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PRO ETHNOLOGIA 4
Publications of Estonian National Museum

HOW TO MAKE ETHNOLOGISTS

TARTU 1996

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The publishing of the present issue was financed by the **Open Estonia Foundation**.

Printed by:
AS Vali
Silla 2, EE2353 Põltsamaa

ISBN 9985-9000-6-5
ISSN 1406-9962

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Editorial

For a number of reasons *Pro Ethnologia 4*, unlike the previous issues of the journal, contains articles in English only. In the present issue articles based on papers presented at the international seminar "How to Make Ethnologists. Current Research and Teaching Strategies" held at the University of Tartu on 11–15 September 1995, are published. The seminar was organised by the Chair of Ethnology, University of Tartu and the Estonian National Museum. The aim of the seminar was to establish academic contacts with ethnologists from other universities, first of all from Nordic and Baltic countries, and discuss alternative teaching strategies. Although some of the European colleagues invited were not able to participate, the seminar contributed to the development of Estonian ethnology and the training of ethnologists at the University of Tartu.

Prof. Elle Vunder gives a detailed survey of the history of Estonian ethnology, concentrating on the central role of the respective chair at the University of Tartu.

Jaanus Plaat and Toomas Gross, both lecturers at the University of Tartu, briefly touch upon the different strategies and perspectives of the same discipline (cultural anthropology) at different departments of the University of Tartu.

Timo J. Virtanen from the University of Turku deals with essential problems of contemporary Finnish ethnology from the viewpoint of studying urban environment.

Prof. Bjarne Rogan (University of Oslo) analyses the perspective of studying material culture within the context of Nordic ethnology where rapid changes have occurred since the 1970s. He argues for three main reasons for this: firstly, the objects of research have changed, secondly, new questions are raised (the subjective and symbolic meaning of things), and, thirdly, earlier positivistic methods have been neglected in favour of an interpretative

approach. *A thing is nothing without ideas,* but *The thing does not reflect the idea* – this is the great paradox of studying material culture according to B. Rogan.

In his article Per-Markku Ristilammi from the University of Lund approaches alterity form three different aspects – modern alterity, social alterity and ethnic alterity – on the example of Rosengård, a district of Malmö.

Finnur Magnússon from the University of Lund examines death and dying in the modern world from the anthropological viewpoint.

In addition to the materials of the seminar we have published a contribution by Slade Carter, a postgraduate student from Australia, who has made an attempt to analyse the significance of the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg* and Estonian song festivals for the Estonian people and their role in the development of Estonian national identity.

Hereby I would like to thank the Open Estonia Foundation and the "Postimees" Foundation for financial support to the above-mentioned seminar and the publication of the present issue.

December 1996 Heiki Pärdi

Ethnology at the University of Tartu in Historical Perspective

Elle Vunder

Ethnology as a university discipline and an independent branch of the humanities is relatively young in Estonia, although an interest in national culture arose for the first time already in the period of National Awakening in the 2nd half of the 19th century. At that time first-generation Estonian intellectuals started to develop a national identity based on peasant culture within the framework of national(ist) ideology. Becoming aware of one's identity was the first serious step in the process of transformation to modern complex society (Viires 1984b: 11–16; Viires 1991a: 123).

At that time Estonia was a province of czarist Russia and peasants constituted the majority of the Estonian population. Local power belonged to the Baltic German nobility and the Germans also dominated in cultural and educational life. At grammar schools and university German was the language of tuition and thus the Estonians who got higher education were often assimilated into the German-speaking elite.

The teaching of ethnology at the University of Tartu that had started already in the 1st half of the 19th century, was in German as well. A course of historical ethnology read by Prof. G. F. Pörschelmann was first mentioned in 1807, but it was probably not a full-time regular course (Luts 1992: 77). The teaching of ethnology, a part of geography at that time, became regular in the 1820s. From 1865 an independent Chair of Geography, Ethnography and Statistics existed at the University of Tartu. From 1884 to 1909 an amateur ethnographer Richard Mucke worked as a professor at the chair (ibid.). In 1879 even an MA dissertation in ethnology (on Tungusians) was written

(C. Hiekisch. *Die Tungusen. Eine ethnologische Monographie.* St. Petersburg 1897). The term *ethnography* was introduced in the Estonian language, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, on the Russian example. It was used for the first time by the weekly *Eesti Postimees* in a survey of the 1867 All-Russian Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow (Viires 1991a: 124). At that time, and even later, during the Soviet period, the term *ethnography* (the study of folk-life – *rahvateadus* in Estonian) signified the field of West-European *ethnology* or *cultural/social anthropology*.

Teachers of community schools and Estonian-minded intellectuals regarded the Germanization of the developing cultural and educational life as a serious danger to national identity (Viires 1984a: 508–519; Rebas 1995: 263–267). Therefore the national movement was first of all directed against the domination of the Baltic Germans. In search of economic and social opportunities Estonian intellectuals sometimes turned to the support of Russian central authorities, even in the period of Russification in 1880–1905 when Russian was made the language of education and government. However, as paradoxical as it seems, Estonian national culture was developed according to the German pattern of culture (Viires 1984b: 12–13; Vunder 1994: 28–29). It was given a national content, and the only possible essence of that was peasant culture. According to Kristjan Raud, an outstanding Estonian artist and public figure, original national culture had to become the "precondition of true independence" (Kannike 1994: 7–29).

Following those ideas, the collecting of material and spiritual folk culture was started. Hereby the Scandinavian, especially the Finnish pattern was followed to a great extent (Raun 1985: 568–578). The Estonian national epic "Kalevipoeg", composed by Fr. R. Kreutzwald and published in 1862 became the cornerstone and guarantee of national culture (Viires 1991a: 123–124). The next major enterprise was the appeal of pastor Jakob Hurt (1839–1907; one of the initiators of the national movement) to collect folklore, to which he received a quarter of a million answers (Linnus 1995a: 23). A. O. Heikel (1851–1924), the first graduated Finnish ethnologist, started a serious collection of Estonian ethnographic material. He also wrote the first ethnographic studies on Estonian peasant archi-

tecture and folk costume. Oskar Kallas (1868–1946), the first Estonian folklorist who gained a PhD degree, studied at the University of Helsinki as well (Linnus 1995a: 22–31). At the beginning of the 20th century Estonian intellectuals took an increasing interest in the vanishing peasant culture. Their purpose was to popularize and, like in Scandinavian countries and Finland, revive it (Viires 1986: 79–97). As a result of the described activities the Estonian National Museum (*Eesti Rahva Muuseum*) was founded in 1909, to commemorate J. Hurt. The main aim of the museum was to collect and popularize old peasant culture and art (Viires 1984a: 508–519; Rebas 1995: 262).

At that time the main emphasis was laid on enthusiastic collecting of folklore and ethnographic material. Academic research, as well as teaching, remained in the background. The first studies were mostly descriptive surveys of local-historical orientation. However, this work laid a foundation to the collections of folk cultural heritage, the so-called "treasury for ethnographic studies", and created the preconditions for developing academic research and instruction in the following period.

*

After the independent Republic of Estonia was proclaimed in 1918, the University of Tartu that had formerly been subject to Russian and German authorities, became an Estonian university in 1919. It was considered necessary to pay special attention to national science that had to study the specificity of Estonian culture and history (Rebas 1995: 267–271). In respective faculties professorships were established. Because of the lack of Estonian specialists, foreign, especially Finnish scholars were invited to teach the above-mentioned disciplines (Linnus 1989: 50; Talve 1992: 61).

Already the project of the statutes of Tartu University in 1919 prescribed the establishment of the chairs of folklife studies and archaeology (Luts 1992: 77). The latter was founded already in 1920. Prof. Arne Mikael Tallgren who was invited to this post from Finland paid much attention to the Estonian National Museum as well (Viires 1989a: 80). He emphasized the idea that the museum

had to become an institution for research, the basis for students of folklife studies and for the training of museum workers (Linnus 1983: 132–141; Linnus 1989: 54). So, it was fixed in a regulation of the University Council in 1921 that the Docent of Ethnology was also responsible for the arrangement of the collections of the Estonian National Museum. At first the docent's post remained vacant as there were no qualified applicants, as O. Kallas, the only Estonian Doctor of Folklore, became an ambassador in Finland and later on in England. In 1920, Walter Anderson (1885–1962), an internationally recognized specialist in folk tale repertoire, was invited to teach folklore in Tartu (Viires 1991a: 125).

In 1922 the Finnish ethnologist Dr. Ilmari Manninen (1894–1935) was offered the post of the director of the Estonian National Museum (Linnus 1989: 52; Talve 1992: 61). He was also considered to be suitable to become Docent of Ethnography. Already in 1923 he started to read courses on ethnography. In 1924 a respective docentship was established (Talve 1992: 61). In his opening lecture on 16 October he defined the main tasks of teaching and studying in the field of Estonian ethnology. According to Manninen, the main purpose was to give a complete survey of Estonian material heritage, following the typological and historical-geographical principles (Manninen 1924: 527–537). At the same time he also emphasized the need to study the folk culture of minorities in Estonia, neighbouring and kindred peoples. As the first step, he wrote an ethnographical dictionary (*Etnograafiline sõnastik.* Tartu 1925) and the first short general survey of the material culture of Estonia (Talve 1992: 58–59). At the university Manninen read five main courses on the folk culture of Estonians, Finno-Ugric peoples and several other peoples of the world (Linnus 1989: 53–54). On the basis of these courses a number of Manninen's monographs were later published (*Eesti rahvariiete ajalugu.* Tartu 1927; *Soome sugu rahvaste etnograafia.* Tartu 1929). Manninen also laid the foundation to the Chair library and a collection of slides (now kept at the Estonian National Museum).

