tikhvin District of the Leningrad Oblast. In her own words, she discovered a people that did not officially exist, who were not recognised, but shared rich cultural traditions (ERA, DV 154).

On the one hand, the museum has been, for its initiator, a private endeavour to educate her children and to understand her close family members; on the other hand, this project had wider public implications as Tatiana started to question the official minority politics represented by the regional museum in Kingisepp. In this way, she took on the role of a guardian of the Votian tradition, even though she was not an expert in museology, ethnology or any related field. During her investigations, Tatiana discovered various popular and scholarly misinterpretations of Votians⁴ that were articulated from the cosmopolitan point of view. In many cases, she formulated her own alternative theories, which contested the well-established stereotypes and explanations, from the standpoint of local knowledge.

Heritage Production through Museum Display: Artefacts and Individuals

The establishment and development of this particular museum can be interpreted as a process, a series of performative acts that created a specific cultural space. As stated by Laurajane Smith, “The very act of possessing, managing and conserving (...) museum collections is itself a performative utterance of having identity” (Smith 2006: 68). Despite the fact that the Luzhicy museum was based on the individual initiative of a newcomer, members of the local community were included in the process as donors and informants. According to Tatiana Efimova, the first artefacts of the expositions were items of the household equipment of her husband’s family, but later, when villagers got to know about her “hobby”, they started to bring new exhibits of their own accord. Therefore we can speak of the museum-making process as a negotiated and collaborative performance. The hostess of the museum formulated this idea vividly in the interview recorded in August 2000:

In the very beginning, there were items that lacked any information about their application and meaning, not to mention what they were called. But it was a pity to throw them away. So I went to ask. And I got to know that, for example (Tatiana points to the artefact), this is an *astija* (vial), and this a *lännikko* (wooden vessel with cover), a container for curds or butter. This is also an *astija* (Tatiana takes another vessel in her hand), but for mashing potatoes. This is an *ušatti* (wooden pail; she again takes the artefact in her hand), a prototype of the present-day bucket. (...) Villagers themselves now bring the majority of exhibits. I have fishing nets, of course, an anchor etc. All this reflects that our village was, first and foremost, a fishermen's village, and this is what I want to show. And villagers just brought me exhibits such as, for example, a *kurviverkko* (a net for smelt), a whole set, a net for catching smelt, in its entirety. Recently, they presented me with *pullod* (floats) and weights of an archaic type. Even those villagers you would not expect to do so bring exhibits (...). (ERA, DV 157)

In 1998, when our research team visited the museum for the first time, the Efimovs had equipped a room of about 20 m² with a variety of exhibits that were labelled in Votian and Russian. During our next three visits (1999–2001), we witnessed the gradual growth of the display and explored how new layers had been added to the “home-made” exhibition. The museum display consisted mostly of ethnographic artefacts (nineteenth-century household equipment, clothes, working tools, including fishing gear, and items used in agriculture and cattle breeding), pieces of art (icons, paintings and drawings made by amateur artists), documents, books and photos donated by the villagers, as well as those acquired from archives and visitors.⁵ Half of the walls of the museum room were covered with fishing nets; clothes and working tools were attached to the walls and some were placed on long benches located at the edges of the room. For Tatiana Efimova, every single exhibit had its own story; she knew by heart the previous owners of the artefacts and all of them represented

for her certain periods in the history of the village.⁶ For example, the existence of a pre-war Orthodox chapel in Luzhicy, and the religious life of the village in general, were marked by icons donated by the Vasiliev family, in the “improvised” holy corner of the museum room, and religious literature of the pre-war period. The Swedish period was indicated by two Swedish coins, dating back to 1636, found in the Efimovs' vegetable garden and considered by the hostess of the museum to be the most precious exhibits of the display.⁷ Her relationship with the exhibits was quite emotional; when we asked Tatiana Efimova to mention her favourite exhibit she answered: “I cannot say that I have one favourite item. All these things are for me like my own children” (ERA, DV 157).

Thus, the exposition of the museum was built up from objects that supported remembering and dictated the narrative of the museum creator. In addition, for the sake of the exhibition Tatiana Efimova had ordered, from the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg, copies of photos taken by Soviet ethnographers in the 1920s. These photos mostly depicted villagers of that period and were mainly focused on personal aspects and genealogies of the villagers. Individuals were also dominant in the old family photos donated to the museum and exhibited together with ethnographic artefacts. According to Tatiana Efimova, one of her aims in putting together the exposition was to commemorate and present native inhabitants and to “show how talented our people are” (ibid.). One of those gifted personalities was, for example, Nikolay Nesterov, born in 1921 in Luzhicy, who worked for decades as an electrical engineer in St. Petersburg, and donated to the museum his drawings that were made during and after the war. Nikolay Nesterov had never studied art, but his talent allowed him to earn additional money and survive as a prisoner of war during the Second World War (FM 2000).

The hostess of the museum had accumulated a considerable amount of information on the genealogies of the villagers, so that we witnessed how she (as a newcomer) explained, with the help of museum photos, the genealogical relationships of

the one-time villagers to the native inhabitants of Luzhicy (ERA, DV 266). Tatiana Efimova thus had a somewhat ambivalent role in the heritage production process: she collected knowledge of local matters from state archives and scholarly literature and by interviewing local villagers, but also shared this knowledge with the village community, gaining the status of local heritage specialist *per se*.

Two opposite trends in the practices of arranging the display appeared. On the one hand, there was restoration of local history and heritage through artefacts, documents and photographs; these were accumulated and displayed in order to create a valid depiction of the past, to support and recreate Votian identity among villagers. On the other hand, due to the creative nature of the performative process, new interpretations were put forward that re-scripted various cultural phenomena from the vernacular perspective and articulated new “cultural myths”, which placed Votians at the centre of the universe, and contested cosmopolitan views of centre and periphery (cf. Tuan 1974: 239; Gradén 2003). For example, Tatiana linked the term for public assembly in medieval Novgorod, the *Veche* (Russian *вече*), with the Votian word *vāci* – ‘people’. She also interpreted, with the help of Votian words, many local place names and thus presented various folk etymological explanations (see Efimova 2006, 2009, FM 2003).

The museum attracted both inhabitants of Luzhicy and visitors (mostly relatives who came to the countryside during the summer vacation), as well as groups of schoolchildren and tourists whose sight-seeing routes passed through the region. However, the scarcity of museum space set a limit on the number of visitors who could enjoy the display at any one time.

The Community Museum as a Contested Site of Action

The museum as a symbolically rich cultural space and memory site may become a stage for contesting common views, and sometimes even a battlefield of identity, as well as local politics, especially in unstable socio-cultural situations. The story of the

Luzhicy museum is a characteristic example of such developments, and it culminated in two dramatic events that destroyed not only the museum building but also the Efimov household. There was a fire in their house in September 2001 that resulted in the destruction of the whole building, including all of the museum holdings (around 70 ethnographic objects, 200 photos and documents). The causes of the fire were not identified, but local villagers associated the casualties with vengeance against the Efimovs’ appeals to officials concerning the illegal logging going on in the forest. The Efimovs’ activities in the field of the Votian revival and their fight for the rights of local inhabitants were evidently opposed by those people who were interested in developing and earning from the plunder economy due to the lack of control and changing political situation in the Russian Federation.

However, after the fire, villagers continued to donate new objects to the museum, and even two years later our research team found a new temporary exhibition set up on the veranda of the Efimovs’ new house. In these years, Tatiana and Sergey Efimov attracted a group of activists from St. Petersburg and other nearby urban centres, who brought along new ideas to advance the Votian revival. For example, classes on native language and local history were initiated in the local Basic School of Krakolye, the first Internet homepage dedicated to Votian matters (see <http://vadjamaa.narod.ru>) was opened and brand-new Votian ethnic symbols (a flag, a coat of arms and an anthem) were invented. Activities also included the publication of a bilingual collection of Votian folk tales, which gave rise to a discussion on Votian orthography and the possibilities of creating a literary language. While at that time “Votian affairs” were predominantly based on individual initiatives, it was logical that a phase of institutionalisation followed. In April 2005, the Society of Votian Culture was established, and since then it has been the core institution of the Votian revival. In order to share information and present its ideas, the society started to publish the small-scale Votian newspaper, which is free and distributed to all villagers.

In October 2005, a half of an old-style Votian

peasant house was donated to the Society of Votian Culture by the Filipov and Kuznetsov families, and it was renovated with the help of the village community and volunteer enthusiasts. The following year a new exhibition, displaying the interior of a Votian house at the beginning of the twentieth century, was opened. While visiting the museum in May 2006, we realised that the new museum space was much bigger; the living room of the old-type Votian peasant house was furnished with old household equipment, including a large oven, a bed covered with home-made textiles, fully functional looms, a spinning wheel, a long table and benches. There were several shelves for displaying ethnographic artefacts, which were organised according to the materials the tools were made of (wood, clay or metal). In addition, an old-fashioned woman's folk costume was exhibited. The log walls of the living room were covered with textiles and panels with photographs depicting outstanding villagers and recent activities of Votian activists.

The expanded museum space made it possible to carry out a variety of activities initiated by the Society of Votian Culture. The new building was used enthusiastically as a community centre; it served as the venue for classes of native language and local history, and workshops of traditional handicraft and cuisine, under the guidance of elderly villagers. In 2006, the museum was the scene of the annual village feast and the celebration of the Day of Indigenous Peoples of the region. This new space provided an opportunity to experience nineteenth-century peasant life through old household interiors and artefacts. As seen in the photos taken by the Efimovs, these opportunities were taken advantage of by Votian activists, as well as members of the children's folklore group, who dressed in folk costumes and participated in workshops dedicated to learning the Votian language and old crafts (see ill. 1). The museum space promoted more intense involvement in old-time everyday practices, such as baking pies, weaving with looms, singing folk songs etc. It concentrated the activities of the villagers and their guests, who participated in common get-togethers and experienced the physical closeness of their com-



Ill. 1: Workshop of baking traditional pies in the Votian Museum. (Photo: S. Lotov, 2005)

panions in the intimate atmosphere of the feasts.

Due to its successful activities, the new museum received a great deal of attention in local newspapers and on local TV channels. All this marked the achievements of the revival movement before the museum was burnt down again in September 2006. This time, some of the exhibits were saved thanks to the rapid action of the villagers. The cause of this fire also remains unclear.

It is clear that the repeated destruction of the museum has caused a considerable reaction in the Votian revival movement. The idea of founding a third museum has been raised, despite the fact that the Efimovs have refused to accept new artefacts donated by the villagers. New exhibits have been partially photographed and a virtual museum has been set up on the homepage of Votian activists (see www.vatland.ru). However, the destruction of the museum house did not diminish the enthusiasm of the initiators of the Votian identity display; quite the contrary. The process of establishing and constantly

re-establishing the Luzhicy museum reflects the performativity of the enterprise – it is not just the building and material objects that can be related to the museum but also the people and the activities of creating the exhibition of Votianness.

Considering the above-mentioned events, the question arises of whether the museum space is an appropriate mode for storing Votians' memories and mediating their identity.

The Village Feast as a Performance of Ethnic Revival

The Luzhicy museum as a cultural space integrates private and public representations, individual and collective depictions of Votian heritage. Once a year, the museum and museum yard are used as a “stage” for hosting the village feast *Luzhickaia sklachina*.

In pre-industrial rural societies of northwest Russia, village feasts were expressions of collective activity that included certain religious, social and economic functions. This phenomenon of collectively celebrating certain days of the church calendar, which included a religious ritual, a common meal, singing and dancing in the course of three or four days, was a part of the common Russian Orthodox tradition shared by several ethnic groups in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.⁸ The religious ritual, consisting of a procession and a service in the local chapel, once an important part of the event, has been abandoned and the celebration of the ethnic community is now the focus of the feast. The village feast, once a tacitly religious testimony that enforced the sacral ties of the community, has now become a consciously re-established event by a group of Votian activists, the “stage directors” of the Votian ethnic identity, and has become a public display for self-reflection.

From the performative perspective, ethnic traditions have always been constantly re-invented by different agencies involved in the process and presented for an audience (either for the group itself or for outsiders) (Bendix 1989). Beverly J. Stoeltje states that all festivals display certain characteristic features, being “calendarically regulated intervals, public in nature, participatory in ethos, complex

in structure, and multiple in voice, scene, and purpose.” The varied opportunities for participation and, at the same time, integration of the whole group because of a common purpose is what makes this kind of event so captivating for participants (Stoeltje 1992: 266). Thereby, festive events become performances of a group's ethnic identity that involve diverse political interests and various articulations of the past realised in communally shared involvement in both real and imaginary cultural space (cf. Gradén 2003; Hoelscher 1998; Mathisen 2009). Though public displays of ethnic identity are always more or less collective creations, they may be initiated by particular individuals serving as “directors” of these events.

The local village feast in Luzhicy, *Luzhickaia sklachina*, was re-established in 2000 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the village.⁹ Since then, Tatiana Efimova, the hostess of the Votian Museum, has been the main organiser of this community festival celebrated each year, usually on the third weekend of July.¹⁰ The venue of the village feast has varied, but for several years it has taken place on museum property. The main participants in the feast are local villagers, their families and relatives who come to visit their home village for this very event. Therefore, the feast also functions as a space for family reunions, in which Votian ethnic identity is celebrated by creating the feeling of temporary *communitas* (Turner 1969). In addition, the village feast has attracted the attention of Votian activists from St. Petersburg, researchers and students of linguistics, ethnology, and folklore, journalists and representatives of local and federal governments. However, folklore experts play a minor role here in comparison with large-scale public folk-life festivals – the village feast in Luzhicy is a collaboratively created event encouraging participation (cf. Bauman & Sawin 1990: 288–314). Tatiana Efimova, along with other cultural activists, has created the general directorial concept for the whole event by structuring it, and by doing so has provided value and legitimacy to certain elements of Votian heritage.

The number of festival participants has varied too, over 200 in the first year but stabilising in re-

cent years at an average of 100. The dominant secular aspect of the village feast and the involvement in ethnic revival has, on the other hand, evidently excluded some members of the village community. For example, in 2003 one of the native inhabitants, a lady in her eighties, for whom the religious aspect of the feast day was more important, refused to participate in the celebration and, instead, that weekend she attended the liturgy in the nearest Orthodox church (ERA, DV 792). Some villagers of Votian descent might have missed the community festival due to the opposition of their non-Votian family members, who perhaps felt embarrassed in an unfamiliar ethnic society (ERA, DV 795). The village feast was also consciously rejected by those villagers, mostly *datshniki* (summer-cottage owners) of various ethnic backgrounds, who had moved to Luzhicy during the post-war period and were not connected with age-old family networks, thus lacking the motivation to communicate with other villagers (FM 2004). Therefore, the feast has been oriented towards a certain segment of the village population: native inhabitants and their closer family members, as well as Votian activists. These people appreciate the organisers' endeavours and they have given positive feedback – for them the festival has increased the in-group coherence of the village community (ERA, DV 154). The village feast can be characterised as a heterogeneous cultural space where different “voices” preserve their varied intentions.

Luzhickaia sklachina, as a contemporary secular village festival, has the following basic elements: (1) an opening ceremony; (2) a communal meal (food and drinks); and (3) carnivalesque activities (games, sports, dancing and a visit by disguised *Chudi*) (cf. Stoeltje 1992: 2; Turner & McArthur 1990: 85). Yet, the overall structure of the event is open and one might also note the preparatory and aftermath phases of this process. The event is pre-planned and certain elements of it are rehearsed by the organisers and key performers. Likewise, there is no formal conclusion and the feast disperses in space, continuing in private celebrations in people's homes. The beginning, the official programme, is carefully staged by organisers and, therefore, a clear distinction be-

tween the performers and the audience can be noted; the festive part that comes after is more improvised and involves all the participants. Thus, two distinct performances meet in the village feast: the opening ceremony, which corresponds to a staged folkloric programme in the form of a gala consisting of carefully selected heritage elements, and the more spontaneous celebration that follows, involving improvisatory self-expression, commensality, dances, games, etc. Although, in the course of ten years, the village feast has had a stable structure, the following analysis is based on participant observation of the performances in 2003 and 2004, supplemented by later photos and descriptions.

The Opening Ceremony of the Village Feast: Staging Votianness

The most explicitly staged and rehearsed part of the event is a gala that includes speeches, arranged poems, musical pieces and other performances. These parts of the programme were, in 2003 and 2004, introduced by the main organiser of the feast, Tatiana Efimova, who, through her commentaries and short presentations, framed the whole official part of the feast. The opening ceremony usually reveals some significant social roles in the community and confirms dominant community values (Stoeltje 1992: 264). Yet, the way the ceremony is staged reveals the organisers' values and principles regarding what should be brought to the stage as representative of the community's heritage. A considerable amount of attention has been paid to the opening ceremony through various acts of commemoration, including the presentation of elderly villagers and certain events in the history of the village. In 2003, the idea of “commemorating all past members of the village community” was manifested in the ritual placing of candles in front of a wooden cross erected temporarily on the site of the former village chapel. This performance of remembering was introduced by reading the Orthodox Church court protocol from the 1730s, which accused the villagers of Luzhicy of carrying out vernacular cultic practices, not approved by Church officials, in the chapel. The performance of remembering peaked with the reading

of the Lord's prayer, translated into Votian for the sake of the festival by one of the elderly villagers.

Since 2003, the compulsory element of the celebration has been the hoisting of the Votian flag,¹¹ which was presented publicly for the first time during the village feast. In addition, the Votian coat of arms and anthem (an arrangement of a folk song) were introduced to the participants of the feast, establishing the legitimacy of the village community. For the sake of the festival, a distinctive cultural space with its own rules and aesthetics was created, where participants could sense and perform "genuine" Votianness. Ethnic identity was manifested vividly in the folk dresses of the performers, which stresses the role of material objects in the process of establishing cultural heritage. These enactments of hybrid performance have historical roots (peasant life of the nineteenth century), but also contain modern elements.