In order to graduate from the University of Tartu, students had to pass final examinations in four independent disciplines that gave 7–8 points altogether (Linnus 1989: 53–54; Talve 1992: 62–63; Luts

1992: 78). At all levels (primary, middle and superior) students of ethnography had to pass examinations in a number of neighbouring subjects – archaeology, art history, folklore, linguistics, Estonian and Nordic history. At the superior level there were some additional courses on theory and methodology. Already at the primary level students were prepared for future research work (Linnus 1984: 35–45). 140 seminar papers written by future scientists based on museum collections have survived and are kept at the Estonian National Museum (Linnus 1989: 59–60; Luts 1990: 207–223). These seminar papers that dealt with "material antiquities" such as furniture, folk costumes, folk ornaments or dishes, often also served as the primary basis for student papers during the period of Soviet occupation.

With his competent and fruitful research that was closely connected with teaching, Manninen laid the foundation to Estonian ethnology as an academic discipline (Ränk 1936: 124–126; Viires 1970a: 232–235; Talve 1992: 55–65). Based on museum collections, the research mostly dealt with elements of material culture (Manninen 1928). Although most of Manninen's books (for example, *Die Sachkultur Estlands.* I–II. Tartu 1931, 1933) are typical museum-based studies, their subject matter is surprisingly extensive. Manninen made use of the information sent to the museum by correspondents, the cartographical method, and also took into account the historical-geographical context (Linnus 1995b: 94–95). Manninen's cartographical method, one of the most important methodological innovations in Estonian ethnology, became the basis for the ethnographic atlases of the mid-20th-century Europe (Viires 1991a: 126; Talve 1992: 65). For publishing shorter studies Manninen also founded the Yearbook of the Estonian National Museum (*Eesti Rahva Muuseumi Aastaraamat*) in 1925.

Having provided a firm methodological basis to the studying of Estonian folk culture at the University of Tartu and also to national ethnology in 1922–1928, Manninen also worked out the scientific principles of systematization for the collections of the Estonian National Museum, following the examples of the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki and the Nordic Museum in Stockholm (Linnus 1995b: 89–91). The same principles of systematization are valid at the Estonian National Museum today. When the permanent

exhibition of Estonian folk culture was opened at the Raadi Manor in 1927, the Estonian National Museum became the leading Estonian museum (Viires 1991a: 125; Talve 1992: 55–56; Linnus 1995b: 91–92).

The first generation of professional Estonian ethnologists and folklorists studied under two prominent scholars and lecturers – I. Manninen and W. Anderson. Unfortunately the two branches of the same field were gradually separated already at that time – *ethnography* (ethnology) mostly dealt with material objects and *folklore* with spiritual culture (Viires 1991a: 125). Under Soviet occupation this separation was institutionalized (Viires & Tedre 1967: 268–269).

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After I. Manninen returned to Finland in 1929, his pupils continued his work, following the methodology and ideas elaborated by their teacher (Leinbock 1930: 42–52; Talve 1992: 62–65). At first the docentship in ethnology remained vacant and due to economic difficulties there was no instruction in folklife studies at Tartu University in 1929 (Luts 1992: 78). Later it was continued, and the workers of the Estonian National Museum – Ferdinand Leinbock (Linnus) (1895–1942), Gustav Ränk (1902) and Eerik Laid (1904–1961) were acting lecturers at the university. The professorship of ethnology was established only in 1938. In 1939 G. Ränk, who had defended his PhD dissertation in 1938, became professor (Linnus 1995c: 155). He worked at this post until his emigration to Sweden in 1944, and remained the only Professor of Ethnology in Estonia until 1994.

In the 1930s the Estonian National Museum became the only centre of teaching and studying Estonian folk culture. From 1929 to 1941 F. Linnus worked as the director of the museum. University lectures and seminars that were held at the museum as well continued according to the abovementioned principles. The range of subjects broadened on the basis of new results achieved in scientific research (Linnus 1989: 56–60). For example, at the end of the 1930s up to three special courses on Estonian folk culture were read in one

term (Luts 1992: 78–79). In 1932 the Network of Correspondents was founded at the museum, and it has been working up to the present day. Soon the first comprehensive surveys of Estonian folk culture, written by F. Linnus (*Die materialle Kultur der Esten.* Tartu 1932) and G. Ränk (*Vana-Eesti rahvakultuur.* Tartu 1935) were published. A revised newprint of G. Ränk's high-level survey of Estonian folk culture (*Vana Eesti. Rahvas ja kultuur*) was published in Stockholm in 1949 (1996 in Tallinn) and has also been translated into English (*Old Estonia: The People and Culture.* Bloomington, Indiana 1976) and Finnish (*Vanha Viro. Kansa ja kulttuuri.* Helsinki 1955). Until now G. Ränk's book has remained the only survey of folk culture in Estonian. Under Soviet occupation only a German survey *Abriss der Estnischen Volkskunde* (Tallinn 1964) and a chapter titled *Estoncy* (the Estonians) in the Russian-language *Narody evropejskoj časti SSSR* (Moscow 1964) (Peoples of the European part of the USSR) were published. Now a new profound survey of Estonian folk culture is under preparation.

Both scholars defended their PhD dissertations in 1938. Among their most prominent works F. Linnus's *Eesti vanem mesindus I. Metsamesindus* (Tartu 1939) on wild-bee keeping and G. Ränk's *Saaremaa taluehitised* (Tartu 1939) on farm buildings in Saaremaa can be mentioned. E. Laid studied the common issues of Finno-Ugric archaeology and ethnography as well as the folk tradition of the Setus. In 1925–1939 14 volumes of the Yearbook of the Estonian National Museum were published. The museum's rich collections of folk costume as well as Helmi Kurrik's (1883–1960) luxurious edition of Estonian folk costumes (*Eesti rahvarõivad.* Tartu 1938) inspired and supported the folkloristic movement that became one of the cornerstones of national culture from the 1930s.

The museum workers developed close contacts with ethnologists from other countries, especially the Swedish school of folklife studies and its outstanding leader Sigurd Erixon (Leinbock 1930: 50; Ränk 1937: 119; Rebas 1995: 269). By the end of the 1930s Estonian ethnography and respective university instruction had reached an academic and internationally recognized level (Viires 1970a: 235; Linnus 1995e: 18–21).

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The secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact signed on 23 August 1939 gave the Soviet Union free hands to occupy Estonia and other Baltic countries in 1940. One of the first steps of the occupation regime was to abolish the Chair of Ethnology at the University of Tartu and to reorganize the Estonian National Museum as a "nationalistic" institution. In September the museum that had until then worked as a foundation, was nationalized. Already in November it was divided into two separate institutions: the *State Ethnographical Museum* where ethnographic collections were kept, and the *State Literary Museum* where folklore collections and archival library were preserved. According to changes in the political atmosphere these institutions were repeatedly renamed (Ränk 1987; Rebas 1995: 285–286). The original name *Estonian National Museum* was resumed only in 1988. However, the collections and actual work are still separated. This separation became even sharper from 1979 when at the university the disciplines were divided between two faculties – since then ethnology was taught at the Faculty of History and folklore at the Faculty of Philology (Viires 1993a: 6).

Before World War II F. Linnus at first continued as director of the museum. He concentrated all the collections of folklore in Tartu, increased the number of workers, visited the museums of the Soviet Union and edited the 15th yearbook. It was published (with enormous cuts) only in 1947. When the war broke out in 1941, F. Linnus was arrested due to false accusation and sent to the concentration camp of Sukhobezvodnoye, region of Gorki (Nizhni Novgorod), in Russia where he died in 1942.

The German-Soviet war brought about a three-year German occupation (Rebas 1995: 272–273). However, G. Ränk and young students continued collection work. In 1942 and 1943 two expeditions were organized to Votian villages. Prominent future scholars – ethnologist Ilmar Talve, archaeoglogist Eerik Laid, linguists Paul Ariste and Julius Mägiste, and folklorist Felix Oinas took part in the expeditions. As military activities grew more heated, Prof. G. Ränk organized the evacuation of ethnographic collections from the Raadi

Manor. This turned out to be a timely step as the manor was destroyed. But the greatest loss of the war for Estonian ethnology was the emigration of skilled, talented and experienced specialists from the native country (Viires 1993a: 7). MA Ilmar Talve, who later became Professor of Ethnology at the University of Turku, fled from German mobilization already in 1943 (Viires 1989b: 281–283). In 1944 Prof. G. Ränk, E. Laid, H. Hagar and H. Kurrik left as well. They continued their career abroad and joined the new programmes developed by S. Erixon at the Swedish Institute of Folklife Studies (Ränk 1970; Viires 1989b: 281–283; Viires 1993a: 6–7). In 1955–1969 G. Ränk also worked as a Docent at the University of Stockholm (Viires 1992: 237–242; Linnus 1995c: 155). In exile some other productive researchers stand out, as ethnologist David Papp and folklorists Ivar Paulson and Felix Oinas (Rebas 1995: 277–278). Most of G. Ränk's young and inexperienced pupils continued at home under ideological pressure (Viires 1970a: 230; Viires 1991a: 127).

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The scholars who remained in Estonia had to adapt themselves to the Soviet system, which made efforts to establish a one-dimensional cultural life that could be easily kept under control (Viires 1991a: 127–128). Dealing with historical problems and more or less superficial or descriptive research, a certain passivity, keeping aloof from research "made to order" helped them to protect themselves from the pressure of Marxist dogmatism.

In Soviet ethnology the "bourgeois" and "idealist" methods were given up for Marxist-Leninist and vulgar-materialist methods. Theoretical studies characterized by schematism and scholastic dogmatism were usually limited to materialist interpretations of prehistoric society (Viires 1991a: 127–128). Moreover, the development of theory was concentrated in the centres, and chairs of ethnology were allowed only at the universities of Moscow and Leningrad.

Cultural phenomena of Soviet as well as of earlier societies were studied according to the descriptive method only. In this respect it

was quite adequate to use the czarist name *ethnography* for this field of research. The descriptive method enabled a kind of objectivity, but did not allow a deeper interpretation and analysis of the context and determinants of the phenomena of folk culture. While ethnological research mainly dealt with the questions of the origin of cultural elements, the history of consumption, human evaluations and respective behaviour remained in the background. This liquidated the humanistic content and human-centered approach in ethnological science.

The results of scientific research were often embellished. Citation of classical Marxist-Leninist works was common practice, they were obligatory "ornaments" in every article, monograph and dissertation. It was also emphasized that all the studied phenomena belonged to the past and had nothing in common with contemporary progressive and happy Soviet life. And if there would exist any "relics", they ought to be extirpated.

For the above-mentioned reasons questions of ethnic history and cultural contacts based on the Marxist theory of social-economical formations became the central issues of planned ethnological research (Viires 1991a: 128). The investigation into different folk cultures was actually only a means of solving questions of ethnic history based on diffusionist ideas. The main purpose of such studies was to show the positive role of the Russians in the cultural development of Soviet peoples. The study of social culture and customs was not a central concern and therefore all synchronic studies in sociology and ethnology dealing with the contemporary period were especially propagandistic, tendentious and schematic. In addition to this, scientific literature published in the West was hardly available, and until the 1980s it was practically impossible to become acquainted with new trends in ethnology and other social sciences. However, serious scholars only formally fulfilled the demands of Marxist theory and, despite thematic and methodological limitedness, achieved quite remarkable results in historical ethnology (Viires 1993a: 5–40).

During the Soviet period the whole academic system of instruction and research was changed radically, and, in many respects, the czarist system was restored. For example, long-time interdiscipli-

nary expeditions with numerous researchers characteristic of the 18th-century Russia were revived. As such expeditions were usually rather vague and prolonged, they did not produce any remarkable results. At the same time even the smallest kind of fieldwork was named an expedition. At universities a stiff course system saturated with political subjects was restored. Within five years students had to pass all obligatory examinations prescribed by the curriculum, write a term paper every year, and, in the last year, to defend a diploma paper and pass the so-called state examinations. As ethnology was officially regarded to be a science ancillary to history, it was taught as an additional speciality at the Department of History. Most ethnologists got the qualification of a "historian, teacher of history and social sciences" (Luts 1992: 81).

In order to take a Candidate's or Doctor's degree, one had to attend respective postgraduate courses. After the dissertation was accomplished, it had to be confirmed in Moscow by a special committee. The activities of the committee were subject to secrecy. As the demands were extremely high, a Candidate's or a Doctor's dissertation turned out to be a scholar's lifework. This reduced the productivity of scientific research work and thus was a means for pushing intellectuals aside (Viires 1993a: 6; Rebas 1995: 281–282, 288–289).

In the Soviet years the staff of research institutions and museums was numerous, but actually all intellectuals were underpaid. Therefore talented young people, especially men, had little motivation for scientific and pedagogical work. As for ethnology, the marginal position of the subject made this problem even more acute. Often political faithfulness was considered to be more important than scientific competence, especially for the leading staff. Biographical data of students and postgraduates were thoroughly checked by Soviet authorities. Special attention was paid to the facts concerning the parents' activities before the war and during the German occupation.

According to the Soviet system only the institutes of the Academy of Sciences were leading scientific centres. Universities were regarded as mainly training institutions. Lecturers were not elected, but nominated to their posts. Museums were considered to be alto-

gether second-rate institutions. Qualified staff left museums because of low salaries, and their general scientific level declined (Viires 1993a: 11; Rebas 1995: 281–282). For half a century Estonian ethnologists had to work under such circumstances.

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As was mentioned above, qualified staff had left Estonia during WW II. Fortunately, all the collections were preserved. They were concentrated in the cellars of a former courthouse in Tartu, where most of the collections are kept until now. In 1946 the Estonian National Museum and the Estonian Literary Museum were included in the system of the Academy of Sciences (Viires 1993a: 8–9). 17 researchers belonged to the staff, the Network of Correspondents was restored and collections were put in order.

The training of ethnologists at Tartu State University started from an empty place as, after G. Ränk had left, the professorship was not restored (Luts 1985: 177). Prof. Harri Moora, Head of the Chair of Archaeology and Dean of the Faculty of History and Languages, deserves immense credit for the training of ethnologists and co-ordination of research at the Estonian National Museum (Viires 1970a: 239; Linnus 1982: 129–133). He was a broad-minded, talented and diplomatic man who, using the historical-geographical method, added to it the demand for the complexity of research. For tactical purposes he also started co-operation with the *Institute of Ethnography of the USSR* (Viires 1970b: 24). However, in practical everyday work he relied on the Estonian National Museum. Museum workers held lectures and seminars at the university. In 1947–1949 the then postgraduate student of ethnology Ants Viires worked as an acting lecturer (Viires 1970a: 239; Luts 1992: 82). After an interval of eight years the 15th Yearbook of the Estonian National Museum was published. The volume included H. Moora's essential article about Estonian ethnology under Soviet construction (*Eesti etnograafia nõukogulikul ülesehitamisel*) and the politically required S. Tolstov's article on ethnography and the present day (*Etnograafia ja nüüdisaeg*) (Viires 1993a: 9–10; Rebas 1995: 274). Already in 1949 the first 1,5-month expedition was organized, where the

researchers of the Moscow Institute of Ethnography also participated. The expedition was to study the first Estonian collective farms that had been formed under compulsion. The results were rather poor (Viires 1993a: 10; Rebas 1995: 280).

Beginning from 1949 a sharp ideological struggle started to inhibit the enthusiastic work that had only started. Many scholars and men of culture were repressed or displaced from their posts. They were replaced by people loyal to the Communist Party, and usually non-professionals became heads of research institutions. In 1950 the Estonian National Museum was "unmasked" as a "bourgeois nationalist institution", several competent workers were dismissed, and in 1951 a member of the Communist Party Martin Rebane became director of the museum –from 1952 the *State Ethnographical Museum of the ESSR*. In 1950 the Chair of Archaeology that had taught ethnology as well, was liquidated. Prof. Harri Moora had to leave the university. He got a job at the Department of Archaeology at the Institute of History (Academy of Sciences of the ESSR) where he managed to provide occupation for two ethnographers as well.

Research work could be continued only in co-operation with ethnographers from Moscow (Viires 1993a: 10–11). In 1952 a regular Baltic complex expedition that included ethnologists, folklorists, archaeologists, anthropologists and linguists, was started. The expedition worked until 1960 and numerous volumes of collected materials were published. In this project the main emphasis was laid on the questions of ethnic history and Estonian-Russian relations (Viires 1970a: 243–244; Linnus 1995d: 158). In 1956 a remarkable comprehensive study on the ethnic history of Estonians (*Eesti rahva etnilisest ajaloost.* Tallinn 1956) edited by H. Moora and in 1964 Aliise Moora's monograph on the ethnic history of Lake Peipsi area (*Peipsimaa etnilisest ajaloost.* Tallinn) were published (Viires 1970a: 245; Viires 1993a: 18–19). In the course of the expedition an important theory in post-war Soviet ethnology on economic-cultural types and historical-ethnographical areas (taken over from the works of an American anthropologist Clark Wissler) was worked out by N. Tsheboksarov and M. Levin (Viires 1991a: 129). The Baltic countries served as a good example for this theory. In 1960 H. and

A. Moora's article on historical-ethnographical areas in the Baltic countries (*Baltimaade ajaloolis-kultuuriliste allvaldkondade ja vähemate alljaotuste kujunemisest.* In: *Etnograafiamuuseumi Aastaraamat* XVII) was published, and it developed the same main idea (Viires 1993a: 17–18). Their study was based on a cultural-ecological approach that associated the specific natural conditions with traditional branches of economy and cultural phenomena. The investigations into farm buildings, agricultural tools and folk costume made during the expedition did not yield any remarkable results compared with what had been made in the pre-war Republic of Estonia (Viires 1993a: 18). At the same time H. Moora's survey of the historical development of folk costume in a respective album (*Eesti rahvarõivaid XIX sajandist ja XX sajandi algult.* Tallinn 1957) was a success (Viires 1991a: 129–130). Anyway, it has to be admitted that the described expedition helped to bring together the Estonian ethnologists who were scattered between different institutions, and slowed down the decline (Viires 1993a: 10–13, 18).

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At the end of the 1950s the situation started to stabilize gradually (Viires 1993a: 12–14; Linnus 1995d: 158–159). This marked the beginning of a new period in the development of the Estonian National Museum, Tartu University and ethnography. Several scholars, among them Ants Viires and Jüri Linnus, resumed their posts at research institutions. In 1955 Ants Viires was the first to defend a remarkable Candidate's dissertation in ethnology on Estonian traditional woodwork. In 1958 Aleksei Peterson who had recently graduated from the university as an ethnologists was appointed new director of the Estonian National Museum. In 1959 the tradition of annual scientific conferences was restored and the Yearbook of the Museum was published (up to now 41 volumes of the yearbook have been published) (Viires 1984a: 508). Numerous research seminars and commemoration days dedicated to H. Moora have been held. In 1960 the museum's film group was established and the making of ethnographical films started. At the same time an enormous amount of materials were gathered to enrich the object collections, ethno-

graphical archives, the archives of the museum's correspondents, as well as photo and film archives. Expeditions to the Finno-Ugric peoples were organized every year (Peterson 1966: 22). As a result, the Estonian National Museum has become one of the major centres of Finno-Ugric ethnology, regarding its object collections and co-ordination of respective research work (Peterson 1970; Ränk 1984; Viires 1993a: 13–15; Rebas 1995: 278–285).