The ambivalent nature of contemporary Votianness was vividly represented in the performances of the local folklore group at the opening ceremony. Schoolchildren, most of whom had neither an indigenous cultural background nor knowledge of the native language, performed Votian folk songs for the audience, among whom only a small minority could understand the lyrics.¹² In 2004, Votian heritage was re-introduced in staged performances of folk dances, as well as in the fragments of the wedding ritual of the nineteenth-century peasant's life cycle. Besides the songs, Votianness was stressed in these performances through dialogues in the native language, and marked with folk costumes that were reconstructed according to the descriptions of eighteenth-century scholars (FM 2004). Here the tendency to explore more archaic forms of traditional culture is manifested in order to create a feeling of authenticity. The same concerns the clothing of Tatiana Efimova, who during the 2006 village feast was dressed in a folk costume from the beginning of the twentieth century, but since 2007 she has worn a stylised and more archaic costume designed according to archaeological findings.

These representations of past cultural traditions in a new context reflect, however, only one possible

way of performing Votianness. While analysing the field materials, we also found an alternative way in which the Votian identity was celebrated in the programme of the festive gala. These were various performances, for example rhythmic gymnastics, solo singing, etc., that were included in the programme because of the fact that they were performed by the community members or their children. According to this approach, everything that was presented by the local inhabitants, that is, people of Votian descent, represented Votianness.

The opening ceremony of the village feast can be interpreted as a conscious act of remembering and commemoration that is oriented to aural and visual perception. Only certain elements of traditional culture are selected and presented by the "stage directors" as Votian heritage.

The Local Cuisine and the Communal Meal

Another aspect of Votian identity that has been manifested and celebrated vividly during the village feast is the local cuisine. Compared to the opening ceremony, the communal meal is clearly a less staged part of the event. According to Beverly Stoeltje, the food eaten during the feast "embodies the identity of the group and represents the particular occasion"; the food as it is performed (prepared, served and chosen) communicates a tradition of the community (Stoeltje 1992: 265). "Through the choice of food and drink and the way they are served, people are bonded into groups through commensal activity" (Stoeltje & Bauman 1988: 594). In this ritual-like event, which carries both traditional and modern meanings, a temporary *communitas*, the feeling of an "extended family", is created.

In the first revived village feasts, the presentation of local "forgotten" delicacies was initiated by the organisers of the feast, and this was carried out in the form of contests: traditional food (mostly pies with different shapes and fillings) was prepared by the older female members of the community; these were judged by a jury and finally shared with all participants in the feast. This kind of activity helped the Votian activists explore and revive local food traditions, bring them forth from the memories of elderly

people and, in this way, turn certain manifestations of former traditional cuisine into celebrated cultural heritage.

Because the genre of contest was not successful in the context of village feasts (as the food was not distributed evenly), this idea was later somewhat transformed. As the programme of the annual feast has, from the very beginning, included a communal meal, where participants share their home-made dishes and drinks, the presentation of traditional cuisine has become a compulsory part of the festive menu. We can also examine this issue from another perspective: a tradition was re-invented to prepare certain dishes for the sake of the village feast, and this has given them a new function and thus helped the recipes of past delicacies to survive.

Our fieldwork team also witnessed a deliberate invention of heritage in the sphere of cuisine: in 2004, a herbal tea made of the fermented leaves of Rosebay Willowherb (*Epilobium angustifolium*) was presented during the village feast as a local drink that had once gained international fame for the Votian people (cf. Nikolaeva 2005). This interpretation was based on a vernacular Russian designation of the drink *копорский чай*, “tea of Kopyrye”, which linked the origin of the tea with the medieval centre of the Votian land, Kopyrye.

According to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “feasts are prominent in rites of incorporation, where commensality, the act of eating together, is an archetype of union” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001: 23). The communal meal can be regarded as the starting point of the unofficial part of the Luzhicy village feast. When we attended, the meal was arranged on long tables, where home-made dishes and drinks were shared and served by the participants themselves. While up to that point performers and audience were separated, during the meal these borders disappeared and the activities were no longer directed by the organisers but by the village community itself. People sat around the tables grouped into families and kinship groups. However, there were no rigid hierarchies and people were welcome to change their places, as the meal served as a venue for active communication. People, some of

whom did not meet face to face more often than once a year, had the opportunity to share news, to recall past events or to just have a good time in the company of their relatives and neighbours. It was evident that, through the communal meal, kinship ties were continuously strengthened and the same was true of the local village identity.

The meal included short greetings and toasts, as well as communal singing. However, these were no longer old Votian songs, performed within the gala by the folklore group, but popular Russian songs, learned from and distributed by popular movies, radio programmes, and other mass media. The very act of singing together, the pleasure of collective performance, united villagers, relieved tensions and clearly created a feeling of cohesion. These performances also reflected contemporary Votianness, which is not defined so much through the native language as through shared past and common activities.

Music and dancing are important factors in generating the shared experience and celebration so crucial to the success of the festival (Turner & McArthur 1990: 85). However, in 2003 we witnessed, in this respect, contested approaches, as more educated “guardians of authenticity” (cf. Annist 2009: 132) from St. Petersburg intervened to control the repertoire of common singing, to avoid popular music and choose traditional songs, as well as to oppose the disco dancing favoured by villagers and their guests.

Carnavalesque Elements of the Village Feast

The final part of the feast is minimally staged and much more spontaneous and improvisatory as a performance. As Michail Bakhtin (1984: 196–277) has argued, popular festive forms in culture, especially carnivalesque events, involve all the participants and are often a humorous and playful mix of the high and low, the sacred and the profane. In 2003 and 2004, the feast reached its culmination with a variety of games and contests between the participants, dancing and visits by disguised “guests”, called the *Chudi*, who appeared suddenly to the participants of the feast.¹³ These were mostly elderly villagers, accompanied by their grandchildren, who had disguised themselves and brought in carna-

lesque elements that finally broke down all borders and conventions, freeing the participants in their bodily expressions through joy and merriment. The mummers entered the “stage” of the feast singing a Russian song, and then joined the dancers and asked the participants to dance with them, repeating their provocative movements and gestures. The Chudi also made attempts to get those people who were sitting at the tables into the dance area, thus causing overall disorder and joy. After public “presentation” of their masks and costumes, some of the mummers, playing certain roles, asked the participants questions. For example, in 2003 one of the elderly women was disguised as a soldier and asked the guests to show their certificates that allowed them to be in the border zone (ERA, DV 798).

The institution of visiting mummers is based on a nineteenth-century peasant tradition, a custom

related to midwinter feasts of the folk calendar, weddings and other communal get-togethers (cf. Ariste 1969: 142–148). In the contemporary village feasts, this phenomenon was not restored deliberately by the “directors”, but it re-emerged spontaneously as an initiative of older community members, thus being an autonomous vernacular creativity uniting various aspects of bodily expression. The selection of disguises also echoed, on the one hand, topical problems of the village community (for example, restrictions in the border zone, and the construction of the port; see also ill. 2); on the other hand, the masks of mummers reflected villagers’ spontaneous inspiration, as these represented a variety of folkloric and fictional characters (for example, Baba Yaga, the Booted Cat and the Gypsy Woman).

Carnavalesque elements may articulate alternative modes of self-expression and they often integrate



Ill. 2: Chudi disguised as a soldier, a bride and a sailor. (Photo: Sergey Efimov, 2007)

different groups within the community through amusing games, contests etc. Through laughter, tensions and even traumas of everyday life may be collectively derided and overcome. Individual and social identities become transformed; as in the case of the Chudi, at the time of our visits, villagers wore grotesque costumes and masks while performing the roles of imaginary characters. The costumed performer was more than just a particular person; she or he became a “bearer” of symbolic messages (from the past) (cf. Stoeltje 1992: 270). Dance and music, likewise supporting carnivalesque solidarity, engaged all the participants in the same action, creating emotionally enhanced memorable moments. Thus, the integration of various participants, members of the village community and cultural activists into one *communitas* was realised by carnivalesque laughter, play and games.

Conclusion

The Votian Museum and the Luzhicy village feast are “heritage practices” (Hafstein 2009: 11) in which the cultural identity of an ethnic group is publicly performed and negotiated through the creation of a symbolic space. These acts of commemoration make it possible to establish and revitalise the collective myths and images of the past, reflect upon the present condition of the community, and ensure the sustainability of an endangered minority group.

The revival of the Votian ethnic identity in the last decade has been initiated by particular individuals, cultural activists, who have taken the role of guardians and “stage-directors” of contemporary Votian-ness. Both in the case of the Votian Museum and the Luzhicy village feast, certain elements of the ethnic past are consciously selected, combined with popular cultural practices, and publicly displayed by the activists. However, staged performances also include spontaneous enactments that produce hybridity, blending traditions of different origins and thereby maintaining the vitality of heritage practices, as well as the identity of the group. These performances provide opportunities for active participation and facilitate in-group cohesion.

Our research proved that a museum, traditionally

considered to be a static archive of cultural heritage, may also be seen as a process of performative acts. Furthermore, this archive is not eternal and can be a challenged space of resistance. Thus, a museum is not only a set of rooms with artefacts but also a conglomerate of ideas that are reified in exposition, as well as being articulated in various practices and performances attached to it. The Votian Museum, as a “minority museum”, exhibits the local history from a subjectively perceived alternative perspective that contests the story of the “majority museum” in the regional administrative centre and brings forth the excluded experiences of Votianness.

The Votian Museum has been the main setting for staging the most vibrant manifestation of the Votian ethnic revival. Although the re-invented feast is based on the traditions of Russian Orthodoxy, religious elements have been discarded in the context of the contemporary festival, which provides an embodied multisensory experience of heritage and a temporary feeling of *communitas*. While analysing the *Luzhickaia sklachina*, we outlined three basic components that had been staged to different degrees, starting with the most arranged part, the opening ceremony, and concluding with the most spontaneous part, the carnivalesque revel. It seems that the elements of the latter, especially mummings, joint singing and dances (not necessarily folkloric), are the most vital aspects, as these encourage participation of all attendants and, at the same time, they are the most sustainable, as they can be adapted to changing cultural conditions. The commensality of the festive meal supported this claim: communal sharing of food and drinks proved to be more important than including traditional recipes in the menu. The Luzhicy village feast as a performance of culture (cf. Schechner 2002: 38) produces ethnic identity and consolidates the village community; it allows for communication with the imagined ethnic past and, at the same time, educates younger participants. Furthermore, the village feast creates a space for the increased and intensified experience of ethnic identity through the collective commemoration of the past. It gives rise to festive joy and a celebration of shared moments for families and kinship groups.

We claim that, in the contemporary socio-political situation, the Luzhicy village feast, through its material objects and sensory involvement, has proved to be a more productive and sustainable mode of creating and supporting ethnic identity than the more transient exposition of the Votian Museum.

In conclusion, an ethnic cultural space can be created in either more stable places, such as a museum, or in temporal, performative spaces, such as the village feast. Yet, both cases indicate that the cultural space is actively produced by particular individual agencies, who, in their embodied actions and experiences, constantly negotiate the present and the future of ethnic survival.

Notes

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- 1 All the activists were interested in “Votian affairs”, but only few of them possessed active knowledge of the Votian language.
 - 2 We use the term “village feast” to mark a subcategory of a festival, a collective phenomenon that creates and supports in-group cohesion within the particular community. A more specific term is preferred here in order to stress the one-time religious and communal function of the celebration (cf. Shevzov 2004). The term *Luzhickaia sklachina*, literally translated as “clubbing of Luzhicy” (*складчина < складываться* ‘club together; pool one’s resources’), refers to the communality of the event. Activists also use the Votian parallel term *Luutsan vakkovõ*.
 - 3 Richard Schechner’s (2002: 22) basic definition of performance as “restored” behaviour indicates not only the repetitiveness of cultural practices, but also the way identities (whether personal or collective) and traditions are enacted in multiple acts that are unique, yet

always contain some remnants of what was done in the past.

- 4 For example, Soviet scholars, as well as authorities, did not make the distinction between various indigenous peoples of the region and labelled them all as Izhorians, another Balto-Finnic ethnic group living in the Leningrad Oblast. That is the reason why local Votian villagers started to identify themselves voluntarily as Izhorians and, due to long-term non-recognition and assimilation in recent decades, also as Russians. Tatiana Efimova stressed the importance of the “enlightening” aspect of her activities in interviews recorded in 1998 and 2000. (All interviews with Tatiana Efimova cited below were conducted in Russian.)
- 5 Both scholarly books on Votian folklore and LPs and CDs with music received from visiting researchers as gifts had been put on display.
- 6 These periods mentioned by Tatiana Efimova in the interview included the Swedish rule of the seventeenth century, the growth of the village at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Stalinist repressions of the 1930s, the calamities of the Second World War, and the insecurity of the post-war period (ERA, DV 157).
- 7 The Swedish period is marked in vernacular place-related lore by medieval burial mounds that are interpreted as “Swedish cemeteries” (Votian *švetaa kalmõd*, Russian *шведские могилы*), despite the fact that these mounds date back to an earlier period. Memories of seventeenth-century Swedish rule are a part of the common knowledge of the native inhabitants of the region.
- 8 On the phenomenon of local feast days in popular Eastern Orthodoxy see, for example, Shevzov 2004 and Västriik 2008.
- 9 Luzhicy was for the first time mentioned in written sources in tax lists of the year 1500, documenting the inhabitants of the Votian Fifth, a former administrative unit of the Novgorodian Republic.
- 10 This date generally corresponds to the Day of Sts. Peter and Paul in the Orthodox church calendar, celebrated traditionally as one of the feast days by the Luzhicy village chapel up to the 1960s (cf. Västriik 2008: 106–107).
- 11 On the flag, designed by Votian activists in 2002, there is a red cross on a white centreboard, which is framed by two blue triangles.
- 12 There are only a few dozen people, elderly men and women, who have an active knowledge of Votian. Nonetheless, the native language is an important symbolic value for the Votian revival movement.
- 13 The word *Chudi* (*чуды*) denotes, in the folklore of Russians and several Finno-Ugric peoples, mythological Others. In Votian folklore, the *Chudi* correspond to the Nordic mumming tradition (cf. Gunnell 2007).

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A PERFORMATIVITY OF NORDIC SPACE

The Tension between Ritual and Sincerity Re-Embodied through Each Performance of Sweden's *Allsång på Skansen*

Chad Eric Bergman

Drawing on Richard Schechner's ideas of performance, modern ritual theory (especially the work of Seligman, Weller, Puett and Simon), and Butler's considerations of performativity, this article considers that the performativity of Nordic Space is located in the tension between ritual and sincerity. Using examples from the 150th televised installment of *Allsång på Skansen* (a Swedish community sing-along event) I examine how repetition affords us the opportunity to create and re-create a sense of what Nordic could mean in a variety of arenas. Repeating Nordic Space as a blend of memory and re-creation continually reestablishes the refreshing tension between ritual and sincerity.

Keywords: performativity, ritual, sincerity, sing-along, Sweden

There will be more “in-between” performative genres. In-between is becoming the norm: between literature and recitation; between religion and entertainment; between ritual and theatre. Also, the in-between of cultures: events that can't easily be said to originate in, or belong to, this or that culture but that extend into several cultures. (Schechner 1985: 322)

I wonder: What would a performativity of Nordic Space look like? Sound like? Feel like? Smell like? Taste like? These questions begin a discussion of action and doing that is central to the project of Nordic Spaces. These are not passive places, pieces of real estate to be possessed, owned or reflected in a state of being. On the contrary, Nordic Space evokes an active exchange of *doing* and calls forth a space relocated and re-imagined. To do this imaginative

thinking, I want to explore these concepts of performativity and Nordic Space as an “in-between” genre that might offer insight into events that “extend into several cultures.” I will then look at the Nordic Space of *Allsång på Skansen* (a Swedish community sing-along event) in particular through the lens and speaker of sight and sound.

Richard Schechner, groundbreaking theatre and performance scholar, opened up the discursive vista, or a fan in his case, of what is possible to examine under the rubric of performance and as a result created an interconnected web of possibilities for understanding the way we experience the world. Undergirded by collaborations with and writings of anthropologists Victor Turner, Erving Goffman and Clifford Geertz, Schechner explained that the basic performance structure of gathering/performing/dispersing underlies – and literally con-

tains – the dramatic structure of Turner’s *Breach, Crisis, Redressive action and Reintegration* (1974). But in contrast to theatre’s bottom line of conflict, performance looks to solidarity as the foundation (Schechner 2003: 189). In breaking from the Aristotelian poetics of conflict/resolution, Schechner casts a wide net in describing the magnitude of performance. In an extensive table he lists a range of possibilities from clear examples of theatre, dance, and music to “what Clifford Geertz might lift his eyebrows at as the blurriest of genres: the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979–80, a bar mitzvah, famous murder trials (like those of Klaus von Bulow or Jean Harris), Hindu temple services, title boxing matches, TV soap operas, the Yaqui Easter Passion play, orthodox Euro-American theater and dance, noh drama, ram-lila, etc.” (ibid.: 295). The very nature of the term Nordic Space invites community. The word *Nordic* is inclusive, encompassing a region, and the word *Space* offers a location of gathering and solidarity where doing can happen. Is it so far to suggest, then, that a dining experience at the restaurant *noma* in Copenhagen (see Larsen, this volume), the ritual of gift giving between museums in Sweden and North America (see Gradén, this volume), or an outdoor community sing-along in Stockholm find a home on Schechner’s taxonomy of performance? Not at all – yet taken to a reduced conclusion it could be interpreted that everything is performance, and in some regard, this is true. What Schechner sets out to explain in a thick description, however, is what he posits as a triune thesis: “1) there is a unifiable realm of performance that includes ritual, theater, dance, music, sports, play, social drama, and various popular entertainments; 2) certain patterns can be detected among these examples; 3) from these patterns theorists can develop consistent broad-based models that respect the immediacy, ephemerality, peculiarity, and ever-changingness of individual performances, runs and genres” (ibid.: 296). Taking this task into consideration, what consistent patterns or models can be explored when examining a notion such as Nordic Space with its immediacy, ephemerality, peculiarity and every-changingness? And what is essentially performative about it? Can we see in

Nordic Space what Schechner described above as a more “in-between” performative genre?