Exclusion from the system of the Academy of Sciences in 1963 meant a serious setback for the museum's development. The former centre for the preservation, teaching and studying of folk culture was, according to Soviet standards, turned into a second-rate institution (Pärdi 1994: 30–50). In the course of 50 years the museum did not even have any space for exhibiting its magnificent collections.

The foundation of the first open-air museum of the Soviet Union in Rocca al Mare (Tallinn) was a remarkable achievement of Estonian ethnologists and architects (Saron 1996: 21–30). With its exposition of peasant architecture, which was laid out on an international scientific-methodological level, the museum became another important centre of studying folk culture in Estonia (Lang 1996: 48–62).

At the same time academic research work in ethnology was concentrated in the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the ESSR, where a group of ethnologists headed by A. Viires worked at the Department of Archaeology. An independent Department of Ethnography was founded only in 1983, as Viires was not approved to be head of department for political reasons (Rebas 1995: 282). In Latvia and Lithuania respective departments were founded already in 1950. This was partly due to the fact that in these countries there was actually no centre of folk culture analogous to the Estonian National Museum.

A problem commission of ethnology that worked at the Academy of Sciences in 1983–1987 presented detailed proposals for creating an Institute of Folk Culture. The actual purpose of the plan was to restore the Estonian National Museum as a centre of scientific research (Viires 1993a: 16–17). This project remained unrealized, but the idea is still topical. For such a small state as Estonia it is

more practical to unite material resources, scientific and teaching potential to develop ethnology at a contemporary international level (Viires 1991b: 65; Rebas 1995: 283–286).

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At Tartu State University ethnology started to be taught from 1953 at the Chair of History of the USSR (Luts 1985: 178–179; Luts 1992: 81–82). The Chair of Estonian History was liquidated already in 1949, and the Chair of Archaeology in 1950. Besides the researchers of the Estonian National Museum mostly ethnologists from Moscow and Leningrad – Prof. N. Tsheboksarov, V. Belitser, N. Shlygina and R. Its carried through instruction at the university. Students even attended some lecture courses in Leningrad. In 1958–1970 acting lecturer Jüri Linnus supervised the training of ethnologists. Teaching duties were also assumed by visiting lecturers A. Viires, A. Luts and A. Peterson. Only in 1970 a permanent lecturer's post was included in the staff of the Department of the History of the USSR. In 1970–1989 it was filled by docent Arved Luts who had completed special postgraduate studies in Moscow.

As a result of the "singing revolution" one more lecturer's post was allocated to ethnologists (filled by Elle Vunder, Lauri Vahtre and Heiki Pärdi) in 1988. In 1989 the Chair of Estonian History was restored, and it also co-ordinated the teaching of ethnography, archaeology and art history (Luts 1994: 207). In 1993 an independent Chair of Ethnology (at the Department of History) was formed, headed by acting professor A. Luts, who by now has retired. From 1994 there is once again a professorship of ethnology at Tartu University, filled by Prof. Elle Vunder. At present there is one professor, one part-time lecturer (Jaanus Plaat), two part-time assistants (Ene Kõresaar, Liivo Niglas) and one part-time researcher (Heiki Pärdi) working at the Chair.

At Tartu State University students had to study according to the Soviet course system, passing ca 40 examinations and 60 preliminary examinations during five years (Luts 1992: 81). The main subjects were history and social sciences (history of the Communist Party, political economy, Marxist-Leninist philosophy, historical

and dialectical materialism, scientific communism). Besides, there were basic courses in languages, archaeology, art history and pedagogical disciplines (as all historians got a teacher's qualification) in the curriculum. Only in their third year at the university some (2–5) students could specialize in ethnology, archaeology or art history.

The number and content of subjects prescribed for the students of ethnology varied, but the basic courses dealt with the history of Soviet ethnology (including "critique" of western ideas and trends), and the folk culture of the peoples of the USSR, the Finno-Ugric peoples, Estonians, Finns and Swedes (Luts 1985: 180; Luts 1992: 81). As the number of students specializing in ethnology was very small, independent work with special literature was also of great importance. Students also became acquainted with elementary fieldwork methods, collecting material for their course and diploma papers (Linnus 1984: 35–45). These research papers enabled the supervisors to take into account the students' personal interests and, to some extent, broaden the range of subjects taught (Luts 1987: 100–104; Luts 1994: 207–219).

During the Soviet years about 120 students were trained as historians-ethnologists. However, less than a half of them work on their speciality (Luts 1985: 179–185). Over 200 course and diploma papers are preserved at the Estonian National Museum (Luts 1987: 94–108; Luts 1990: 207–223; Luts 1994: 207–219). The majority of these studies deal with traditional material culture, like the student seminar papers written in the 1920s–1930s. Besides, the development of crafts, customs, buildings and furniture have been studied. Large-scale fieldwork has served as the basis for research on the Estonians living in Russia, Finno-Ugric peoples, worker milieu in small settlements and folk medicine. In a number of cases these studies have provided Estonian ethnology with new aspects or results of analysis, and have later been published as articles. Most of these studies are descriptive by nature and based on the traditional comparative-historical method without any deeper analysis. As the study of contemporary culture lacked a serious scientific perspective, students avoided such topics.

However, it would have been possible and necessary to apply new theoretical and methodological ideas of Western ethnology

already in the 1980s, at least in university instruction. At that time current trends and schools were already somewhat familiar in Estonia, first of all owing to good contacts with Finnish colleagues. Besides, the processual studies popular in the 1970s had much in common with the diachronic methods that dominated in Soviet Estonian ethnology. Beginning from the 1960s, the school of semiotics headed by Prof. Juri Lotman developed at Tartu University and achieved international recognition. Tartu sociologists made considerable progress as well, especially in methodology. However, the results of these neighbouring disciplines were not applied in ethnological training at the university, and the preparation of students for scientific research in general remained rather negligible (Linnus 1995d: 159–160).

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Considering the above-mentioned, the research made in Estonian ethnology at the Soviet time was characterized by theoretical narrowness and splintering between different institutions (Tõnurist 1980: 362–364; Rebas 1995: 273–289). Still, especially from the beginning of 1960s several diachronic studies based on the traditional comparative-historical method were written. During 50 years 25 volumes of the Yearbook of the Estonian National Museum, more than ten notable monographs, collections of articles and albums of folk art, two volumes of the Baltic historical-ethnographical atlas, etc., have been published (Viires 1993b: 42–44). The research has predominantly dealt with ethnic history, cultural contacts and material elements of traditional peasant culture, Estonian-Russian cultural relations, folk culture of the Baltic Finns and lately, to a minor extent, with the processes of transition and modernization, as well as urban culture (Viires 1993a: 17–33).

Concentrating on Estonian ethnic history brought about the need to study cultural contacts (Viires 1993a: 17–22). While the research that dealt with Estonian-Russian relations, placed in the forefront for political reasons, was quite fruitful, the ethno-cultural analysis of the Setus, a minority group of Orthodox Estonians, has not yielded any remarkable results.

As a result of twenty years' work in the field of the Baltic historical-ethnographical area two volumes of the historical-ethnographical atlas of the Baltic countries (*Istoriko-etnografičeskij atlas Pribaltiki*) were published, treating of agriculture (*Zemledelie.* Vilnius 1983) and folk costume respectively (*Odežda.* Riga 1986). The authors of the atlas had to face serious methodological problems due to the character of source material as well as its division. Therefore the results were not satisfying in all respects (Viires 1993a: 21).

Among the most prominent results of individual research in this field A. Viires's monograph on the history of agricultural vehicles in the Baltic countries (*Talurahva veovahendid.* Tallinn 1986) can be mentioned (Rebas 1995: 276). At the same time the culture of Estonian minorities – the Swedes living on the West-Estonian coast and islands and the Baltic Germans – remained unstudied. The representatives of both groups had left before and during World War II. However, the cultural influence of these groups has been touched upon in a number of special studies (Viires 1993a: 21–22).

The emigration of Estonians to Russia, Caucasia and Siberia for economic, social, and political reasons is also an important issue of ethnic history that has been studied from the viewpoint of cultural contacts as well as ethnic processes (Luts 1992: 82, 84; Viires 1993a: 20). Estonian emigration to Sweden, Canada, etc. after WW II is also an important question to be analysed as well. In the 1980s an unsuccessful attempt to study ethnic processes in towns, namely Estonian-Russian mixed marriages, was made. The study *Everyday Life and Ethnicity. Urban Families in Loviisa and Võru 1988–1991* (Helsinki 1994), based on the results of Estonian-Finnish-Russian common project, marked a major progress in studying ethnic processes in the context of family relations and gender roles. At present new projects on the ways and forms of life and value orientations of the Setus as well as the inhabitants in Lake Peipsi area are at their initial stage.

Many-sided work has been carried out in the field of Finno-Ugric folk culture: remarkable object collections have been created, since 1960 Finno-Ugric congresses have been held, and collections of sources and articles have been published. This work has been based on a thesis presented by a Finnish ethnologist Prof. Kustaa Vilkuna

in the 1950s, claiming that there does not exist any common Finno-Ugric original culture, but the complex analysis of north-west European forest zone culture is of great importance (Viires 1993a: 22–24). Several articles and a survey of the Balto-Finnic peoples have been published (*Slaavi-läänemeresoome suhete ajaloost.* Tallinn 1965; *Läänemeresoomlaste rahvakultuurist.* Tallinn 1970).

Extensive co-operation between Estonian and Finnish ethnologists within the framework of the project "Finnish-Soviet scientific-technical co-operation" also concentrated on the investigation into the problems of Finno-Ugric folk culture (Rebas 1995: 276). Several common symposiums were held, a collection of articles on industrialization processes in urban and rural milieu (*Dorf- und Stadtkultur.* Helsinki 1987) and the above-mentioned *Everyday Life and Ethnicity* were published. International contacts with other neighbouring countries were not so intensive (Viires 1991a: 130). However, Estonian ethnologists participated in colloquia organized by East German ethnologists beginning from 1966, and regular conferences of the Baltic Studies were held in Sweden from 1979 (Viires 1993a: 24). Dr. A. Viires has contributed to *Ethnologia Europaea* since 1967 and has been a member of the editorial board since 1983 (G. Ränk in 1967–1989).

Estonian folk culture is another major field of research. Here the extensive study of phenomena of folk culture has been continued according to the traditional historical-ethnographical method. From the aspect of historical analysis new data have been entered into the scientific discourse.

G. Troska has studied the historical development of Estonian villages (*Eesti külad XIX sajandil.* Tallinn 1987). A. Moora has written a thorough two-volume study of Estonian traditional cuisine (*Eesti talurahva vanem toit.* I, II. Tallinn 1980, 1991). Traditional handicraft and the role of craftsmen in village society have been studied by A. Viires (*Eesti rahvapärane puutööndus.* Tallinn 1960) and J. Linnus (*Maakäsitöölised Eestis 18. sajandil ja 19. sajandi algul.* Tallinn 1973); the characteristic features and the development of folk art by Helmi Üprus, Kaalu Kirme (*Eesti sõled.* Tallinn 1986) and Elle Vunder (*Eesti rahvapärane taimornament tikandis.* Tallinn 1992). To some extent, society movement and the processes of

industrialization and urbanization in the 19th–20th centuries have been studied as well (Mäsak, E. *Elutingimused Tallinna eeslinnades 1870–1940.* Tallinn 1981).

Folk costume has been a popular topic owing to the folkloristic movement. A. Voolmaa has provided detailed studies on different articles of clothing, but little attention has been paid to the communicative and functional aspects of costume. Although several monographs have been written on Estonian peasant architecture (Tihase, K. *Eesti talurahvaarhitektuur.* Tallinn 1974; Habicht, T. *Rahvapärane arhitektuur.* Tallinn 1977), the genesis of the unique Estonian barn-dwelling has remained an unsolved problem.

Expeditions to the district of Võru (1962–1964), the district of Viljandi (1978–1981) and to Aravete in Central Estonia (1983–1986) with the purpose to study contemporary culture, did not yield any remarkable results (Viires 1993a: 31; Linnus 1995d: 158).

Within recent years we have used the term *ethnology* and tried to pay more serious attention to the latest trends in the general discourse of Western ethnology. Special courses touch upon the ideas and research projects of Nordic countries, Germany, France, the USA, etc. Closer co-operation with folklorists is also one of our main aims in developing the Chair of Ethnology. The range of problems in student papers has broadened, some of the graduation papers have touched upon modern culture, and 7 postgraduates (A. Kannike, T. Anepaio, H. Pärdi, J. Plaat, E. Kõresaar, A. Leete, A. Jürgenson) have taken an MA degree. Doctoral students T. Anepaio, A. Kannike and J. Plaat all concentrate on the analyses of contemporary Estonian society in their work.

It has become evident that the main emphasis of research work must be laid on contemporary everyday culture and the analysis of people's world views and life strategies during the decades of Soviet occupation. At the same time the preparation of specialists of traditional Estonian peasant culture must continue, as a number of important problems are still unstudied in this field and these topics are essential from the point of view of national identity. As the field of study is very broad, and the number of researchers still small, the choice of adequate problems and methodology is of great importance.

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Translated by Anu Kannike

Strategies of Teaching Ethnology at the Chair of Ethnology, University of Tartu

Jaanus Plaat

This paper is a survey of the situation at the Chair of Ethnology of the University of Tartu in September 1995 and the experience and perspectives of teaching ethnology/anthropology in Estonia.

Currently we have four lecturers at the Chair of Ethnology, which is a part of the History Department of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Tartu. The head of the chair is Prof. Elle Vunder, other lecturers are Ene Kõresaar, Liivo Niglas and Jaanus Plaat. Prof. Vunder has a full-time appointment, the other three are part-time lecturers.

The aim of the Chair of Ethnology is to prepare researchers and museum workers. It is also possible to become a teacher of History through additional training.

Most courses in ethnology are taught by our chair, and the list of courses is the following (some courses are obligatory and some are optional):

1. Introduction to Ethnology (an obligatory course for all freshmen of the History Department) – 2 CPs (two credit points)
2. Basic Course of Estonian Ethnography – 2 CPs
3. Basic Course of Finno-Ugric Ethnology – 3 CPs
4. Methods of Ethnographic Fieldwork (theory and practice) – 2 CPs
5. Ethnographic Fieldwork I–II (2 practical fieldwork sessions during summer holidays) – 2 CPs each
6. Ethnography of Estonia I–II – 2 CPs
7. Ethnology of Europe I (Eastern Europe) – 2 CPs
8. Ethnology of Europe II (Central Europe) – 2 CPs
9. History of Theories and Methods of Ethnology – 2 CPs

10. Museum Studies – 1 CP
11. Practical Work in Museums – 2 CPs
12. Contemporary Research Methods in Ethnology – 1 CP
13. History of Ornament Styles – 2 CPs
14. North American Indians – 2 CPs
15. Ethnology of Sweden – 2 CPs

All the subjects are taught to students on three levels: lower, intermediate, and upper level. Students will normally pass all the courses taught by our chair within four years.

Students who have specialised in ethnology can also choose optional subjects taught at the University of Tartu, such as: History of Estonian Vocabulary; Archaeology of Estonia; Introduction to Folklore; Folk Religion and Customs; Computing; Additional Foreign Language (to Ethnology students a language of neighbouring or Finno-Ugric peoples is recommended, e.g. Swedish, Latvian, Finnish etc.); Semiotics; Comparative Study of Religion, etc.

Students of ethnology as well as other students from the History Department and elsewhere can also write their seminar papers, final seminar or BA papers, MA and PhD theses under the supervision of the staff members of the Chair of Ethnology.

As most of us are part-time lecturers, we have to use our resources very reasonably. As a priority, we must teach the main or basic courses (such as intro-courses, History of Anthropological Theory; Ethnographic Fieldwork Methods). Also, as we are the only chair of ethnology/anthropology in the world that is specialised in Estonian ethnography, we want to continue our courses dealing with different topics on Estonian culture and sub-cultures and supervise the papers written on Estonian ethnography.

It is also our intention to remain a centre of Finno-Ugric studies, to lecture and supervise seminar papers and theses on Finno-Ugric cultures. We also have to use ethnologists of the Estonian National Museum, which is the leading centre of ethnological research in Estonia. Ethnologists from the museum have mainly lectured on topics concerning Estonian and Finno-Ugric cultures.

In addition we have to provide training on new methods and approaches in ethnology. This is an area that has not been taught on contemporary level in Estonia. Our aim is to arrange possibilities for our students to take special courses in several branches of ethnology/anthropology that are not studied or insufficiently taught at the University of Tartu. Inviting guest professors to Tartu can be seen as one of the possibilities to achieve this aim. Last academic year we invited guest professors from Germany: Prof. Ulla Johansen read a course on cognitive ethnology, Prof. Klaus Roth provided lectures on contemporary material culture research. Both lecturers are among leading European ethnologists.

It is crucial for us to establish new contacts with different ethnology centres abroad and send our students to study at foreign universities. It is important to let them gain academic credits at foreign universities and take these into account here.

Our lecturers are at the same time academic advisors to our students, recommending them different subjects from other departments of the University of Tartu. Many courses which are taught at different departments here in Tartu are considered to be parts of anthropology or ethnology in other countries (e.g. Physical Anthropology, Linguistics, Archaeology, Folklore, etc.).

One of our main aims is to arrange ethnographic fieldwork for our students and supervise field sessions on contemporary methodological level. We can achieve this in co-operation with different local and international projects that contain ethnographic fieldwork. Last summer several ethnographic projects were carried out in Lake Peipsi area. They were organised by the Estonian National Museum (the Russian Old-Believers Project); by the Lake Peipsi Project and the Faculty of Social Sciences (the international anthropological project on the Russian and Estonian communities in Lake Peipsi area); and by archaeologists of the History Department (fieldwork in Setu villages on the Estonian side). The participants of these projects were the ethnology students of the History Department as well as sociology, folklore, and theology students and the researchers of the University of Tartu, the Estonian National Museum and the Estonian Literary Museum.

Our students can also continue to participate in various fieldwork trips of the Estonian National Museum. There have been many expeditions of museum researchers to different areas of Estonia and to Finno-Ugric peoples during the last decades. Our students are supervised by experienced specialists of Estonian and Finno-Ugric folk culture. But the main problem here is that many expeditions are not at the methodological level we consider to be contemporary. Ethnographic fieldwork methods are at present taught only by the Chair of Ethnology and we have to achieve an adequate level. We also have to find resources to obtain modern fieldwork equipment.