Performativity

Before attaching the concept of performativity to Nordic Space, we need to understand clearly why this term is salient to our discussion. In their introduction to the collection of essays in *Performativity and Performance*, Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1995) clarify how J.L. Austin’s term of performativity (speech-act) is expanded in the works of Jacques Derrida (1982) and Judith Butler (1988). Parker and Kosofsky Sedgwick argue that “performativity enabled a powerful appreciation of the ways that identities are constructed iteratively through complex citational processes” (1995: 2). Simplified, the iteration gives meaning – action gives insight. Through this collection of essays we begin to tease out a definition of performativity, one that is defined differently from performance or theatricality. While performance and performativity share a similar root, what Parker and Kosofsky Sedgwick want us to think about is that a “certain stress has been lifted momentarily from the issues that surround *being something*, an exciting charged and spacious stage seems to open up for explorations of that even older, even newer question, of how saying something can be doing something” (1995: 16). Indeed, through examining performance, Schechner opens a window into understanding the world. Parker and Kosofsky Sedgwick focus that view by suggesting that performativity is the repeated act of performance, and from that repeatable act meaningful identity emerges. Taken together, they articulate that identities are performative: made and re-made by doing.

Such a question is taken up by Judith Butler where she makes the strong argument that gender is performative. She contends that what defines gender is established through repeatable speech-acts over time (Butler 1988). For example, a daughter learns to be a gendered “women” by observing over time the repeated performance of her mother. In developing this idea of performative gender, Butler opens up the discussion for other theoretical possibilities.

Can repeatable performances over time confirm other aspects of human identity? Can a performance confirm and reaffirm the notion of Nordicness? Can Nordic Space be defined by repeatable performative acts? Performance-studies scholar Joseph Roach considers the way that communities attempt to define their own culture by actively selecting what they will transmit through performance. Different than analyzing history and what written records demonstrate, he contends that performance highlights social memory as a form of cultural transmission across time. Events such as theatrical performances, shamanistic rituals, or Olympic opening ceremonies function for cultures as ways to select what they transmit through memory (Roach 1995: 47). Richard Schechner sees this as a “restoration of behavior” in the ritual performance where the behavior is symbolic and reflexive – “its meaning need to be decoded by those in the know” (2002: 28).

Considering these ideas together, they develop an idea that certain aspects of community and its collective knowledge is in part tested, confirmed and modeled through the repeatable act of doing: that is, performativity. The larger question for the Nordic Spaces project, then, is where are such repeatable actions located; what places make space for these performances? For Butler, gender became that performative space. In the case of the greater topic of Nordic Spaces, what types of places are created when a sense of Nordicness is embodied and (re)performed over time? And how, according to Schechner, can these spaces be immediate, ephemeral and ever-changing? In the assessment of Nordic gastronomy, Hanne Pico Larsen examines the Nordic Space of restaurant *noma* and how the vast expanse of the Nordic region (and its *terroir*) is embodied in the tactile, taste, smell and look on each plate served (see Larsen, this volume). Through performative acts over time, the restaurant is redefining what Nordic Cuisine means to the public, the gastro-audience. The audience is a willing participant in the performance equation. This act of engagement underscores the concept that Nordic Spaces are fluid in their very notion of identity however bound in/to nature, but somewhat simultaneously sacrosanct. At the same

time that we (a collective we) have a sense of what “Nordic” means, we are also challenging that definition: in the case of *noma* engaging both playfulness in form of innovation, as well as nostalgia (cf. Larsen this issue). In the same way as Butler demonstrates how concepts of gender can and will change over time, so too, can the concept of heritage and ones identity within it (see Gradén, this volume). These performative “spaces” of fluid memory exist all through the Nordic region and can be explored to illuminate different approaches of how performance matters in construction of Nordicness. By saying Nordic Space, we are not eliminating, but gathering and re-gathering, articulating that collective or solidarity suggested by Schechner (2003).

The Ritual Process is Performance – According to Schechner

As implied above, Nordic Space is about doing and redoing memory. It is this performative act of iteration, of doing and re-doing that I want to explore in the rest of this article. To do this, I want to bring ritual into the discussion where the acts of doing and re-doing are essential. The current discourse in ritual studies is helpful to understand the performative tension at the core of Nordic Space. While ritual studies in the past have focused more on the exchange between traditional and modern, current scholars are re-examining this dichotomy. Instead of seeing ritual as meaning something, scholars are now thinking that ritual is about *doing* more than about being or saying something. Catherine Bell, for example, sees one of the core characteristics of ritualization as “the simple imperative to *do* something in such a way that the doing itself gives the acts a special or privileged status” (1997: 168). There is a tension, however, that emerges in the act of doing – a tension between repetition and originality, between a perceived ritualization and individual sincerity. The “doing” of Nordic Space relies on a heritage cycle to keep its identity reified, but needs to be located/named in order to be authentic. For example, somehow we agree collectively that a type of cuisine is Nordic, or a dance step is authentic. The moment that the authentic becomes established, however, the

location of the Nordic seems to shift. We have the urge to explore the parameters that constitute the cuisine or dance step. In the words of Henry Glassie, “all tradition is change” (1995).

This paradox is the tension articulated in *Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (2008). Here, authors Adam B. Seligman, Robert P. Weller, Michael J. Puett and Bennett Simon make the convincing argument that ritual creates *as if* worlds, drawing upon the imaginative capacity of the human mind to create a subjunctive universe. Instead of looking at ritual as a fixed structure indicating stasis in order to understand meaning, they contend that ritual works best when it is not seen as a convention, but rather looking at what *could be*. They suggest that we do not teach our children to say “please” and “thank you” because convention dictates so, we do it because the very nature of kindness emerges in the repetition of the act. We say “please” and “thank you” because we want to live in such a world that is filled with gratitude, even if it is done by rote without feeling. We can never know if the “please” and “thank you” is sincere and often it is not. In doing a ritual, however, the whole issue of our internal being is often neither here nor there because “[w]hat you *are* is what you *are in the doing*, which is of course an external act” (Seligman et al. 2008: 24). The degree to which the “please” is sincere is personal and can only truly be known by the individual, but with ritual, the repetitive act indicates a social orientation. With the repetition of the action, we are embodying a view that the currency in the world *could be* kindness. This is what Seligman et al. describe as the subjunctive and by using the grammatical term, they introduce a helpful idea in explaining why we go through the act of ritual repetition.

To further understand this tension between ritual and sincerity found in the social world, Seligman et al. underscore a “continuum of orientations”. They write that ritual orientations stress the “performative, repetitive, subjunctive, antidiscursive, and social,” while sincere orientations stress the “indicative, unique, discursive, and private.” These orientations are not necessarily binaries, but rather “structural alternatives to action” with two modes of

response having their “internal tensions and inter-actions” present at all times (ibid.: 115). Our modern world seems to emphasize sincerity and by means of the indicative and private it has inappropriately been linked to truth and purity. Ritual offers hope to a fragmented world as it “continues to provide an ongoing arena of creativity and tradition, acceptance and obligation. Ritual practice becomes the arena where the dynamic of that third space, the potential space within which cultural creativity takes place, is worked out” (ibid.: 37). Similar to Schechner’s in-between performative genre, this third space makes room for engaging a Nordic presence of cultural creativity, whether the space is actively found on the performance stage, culinary arena or urban landscape. I think the space of Nordic performativity can be found at the balance of the tension between ritual and sincerity. To examine this notion more fully, I want to locate this potential third space at a particular event, a potential in-between, according to Schechner: the community sing-along of *Allsång på Skansen*.

A Performative Nordic Space: *Allsång på Skansen*

The immediacy of our senses (sights, sounds, smells and tastes experienced in the moment) and what we recall (memory) are in constant tension. Uniquely private, I remember the smell of a special cuisine as it evokes a feeling in me, while at the same time I am removed from the ephemeral moment. This same experience works collectively as we listen to a certain song and it moves us emotionally because for the group it brings to mind a nostalgic ephemeral moment. This desire to recreate is one reason why we return to familiar behaviors and yet we can never step in the same river twice. These experiences are momentary, so we establish structures that help us remember. Tastes, sounds and sights work on an emotional level – a known song or a familiar taste can stir the core tension between sincerity and ritual. We hear, we are moved, we are called to respond – together, it is an individual experience and a community event based on prior knowledge. One such place to examine that offers understanding in the

performativity of Nordic Space is Sweden's summer community sing-along event, *Allsång på Skansen*. To offer context, *Allsång på Skansen* began in 1935 as an outdoor summer event at Stockholm's open-air museum Skansen, gradually evolving to also include a live national radio broadcast in 1956, and finally live national television broadcasts beginning in 1979. Initially, people gathered to sing popular songs and as a tradition with humble origins the program has grown in size and scope (Bæhrendtz 1980; svt.se/2.110066/1.406787/all_historiafakta?lid=puff_1635683&lpos=lasMer, accessed August 11, 2010). In its current configuration of an hour long performance on the seven (eight in 2010) Tuesdays following summer solstice, people can attend the event at Skansen, they can watch the program live on television, they can stream it live via the web and they can see the archived version of the performance for a limited time after the event. Given the numerous opportunities for viewing it (in different formats), some form of *Allsång* reaches nearly a quarter of the Swedish population each week during summer (svt.se/2.134076/1.2043610/allsang_pa_skansens_rekordlista?lid=puff_2043939&lpos=lasMer, accessed August 11, 2010).

The viewing experience, however, involves (at least) two distinct events wrapped up in one. There is a live event for those in attendance and a mediated event for those who watch from a distance. The live event has the sensation of being at a large open-air revival meeting. There is a significant notion of eventness (Sauter 2000) where the overall experience engages the sights, sounds and smells of a summer night in Stockholm and seeks to evoke a heightened state of *communitas* (Turner 1998).¹ Those in attendance participate with their full bodies; they chant, they sing, they respond in motion to emotions throughout the event. Rain or shine, the crowd embraces the moment of the outdoors. While the physical stage operates as a focal point to the action, the shared space of all who attend the event sense the importance of *being* there. They appear as the physical embodiment of a collected Sweden. But more importantly, there is a keen sense of *doing* there. The crowd assembles at *Allsång* to actively participate in

the event, most notably to sing. However, this singing reaches into households as well, as people sing along with their televisions aided by the text of the song scrolling on the screen. In addition, the event clearly also reaches beyond the borders of Sweden as was demonstrated by the multinational flags in the audience and the fact that its form has been replicated in both Norway and Finland (tv2underholding.no/allsang; yle.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri/2009/05/yhteislaulu_kasvattaa_suosiotaan_738033.html, accessed August 11, 2010).

Allsång is a good example of exploring a performativity of Nordic Space because the reach of the program extends beyond the borders of Sweden. While it is indeed a focal point of Sweden,² other Nordic countries are represented in its influence, guests and participants (as noted above). As a significant act of doing, it also involves performativity that is repeated and (re)performed each week. Given our topic of the tension that can exist between ritual and sincerity, it is important to examine how *Allsång* entails a cyclical struggle between the two, as mentioned earlier.

Much of early ritual theory was based on the observations of the action and reaction entangled in Protestant/Catholic reform. For instance, the Protestant movement emerged as a reaction to the rigidity of form and the perceived meaninglessness of the formalism within the Catholic Church. Perceived as missing was the sense of sincerity, the emotional connection and a desire to have an "authentic" faith. In later times, this same perception of emptiness combined with the legal ramifications associated with the Swedish State Church (the payment of fees to get married, for example), led many people to move from the formalism of the church to discover new "authenticity" in more charismatic movements. These movements once again tapped in to the sincerity individuals apparently craved from religion and while these new movements included several religious Fundamental, Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, the form of authentic worship that emerged echoes the same loose, sincerity-based form that has developed in the presentation of the *Allsång*. The structure makes sense when one sees *Allsång* as a reaction to the ritualized performance in the Swed-

ish State Church and as a reflection of the aforementioned contemporary congregations. While Svenska Kyrkan (The Church of Sweden) is the largest church in Sweden with about 75 percent of Swedes as members, only 2 percent of its members regularly attend a Sunday service – about 150,000 people (svenskakyrkan.se/SVK/eng/liturgy.htm, accessed August 11, 2010). Another religious organization a little closer to the structure of *Allsång* is the Pingst, or Pentecostal Church in Sweden with about 83,000 members (pingst.se/viewNavMenu.do?menuID=71, accessed August 11, 2010). *Allsång*, with its seven Tuesday installments following the Swedish national holiday of *Midsommar*, generates a television audience of over two million people per episode in addition to those who are in attendance at Skansen. If I wanted to reach a sizable portion of Sweden, I would choose *Allsång* as the platform rather than the church. Unlike the religious movements, however, *Allsång* eliminates the spiritual without doing away with the sincere and still manages to have developed a distinct ritual component.

What *Allsång* has done to facilitate social memory is to script the event in the same way that some contemporary Protestant churches have scripted the Sunday worship service; both emphasize an authentic sincere feel and both rely on pop-culture influences to motivate the audience. While the live event has more of a tent-rival feeling to it, the televised version is more tightly structured, but both have an order of the “service” that is essentially the same each episode – the crowd assembles in Skansen with the “Pastor” leading his flock in an opening song. Then a series of special guests are integrated in the “service” to sing, dance, perform or lead the group in a rousing rendition of a song from the yearly printed song book, or “hymnal”. Even though the songs in this book change each year, the book represents a cultural repository of songs Swedes *should* know. Interspersed among the solo performances and public sing-alongs are interviews with the special guests that serve as human-interest testimonies to help the audience feel connected to the guest. There is a similar feel to the “testimonies” of those who have turned away from sin and returned to the church.

Testimonies are very important in the Evangelical Protestant movement as one’s individual experience offers a sincere and honest witness to the authenticity of the event. There are even public service announcements because the producers know that they have a significant audience to get a new message across. For example, in the 150th televised episode the cast and crew of *Bolibompa*, a popular children’s program, walked through the crowd to simulate the program’s programmatic move to the new television channel for children. Each event concludes with the assembled participants receiving flowers from young children often dressed in traditional folk costumes, suggesting an emotional anchor to a collective past.

Very important to the concept of sincerity is the powerful conviction that individual belief holds. There is very little ambiguity, and thus play, in search for a true self or a pure self (Seligman et al. 2008: 107). Within the Protestant notion of salvation, people personally ask Jesus to come into their hearts and thus wash all sins away creating a clean and whole person. In a similar fashion we see this invocation each week in the very words of the opening song written by the previous host of *Allsång*, Lasse Berghagen. Much like an evangelist, the song’s refrain engages all people to place Stockholm in their hearts:

Stockholm in my heart,
let me sing of you now,
aged in youthful greenery,
island city, it’s you!
Of the cities I know in the world
you are the city that has received everything.
Through Mälaren’s love towards the sea
you are a mixture of sweet (fresh) and salt.³

For Protestants (Evangelical and Fundamental, in particular), the act of asking Jesus into their hearts is the most important choice and significant act an individual can make or do. As an act of sincerity, then, placing Stockholm in people’s hearts is as equally transformative.

The current “Pastor” figure in *Allsång*, Anders Lundin, energizes the live crowd, but also – similar

to a television-evangelist – talks and sings directly to the television camera as if he is speaking explicitly to the people watching at home, thereby involving them in the event in a much more immediate way than those on site. Lundin is a Swedish “everyman” who, with his broad and welcoming smile exudes sincerity urging the flock to follow him through the hour spectacle/service. Looking at the website of the Swedish Television (svt.se/2.109533/start, accessed August 11, 2010), he is the face of *Allsång* and by extension is the authentic face of Swedish summer – light, carefree and buoyant. He is the right mixture of “sweet and salt”, as the song above evokes, walking the fine line between ritual and sincerity, age and youth, tradition and trend.

Popular and traditional songs in particular carry important cultural significance and act as a common vocabulary in society. This is especially true for the charismatic movements. Music moves people to have an emotional and spiritual experience. People seek it out, they crave the sincere feeling it generates and try to duplicate it. The choice of many of the songs and those who sing them is built on a collective memory, or a “generational memory” (Hyltén-Cavallius 2002) and while difficult to identify what that shared knowledge is, there is a symbolic construction of community here (Cohen 1985). Using

Michel de Certeau’s theories about the practice of everyday life (1984), Roach illustrates how spectators become actors in rituals (1995: 46). This blurred line of performer/audience is evident throughout the performance of *Allsång*, especially on television. During the sing-along, the scripted line is also blurred as improvisation brings new life to songs that in many cases have long been considered obsolete. Furthermore, the nation, via television and web-casts, observes ordinary people as performers in a larger apparatus happily singing these old classics. The authentic voices (participants in the crowd) sing as professionals lead the song. Throughout each song, several “authentic voices” get the chance to sing into the microphone (but not too much). What is important to note is that people sing along regardless if a microphone is placed in front of them. This is communal song and in a sense communal worship.

In the 150th episode, such a song was the traditional “Flickorna i Småland” (Girls from Småland, a Swedish province). In a clever move by producers, this community sing-along was led by the blue grass/folk group Abalone Dots. This was particularly relevant in terms of building sincerity and authenticity because Abalone Dots are four women who come from Västervik in Småland and thereby



Ill. 1: Anders Lundin is the charismatic leader of Sweden’s sing-along, *Allsång på Skansen*. (Photo: Carl-Johan Söder/SVT)

they were helping to legitimize the song for the Swedish audience. This intentional arrangement of performers (both the local folk group and the audience) brought life back to the song and re-confirmed it as a Swedish standard.

Music is an important part of church services and essential to the very fabric of *Allsång*, and the musicians at *Allsång* hold a significant place in the production hierarchy. Every great evangelist has had a musical genius at his side. The renowned Billy Graham had Cliff Barrows as his song leader – Anders Lundin has Kjell Öhman, who is well known in Sweden.⁴ Working as another anchor for the older generation who view *Allsång* as a link to their heritage, seeing the legendary jazz musician on stage each week further assuages their anxieties of *too* much change taking place. In a time of pop, hip-hop and electronica, Öhman reminds the older faithful that tradition still matters. The structure of the program and the cultural reminders of traditional songs and familiar faces serve to sustain a Swedish identity in an over-mediated world.

Allsång has become a relevant place of communal gathering because of how it engages sincerity in the same way that the charismatic movement embraces pop-culture to celebrate the individual experience of worship. Feeling connected to something greater and living those emotions transform a simple gathering into a conversion experience. If we rely solely on the individual feelings to always evoke the same emotions, however, we are only engaging half of what makes the experience performative. I think a key in understanding how *Allsång* becomes a “third space”, an “in-between” in which Nordic Spaces becomes performative, is exemplified in the chorus of the opening song of the program, “Genom Mälarens kärlek till havet är du en blandning av sött och salt” (see above). The tension is held in this last phrase, a mixture of sweet (or fresh water) and salt. Lake Mälaren is the confluence in Stockholm where the freshwater from inland meets the salt water from the sea. For if something becomes too sincere, it often individually becomes too sweet. Paradoxically, it actually loses its authenticity. In order to preserve something, meat or in this case tradition, one uses

salt. But too much salt takes all the moisture and life out of it and paradoxically, loses all sense of meaning. It might be argued that Nordic Spaces is constantly renewed within the tension involved in keeping tradition fresh. As a Nordic Space, the audience of *Allsång* participates in the performative act in three ways: they embrace the communal *as if*, they willingly do so and they do so repeatedly.

Performativity and Ritual: The Subjunctive, *as if*

Held in this idea of the subjunctive, *Allsång* looks at the *could be* aspect within a divided and fractured community. The structure of the event allows for the creative flexibility for Nordicness to be formed and reformed through performativity. Most present in the performative repeating is the collective acknowledgement of songs that everyone sings. As the example above with the group of women from Småland confirming the traditional aspects of an acknowledged standard folk song, they are affirming an aspect of their Swedishness in the very act of doing. Yet the form and the potential of the *as if* are in constant movement, an inherent flexibility in the iteration.

This is the very point that Seligman et al. are trying to make. That there is room for the creative expanse of possibility within helping the world navigate the changes and fragmentations. In effect, ritual is fluid and how *Allsång* responds to these new influences is found in the performative act. Nordic Space is at once an imaginary and imagined space – one that is defined and redefined in the hope of a *could be*.

Schechner offers us a glimpse in how the *could be* is a paradox that keeps the performative tension alive. When one thinks subjunctively, one can imagine how terms associated with progress, vanguard, the cutting edge, or the avant-garde can be employed within the traditional. Schechner, while offering five different approaches to the avant-garde (historical, “current”, forward-looking, tradition-seeking, and intercultural), ultimately wonders if there is actually no avant-garde at all or perhaps only a blended combination (1993: 5–18). Instead of looking at progress through the lens of a historic avant-garde, with its connotation of trying to shock people, Schechner

notes that the “current avant-garde includes work that is forward-looking, tradition-seeking, and intercultural” (ibid.: 18). Recognizing how complex the avant-garde has become, this description is apt for how a “forward-looking, tradition-seeking, and intercultural” Nordic Space can exist. At least this tension is evident throughout the performances of *Allsång*.

Seeing the world as it *could be*, something central to the theme of the 150th episode, *Allsång* highlighted Stockholm as the 2008 EuroPride festival city with a significant portion of this particular show being dedicated to LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) songs and sketches.⁵ In this episode the complex perspective was illustrated by an ecumenical call of cultural inclusion. This is a particular Nordic trait given how the Nordic countries have had leading positions in adopting universal suffrage. *Allsång* demonstrated this currency with Swedish electro/pop/dance/synth group BWO (originally Bodies Without Organs) premiering the 2008 EuroPride-song “The Bells of Freedom”. The band’s performance was a full-on, get the party rocking, feel good number done in English with a focus on how the world could be with “love for all”.

The Bells of Freedom,
there gonna be ringing
the Love that I’m bringing
is Love for all.

While the crowd got caught up in the snappy pop and the feel-good lyrics, for the television audience there was a telling juxtaposition that the television and web audience experienced between this song and the one lead by Abalone Dots. The televised frame followed the lead singer through the crowd in this song creating a different narrative to the crowd shots shown during “Flickorna i Småland”. In “The Bells of Freedom” it seemed important for *Allsång* to cover as many youthful female fans as possible and nearly everyone in the camera shot was what would be considered by some to be a “traditional” Swedish girl – blond and fair. Perhaps this was a conscious choice to show the traditional screaming fan’s sup-

port of the EuroPride song, and by extension LGBT rights. During the traditional folk song “Flickorna i Småland”, however, the visual picture was different. After establishing the shot with the members of Abalone Dots, the camera cut to a person of African origins (a Swedish celebrity), then to a family of four, then to a single Asian (possibly Korean) girl, then to another person of African origin, then to an elderly “traditional Swedish” couple, back to a person of African origin, then to a young girl, and concluded with a shot of two men in pink outfits with yellow Band-Aids over their nipples donning silver crash helmets. This seemed to suggest that while “Flickorna i Småland” is a traditional song, it has the potential to be inclusive. In fact, the camera routinely tries to capture as many diverse faces as possible in crowd shots, but one cannot help but acknowledge the sea of blond that is in the audience. Understanding the power of the visual image and the story it sends, Schechner speaks of TV working to knit “together many voices into a unitary broadcast fabric” (1993: 90). Here, in *Allsång*, this projects the hopes of how a Nordic world *could be*.

For all its hoopla, both in person and via the media, the subjunctive mode of *Allsång* constitutes a dream of a shared reality and a shared future through the stories of a common past (Seligman et al. 2008: 105). Without this shared subjunctive space, or Nordic Space, individuals would need to be bound by the depths of their own sincerity. Sincerity of feeling comes to replace the subjunctive world of shared “illusion” as the new ground of personal commitment and interpersonal bonding. According to Seligman et al., the establishment of a stable and unquestionable *as is*, rather than a common *as if*, becomes the projected basis for the intersubjective world (ibid.). If the orientation of sincerity overtakes the subjunctive of Nordic Space and thus creates an imbalance, the result moves it out of the “third space” to become a platform for the individual.

Performativity and Sincerity: The *as is*

We have already looked at how sincerity relates to ritual to help create the tension we observe in Nordic Space. What is interesting to explore are exam-

ples when the application of *as is* interferes with the subjunctive performative space. Seligman et al. state that “unlike ritual, the sincere form is characterized by a search for motives and for the purity of motives” (ibid.: 105). A significant example from history where such a search for purity or a “true” self was overplayed, was during the nineteenth century campaign for nation states and nationalisms. In this search to renew the “authentic” sources of sincerity, ambiguity was avoided. In fact, ambiguity and ambivalence threaten the attempt to arrive at the “true” self (ibid.: 107). In the work of the nineteenth-century national romantics, we can see how defined the constructed identities were as the romantics tried to present the true Swede (paintings by Carl Larsson), the true Dane (the Skagen movement), the true Finn (*Kalevala*), the true Norwegian (music by Edvard Grieg).

Nordic Spaces also potentially can fall into the trap of “authenticity” or true self – especially in terms of what *is* unambiguously heritage. We see this in the intense arguments over the most authentic meatball or the exact movement of a dance step. These same questions of “true” self are at play in the episode of *Allsång* under discussion and the attempt to eliminate ambiguity only exposed an inauthentic approach to performativity, but in a distinctly different way. In effect, individual motivations of “authenticity” actually get in the way of the established subjunctive world that had been building momentum through multiple years of *Allsång*. Two examples from the 150th episode offer insight into how the very nature of trying to establish a “true” self or the “ironic true” self actually comes across as insincere to the collectivistic universe that is *Allsång*. These examples demonstrate an attempt at creating something *as is* from an individual point of view instead of what *could be*.

The first example illustrates how the identity and voice of one person, while important in and of itself, can serve to break the subjunctive agreement and disrupts the balanced tension involved in establishing *Allsång* as a performative subjunctive Nordic Space. During the summer of 2008, the drag artist Babsan, embodied by the performer Lars-Åke Wil-

helmsson, offered color commentary to Anders’ “straight”-man schtick. While drag is not progressive in and of itself, the repeated act of inclusion implied by Babsan seemed to prepare the audience for this particular episode to embrace the Pride festival fully and unconditionally. During each previous episode, Babsan would interview guests and prepare to go on with her big number, only to have Anders tell her that the program was running late and there wasn’t any time. The recurring comic gag was that there would be time “nästa tisdag” – next Tuesday. With the opening song of this episode, Anders turned to the doorway where Babsan usually enters and the door was empty. Motioning from the crowd, Lars-Åke drew Anders’ attention and the audience saw Babsan, now in the form of an actor in male street clothes. After five failed attempts, Wilhelmsson seemed to have “decided” to not participate as a performer, and yet was still shown as part of the collective community. Anders implored him to bring on Babsan and the crowd willingly approved. This comic play was, of course, a set up for the finale of the program when Babsan entered the stage full-clad in a bright pink coiffed wig, a lemon-yellow dress with dangling sleeves and high heeled shoes ready to perform her big number. As expected, Anders once again informed Babsan that there was not time for her musical number suggesting that perhaps, once again, there will be time next Tuesday. Now, however, Babsan took control to go on to sing “GALA (Jet-Set Babsan)”, a song that celebrated the celebrity life of Babsan, the character.

On the surface, it appears that Babsan had finally gotten to voice her identity, to be a part of the subjunctive *could be* expressed by *Allsång*. If she had not been “invited” to say the “I”, as Judith Butler (2000: 571) puts it, Babsan’s speech act certainly claimed the central stage of Sweden and Swedishness. Butler suggests that performative acts are forms of authoritative speech and confer a binding power on the action performed (ibid.). In declaring herself as Babsan, in a similar way to other declarations of ownership or statements of baptism, Sweden, therefore, acknowledges the power of Babsan’s performed action – an action of individual authority. Babsan’s performa-

tive statement at the end of the episode seemed to be the culmination of inclusiveness charted by earlier musical numbers and sketches.

A closer look at these earlier examples demonstrates a more complicated view of how her action was perceived, however. While *Allsång* may have wished to demonstrate how “forward-looking, tradition-seeking” Sweden is with this episode, the actual trajectory of this performance, nonetheless, missed the mark. Unambiguous as it was, the performance was solely an individual’s experience rather than that of the group, and as mentioned earlier, “sincere orientations stress the indicative, unique, discursive, and private” (Seligman et al. 2008: 115). Babsan’s performative act placed in a different subjunctive universe, say a pride parade, would have been appropriate. At *Allsång*, however, it seemed forced and indicative.

The second example comes in the form of an ironic attempt that seemed to be trying to understand, or rather, appropriate a unique and individualistic perspective. As successful as the “Bells of Freedom” was in getting the crowd communally excited about a subjunctive universe, a more muted and ambiguous crowd response was given to Andreas Nilsson’s lack of ambiguous performance of “Om jag var en homo” (If I were gay).⁶ In this performance, *Allsång* hedged its bet in Nilsson’s song on a comically ironic number that tried to extract humor from an imaginary *as is*. Possibly the mistake is in the reduction of performativity to performance (Reinelt 2002). Butler suggests that “performativity consists as a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer’s ‘will’ or ‘choice’” (2000: 579). Since gender is a performative “act”, the performance of gender cannot always be assumed to be true. Nilsson’s attempt at performing the “truth” of “en homo” disavowed the performativity of a sub-culture. In other words, in an attempt to be inclusive, he was completely unaware of how his performance played to the audience he was trying to include. Playing on the expectation of the audience, Nilsson lead up to the song with a plea to heaven in the style of Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof*, asking “why have you

made me the way I am?” Nilsson then launched into song with the tune of “If I Were a Rich Man” claiming “Om jag var en homo” how much better his life would be. There was a complicated assumption that was happening at this moment in Nilsson’s performance – an assumption of progressive confidence. As if to say, look at how far we (Swedes) have progressed beyond worrying whether or not we are accepting. By using self-irony, there was an attempt to point out that there is no longer a sub-altern group and in effect removing any ambiguity in understanding a “true” self. What is the difference between saying this is *exactly* how a Danish table should be set and this is *exactly* how the gay community acts? Both reduce the *as if* to an *as is*. During the comic song, the camera scanned the audience to reveal equal parts laughing and not laughing.⁷

As progressive as *Allsång* wanted to appear, the complexity of this performance illustrated the difference between drawing attention to how progressive one is versus the natural fluctuation of a society based on fluid practices and beliefs. Bell contends that as with ritual action, “people tend not to see how they construct tradition and meaning but rather, in ritualization, people tend to see themselves as responding or transmitting – not creating” (1997: 167). It seemed that the error for *Allsång* here was in the action and attempt of creating a definitive self rather than the responding to the adaptable changes within Nordic Spaces. Yet in this tension between tradition and progress is a space where Swedish identity is renewed and made new. Returning to Schechner’s idea that the “current avant-garde includes work that is forward-looking, tradition-seeking, and intercultural” (1993: 18), it might be said that the strength of *Allsång* is in its intercultural ambiguity, the in-between. Rather than living in a subjunctive world that has room for creative changes, the fault in these examples lay in trying to create authentic individuality motivated by articulating the way things *are*. As Seligman et al. suggest:

Getting it *right* is not a matter of making outer acts conform to inner beliefs. Getting it right is doing it again and again and again – it is an act of

world construction. This suggests the counterintuitive insight that in this world of ritual acts the self is left more “room to wander” (perhaps also to wonder) than in one where the self has to be firmly identified with its role – where the matrix of social order is in sincerity (for which there is never enough evidence, cannot be, anywhere, at any time). As ideal types the self *who does ritual* is very different from the self *who is sincere* (2008: 24).

The Repeatable Balanced Tension: A Performativity of Nordic Space

I'd like to bring the discussion back to my first moment of wonder – what does a performativity of Nordic Space look like? In considering contemporary Nordic Spaces, they are not places where individual entities dissolve into a collective oneness. Rather, as a ritual it is a subjunctively shared arena, a space in between (Seligman et al. 2008: 26). Using *Allsång* as the example, I suggest that performativity of contemporary Nordic Space is seen in the repeatable subjunctive mode of *as if* or *could be*. Together we sing, together we break bread, together we experience the city, together we give gifts – all again and again in a mode of a world based on what *could be*.

Repetition affords us the opportunity to create and re-create a sense of Nordicness in a variety of arenas. Repeating Nordic Spaces as a blend of memory and re-creation continually reestablishes the refreshing tension between ritual and sincerity. The act of repetition itself, through infinite iterations, erases what was established in the perpetuity of repetition itself. Seligman et al. articulate repetition this way:

Repetition circumscribes the future in and by the past. It limits an otherwise infinite and uncontrolled set of all possible future events within the frame of a known, specific, particular, and felt (past) experience. Repetition creates by constraining. It creates community and union by replicating precisely delineated actions, words, and gestures. By doing so, it also re-creates. The act of re-creation opens repetition to the future, to what

is not so circumscribed – to what is beyond the ritualized and formalized modes of apperception. It opens repetition to change. Repetition embraces both past and future, ritual and sincerity, the mediated and the unmediated (2008: 120).

Allsång på Skansen thus illustrates a location where a performativity of Nordic Space lives in the tension between ritual and sincerity. This Nordic Space is renewed because a significant portion of the program is based on acknowledging the group's desire to see the action as a potential – *as if* – universe. It could be said that Nordic Spaces today are dynamic spaces for this very reason; we see them, taste them, feel them and hear them sustained through flexible acts of doing and redoing over time. Glacial as change might seem, the performativity of Nordic Spaces are in constant flux, yet identifiable nonetheless.

Notes

- 1 The sense of *communitas* is not universal at *Allsång* and there are distinct moments when there is not a heightened sense of community present. Furthermore, there appears to be a currency of patience as different generations find their experience celebrated at different times during each show. *Allsång* therefore creates this multilayered community phenomenon whereby audience members wait, without judgment, their turn to feel the togetherness. Regardless, people return each week with excitement.
- 2 Often cited as the first open-air museum, Skansen was created by Artur Hazelius during the National Romantic movement of the late nineteenth century. He assembled representative buildings from around Sweden in one location to emphasize the historical depth of Sweden. For a complete description, consult the Skansen website: www.skansen.se.
- 3 ”Stockholm i mitt hjärta, låt mig besjunga dig nu, åldrad i ungdomlig grönska, öarnas stad, det är du! Av städer jag känner i världen är du den stad som fått allt. Genom Mälarens kärlek till havet är du en blandning av sött och salt” (translation by the author).
- 4 Kjell Ohman has led the house band at *Allsång* for over 15 years. He is especially renowned for his Hammond-organ skills.
- 5 According to their website, “The European Pride Organisers Association is a network of European Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Organisations. epoa was founded in London and incorporated in 2002

in Berlin as a non-profit association. epoa holds the rights to the title EuroPride. The purpose of epoa is to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Pride on a pan-European level and to empower and support local and national pride organisations in their efforts of planning and promoting pride celebrations”(www.europride.info, accessed August 11, 2010).

- 6 Andreas Nilsson is most known in Sweden as the voice of Kalle Anka – Sweden’s Donald Duck. The choice of Nilsson to sing a song reflecting a cultural “other” was an interesting choice given the fact that he voices a classic “other” character in the early catalogue of Disney characters.
- 7 The discussion of appropriateness was also found on the popular Youtube comment section where the argument vacillated between “Fördomar är ju drivkraften i den här sortens humor” (Prejudice is the driving force behind this kind of humor) and “Jag tycker inte det är fördomar, han talar ju gott om att vara homosexuell. Jag kan faktiskt hålla med honom i det han sjunger, på ett positivt sätt. Så tro inte att jag har fördomar, se det som en komplimang!” (I do not think it’s prejudice, he is talking good about being gay. I can actually agree with him in what he sings, in a positive way. So, do not think that I have prejudices, see it as a compliment!) (youtube.com/watch?v=Q9N5yOITS8g, accessed August 27, 2009). Although not necessarily a reliable source for cultural criticism, the comments do shed light on the continued discussion of gender and gendered politics in Sweden.

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PERFORMING TASTY HERITAGE

Danish Cuisine and Playful Nostalgia at Restaurant *noma*

Hanne Pico Larsen

At *noma*, a gourmet restaurant in Copenhagen, food is a performative medium. While renewing the Danish cultural heritage it also adds to it a very trendy life. By both regenerating and updating the Nordic Cuisine, the chef gives his unique interpretation of the New Nordic Kitchen. The performative experience is based on the narrative of *terroir*, ingredients, heritage and authenticity of place. In turn, *playful nostalgia* arises. Through limiting itself to one place, or region, emphasis is focused on the embodiment of the Nordic heritage. Restaurant *noma* is simultaneously playing with nostalgia and innovation. Nostalgia provides justification, material and sheer force, while the innovativeness makes the heritage playful, fun, and, above all, tasty.