Other problems our department is facing, are mainly connected with the academic level of our scholarship. Estonian ethnology can be best understood by viewing it within the historical context. Estonian ethnology has primarily dealt with the material aspects of folk culture and ethnographic research has been characterised by historical realism. In the Soviet Union ethnography (ethnology) was above all viewed as a branch of history, a subdiscipline that dealt with human culture, especially its material aspects. Our ethnology has been largely untouched by the new currents in the study of culture, that emerged in the West after World War I. Now it is time to turn to contemporary scholarship in ethnology and cultural anthropology. We have to contribute to the transition from cultural history to cultural analysis within Estonian ethnology. We would like to introduce the current problems and methodological approaches in ethnology, strategies of doing fieldwork at the contemporary level. We can achieve this in co-operation with sociologists, anthropologists, folklorists, historians from several departments of the University of Tartu, museums and other scientific institutions. Maybe in the future we are strong enough to create a separate institute, which can unite ethnologists and anthropologists of the University of Tartu, the Estonian National Museum and other institutions.

Teaching Anthropology at the Faculty of Social Sciences: Reflexions and Perspectives

Toomas Gross

Writing on the teaching of anthropology[1] at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tartu, I have an uneasy feeling because in my opinion in this respect one can only speak either about the past or the future. There is no present, at least what concerns anthropological research. And research, I think, should always accompany teaching. Or, to put it more radically, teaching should accompany research, the former should outgrow from the latter and not float on a loose ground. Although pessimistic about the present of the discipline of anthropology at the University of Tartu, I am not entirely on the standpoint that anthropological research would not have perspectives at our *alma mater*. On the contrary, I think that the perspectives of anthropology at the University of Tartu are, for various reasons, fairly good. However, let me follow the chronological line and start from the very beginning.

The University of Tartu has throughout its existence been heavily influenced by German and Russian intellectual environment. This can also be seen in the nature, approach and research interests of cultural studies. For decades ethnology, ethnography and folklore have been disciplines within institutionally established departments. The discipline of Anthropology as the study of society and culture never existed and the term was mainly associated with physical and biological study of mankind, if associated

[1] I use the term 'anthropology' in the meaning of both social and cultural anthropology. I find the difference between the two so insignificant as not to use different terms.

with anything at all. Less informed people often mixed the term with 'archaeology', 'astronomy' or even 'anthroposophy'. Anthropology is the discipline of Anglo-American tradition that roughly corresponds to French *éthnologie*, German *Völkerkunde* and hence Estonian *etnoloogia*. The similarity, however, is only superficial and the disciplines themselves are intrinsically quite different, that is best expressed in the ethymology of the terms. 'Anthropology' is the study of man (in Greek *antropos* + *logos*), 'ethnology' the study of ethnies or ethnicities (*ethnos* + *logos*). The latter thus regards its study object as defined by ethnic or/and cultural boundaries, while the former implies some kinds of universal patterns and logic underlying the human coexistence in all societies that could be investigated through cross-cultural comparison.

Anthropology as an academic subject was introduced at the University of Tartu in 1992 when the former Rector, Professor Jüri Kärner, invited Rein Taagepera, Professor of Political Sciences at the University of California, Irvine, to establish the Faculty of Social Sciences. The new faculty was meant to give a possibility to major and receive both BA and MA in four academic disciplines – political science, public administration, sociology and anthropology. Taagepera brought along Anglo-American academic tradition and teaching style that to a large extent differed from that of the other departments. Due to the shortage of native scholars in these fields as well as Taagepera's dissatisfaction with some scholars because of their procommunist background, many lecturers were invited from abroad, some of them ethnic Estonians, some foreigners. Anthropologists fell to the second category. Taagepera managed to invite two Americans, Professor Robert Dirks from Indiana State University who taught in 1993/94, and Professor Russell Langworthy from Yale University Civic Education Project who taught in 1994/95. Both professors were highly respected at the department and their presence did much to popularize anthropology as a subject. However, it was not enough to establish anthropology as a major field. Neither of the professors conducted real research in Estonia although both encouraged the students to do so. Professor Dirks was especially interested in the deconstruction of everyday habits and rituals. One

of these that struck his attention was the Estonians' habit to take off their shoes at the door. Professor Langworthy with his immense fieldwork experience from Sri Lanka, India, Yugoslavia, Tunesia and Guatemala, was in Estonia mostly interested in rural transformation and sustainable development.

The summer of 1995 was in my opinion the culmination point for the discipline of anthropology in Tartu so far. 10 students from the Faculty of Social Sciences participated in a joint anthropological study that was organised by Lake Peipsi Project, an international Non-Governmental Organization. The aim of the project was a comparative anthropological study of people's attitudes to social changes in 10 different towns and villages on both coasts of Lake Peipsi, i.e. on the Russian and the Estonian sides. 10 students from the University of Tartu and 10 students from Pskov Free University were trained by Professor Langworthy who taught the students basic anthropological fieldwork methods. Extensive training program also included lectures by Marju Lauristin, Asser Murutar, Jaanus Plaat, Eiki Berg, and many others. The students spent three weeks doing fieldwork, which included distribution of questionnaires, interviews and participant observation. This project was a good example of doing two things at the same time – training students and conducting scientific research. The processed results of the study have been collected into a booklet that is to be published by the end of 1996.

The fall of 1995 marked the change in the structure of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The visions of the new Rector, Professor Peeter Tulviste, about the Faculty were different from those of the previous Rector and Professor Taagepera. The faculty was completely reorganised on the basis of different departments. The number of disciplines was increased and the Departments of Semiotics, Journalism, Psychology and Social Work were incorporated into the faculty (the latter was joined with Public Administration). These changes did not correspond to Professor Taagepera's visions of 'integral growth' and he resigned. I would not dear to imply that the reorganisation of the faculty was the primary reason for the downfall of anthropology but the two things coincided. The subject of anthropology was moved under the

Chair of the History of Sociology and lost its role as an autonomous although underdeveloped field. After Professor Langworthy no foreign anthropologists have been invited to the Faculty of Social Sciences. In August 1995 I was appointed Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the Department of Sociology but was on leave for a whole year due to my studies at the University of Cambridge. In the fall of 1996 I am teaching three courses – Introduction to Anthropology, Anthropology of Religion and Intercultural Communication, and in spring 1997 another course on the Anthropology of Nationalism. There are some others who are working on the borderline between anthropology and sociology, for instance Aet Annist who is at present lecturing on the Discourses about Youth.

However bleak the situation in anthropology might seem at the moment, I still think that anthropology has very good perspectives in Tartu for both subjective and objective reasons. First, there are many people who are interested in this field. Many of them are influenced by Castaneda-like mysticism or romanticism caused by the admiration of the 'exotic other' or what Rousseau called *noble savage* and the hope to see and study exotic countries. Others are motivated by a more serious strive for knowledge and understanding the processes of culture and society. By no means should one, I think, despise the first motivation but instead see its inner force and learn to canalize it. I met professional anthropologists in Cambridge which has always been one the leading centers in anthropology who talked with a trembling voice about going to do fieldwork in South-America because it is much more interesting, pleasant and sunny there than in dull, unpleasant and foggy England.

The objective reasons for the good perspective of anthropology at the University of Tartu are the geographical location of Estonia and the social changes that the postcommunist countries are currently undergoing. The whole of the Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union have for obvious reasons been relatively understudied by Western anthropologists. The very few known studies are written by Chris Shore on Hungary, Katherine Verdery on Romania, Tamara Dragadze on Georgia and Caroline Humphrey

on Buryatiya. Estonia itself belongs to the understudied area but its relative closeness to the Western world gives it a unique position to become a mediator, for instance, between Scandinavian anthropologists and other East-European countries. For that reason Estonian anthropologists would not lack propositions for cooperative projects in future. But East-Europe and the former Soviet Union do not constitute a valuable area of research only because they are blank spots on the 'anthropological map'. The breakdown of communism, turn to capitalism and the consequent social changes are unique processes that should not be missed by neither foreign nor local social scientists. In the 1990s a number of Western anthropologists have studied these processes in Estonia. In 1992 Ray Abrahams from the University of Cambridge studied rural changes in Võrumaa and Saaremaa, at the moment Laura Assmuth from the University of Helsinki is doing a case-study on Nasva, a village in Saaremaa, and how the people experience social changes there.

Whether Estonian anthropologists in the future should study their own culture, that of the other East European countries with somewhat similar historical and social context, or go to South-East Asia and South America, is another question. One can find two extreme approaches. The postmodern wing of anthropology in the 1980s propagated the so-called 'anthropology at home' or 'anthropology of the self', i.e., the study of one's own culture and society. This propagation was the result of a kind of 'Wittgensteinean turn' in social scientific thinking and the approach to cultures as different 'language games' with unique rules that were not comprehensible by the outsider. Thus anthropologists were to study their own language games the rules of which they were able to perceive. The other extreme is understanding anthropology as the study of 'absolute' other, propagated, for example, by Matti Sarmela, Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Helsinki. That department encourages anthropological research outside Europe only. In Tartu, I think, as well as anywhere else, we have to find a compromise between the two approaches. We should not look too far and forget about the things right beside us, but in order to see some things more clearly, we have to step back and

look from afar. Anthropologists must be able to commute between the two points in order to see familiar in the unfamiliar and vice versa.

There is another aspect that should not be neglected while talking about anthropology in the context of Tartu. The semiotic tradition at the University of Tartu could offer a special dimension to the more theoretical trends in anthropology, like interpretative anthropology, cognitive anthropology, ethnoscience etc. If linking anthropology and cultural studies with semiotics would go further than just flirting with Lotman's name, it could offer an interesting approach to culture as a communicative or symbolic system, as well as to the nature of intercultural and interethnic communication.

The Other, Near and Far.
How to Make an Ethnological Object

Timo J. Virtanen

"On solid ground the haycock was carried by two men (or women) **hamilat** in western Finland. In western Finland they used to bind the poles together with withes, on top of which the hay was heaped" (Vuorela 1975: 213).