Keywords: performance, food, heritage, *terroir*/soil, playful nostalgia

For what is food? It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usage, situations and behavior. Information about food must be gathered wherever it can be found: by direct observation in the economy, in techniques, usages, and advertising; and by indirect observation of the mental life in a given society. (Barthes 1979: 167)

Food, and all that is associated with it, is already larger than life. It is already highly charged with meaning and affect. It is already performative and theatrical. An art of the concrete, food, like performance, is alive, fugitive and sensory. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1999: 1)

Theoretically, an accomplished chef could establish a first-rate restaurant anywhere that the necessary

ingredients can be obtained, and where a potential source of clientele to financially support it is present. As will become evident in what follows, the Danish restaurant *noma* could come into being only in Denmark. Perhaps *noma* could have happened anywhere in Denmark, however, a warehouse on a canal in the historic merchants' harbor in Copenhagen provides the optimal setting for the performance and further enhances this cultural heritage project. Guests come to the restaurant to eat, but they also come to be part of an overall theatrical production, and of course each night's performance is slightly different and depends on how the audience affects the feel of the performances. As in all performances, many elements must come together for a successful result. It is through tracing these elements that this particular heritage performance will be examined.

The name of the restaurant is a combination of the two Nordic words "**nordisk**" (Nordic) and

“mad” (food), which reflects the goal of seeking the essence of Nordic gastronomic tradition. Chef René Redzepi is looking both to the past and toward the future, striving to create something new and unique by way of interpreting *Danishness* in the context of the kitchen.

What follows is a commentary on contemporary cultural heritage creation. In order to accomplish this, the chef relies on the narrative of *terroir*,¹ ingredients, heritage and the authenticity of place. Two dishes will be analyzed to demonstrate how the traditional aspect of this poetic project resides in the Nordic landscape and its ingredients, and how innovation is introduced in the cooking methods and the presentation. It is nostalgia without overt sentimentality – it is nostalgia and innovation combined and used playfully to create a new heritage. The concept of *playful nostalgia* will be introduced in the context of gastronomy and heritage-making, which seems to be lacking from the list of different kinds of food nostalgia, as recognized within the study of food/culture (Holtzman 2006; Mannur 2007; Sutton 2001).

Method and Premises

I was introduced to noma in 2005 when it had just opened and not yet received any Michelin stars; at that time they were already cooking Nordic food. I have been following noma ever since, and it seemed the obvious choice and focus for my ongoing work on sensuous representations and displays of Danishness in different settings. It serves as a contemporary example and shows the immediacy and constant renewal of Danish culture from within.

The staff at noma have had a welcoming attitude and patiently answered all my questions, allowing my research to be partially based on interviews with the people behind the restaurant: Chef and founder, René Redzepi; co-founder, Claus Meyer; director, Peter Kreiner; sous-chef, Victor Wågman; sous-chef, Søren Westh; and photographer, Ditte Isager. All interviews were carried out during the summer of 2009 and 2010. Future work on noma is also planned.²

There has been no shortage of studies on food since Roland Barthes noted how food had become

important in every aspect of life, and he urged scholars to study food from different angles. His rhetorical question “For what is food?” (Barthes 1979: 167) is still being pondered by scholars from various academic disciplines. This article relies upon the discursive and performative aspects of food, especially as promoted within the field of performance studies. Elements such as embodiment, action, behavior and agency are key questions, which are dealt with interculturally (Schechner 2006).

This work rests on a panoply of scholars who have studied food as both a part of everyday life and aesthetics (e.g., de Certeau, Giard & Mayol 1998; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995; Warde 1997), and as the meaning of food in more festive, or ritualized, situations and settings (e.g., Fine 1995, 1996; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1999, 2007. See also Västrik & Vösu, this issue). Besides taste, economy, the nutritious benefits of food, and the pleasure or discomfort experienced in consuming it, it should be remembered that an inherent element of cooking is the performativity of the food itself, its meaning and presentation; its ability to shape identities and/or underline the “authenticity” of either a region or an ethnicity (e.g., Amilien 2003; Appadurai 1988; Lu & Fine 1995); and its intrinsic ability to drive different kinds of nostalgia whether it is slow cooked in grandmother’s kitchen, served raw directly after the hunt, or presented in the beautiful, often theatrical, surrounding of a restaurant. In each case, surroundings and participants are of great importance (e.g., Holtzman 2006; Mannur 2007; Sutton 2001).

The performance is the purpose for a visit, and the performance draws upon various aesthetic aspects. As described by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, food and performance converge conceptually at (at least) three junctures: to do, to behave, and to show “– in other words, all that governs the production, presentation, and disposal of food and their staging” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1999: 1). A visit can evoke and involve various aspects of performativity even before the visit takes place (through advertisements, websites, cookbooks etc.). However, the focus here is on the staging of the actual dishes and the underlying narrative about soil linked to heritage.

While the term “heritage-making” is of intrinsic importance, the general assessment and frame of reference is inspired by the writings of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998; see also Gradén 2003). She writes about various locations turned into destinations, which in turn promise to deliver heritage. She stresses that even if heritage is presented as something old, it is a new production and it provides a second life to an otherwise dying cultural location and phenomenon.

Ethnicity is protean, amorphous and seemingly ubiquitous, and “Ethnicity is, has always been, both one thing and many, the same yet infinitively diverse” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 1). In addition, ethnicity is often made true to fit the experience economy, and is thereby economically driven: “Ethnicity often becomes a marketing tool, part of an entrepreneurial market” (Lu & Fine 1995: 535). In the present case of Danish culinary heritage, ethnicity is being defined by a chef for a primarily gourmet audience.³ Questions about who rightfully has access to the culinary heritage to be shaped, and whose identity is represented in this project are both interesting and valid. However, investigating them would detract from this unique example of a new production, which is providing a second life to the Danish culinary heritage.⁴

Restaurant noma

Restaurant noma opened in 2004 and soon became a highly popular destination in Copenhagen. It achieved rapid success and by 2010 the restaurant had been awarded two Michelin stars. In 2010 it was rated first on the list of the world’s best restaurants by *Restaurant Magazine*,⁵ and thereby gained its current recognition as one of the most influential restaurants in the world. In addition, it has also won international acclaim for its larger purpose of developing a Nordic gourmet *cuisine*, a previously non-existent phenomenon.⁶

The location is a former warehouse on the waterfront in central Copenhagen. The building, situated at the Greenlandic Trading Square, historically served as a center for trade to and from the Faroe Islands, Finnmark, Iceland, and Greenland. For

200 years dried and salted fish, oils, and skins were among the goods stored in and around the warehouse waiting to be dispersed to the European markets.

In 2004 the warehouse was converted into the North Atlantic House, a center established for the purpose of displaying and promoting the art and culture of the North Atlantic region. The frame of this project therefore has a double level of history. The history of the warehouse now gives its heritage new meaning, as the center itself is no longer designed for function only, but rather for display and pleasure of a new audience consuming aestheticized Nordic heritage in various ways.

The rustic outer walls and the general setting are underlined by a carefully chosen interior design, which draws upon the Nordic “spirit” and aesthetic values. The brick walls of the original building have been exposed, wood is dominant and the style is unmistakably modernistic. The tables are set with Royal Copenhagen, a nostalgic yet modern feature, a modest bouquet of cut wild flowers, and perhaps a thick-cut candle. Fluffy sheepskins are casually draped on the Scandinavian-designed chairs. The waiters wear grey shirts, and the overall color scheme is attenuated to both the immediate setting, as well as its geographical location. Regarding the color scheme one reviewer noted: “There are fundamentally three colors: brown, grey and green. There are touches of other colors, but the most dominant are these three, in a bewilderingly subtle variety of shades and nuances.”⁷ The earthy tones remind the patrons of the Nordic landscape. The modernist decor is in itself historic, and obviously enduring, much like the ingredients used in the kitchen. The audience that noma is likely to attract is well aware of the fact that the Nordic countries were the avant-garde of the modernist movement. In fact, it has almost become a Nordic heritage, trademark and brand (Fiell & Fiell 2002; Hansen 2010). Hence the interior of the restaurant works to reinforce the history and nostalgia of the past with a wink and a nod, and becomes part of the playfulness of the space.

Outside is the water and one can see the city centre

in the near distance. Herbs used in the kitchen are grown in flowerboxes while the name of the restaurant – barely visible – is written in a minimalist font on the wall by the main entrance. The unassuming location, the minimalist presentation, and even the writing on the wall are characteristics reflecting the subtle features of Scandinavia, which is promoted throughout, helping to make it a heritage destination. They convey a sense that it is clean, fresh, new, and “down to earth.” Yet, it has always been there. Not the restaurant, *per se*, but the North.

Within the Nordic cooking tradition of the past, there was no gourmet kitchen. Instead, it was a kitchen based on survival (Bringéus 2001). The common perception of the Nordic kitchen was probably best summarized in a remark from the provocative American TV chef, Anthony Bourdain, who exclaimed that: “Scandinavian Food Sucks.”⁸ In 2004, in an effort to combat this perception, the people behind noma brought together Scandinavian chefs, philosophers, politicians, private investors and academics for a discussion about the prospect of a New Nordic Kitchen. Part of the agenda for the New Nordic Kitchen is to create a new image of Nordic Cuisine, while still serving traditional items such as beer soup. These discussions culminated in the Ten Commandments of the *Pan-Scandinavian Manifesto* containing new rules for the Nordic Kitchen, signed by twelve of the most influential chefs from all the Nordic countries. Currently, this manifesto is in use in several restaurants in the North.⁹ The statement of purpose of the manifesto reads as follows:

As Nordic chefs we find that the time has now come for us to create a New Nordic Kitchen, which in virtue of its good taste and special character compares favorably with the standards of the greatest kitchens of the world.¹⁰

The ideological overtones embedded in the manifesto are slightly reminiscent of that of the Slow Food movement headed by the Italian Carlo Petrini. The *Manifesto on the Future of Food* is dated 2003 and has a different and more political focus.¹¹ Most gourmet restaurants today have a similar *philosophy* to show

the audience what values and judgments are applied when selecting the products, what techniques are used in the kitchen, and some may even go as far as to share their creative process. That is all part of the larger performance.¹²

In 2005, the Nordic governments added their official support to the manifesto establishing the New Nordic Food program by focusing on almost everything related to food such as: health, exports, tourism, etc. The program is still functioning, and Redzepi is one of its ambassadors.¹³

One of the projects arising from this initiative was the establishment of the NordicFoodLab (established in 2008), a test-kitchen located next to the restaurant. The NordicFoodLab is a non-profit, self-governed institution founded by Redzepi along with another of the founding figures of noma, Claus Meyer. The purpose of the NordicFoodLab is to find alternative ways in which to prepare Nordic produce by using both old and new techniques.¹⁴ The test results, recommendations and recipes will eventually be made public both for other restaurants and for the food industry in the Nordic region.

In recent years the Danish Government has undertaken initiatives to make Denmark greener by improving the environment (both wildlife and agricultural areas), by promoting exports, through the branding of Denmark and by portraying Danish products as healthy, ecological, tasty, and innovative. This has had an impact on various aspects of the Danish economy and culture, such as the experience economy, exports, science, and everyday diet and food culture. Currently, Denmark is heavily promoting itself as a gourmet country, and Copenhagen is showcased as the capital in the world with most Michelin stars per capita, and noma has been utilized as a flagship for branding Denmark and for the export of vegetables (Grøn Vækst 2009; Fakta om Gastronomikonsortium 2010).¹⁵

In spite of noma's involvement in various programs establishing a New Nordic Kitchen, it is first and foremost a gourmet restaurant promoted as introducing and broadening a new concept of an exciting Nordic food culture. The manifesto can be seen as a script, and the menu reflects Redzepi's personal

interpretation. The Nordic component of the overarching project has been toned down since the opening in 2004 and the restaurant has become more distinctively “Danish.” Danish produce now accounts for 95 per cent of the menu whereas only 5 per cent of the exotic delicacies come from the larger Nordic region. Although this may in part be due to the complicated export lines within the region, it is also the result of the chef developing a personal relationship with his gatherers and farmers, who are all located in the northeastern part of Denmark and southern part of Sweden. From the performative perspective, this was a strategic move, since it is no longer only the food and its preparation, but also the personalized local background of the landscape, that is intrinsic to the performance. The dialogue between the chef and the farmers along with the land and the ingredients in season is repeatedly emphasized by the chef:

When I’m not here I can’t go and visit my suppliers and I need to because our menu is constantly changing. We set ourselves a goal of a minimum of four new dishes a month. Every day you want to make yourself do a little better than the previous day.¹⁶

This image and progression of the narrative is also reflected in the resultant cookbooks. Whereas the first cookbook featured photos of the pristine and somewhat exotic northern landscape (Redzepi & Meyer 2006), the focus of the new cookbook (Redzepi 2010) is on the produce itself and on its producers. This broadens the overall performance and enhances the experience of the restaurant visit. While it carefully avoids the smell and blood of the farm and slaughterhouse, it still brings authenticity to the table and adds the personal dimension to the menu; the patron almost knows the farmer (Zukin 2008).

Restaurant noma as a Nordic Space

A gourmet restaurant is by nature a somewhat elitist project and this one has induced curiosity, joy and pride among ordinary people. It has also made many a Dane raise an eyebrow in wonder, ambivalence and

skepticism. An example is the average Dane’s reaction upon seeing the infamous traditional dish *øl-lebrød* – a porridge made of beer and old rye bread known mainly by Danes for its nutritious values rather than its good taste – (see also Bringéus 2001: 138–148) turned into a pricey gourmet dish, which makes food critics rave with joy. One food critic wrote:

Our meal ended with a take on “Øllebrød,” a traditional Danish porridge. Served with frothed milk, skyr (an Icelandic cultured dairy item, similar to strained yoghurt) sorbet and toasted rye kernels soaked in beer, it’s not how your mother made it (if you were Danish!), but every spoonful reminds one of home. This humble looking dish was my favourite dessert by far.¹⁷

The “take” on this traditional dish has changed it. It is no longer identical to the one in mother’s kitchen: heritage has been altered and given a new incarnation as a gourmet dessert. The question is how much change a dish like this can undergo before it no longer represents what is traditionally Danish (Lu & Fine 1995). Nostalgia is still evoked by hinting at the humble character of the predecessor made of regular everyday staple ingredients. Admittedly tastes change, but the location for the consumption of the beer soup is equally important. The surroundings are an essential part of the experience, and here the meal is eaten not as a matter of survival, but as something strange and “ethnic.” The chef has played with culinary tradition. He revived, revitalized, and somewhat exoticized beer soup by giving it a new context. As a Dane it is hard to believe that anyone ever felt a longing for beer soup, yet, this new version can inspire nostalgia.

Redzepi became a controversial figure in 2008 when the Danish Public Radio and TV (DR) aired a documentary about noma entitled *Noma på Kogepunktet* (Noma at the Boiling Point).¹⁸ During the program, the temper of the chef was on display causing some Danes to raise concern about Redzepi’s ethnic background. It provided a chance to vent frustration because of the fact that a son of a Dan-

ish woman and a Macedonian guest worker was undertaking such a national task of recovering, or even inventing, a new Danish national cuisine. Whereas Redzepi's name and partly Balkan heritage is an issue for some, he himself has used it to recall an image of a childhood memory of his Balkan summers, where milk came directly from the cow and the chestnuts were roasted over an open fire. Hence he makes his ethnic background an advantage rather than a subject for racial polemics. According to Redzepi he grew up in communion with nature, roaming in the open fields of watermelons during the day, and playing with fireflies in the dark (Redzepi & Meyer 2006: 16–26). This image of a young boy, who understands and makes use of his native environment, may help to cement his authority as a chef, even if the analytical eye will recognize the grandiose in such a nostalgic fantasy.

It is interesting to ponder why noma, as a phenomenon, is happening now rather than ten years ago.

Will it still be here ten years from now? Why has the Nordic Space it promotes become so powerful, and such a success story as an example of a re-invention of a Nordic Space? Romanticizing the North, and the Nordic landscape in particular, has been done many times before via landscape paintings and poetry (see for example Amilien 2003). However, this culinary example and the rise of Nordic gastronomy in general, which so quickly caught on like wildfire, seems to be used both politically and within the booming experience economy to re-install a strong Nordic identity and pride.