The Legacy of the Tradition

Finnish ethnology (in Finnish, *kansatiede* or *etnologia*) can be regarded as a branch of the humanistic study of cultures. Generally, it is associated with what can be called tradition research, where the main interest lies in topics such as ploughs, laments, and customs of Easter celebration. When I presented the question "What is *kansatiede*?" to first-year students taking part in an introductory course, they answered by making a whole host of references to countryside and farm implements; in short, they associated ethnology with a vague notion of olden days and the mustiness of a museum.

Moreover, Finnish people often make the mistake of equating *kansatiede* with *kansantiede*, i.e. 'folk science', some kind of popular 'science' like weather foretelling, water-divining, or the efforts to invent a perpetual motion machine. The public image of the disciplines concerned with tradition research such as ethnology, ethnography, and folkloristics is related to history and thus, for the most part, to agrarian milieu. Whereas ethnology and ethnography have primarily been connected with material culture and usage and customs, folkloristics (also known as the study of

folk poetry) has largely been associated with the study of oral tradition.[1] Due to their historical-regionalist approach, all of these disciplines have from time to time been cast in the role of a national project striving to preserve and save the material and immaterial cultural heritage (e.g. Räsänen 1989: 10–28). This image of ethnology as 'saving the traditions' and the way this image makes us view folklife are not incorrect, but they are clearly only one side of the picture.[2]

It is for a long time already that the great majority of Finnish people have lived in towns and densely settled town-like areas, where their living conditions have been determined by industrialized society. However, only a minimum of all Finnish ethnological research has been devoted to urban folk culture (Anttila 1985; Kaskö 1985; Rönkkö *et al.* 1986; Aukia & Virtanen 1994; *Everyday Life and Ethnicity* 1994. On the effect of the industrial revolution on folk culture see e.g. Talve 1979). This very failure is becoming apparent in present-day Finland which is in a process of multiculturalization; the emergence of new ethnic minorities is closely related to the fundamental questions involved in urban culture. The discussion which has rested on the juxtaposition of the town and the country is now given new substance by the notions of ethnic subcultures, ethnic hierarchy, and ethnic networks in the cities. Although urban areas of such ethnic integrity as Chinatown or Harlem cannot yet be found, many Finnish towns and cities do show signs of ethnic segregation. Equally evident is the segregation of industrial estates, areas for leisure and recreational activities, dangerous areas, or 'areas of the night'. Despite the growing number of 'the cities within a city' (Virtanen 1993b; Virtanen 1994b: 29) among cultural scholars there is a lack of skills and motivation to recognize and interpret this development.

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[1] For an overview see e.g. Vuorela 1975; Talve 1979; Leea Virtanen 1988. The translation into English of Talve's work on Finnish folk culture (*Suomen kansankulttuuri)* has been completed and the English edition is forthcoming.

[2] The term 'ethnography' was used by W. F. Edwards as early as the 1830s. As to the term 'ethnology', Varelius' publication *Kertomuksia Tyrvään pitäjästä* (1853) is one early example of its application: Niiranen 1992: 21–40. One of the main issues in the present-day discussion is the relationship between the positivist and the hermeneutic research tradition.

No longer does the ethnological approach to mapping the dweller's perception mean the same as a mere description of physical and social environment. Ever-increasing attention is rather being given to how people learn about the city, how they deal with urban environment, and how they perceive urban surroundings. These questions are part of a larger problem as to the bonds of meaning that exist between people and urban environment and the emotions that urban dwellers attach to their surroundings. In addition, they also have to do with the way in which individuals experience space and time in their everyday lives. (These topics have been explored in fields such as cultural geography and environmental psychology; in traditional cultural research, however, it is only anthropologists who have given these matters more thorough investigation (Tuan 1974; Asplund 1985: 169–202; Rapoport 1977; Walmsley 1988; *Women and Space* 1993; Virtanen 1993b).) The exact nature of the bonds of meaning varies greatly in intensity, preciseness, and manifestation; the affective bonds between people and locations can be of aesthetic, emotional, nostalgic, or economic kind (Andersson 1984: 16). The images formed of the living environment enable urban dwellers to build up overall mental representations of the city. These mental maps in turn help the individuals to decide which areas they prefer, and quite simply, to know 'what is where'. The notion of mental mapping proves useful in the analysis of the urban images that 'ordinary people' have. A compilation of individual maps reveals the characteristic features of an area and allows the study of the locations, edges, routes, landmarks, etc., of urban environment (Lynch 1960; Schilling 1994: 149–152). This kind of humanistic approach would also seem to have a practical application. For instance, planners of residential areas – whose approach has traditionally been functionalist-instrumental – also need information on how dwellers experience place and space in their everyday lives (Aartelo 1992).

At least as far as ethnology is concerned, in Finland the humanistic study of cultures has for long been standing in the situation where the proponents of the positivist 'long paradigm' do not necessarily support the research done within the discipline. On the

contrary, the attitudes towards urban ethnology have been surprisingly two-fold. On the one hand, there has been willingness to give the outside world the impression of an up-to-date subject closely related to social science. On the other hand, within the discipline urban ethnology has posed a threat to the more traditional approaches because of the danger, complexities, and disharmony involved in modern ideas (Virtanen 1994: 25). This fact has affected the way Finnish ethnologists perceive the role of the discipline and reduced their contacts with urban anthropology.

Folklife has always been a many-sided component of history, which manifests itself also in an urban context. It is not only in the countryside but also in the various forms of urban environment that people with genuine, real-world experience of cultural processes can be found. Whereas the historical 'truth' has been based upon written documents, i.e. 'reliable information', folklife scholars have often entered into discussion with people leading 'folklife' and gathered data by means of fieldwork, in direct contact with the subjects. Owing to this feature characteristic of all the disciplines concerned with the study of cultures, the core of the research material has been formed by oral tradition. However, the fragmented and diverse nature of urban environment as well as the temporal rhythms of urban living require that increasing attention be paid to the development of observational methods.[3]

This article aims to discuss the ethnological perspective on urban environment using both information provided by earlier research and stories by people leading folklife. Even as late as the 1980s the Finnish ethnologists viewing a town rarely saw nothing but one street, a block, or a quarter of it. Indeed, in some exceptional cases they even saw the whole town. This meant that their attention was focussed on documentary sources and data on constructed environment like construction drawings, building codes, decoration drawings, fire insurance policies, and deeds of estate inventory. Since then the development of fieldwork methodology has contributed to new forms of interaction between researchers

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[3] On ethnological fieldwork methodology see e.g. Werner & Schoepfle 1–2, 1989/1987.

and subjects, and led to a growing recognition of the ways in which this interaction can affect the findings of a study. Previously the researcher's role has been commonly ignored, despite the fact that in many studies published by Finnish ethnologists it is possible to distinguish between the scholarly voice of the researcher, 'a well-informed authority', and the subjective and descriptive story of the informant.[4]

Due to the traditional view that people leading folklife could only be found among agrarian population, it is only relatively recently that Finnish ethnologists have turned their attention to urban environment. When, why, and how did urban ethnology arrive at the arena? What kind of picture does urban ethnology give of everyday folklife in comparison with the image of folklife created by 'rural' ethnology? Does it make sense to draw a sharp distinction between the study of the country and the study of the town?

A 'New Notion' of Everyday Life

> "Meantime all clothes were put in a basket, and the smalls were washed oftener. The washing was steamed in the washhouse. Some lye was put into the wash-tub, it was drained off, and then it was put into the tub again. This was done many times and in the morning a horse was sent to bring to wash-tub to Varvinranta where the washing was rinsed..." (Virtanen 1994: 108–109).

In contrast to historical research where the main interest lies in the study of political and national developments, ethnology (which took root in Finland more than a hundred years ago) focuses on the everyday life of 'the man in the street'. In recent times, however, Finnish historians have also become increasingly interested in the study of everyday life and the use of oral sources. One example of

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[4] On reflexivity see Ehn & Klein 1994; cf. e.g. *Hemma Bäst* 1990, where the informant's story is followed by the ethnologist's scholarly comment on the structurization of everyday life. See also *Etnologiska beskrivningar* (1989).

this is 'history of mentalities', whose invasion of Finland dates back to the late 1980s (Peltonen 1992). As to the present discussion among cultural historians, their new notion of everyday life has a striking resemblance to the one traditionally held by ethnologists (Ollila 1994: 49–58).

Therefore, the claim that during the last few decades ethnology has come closer to anthropology does not seem to be justifiable. Quite recently there have rather been signs of a development where anthropology and historical research are coming closer to ethnology. Naturally, scholars involved in tradition research have always had a definite view of what they should study and who their subjects are, which is due to the self-perception of these disciplines. This seemingly self-evident nature of the study of everyday life may be the very reason for the absence of conceptual analysis in the area.[5] The definition of the field of research has been in close connection with the identity of the disciplines and the scholars' ideologies. For the most part, Finnish ethnologists have equated 'the popular' with 'the peasant', and used the word 'peasant' in an approving sense. Until fairly recently urban elements have been incompatible with the antiquarian and museum-like image of the discipline. One part of the explanation lies in the fact that Finnish ethnology originated in the era of the industrial revolution, at the time when it was the peasant culture that was felt to be in greatest danger. Consequently, ethnologists saw the systematic study and recording of peasant culture as their primary concern (cf. *Pioneers* 1992). This view became deeply embedded in Finnish ethnology; it was prevalent even as late as 1975, when Toivo Vuorela's book on Finnish folk culture (*Suomalainen kansankulttuuri*) was published. In the introduction to his work the author gives the following definition of folk culture:

> "In contrast to what is called higher culture, folk culture (i.e., popular culture) is in essence peasant culture..." (Vuorela 1975: 5).

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[5] On the segmentation of everyday life see e.g. Elias 1978; Greverus 1978: 93; Köstlin 1991: 71-85.