When visiting the American talk show *Charlie Rose*, after being voted number one restaurant in the world, Redzepi was asked what it is that makes noma so important right now. Redzepi suggested that part of the noma success is due to timing and trend. The ambition from the outset was to create a new Nordic Cuisine using only local and regional products. Later sustainability became a big mantra. At the



Ill. 1: Even if the menu is Nordic, the staff behind noma is very diverse. Here the doors are being polished for the next performance. (Photo: Morten Sørensen, 2010)

same time an overall trend in the world dictated, “If you are not doing something for the environment, you were doing something wrong.”¹⁹ By the time that trend was picked up by the culinary world, noma had already built up a network of producers working for nature and thereby put itself ahead of that movement, which Redzepi calls a *natural cuisine*. The natural cuisine follows a decade of innovation and manipulation of produce in the culinary word. In the kitchen of his restaurant there is always an unbroken link from the environment in which the ingredient is found, to when it is served. In that way you taste both the immediate place and time. This is a new and interesting story in the culinary world, which was quickly picked up by the large crowd of hungry, ever trend-spotting food critics – after all, “What is new in a story about another French restaurant in Copenhagen,” Redzepi asked rhetorically.²⁰

The Performed Narrative of Terroir, Ingredients, Heritage and the Authenticity of Place

As the Ten Commandments of Nordic Cuisine underlines, one of the leading trends in gastronomy today is a cuisine that is first and foremost natural, local, seasonal, and has a focus on superior ingredients, allowing for continual variation by time and place, and reference to the environmentally friendly. For example, one finds herbs and weeds grown in the wild, species of vegetables labeled “heirlooms” and the use of other traditional, and/or artisan-made products which implicitly bear promises of local “authenticity” and the application of moral values in the process of food production (see for example, Ferguson & Zukin 1995; Jordan 2007; Zukin 2008). A personal and stable relationship between local farmers and restaurants like the one mentioned above in connection with noma has almost become the norm for many restaurants and restaurant-goers today. Restaurants that follow this trend go out of their way to offer a unique insight into their terroir. “Terroir” means “the sense of place” and it includes everything from the soil composition, light, wind, temperature, rainfall, etc. Terroir can be said to define the character and taste of its products. Large parts of the Nordic terroir are still pristine, less polluted

than other areas and comparatively undiscovered by outsiders, and especially by those interested in food. For example, the NordicFoodLab has found certain underwater resources such as various seaweeds to be rich and unexplored, and it intends to make an attempt to tap into this new field. At noma, ingredients from such untouched areas are advertised as a trademark; they are presented as representing particularly “Nordic” qualities such as cleanness/freshness, purity, healthiness, honesty, and authenticity (see also Meyer & Ehler 2006: 168–177). It is important to point out, that these qualities are written into the food and the way it is presented, or made to perform. Regional cuisines are shown to be dependent on their terroir: Scandinavian cuisines are bound to Scandinavian soil; French cuisines to French soil, etc. Whereas cuisines can borrow or interchange ingredients from other cuisines, the duplication of products might only result in what Luce Giard labels “pale copies,” referring to watered down or diluted tastes of certain produce grown outside of their terroir of origin (de Certeau, Giard & Mayol 1998). Foreign ingredients and produce are transported rapidly over great distances to complement what is locally available. Whereas this creates great export opportunities, it also intensifies the demand for local and more authentic consumption (Amilien 2003; Zukin 2008).²¹

Chef Redzepi of noma follows the approach in which every new dish deliberately explores the potential of the Nordic terroir, and in doing so seeks to reinterpret the identity of the Nordic kitchen. This places the focus on the ingredients, which are shown to have a character of their own, enhanced by the way they are presented in the overall performance, by the adverts, cooking books, or by the waiter as he presents the food: a carrot is seldom just a carrot; a berry is not just red, or green – it has a long story, and that story is brought forth and made unique, thereby making the performance itself unique for those experiencing it. The various narratives turn each and every ingredient into a cultural object of its own, both contextualized and narrativized before it is served and consumed. Furthermore, like an actor in a performance, it can be argued that the “starring”

carrot, beet, or leek has honed its craft by rehearsal: it has also passed through various culinary experiments by the chef, who is somewhat like the director. According to Redzepi, the role of the chef is not only to cook, but to “understand” the conditions of the raw produce, and to do as little as possible in preparing the food – thereby allowing room for the uniqueness of the birch sap, carrot, herb, or lamb to shine through. In other words, his goal is to draw only a fine line between the raw and the cooked, allowing the cultural to retain elements of the wild. The chef is unintentionally evoking the question raised by Lévi-Strauss about what cultures do to the raw before it is turned into culture (Lévi-Strauss 1969). In this case, the chef is trying to get as close to nature as possible, by doing as little as possible to the raw products, thereby taking a step back from the cultured to a nostalgic liminal stage. In short, he aims to recreate the “mere” traditional through innovation and reference to pre-traditional raw products: a culture that sells itself by getting “back to the earth.” The interest in celebrity chefs has now been carried even further and extended to the world of produce, handing over the stage to *celebrity vegetables*.²²

The following two courses were chosen by Redzepi in order to illustrate this natural Nordic Cuisine, and to exemplify the interplay among the terroir, its produce, the traditional and the artistic innovation, which join to create a deliberately performative heritage project. The two dishes serve as a prism through which to observe the following tropes and concepts: performance, terroir, ingredients, heritage, and authenticity of place. The concepts are complementary and overlapping, and the analyses of the two dishes interact and intersect, and together they present a more nuanced – and playful – presentation of the heritage project as performed at noma.

Glazed Sheep’s Milk Mousse and Sorrel Granité

The milk for the mousse comes from the sheep, and in that milk you taste notes of grass and acidic greens, which are the main ingredients in the diet of the sheep. The acidic sorrel granité gives reference to the field where the sheep roam, bringing the story full circle. The dish takes preparation, but the

amount of actual “cooking” is limited to the melting of the gelatin which goes into the mousse, boiling water and sugar for the granité as well as boiling the ingredients for the small piece of caramel, which goes on top of the dish. The dish is kept as raw and close to nature as possible, securing the authenticity of place, as well as of the ingredients.

Tartar Wood Sorrel and Tarragon Emulsion

This course has become one of the signature dishes (Redzepi & Meyer 2006: 89), and it underlines the raw and natural features. It is to be eaten with bare hands, and it brings forth the excitement and happiness of the guests by challenging the usual etiquette of the *haute cuisine*. The performative aspects of this particular dish are manifold, and correspond well with the three main features of performativity in foods described by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (see above). One guest captures it all in his very detailed description of his own consumption and enjoyment of this dish:

Tartar of Danish beef, arranged in a neat rectangle and besprinkled with toasted rye breadcrumbs and grated horseradish under wood sorrel and rings of onion, left a trail of ground juniper in its wake; a matching belt of vibrant tarragon emulsion shadowed the beef and its hoof prints. To be consumed without cutlery, one uses the heart-like leaves of wood sorrel to clasp the just-chopped meat, smear it through the tarragon then swab it in specks of juniper.

The initial pleasure came from the presentation. Vivid and colorful, there was also simplicity, freshness and purity on the plate. Roughly cut yet trimly set tartar; cluttered though carefully fixed sorrel; coarse, but deliberate sprinkles and daubs presented rustic precision. Additionally, the leaf-topped tartar over the green row immediately evoked a dynamic image of the animal itself grazing across the field.

The beef, mild yet clean and flavorsome, was enlivened by the lemony spark of the sorrel, spicy

horseradish and warmth of the mustard oil from Gotland. Aniseed tarragon and stimulating, woody juniper were both distinct and balanced delicately well; whilst the rye added crunch.

This course considered all the senses, pleasing more than simply the palate and provoking sensations both amusing and intellectual. Eating with one's hands makes this instantly more than just another dish. Foremost, it is fun; a challenge to social convention and expectation too. However, on a deeper level, it also connects the diner to the food – the textures manifest no longer only in the mouth-feel, but on the tips of one's fingers; or through the lemon scent that stains their hands, for instance. Moreover, there is the romantic vision roused; one realizes and appreciates that this is how our ancestors – and/or how the Vikings – long ago once ate. Raw food with bare hands.²³

The diner is practically performing the dish for us, touching upon all the ingredients, their preparation and presentation, smell, color, and taste. He uses plenty of adjectives (such as simplicity, freshness, purity, rustic) in describing the dish, and at the same time he evokes the “dynamic image of the animal itself grazing across the field.” The dish brings pleasure and amusement, and it challenges and defies social conventions. The consumer is physically connected to the food while eating with the fingers, and the food is connected to the soil and heritage. Heritage is also referred to by the image of the ancestors eating raw meat with bare hands.

National Cuisines and Playful Nostalgia

In 1979, Roland Barthes commented on the nostalgia involved in the creation of the myth about the French and their national cuisine:

French food is never supposed to be innovative, except when it rediscovers long-forgotten secrets. The historical theme, which was so often sounded in our advertising, mobilizes two different values: on the one hand, it implies an aristocratic tradition (dynasties of manufactures, moutarde

du Roy, the Brandy of Napoleon); on the other hand, food frequently carries notions of representing the flavorful survival of an old, rural society that is itself highly idealized. In this manner, food brings the memory of the soil into our very contemporary life; hence the paradoxical association of gastronomy and industrialization in the form of canned “gourmet dishes.” No doubt the myth of French cooking abroad (as expressed to foreigners) strengthens this “nostalgic” value of food considerably; but since the French themselves actively participate in this myth (especially when travelling), it is fair to say that through his food the Frenchman experiences a certain national continuity. By way of thousand detours, food permits him to insert himself daily into his own past and to believe in a certain culinary “being” of France. (Barthes 1979: 170–171)

Whereas the French nostalgia described by Barthes' views, traditions as customary practices and ways of acting, the Danish/Nordic nostalgia of noma, and similar Nordic gourmet restaurants, focus on tradition in the form of the historical landscape itself. Here, it is the pointedly Nordic qualities of the landscape that are being showcased. This performance of environmental heritage automatically evokes a strong hint of nostalgia since it is perceived as connected with an authentic and idealized rural past that is being threatened in the contemporary world (Amilien 2003). However, the consistent linking of the Nordic soil with the sensory experience of taste that draws flavor from the local earth would seem to be new and innovative in the culinary world – especially when it is coupled with the ability to taste, and discern, authentic Danishness. The idea that these taste sensations give an added performance dimension through their being linked not only to food narratives but also to places is particularly relevant to Barthes' quote. If a central theme of contemporary life is placelessness/being a nomad, then what is innovative here is the attempt to create a consumption experience that is strongly rooted in place, nature, history and tradition.²⁴ It binds people to places in contrast to trends of postmodernity, which focus

on the global with a lack of reference to a place, as for example in the various fusion cuisines. Visitors at noma are not simply consuming the place/food – they are making it part of their own bodies. This creates a heritage tourism with embodiment as the central issue, or even “gastronomic tourism” (Zelinsky 1985: 51).

Playful nostalgia is what is at work in the noma kitchen, and on display in the dining room, with its modernist decor. I use the term nostalgia with caution being well aware that it has its own body of theoretical literature, and applications. I apply the term hinting at its general use often related with marketing and consuming strategies in contemporary western societies. I use *playful nostalgia* only in the context of the food experience and base it on the growing literature on this subject. Most kinds of culinary nostalgia are found within the private settings of immigrant groups cooking in order to overcome feelings of displacement and dislocation, and to compensate for the longing for faraway places (see e.g., Holtzman 2006). Restaurant noma on the other hand, is right at home in its own terroir, making use of what grows in its very own backyard. The nostalgic aspect of the *noma* cooking is therefore not only about space, but also about the historic past, as attested to by the title of the recent cookbook. The project is about *noma: Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine* (Redzepi 2010). At noma the chef tries to revive and revise the diet of the past, making it look and taste good in new ways.

Sheep’s milk is given new shape and texture, and presented in new ways, yet pointing back in time playing on the very heritage of the place in which the food is served. It is a new production that provides a new life to the Nordic diet and image.

The nostalgia, the Nordic terroir, and history lend justification and material, whereas the innovativeness makes this cultural heritage project full of jest. The materializations of culinary nostalgia are served without overt sentimentality. It is performative and innovative yet backed by food historians and completely bound to the Nordic terroir.

The key issues of performance, aesthetics, terroir, ingredients, heritage making, and *playful nostalgia*

are all exemplified in the two examples of dishes. The scenography of the setting, the minimalist interior design which has become a brand, along with the innovative and fun presentation of food, the smells, the colors, the juxtaposition of the rustic versus the fragile, the traditional versus the new to be found in both the dishes served, as well as in the surroundings, are all carefully chosen elements evocative to the imagination of the visitors, who of course bring their own sets of expectations, and who are dressed to play their part. The dining room is kept quiet, no music is played, and no noise is to be heard from the kitchen, which is situated in the restaurant proper, so that the customers can see where the food is prepared. The waiters and chefs (who both prepare and serve the food) are waiting in the wings to help the visitors to be seduced and transplanted into the middle of the recreated Nordic terroir. In his attempt to create a particular form of nostalgic, earthy harmony the chef has chosen and prepared something of that beautiful North which is both rough and rugged, but simultaneously serene and almost fragile.

The Glazed Sheep’s Milk Mousse and Sorrel Granité is an example of the harmony between the ingredients and their environment (Redzepi & Meyer 2006: 25, 48). It is supposed to evoke the imagery and taste of the serene North and its products: a sheep, its natural habitat, and its milk. It is a short, yet complex narrative.

Conclusion

The case study described above presents Danish cultural heritage in food, and emphasizes a progressive stance that recognizes the need for a new and fresh image of Danish cultural heritage. It tries to follow current trends, but it also tries to create new ones. In this new approach to cultural heritage, Denmark and the Nordic region are presented as trendy, clean, pristine, and minimalist, with the emphasis being placed on the terroir by means of a focus on the narrative of each individual ingredient. As Barthes commented: “food brings the memory of the soil into our very contemporary life” (Barthes 1979: 170). Restaurant noma is the case in point: it deliberately (via a range of different senses) binds itself

to one place, or region, and it is exactly the diverse nature of this region that gives noma its *raison d'être* and its distinctive character. Restaurant noma could not have happened outside of the Nordic region, the strong narrative about the terroir-dependent ingredients underscores this fact. People will have to travel to the North in order to experience a culinary performance at noma. Produce from the Nordic region can be exported, and that is why places like noma become even more important on the national level. Politically, there is a lot to gain from the noma trend. René Redzepi admits that this success and position as number one in the world does not only mark the peak – it also prepares noma for the end: “The question is just, how long is this end going to be.”²⁵

“For what is food?” (Barthes 1979: 167). “Food, like performance, is alive, fugitive and sensory” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1999: 1). Food as a medium carries the ability to simultaneously play the nostalgic, as well as the innovative, part in heritage renewal. The nostalgia provides justification, material and sheer force while the innovativeness makes this cultural heritage project playful, fun, and above all tasty.

Bon appétit.

Notes

- 1 *Terroir* refers to earth, land, and soil. It is a term used in culinary jargon referring to the uniqueness of the soil from particular areas, which in turn affect the animals and plants belonging to these areas (de Certeau, Giard & Mayol 1998; Meyer & Ehler 2006).
- 2 This article is one out of three pieces planned on noma. The two subsequent articles will focus on embodiment and nostalgia. I follow the supply line of ingredients from the farmer/gatherer, through the hands of the chef, to the beautiful plate at noma. There is much playfulness in the relation between the chef and his suppliers. If a supplier sends bark to the restaurant, the chef will try to implement it in the menu, in a new way. If the chef wants to serve edible soil, the supplier helps inventing dirt to be consumed. My goal with these articles is to elaborate on the idea of playful nostalgia as introduced in this article, and to give an example of a sensory heritage, one that relies on the embodiment of terroir (dirt). At noma visitors are not simply consuming the place/food – they are making it part of their own bodies.
- 3 The perception of noma could easily be turned into a Bourdieudian project on taste and class (Bourdieu 1984), but this is not the primary object of this paper. Bourdieu's distinctions are often applied in the studies on food, and with regard to noma it could be argued that this is a case of “planned distinction” that indeed succeeded. For a discussion on taste, culture, and food as well as a discussion of Bourdieu's work on taste when applied to the study of food, see for example Bourdieu 1984; Fine 1995; Holt 1997; Jordan 2007.
- 4 For various useful discussions on the use of cultural heritage and cultural property in both local and national settings, see for example last year's special issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* (2009: 39:2).
- 5 See www.theworlds50best.com/, accessed July 12, 2010.
- 6 See for example www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/may/24/noma-restaurant-copenhagen-jay-rayner, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 7 From www.yype.co.uk/place/551601-Noma-Copenhagen, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 8 From http://seattlest.com/2008/06/09/appreciating_an.php, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 9 From www.noma.dk/main.php?lang=dk&id=3, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 10 From www.nordiskkoecken.dk/, accessed March 29, 2010. The annotat manifesto is on the same website.
- 11 See http://slowfood.com/about_us/eng/popup/campaigns_future.lasso, accessed September 10, 2010.
- 12 See for example Adrià, Soler & Adrià 2008.
- 13 From www.nynordiskmad.org, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 14 From <http://nynordiskmad.org/nyheder/nyheter/visning/arkiv/2008/maj/23/artikel/food-lab-for-the-world-of-nordic-food/>, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 15 The same trend and focus on gastronomy can be seen in all the Nordic countries. The focus on the New Nordic Kitchen, the increased interest in Nordic food products, and the use of nature as branding has of course attracted the interest of many Nordic scholars as well. See for example: Amilien 2003; Bursted, Fredriksson & Jönsson 2005; Christensen & Povlsen 2008; Jönsson 2002; Jönsson & Tellström 2009; Tellström, Gustafsson & Fjellström 2003; Tellström, Gustafsson & Mossberg 2005, 2006.
- 16 From www.decanter.com/news/299925.html, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 17 From <http://gourmettraveller.wordpress.com/2009/12/23/noma/>, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 18 To see the program go to: www.dr.dk/DR1/Dokumentar/2008/1105154542.htm, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 19 René Redzepi at Charlie Rose: www.charlierose.com/view/interview/11054, accessed August 6, 2010.
- 20 René Redzepi at Charlie Rose: www.charlierose.com/view/interview/11054, accessed August 6, 2010.

- 21 For two recent studies emphasizing the meaning and importance of terroir in branding and the progressive commodification of (national and regional) heritage and culture, see for example Christensen & Povlsen 2008; Høyrup & Munk 2009.
- 22 See for example Wood 2000.
- 23 From <http://chowhound.chow.com/topics/654057>, accessed March 29, 2010.
- 24 For a discussion of contemporary life of placelessness vs. settlement, see Bauman 2000: 13, 187f., 198f.
- 25 René Redzepi at Charlie Rose: www.charlierose.com/view/interview/11054, accessed August 6, 2010.

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LEGENDARY PERFORMANCES

Folklore, Repertoire and Mapping

Timothy R. Tangherlini

Maps can play an important role in understanding the close connection between individuals, their lived environment and their story repertoires. The legend genre is particularly related to local environment. Although the original historic-geographic method proposed by Kaarle and Julius Krohn has been largely abandoned by folklorists, the role the map can play in advancing our understanding of the important relationships between teller, told and the environment should not be dismissed. A new approach to folklore repertoire is presented here. This approach makes use of digital archival resources and geographic information systems that allow folklorists to visualize and interpret aspects of folklore closely linked to the environment. This paper presents several small experiments based on the legend collections of Evald Tang Kristensen as an illustration of the power of this new historic-geographic approach.

Keywords: storytelling, repertoire, mapping, computation, geography

Legend, by its very nature, is closely linked to locality (Tangherlini 1990: 385). In legend performance, individual tradition participants explore, debate and ultimately reconfigure the landscape in which their daily lives are embedded. As Terry Gunnell astutely observes,

Legends are told within a particular space, and refer directly to that space however broadly or narrowly defined. And when they are told, remembered and passed on, referring to this and other spaces ... they ... have an effect on the way in which the environment they are told in is understood. (Gunnell 2008: 14)

Michel de Certeau's notion that stories can be seen as "repertoires of schemes of action" brings this nar-

rative reconfiguration of the environment into the ideological, since story performance can be seen as an examination of a locally situated scheme of action (de Certeau 1984: 23). William Labov and Joshua Waletzky's structural map of everyday narrative helps pinpoint the locus of the ideological in these stories (Labov & Waletzky 1966). When a storyteller proposes a strategy to combat a threat presented in the complicating action – a terrifying ghost or a threatening witch for instance – the choice of that particular strategy is an ideological endeavor (Tangherlini 1998, 2000). The resolution to the conflict can be seen as an endorsement or rejection of the proposed strategy depending on the story's outcome. Legend performances thus contribute to the ongoing negotiation between community members over the contours of a locally situated cultural ideology.

The performance of legend indicates that the social boundaries of the group, the physical boundaries of the community, delimitations of inside and outside, questions of belonging and not belonging, the location of both the dangerous and the safe and the projection of these concerns into the local environment are all in a state of constant flux. Features of the landscape – both natural and man-made – take on new and at times contradictory meanings as part of this dynamic process (Tangherlini 1999: 101–102). Interpreting legend in the context of the lives of those who create, perform, receive and re-create those stories requires an understanding of the shifting relationships between tradition participants, their story repertoires and the environment. Mapping these relationships using cartographic representations can play an important role in this interpretive process.

From Historic-Geographic Method to Computational Folkloristics

The earliest folklorists were keenly aware of the power that visual representations of the underlying field data can have as analytical tools. Julius and Kaarle Krohn's methodology for the study of folklore variants, originally predicated on the study of oral narrative, but later adapted for most forms of folkloric expression, required the use of geographical representations – maps – as a means for understanding not only the distribution of variant forms, but also for tracing the historical development and geographic spread of those forms (Krohn 1926). The method, often referred to as the “historic-geographic method,” ultimately proved untenable, focused as it was on the discovery of *Urformen* (original forms) and a fairly simplistic – or at least unrealistic – model of stasis, change, transmission and distribution.¹ Given these goals, the method paid scant attention to the actual performance of traditional expression, and essentially no attention to the relationship between individual tale tellers and the environments in which they lived. Nevertheless, the method recognized the profound impact on thinking that the map can have as a means for understanding places related to memory, recollection and performance.

The method was codified by Antti Aarne in *Leitfaden der vergleichenden Märchenforschung* (1913; Chesnutt 1993: 236) and later presented in *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode* (Krohn 1926) as a how-to guide for applying the method to the study of a folk expression and its variants. Alternately labeled the “comparative method,” the “cartographic method,” the “historic-geographic method,” and the “Finnish method,” the adoption of this method by largely European folklorists in the first decades of the twentieth century as the defining approach in folkloristics resulted in a large series of studies, many published in FF Communications.² In its early years, FF Communications became a *de facto* factory for the dissemination of these results. Apart from Aarne's numerous monographs on various folktale types, the most impressive of these comparative studies in the first quarter of the twentieth century include Walter Anderson's *Kaiser und Abt*, considered among the most important applications of the method to the study of *Schwank* or jocular tales (1923); Waldemar Liungman's study of the princess in the earth mound (1925), perhaps one of the more thorough applications of the method; and Reidar Christiansen's study of the two travelers (1916). The method also led to the development of many of the standard reference works for the comparative study of tales, including the tale-type index, the motif index and the catalog of the migratory legends (Uther 2004; Thompson 1955–1958; Christiansen [1958] 1992). In more recent years, scholars such as Christine Goldberg have attempted to rehabilitate the method with some worthwhile results (1993, 1997).

It is interesting to note that the number of actual maps included in these studies is remarkably small. This paucity of maps can be attributed in part to the difficulty and costs associated with producing hand-drawn maps in the early decades of the twentieth century, and in part to the limited amount of data that researchers had at their disposal. These limitations were compounded by the relatively small number of map types – largely point-distribution maps – that made sense within the parameters of the method. In general, maps were used to illustrate where a particular folk belief, story type or various

motifs were attested. People – both collectors and tradition participants – were conspicuously absent from these graphic representations of tradition, an absence that paid implicit tribute to the superorganic perception of folklore that informed these studies.³ Paradoxically, while mapping played a significant role in the method, the implicit goal of most of these studies was to erase the importance of place. The maps found in these studies are often nothing more than the simple outlines of political boundaries on which the data points are projected; in their simplicity these maps erase essentially all traces of the natural and man-made environments. As part of this reductionism, individual attestations of folk expressive forms appear as nothing more than icons on a map and are, as such, divorced from tellers, audiences and other aspects of the performance context. Consequently these comparative studies often elide not only the intimate connections between individuals, stories and place, but also collapse important local conceptual categories of place into a graphic representation in which experiences of common experiential phenomena such as distance and proximity, inhabited and uninhabited, wet and dry, high and low, passable and impassable disappear.⁴

Despite these considerable shortcomings, there are several important concepts from the historic-geographic method that can help elucidate the connection between traditional expressive forms and the processes by which traditions are created, circulate and change both in space and in time, and highlight how traditional expressive forms help individuals interpret and refigure the local landscape. Without too much trouble, these concepts can be incorporated into a more measured appreciation of the roles that history and geography play in conditioning traditional expression, and the role that traditional expression plays in shaping local conceptions of place and time. This shift in theoretical approach that aligns with the “spatial turn” in the social sciences and humanities significantly changes considerations of what and how to map, and also changes how one analyzes the resulting maps (Warf & Arias 2009). Instead of endorsing a superorganic view of traditional expression, the focus now rests on an awareness of

the relationships between individuals, place, history, and tradition. One consequence of this theoretical repositioning is the recovery of the mutually constitutive performance-centered aspects of tradition and place, even when those performances are echoes of the past housed only in archives.

An ongoing challenge for historical folklore scholarship is this need to rely on archival resources. Richard Schechner cautions that

[h]ard as it may be for some scholars to swallow, performance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them. What they lose first and most importantly is their immediacy, their existence in a specific space and context. Media recording abolishes these almost entirely. Restorations are immediate, and they exist in time/space as wholes; but the occasion is different, the audience is different, and the performers are different. ([1983] 1989: 50)

While Schechner’s observations on the nature of performance are undoubtedly true, the logical conclusion of his position would be to abandon the critical analysis of folklore altogether, as any analysis necessarily rests on a retrospective engagement with the performed.⁵ A simple corrective to this position acknowledges that the individual performance has disappeared forever, but also recognizes that traces of that performance exist both in the archive and in the environment. A subsequent palimpsestic engagement with tradition in which the traces of performance are read both in the archive and in the environment allows for a rehabilitation of the archive. The challenge is to reconnect individuals to their repertoires and to situate them in their proper historical context – both environmental and social. Such an approach requires a great deal of archival research, and a great deal of access to data.

Starting in the mid-1990s, developments in computing made this approach tenable: inexpensive computers became increasingly powerful both in terms of computation and visual display; mapping software became far more user friendly; and large-

scale digitization projects made very large corpora available for study. One can now connect maps – the production of which had been largely a mechanical operation limited to highly trained cartographers – to large databases of historical data and, accordingly, one can reincorporate mapping into the study of folklore and performance. Connecting large amounts of “attribute data” (e.g. stories or songs) to digital, geo-referenced historical maps while recovering social data about individual informants provides a productive avenue for understanding how individuals perform the local even if those performances were recorded one hundred or more years ago (Tangherlini 2004).

Properly drawn, maps have the very real potential for revealing how individuals conceive of local geography. Performances of traditional expressive forms situated in that locally conceived – perhaps even idiosyncratically conceived – geography reconfigure unmarked “space” into culturally determined “place.” John Kasbarian notes that this understanding of the dynamic refiguration of geography,

revamps long-held notions of space and landscape as inert platforms, grids, or containers upon or within which social relations unfold, and instead treats them as fluid dynamic forces which are produced by – and in turn produce – social relations. Indeed, viewed in this way, space and society become inseparable; second, they enlarge the purview of geography to embrace spaces not only bound up with material “objective” patterns and processes, but also spaces of a metaphorical “subjective” kind that may play equally impressive roles through cultural production and ideological formation. (Kasbarian 1996: 530)

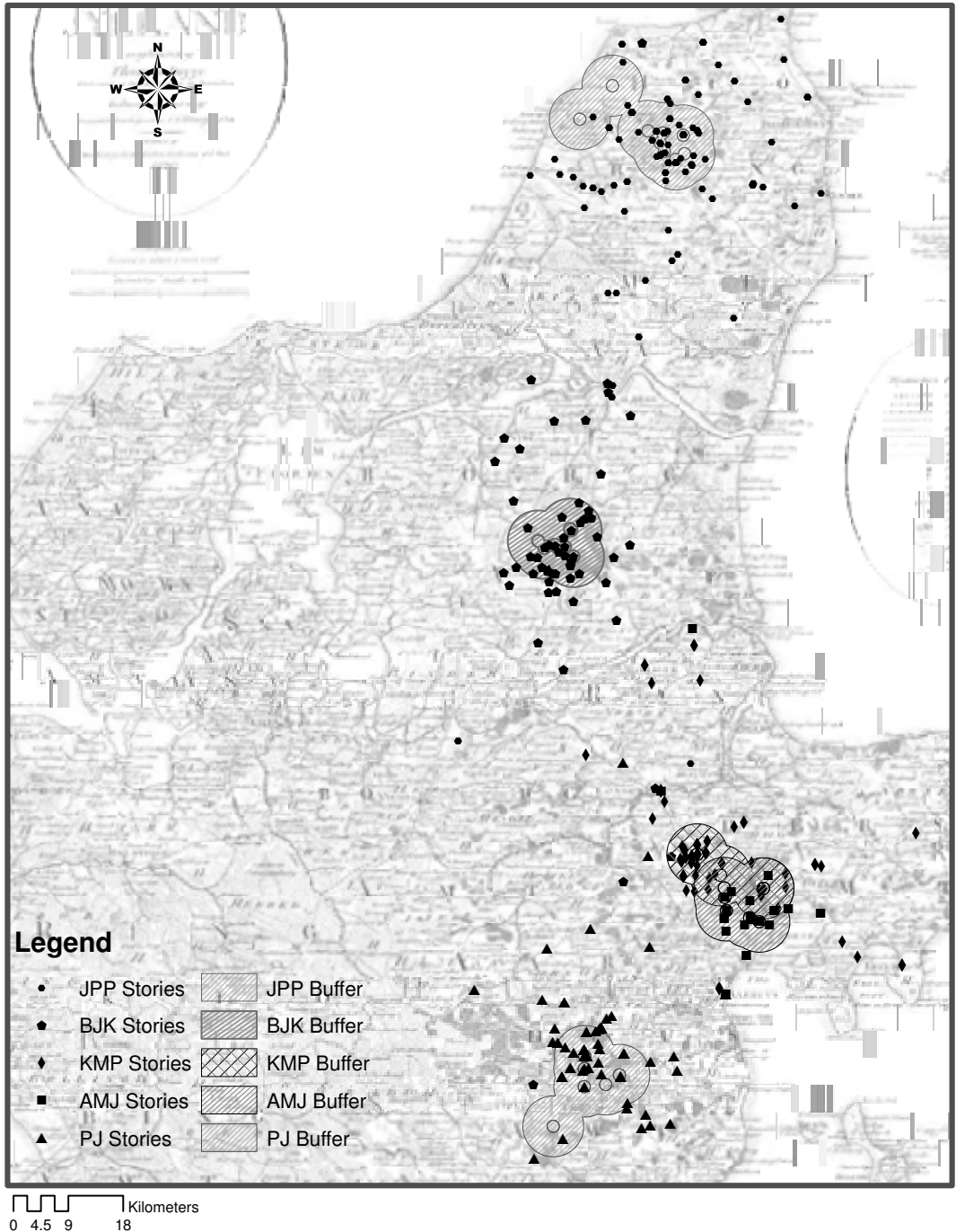
Barbara Bender extends this position and relates it in part to the folklore process, suggesting that the constructed nature of places leads to a redefinition of landscapes as “... created by people – through their experience and engagement with the world”, an engagement lost in the early historic-geographic method, but easily recovered in an approach that emphasizes the connection between individual,

repertoire, place and performance (Bender 1993: 1; Tangherlini & Yea 2008: 3).

Experiments in Mapping Legend Repertoire

Plotting where people lived, where they worked, where they went to school or learned a trade, where they were stationed if they served in the military, where they went to church, where they were born and where they were buried is a surprisingly informative endeavor. Early folklore collectors and scholars paid scant attention to the people who actually created and perpetuated the folklore that otherwise so captivated their scholarly attention. A noteworthy exception to this general rule was the Danish folklore collector, Evald Tang Kristensen (1843–1929). Early on in his collecting career, Tang Kristensen became interested enough in his informants to note their names and where they lived. As his collecting expanded, he used these annotations to plan future visits – he was always eager to revisit prolific storytellers – and to further his own developing ideas of the distribution of folklore throughout Jutland. Eventually, he began augmenting his folkloric collections with ethnographic descriptions of everyday life gathered from people throughout Jutland and this eventually led to his collecting short biographies from hundreds of his many informants (Christiansen 2009).

By correlating Tang Kristensen’s information with information from the national census and church book records, it is possible to develop a fairly in-depth biographical sketch of many of his informants that includes place of birth, place of death, and various residences at the ten-year intervals of the census. Accordingly, one can plot a map that reveals the physical mobility of these informants. By correlating this data with cadastral survey information including land-taxation records as well as the occasional probate record, a general picture of the informants’ economic status and their economic trajectory over the course of their life emerges. Similarly, one can trace their mobility in the context of individual life events such as marriage, and in the broader contexts of shifting land-use patterns and changes in the general economy.



Ill. 1: Multiple ring buffers of 1 km and 5 km surrounding important biographical places for each of the five informants overlaid with places mentioned in storyteller repertoires. (Base map: Bugge 1820)

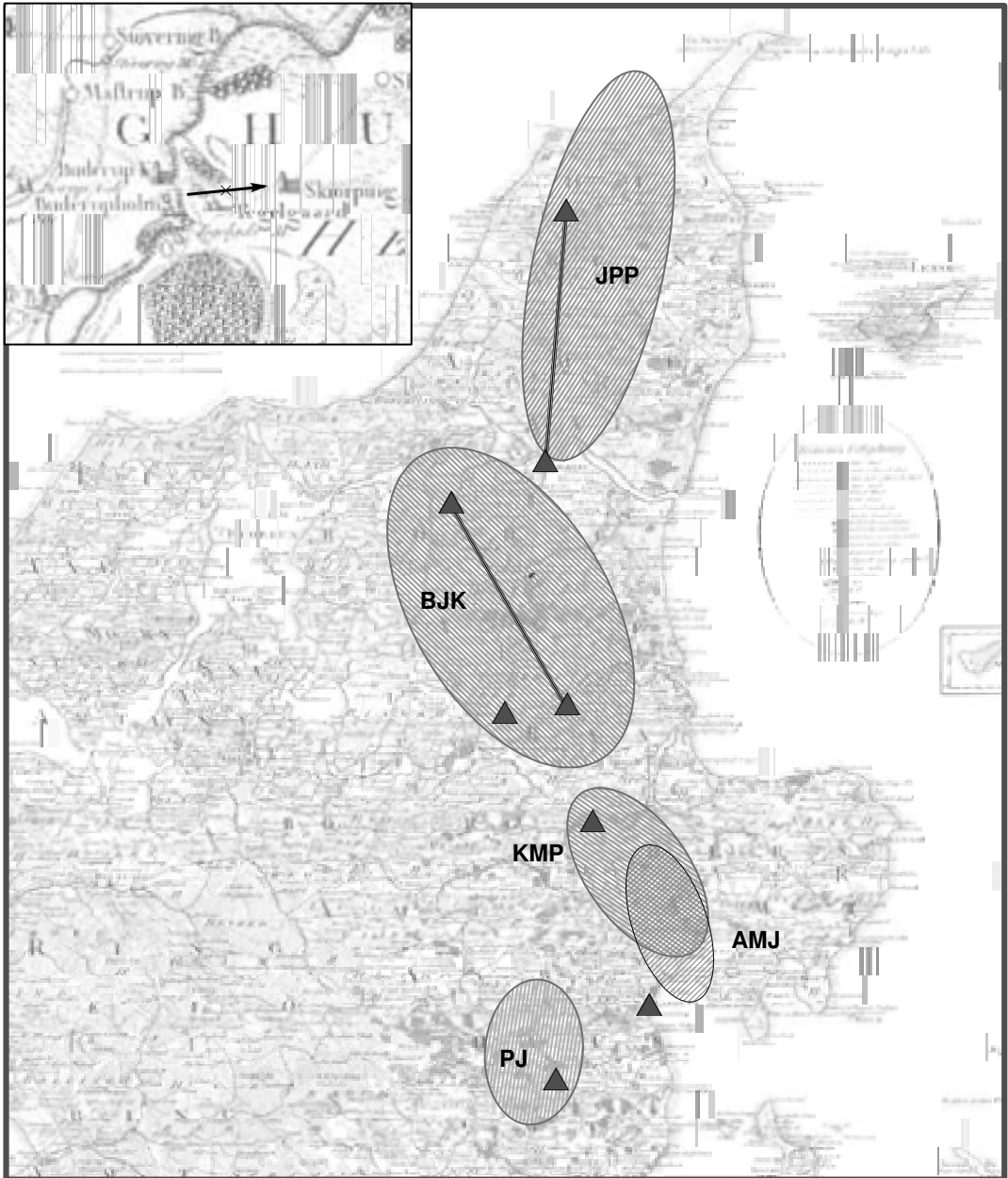
As an illustration of the potential of this approach, a map layer (see ill. 1) projected onto a historical map from the mid-nineteenth century shows the mobility of five of Tang Kristensen's informants. Jens Peter Pedersen (1836–1900) was an extremely poor woodworker who made and repaired parts for spinning wheels and lived his entire life in a small house in the impoverished northern Vendsyssel region. "Bitte" Jens Kristensen (1825–1906), a small holder and clog maker, had served in the military during the remarkably bloody engagements with Bismarck in the war of 1864. He took advantage of various veterans' benefits to buy several small plots of land which allowed him to advance economically. He lived the majority of his life in Himmerland in north-central Jutland near Rold Skov, a large forest known in the local imagination for its concentration of robbers' dens. Peder Johansen (1855–1928), a bachelor his entire life, lived in the more prosperous eastern-central Jutland at a mill near the town of Skanderborg where he worked as a journeyman miller. Further out on the Djursland peninsula, Ane Margrete Jensdatter (1813–1902) eked out an existence as a weaver while Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter (1827–1904) lived a very different life as the wife of a well-off farmer and the sister of an ambitious local political figure. The lives and story repertoires of these five individuals, collected over the course of a dozen years from 1887–1899, form the core sample for the various illustrations of computer-aided mapping given below. Admittedly, these five storytellers constitute a very small sample, a problem if the goal was to present a statistical overview of mobility. Instead, the goal with this study is to represent individuals and their physical mobility over the course of their lives. Unlike earlier historic-geographic maps, this map is not an attempt to provide a visual representation of aggregate experiences.

The map is interesting in several respects. First, it confirms the generally held belief that many late nineteenth-century rural Danes had very limited mobility, often spending their entire lives in a single parish or district. Second, the map clearly reveals the extent of each informant's geographic engagement by plotting all of the places mentioned in each story-

teller's legend repertoire.⁶ It also provides a visual sense of the relationship between each individual's "narrative reach" in relation to their physical mobility. Third, a series of ring buffers of one kilometer and five kilometers have been drawn around each "biographical" spot on the map, making clearer the close connection between an individual's repertoire and their local environment. For some informants, stories are positioned close to life event places, while for others, the stories are kept at some distance.⁷ The map also reveals the direct correlation between physical mobility and narrative reach; in short, narrators who moved around more during their lives told stories about places further afield than less mobile narrators.

A second map expands on some of the general relationships between individuals and the places mentioned in their stories (see ill. 2). Making sense of hundreds of dots can be a visual challenge, and can easily lead to making improper inferences (Tuft 2001). Fortunately, simple statistical tools allow one to highlight distribution patterns in a clear manner. In this map, the points denoting places mentioned have been replaced by a directional distribution standard deviational ellipse for each informant. The directional ellipse is a simple tool that measures whether features – in this case story place points – exhibit a directional trend.⁸ In this case, the distributions generally do reveal a directional bias. The shape of these distributional ellipses is striking, with clear directional trends apparent in the elongated ellipses based on the repertoires of Bitte Jens Kristensen and Jens Peter Pedersen, and less discernible trends in the repertoires of Ane Margrete Jensdatter and Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter. Peder Johansen's repertoire exhibits an intriguing cross between the repertoires of the men and the women.

A likely explanation for the differences in these distributional ellipses can be found in the differences in work domains across the five narrators. The narrators can be broken, interestingly enough, into three separate groups: Jens Peter Pedersen and Bitte Jens Kristensen had work that frequently took them away from home, primarily to the closest market towns. For Jens Peter, this travel consisted of



III. 2: Standard deviational ellipses showing the distribution of place names mentioned in the five storyteller repertoires. Market towns are included. Inset map: route taken by Devil and Per Yde in legend. (Base map: Bugge 1820)

Legend

- ▲ Market Town
- Market Town diagonal
- ▨ AMJ Distribution
- ▩ KMP Distribution
- ▧ BJK Distribution
- ▦ JPP Distribution
- ▤ PJ Distribution

traveling to farms to repair spinning wheels, and to the local market towns to sell spinning wheel parts and to purchase materials. Bitte Jens's travel was related to gathering materials for clog making, and to local market towns where he would sell both his clogs and the output of his small plots of land. One would expect that his experiences as a soldier in the mid-1800s would also influence his narrative reach; interestingly, this does not appear to be the case. Conversely, Ane Margrete Jensdatter and Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter's work kept them very close to home. Although Ane Margrete's work as a weaver and a wheat-bread woman required some travel, it was largely constrained to the immediate community.⁹ Apart from their ballads and fairy tales, the places the women mentioned were all relatively evenly distributed across their local communities.

The larger and more elliptical directional pattern of the two men's repertoires is more regular than it first appears. Close inspection reveals that these ellipses align well with the main travel routes between the largest nearby market towns. Here, the storytellers' repertoires trace patterns of experience that are closely related to their daily economic lives. In the market towns, they could swap stories with other people and contribute to the conceptual mapping of these routes of commerce. Swapping stories would allow them to discover and internalize locations of threat, misfortune and good luck. These stories, in turn, would help redefine these places in the local imagination. At home or in their local community, they could reconfigure their experiences along these routes to align with other aspects of local belief. In this manner, their storytelling about the places along these main commerce routes not only contributed to the narrative inscription of the routes into their memory (and into local oral tradition), but also contributed to the ongoing figuration of these places as loci of meaning.

Peder Johansen's directional distribution ellipse appears at first glance to be anomalous given its relatively circular shape centering on his workplace, Fuldbro Mølle. His work as a journeyman miller, however, offers a potential explanation for this noticeable deviation from the place name dis-

tribution patterns of the other male storytellers. Although Peder frequently made excursions from the mill to nearby Skanderborg, usually to attend church, his daily life focused entirely on the mill. One of his responsibilities as the mill journeyman was to keep customers entertained in the mill room as they waited for their grain to be milled. Consequently, not only did he have an opportunity to tell his many stories, but he also had a chance to hear stories from all the mill customers. Given the organization of milling concessions at the time, the customers came from an area largely coterminous with the distribution of place names in Peder's repertoire. In short, Peder's place names align with the places that define the boundaries of "the local" for the people with whom he was in daily contact. This broad engagement with a fairly widely defined concept of the "local" was reinforced by his secondary work as a fiddler at parties and events. Since many of his playing engagements came from his social network at the mill – coupled to a secondary social network of local musicians – these experiences further contributed to the relatively even distribution of place names over this fairly wide "local" area. Since telling stories of local relevance – and therefore stories that create and reflect local meaning – is one strategy to keep an audience (something that Peder was renowned for doing), it makes sense that he would keep his stories "local." Accordingly, his repertoire reflects a broad engagement with the places that would have had the greatest significance for his customers. Since he did not make frequent and necessary trips to markets – rather the customers came to him – his repertoire did not develop the clear directionality of the other male informants. Since his customers came from a wide area around the mill, and since he fiddled at events in this equally wide area, his more or less circular distribution ellipse exhibits a considerably broader radius than those of the two female informants.

A third type of map shifts the focus away from an individual's entire repertoire to that of an individual story. Already it is apparent that most legends are closely linked to the narrator's local area. Mapping places and their relationships within a single

narrative can help illustrate how a narrator can use a story to project substantive meaning onto otherwise undifferentiated landmarks in the local landscape. To fully understand an individual's conceptual mapping of the local environment, one would need to do this type of mapping for each story in a person's repertoire; these map layers could then be presented and sorted by various criteria – negatively resolved legends, or legends of the Devil for instance. The goal of this “close mapping” is to reveal an individual's ongoing engagement with and changing understanding of the meaningful (at least to him or her) places in the local environment.

In February of 1887, on a two-week field collecting trip through the northern reaches of Himmerland and out to the coast at Hurup, Tang Kristensen met “Bitte” Jens Kristensen for the first time. He recounts this first meeting as follows:

From here I went over to Aarestrup again and naturally sought out Karl Hjort, who showed me to Bitte Jens in Ersted, a group of scattered houses a little bit east of Aarestrup town. I met the man and got him to tell for me, but his wife did not like that, and she hurried up and left. I have no idea where she went, but I did not see any more of her while I was there at the house. Jens was a good storyteller and he was also able to explain old customs from the area, particularly the old dialect that the old ones had spoken, but the younger people are now abandoning. He was an excellent man to meet. He had a sister who lived up on the road to the station and she also sang a little bit for me, but she was not nearly as good as her brother at remembering. At Karl Hjort's place I got food and lodgings, because it was not possible at Jens Christensen's place, as his wife had disappeared. Otherwise I got the impression that Jens who, by the way was not short, was quite proud of his son over in Copenhagen. He was a sculptor and had worked his way up. Later that same son became a famous man as it was he who made the large fountain out at the Grønningen that shows Gefjon plowing Sjælland out of Skåne and that I have later stood and admired. His father told me a bit about

him and that was interesting in large part because he dwelled on how his son had already shown his considerable talents at home. (Tang Kristensen 1923–1928, vol. 3: 82–83)

This meeting with Bitte Jens reflects Tang Kristensen's complex engagements with local populations, networks of teachers and like-minded local historians, and the sparsely populated areas of Jutland in which he collected. The discussion of Anders Bundgaard's famous statue of Gefjon plowing Sjælland out of southern Sweden brings the refiguration of landscape to the fore, and also echoes with the largely nationalistic project that is the foundation for Tang Kristensen's collecting.

During the first storytelling session alluded to above, Bitte Jens told over forty stories, largely legends, followed later in that same fieldtrip by a session that included another fifteen stories. Among the many stories that Bitte Jens told Tang Kristensen was the following story:

There was a man who lived in Teglgården, a little manor farm between Buderup and Skjorping, and he'd given himself to the Devil's power. But the Devil had agreed to give him a sign before he came and took him, so that he could be somewhat prepared for the trip. Then one Sunday morning, his hired girl was to go and get his Sunday clothes for him, he wanted to go to church, and when she brings him a pair of white stockings first, they looked red to his eyes. He says to her that she should get him another pair; he didn't want ones like that. She got him another pair, but they were red too, and all of the ones she brought were red. Then he gets quite upset and says that he doesn't want to go to church today and she should put them away. After that, he chased every one off to church, they all had to go except for the girl who'd given him the stockings, she was to stay home. Now she was to get him a big bowl of sour milk, he said to her, and he put a bunch of silver coins in it. “Now I want you to give me a spoon,” he said, and he wanted to spoon the money into himself, but he couldn't swallow them. So he pushed them

over to the girl, she could have them. Immediately, the finest carriage drove into the courtyard and stopped in front of the main door. She thought that it was important guests and the man who was sitting in the wagon also went in to see the lord but she didn't see what he did with him, but she did hear that he complained quite a bit and he didn't have the chance to leave out the door with him, but rather had to leave through a corner window, and then off with him, and they went fast because they drove over an oak by Hvældam when they got to the stream that runs between Skjørping and Teglgården – there were some scrub oak trees and other oaks down by the stream at that time – and cleaved it so that it almost broke in two, and it hung down and grew like that for many years, and because the Devil had driven over it there was no one who dared take it. Now no one saw Per Yde any more – you see that's what the manor lord at Teglgården was called – but they traveled north to Hell with each other, and after that people heard that when the Devil traveled over the sea with him, a ship came sailing right by at the same moment and the people called out asking who he was. Well, it was the Devil. And what freight did he have? Well, he had Andreas the bishop and Andreas Fal and Peder Yd'. Where were they from? ask the ship's people. Well, one was the bishop of Bremen, and the other was a dean – I can't remember now where he was from, but it was a place way down south, and the third was the man from Teglgården. You see, that was the last people heard of Peder Yde, but when the girl came into the room where the Devil had taken him, she saw his brains hanging on the walls, so he must have grabbed him pretty hard. There was a farmhand who worked here in the town who said that there was always a ruckus in the attic at Teglgården at night. (Tang Kristensen 1892–1901, vol. 6: 142–143)

In performance, the story is sandwiched between a story about an apparent haunt at Torstedlund (Tang Kristensen 1891–1894, vol. 6: 114–115) and the discovery of a mysterious rune stone at Bavnhøj (Tang

Kristensen 1892–1901, vol. 3: 59–60). Consequently, there can be little doubt that this story represents part of Bitte Jens's narrative mapping of the local geography, inscribing uncanny experiences and threat into the landscape.

A map of the locations mentioned in the story projected onto a local map from the historical period along with an approximation of the path taken across Hvældam provides a greater sense of the local geography and Bitte Jens's proximity to the events than simply hearing or reading the place names ever could (see ill. 2, inset). Topographical knowledge – where streams run, where there is a pond, what is passable and what is impassable – is accessible with the map; these are all things that Bitte Jens and his local audience would already know. While a local map is hardly a substitute for a local guide, coupling the words of the local storyteller with the visual representation of the area goes a long way toward bridging this gap for the folklorist engaged in a retrospective recovery of a lost performance. Reading the story together with the map begins to bring the performance back to the immediate. Here, the small manor that appears as an innocuous farm on the map is recast in a far more sinister light while the clearly liminal status of the mill pond and stream is heightened. The unusual path that the Devil takes with the manor lord becomes clear, bringing the terror and torment of the manor lord into the here and now. One no longer reads the landscape of the area around Teglgård – even at a remove of a century – as a pastoral idyll.

In all of these cases, the maps and the various features presented on the maps represent important engagements of individuals with their local environments.¹⁰ The frequent appeal by storytellers to local geography in their legend repertoires is often considered to be little more than “noise” by those unfamiliar with the local geography, a common position for most folklorists. However, coupling these stories to both local geography and performance context – even if that context is the highly contrived context of a collector and his informant – clearly reveals the role that storytelling plays in coding the local landscape as part of the dynamic process of negotiating

cultural ideology. In these performances, the narrators present their conceptual map of the local relying on established place names and more idiosyncratic local names as part of this narrative mapping. Tying the narrative mapping to historical maps allows one to capture at least in part the immediacy of the local, and develop a deeper understanding of the refiguration of relatively undefined space into meaning-laden place.

Conclusion: Distant Reading, the Map and Legend

This exploration of the mapping of individual lives and their engagement with the local environment represents another step toward achieving an ethnographically “thick” representation of folklore and is extensible to domains well beyond the study of Danish folklore (Geertz 1973). The maps in this type of study are not an end unto themselves. They provide a basis for asking additional questions that otherwise would be impossible to answer. As Gregory and Ell note, maps are “good at illustrating a story, but poor at telling it” (2007: 90). One of the most troubling aspects of working with large amounts of folklore material is that one often gets lost in the woods. Franco Moretti speaks convincingly of the strategy of “distant reading,” a corrective to the long-standing tradition in folkloristics of very close reading (Moretti 2005: 1). Distant reading allows one to discover patterns that might otherwise be obscured by too close attention to the details of a text or performance – and the same can be said for the methods briefly outlined here. Fortunately, with these methods, one can combine distant reading with close reading. In so doing, one can interrogate the relationship between performance – in this case of folk expressive culture – and the ideologically laden process of turning space into place. In her short story, “Sorrow Acre,” Isak Dinesen writes, “A child of the country would read this open landscape like a book” (1986: 172). The potential is now here to read an entire folklore corpus not so much as a book, but as a landscape of interaction.¹¹

Notes

- * Support for the work presented here was provided by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies.
- 1 The method has also been referred to as the “Cartographic Method,” recognizing the importance of drawing maps depicting the distribution of variants for this approach. Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, who was one of the most prominent critics of the method, explores some of the flaws in the underlying premises of the theory in his article *Om traditionsspredning* (1932; reprinted 1948).
- 2 *FF Communications*, or *Folklore Fellows’ Communications*, is the monograph series of the Folklore Fellows, an international scholarly organization founded in 1908 to promote the study and teaching of folklore. The monograph series has been published since 1910 by the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters.
- 3 For an excellent discussion of superorganic theories in folklore, see Green 1997: 779–782.
- 4 Because of the broad historical scope of these studies, the human experience of time is also erased: entire decades or centuries are collapsed into a single moment as part of a misleading representation of a nonexistent simultaneity.
- 5 Schechner’s comments are primarily related to plays and dramatic performances but they are by extension equally applicable to folkloric performance.
- 6 I label this geographic scope “narrative reach.” The map also includes place names mentioned in ballads, as these tend to be closely related to local geography. Folktales and, particularly fairy tales (ATU 300–749) present a vexing problem, as many of the place referents are more conceptual than actual: Paris, for example, means “some place glamorous and foreign and far away,” rather than Paris, while Turkey means “some place exotic and dangerous and far away.” For ease of presentation, I have left these place names off of the current map.
- 7 Because of limitations in the number of maps that can accompany this article, further details showing the distance of various types of stories (ghost stories, stories of witches, stories of manor lords, etc.) to life places have not been included. This type of secondary visualization by type promises to be a productive avenue for future inquiry.
- 8 These ellipses are calculated using ArcGIS software. In the ESRI help manuals, they note that: “A common way of measuring the trend for a set of points or areas is to calculate the standard distance separately in the x and y directions. These two measures define the axes of an ellipse encompassing the distribution of features. The ellipse is referred to as the standard deviational ellipse, since the method calculates the standard deviation of

the x coordinates and y coordinates from the mean center to define the axes of the ellipse. The ellipse allows you to see if the distribution of features is elongated and hence has a particular orientation. While you can get a sense of the orientation by drawing the features on a map, calculating the standard deviational ellipse makes the trend clear. You can calculate the standard deviational ellipse using either the locations of the features or using the locations influenced by an attribute value associated with the features. The latter is termed a weighted standard deviational ellipse” (ArcGIS 9.2 desktop help).

- 9 As central bakeries became more prevalent in rural areas in the late nineteenth century, women found employment delivering bread in the early morning to farms in the immediate vicinity of the bakery. These women were known as “wheat-bread” women because the bread they delivered was made largely from wheat flour.
- 10 The database on which this work is based allows one to access the underlying stories behind each of these place points. Were this not the case, these maps would be little more than superficial engagements with the storytellers’ repertoires and would elide the important aspects of performance flow that tie one story in a teller’s repertoire to the previous story and the next story.
- 11 This approach to folklore that recognizes the historically situated component of these relationships and that also acknowledges the close relationship between place and folklore might productively be labeled a new historic-geographic method as part of a broader computational folkloristics. This project presents the beginnings of how this method might look.

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