According to this view it is only the Finnish peasant who embodies 'the folk'. Other people living in the agrarian milieu such as tenant farmers, farm labourers, or dependent lodgers – not to mention the industrial workers of towns and town-like communities – do not fit the category. Again, it was not until the contribution of Swedish-speaking scholars that the study of majorial system won actual recognition among Finnish ethnologists (Åström 1993). Beside the seemingly homogeneous and harmonious 'true' folklife of the countryside, the urban lifestyle has stood for the work done in connection with machines and pace set by clocks; in short, for general dissolution of social networks and harmony. Nevertheless, the image of urban complexity has probably been more accurate than the image of countryside created by agrarian ethnology.

Another change of context that has taken place during the last few decades has to be mentioned. While many scholars of the older generation had a close relationship with countryside that was based on personal experience, this is not true of the present-day authors; their familiarity with agrarian environment is largely illusory. To what extent is the ethnologist with the urban background capable of viewing the town and urban lifestyle objectively?

Whereas anthropologists have found 'the Other' among exotic tribes, ethnologists have explored folklife at a local level. Undoubtedly, as the myth of the heroic anthropologist has been shattered, more and more anthropologists have left the Hula-Hula Islands and moved closer to their home villages and towns. Due to the processes of globalization and creolization the knowledge gained in faraway places has lost some of its sacredness. On the whole, however, anthropologists (mainly of western and urban origin) have continued their search for 'the most other' among the so-called primitive tribes (Hannerz 1992: 5; Gullestad 1989: 71; Ruohonen 1988: 3). What has proved surprisingly difficult is the recognition of cultural complexity and cultural groups present in western cities (Selmer 1988). Hence the voyage to Hula-Hula has tended to be easier than the trip to the complex stratigraphies of the home town. Moreover, in Finnish ethnological debate the

efforts to explore urban diversity have often been disregarded and labelled as 'marginal research'. This is again something that has followed from the dominance of the rural paradigm. Since 'the right categories' of folklife were established by the students of Finnish peasant society in the early 20th century, it has been virtually impossible to break with the positivistic tradition within the framework of 'mainstream' research. The fixed answer given to the fixed question has been an impediment to a more profound understanding and interpretation of urban folklife (Paasi 1991: 4; Koskiaho 1990).

It must not be forgotten that even as early as the first half of the 20th century there were anthropologists who carried out research on urban environment. However, the work of the school of Chigago, which was particularly influential in the area, was often seen as part of sociology or some other related subject. The texts produced by this school show such insight into the urban diversity and peripheries that has often been missing from the work of urban ethnologists.[6] After this period urban environment has also been discussed from the point of view of the dichotomy between the town and the country whereby the typical and opposite features of urban and agrarian environment are looked into. In Finland this approach has influenced especially the discussion concerning the migration from the country to town (e.g. Redfield 1947). In continental Europe, particularly in the German-speaking area, the study of urban environment has largely been equated with the study of large cities. The classics of Finnish ethnology are relatively unfamiliar with Simmel, Park or Wirth; as to the representatives of *Volkskunde* proper, at least Lehmann, Schmidt, and Bach did research on urban environment.

6 On the school of Chicago see Hannerz 1980: 19–58; for examples of their work see Anderson 1923 (1961) *The Hobo.*

The Transition to Urban Ethnology

Finnish urban ethnology has been built on the foundation of the connection between the country and the town. In the late 1950s, during the time when Finnish ethnologists began to stress the importance of the study of urban folklife, towns were not seen as an independent field of research. They were rather thought of as a state whose relationship to 'the approved' rural culture was either close or distant. In a way, the countryside proved to be elastic. This is how Ilmar Talve, the pioneer of Finnish urban ethnology, describes the relationship between rural and urban culture:

> "Their [town-dwellers'] bonds with the regions where – according to the common belief – rural culture was prevalent were thus by no means non-existent. It is a safe assumption that the 'rural' part of these people was not left behind the tollgate when they, sitting on their cartloads, moved inside the gate. Their cartloads included a good deal of the old and traditional; not only concretely but also spiritually" (Talve 1961: 12).

The notion of the continuum between the rural and urban lifestyle has been a characteristic of the subsequent research, too. In a sense, the countryside has been the justification for the existence of towns. However, in the late 1950s there began to emerge the idea of 'another ethnology' which would turn its attention to towns, industrial working population, and occupational groups at large. This movement was born at the University of Turku and can for every reason be called 'the school of Turku'. Similarly, it would seem that the early 1990s have marked the rise of a 'cultural encounter and ethnicity' movement.

When Samuli Paulaharju's studies on the towns of Tornio and Raahe were published in the 1920s, their approach was mainly descriptive. His work did but little to stimulate more analytical study of urban environment (Paulaharju 1921; Paulaharju 1925), since these texts were, once again, about the exploration and presentation of 'the tradition'. The towns discussed by Paulaharju

were pre-industrial market towns; Paulaharju's Tornio, for example, is a fairly rural town:

> "A peaceful town on the estuary, whose dwellers were almost like one large family: everybody knew each other, and knew about each other's business; a stranger's arrival was all over the town in no time. This was Tornio like even as late as the middle of the last century. Only a big village, christened a town and built as a town; a village where people behaved like townsfolk but where they, for the most part, led a modest rural life" (Paulaharju 1921: 116).

In fact, these studies were not even thought to be ethnological research on folklife. It was only in the country that 'the folk' of the Finnish ethnology could be found, and no town – not even a village-like town – could count as countryside. However, it is worth pointing out that Paulaharju's study on Raahe included a chapter named "Everyday Life", which was followed by the sections "Family Celebrations" and "Culture and Social Life". Despite the lack of conceptual analysis Paulaharju's work constitutes an excellent piece of ethnographic research into the urban folklife of the 1920s (Paulaharju 1925). Interestingly enough, some recent ethnological commentaries point to the fact that ethnographic description has for long been underrated beside what can be called scholarly-theoretical approach (*Etnologiska beskrivningar* 1989).

In the 1930s and 1940s texts on urban folklife kept on coming out in an similarly occasional fashion. In 1938, the 300th jubilee of Hämeenlinna, a collection on the history of the town (*Hämeenlinna. Luontoa ja elämää*) was published. This work included, for example, an article "Everyday life in Hämeenlinna in the late 19th century" (*Arkielämää Hämeenlinnassa 1800-luvun lopulla*) (Suhonen 1938: 295–323) and also an article based on oral sources and dealing with the paid labourers' life in Hämeenlinna during the late 19th century (Vainio 1938: 270–294). Other examples of the research done in this period are Niilo Valonen's and his students' fieldwork in Pori at the end of the 1930s (Virtanen 1994: 14, 189), and Unto Kanerva's article on the

industrial workers' working and housing conditions in Tampere (*Pumpulilaisia ja pruukilaisia*), which was published in 1946. A few years later there also came out a text on the town of Forssa (Aaltonen 1947 [1951]).

It was not until the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s that the relationship between town and ethnology aroused wider interest among Finnish ethnologists (e.g. Talve 1958; Talve 1961). This period can be seen as a turning-point in Finnish ethnology. The following quotation is from a commentary given by Ilmar Talve in 1958 on Swedish urban ethnology. Talve makes mention of the central role that the universities of Uppsala and Stockholm and the archives of Lund have had in this research, and then he goes on:

> "Efforts have been made to illuminate various aspects of the life that townsfolk used to lead in former times; the main emphasis has been laid on the study of home life, housing and furnishings, festival customs, etc., and the informants have represented all social classes. Material has been gathered in most towns already; the amount of data varies from town to town, but this does not prevent comparative study since all fieldworkers have used the same kind of question series" (Talve 1958: 438).

This quotation reveals some typical features of the early Finnish urban ethnology, which were (and which have also later been) particularly characteristic of the research done in Turku. First, the field of study is divided into categories introduced by rural ethnography: housing, furnishings, food, and customs, etc. Although this approach has been criticized for being simplistic, these kind of categories can also be seen as conceptual tools which serve to organize the chaos and without which there would have been no analytical research in the field. Second, the fact that attention is being paid to all social classes, forms a link with the revival of the research on working population and occupational groups that took place in Turku. And third, as to the methods of gathering information, stress is laid on the comparability of data. Especially the 1960s constituted an era of active fieldwork in Finnish towns.

Quite a few seminar papers and *pro gradu* theses were written, but publications at a more advanced level were rare during this period. In his review of the research done in the 1960s (published in 1970) Martti Linkola considers the studies of buildings by Talve, Vilkuna, and Valonen to be the most important ones (Talve 1960; Vilkuna 1960; Valonen 1963). Further on, he states that these and similar publications reflect "the careful choice of the subject and methods, some kind of 'common sense' prevalent among Finnish ethnologists". However, he has to admit that "nevertheless, it is urban ethnology that seems to have been the watchword of Finnish ethnologists throughout the decade". Linkola's comment exemplifies the negative attitudes which, due to the smallness of the discipline, have been capable of hindering the progress of methodology and the search for new fields of research.

It is not until the 1970s that we can find articles, publications, and seminar work which indicate a transition from the stage of 'legitimate urban ethnology' to the one of more analytical research (Talve 1972; Lehtonen & Räsänen 1972; *Uusimman ajan...* 1974). One source of inspiration for this new kind of research was the work of Swedish ethnologists (Ek 1971). How did modern urban ethnology relate to the more traditional research? It is obvious that the new approaches did not completely accord with the previous ones. The following quotations from Juhani U. E. Lehtonen and Matti Räsänen, on the one hand, and Ilmar Talve, on the other, illustrate the divergent views among Finnish ethnologists. The first extract is from a text by Lehtonen and Räsänen, who were actively involved in the contemporary research on urban environment:

> "The study of urban environment is not any different from the other branches of ethnological research because the material and the fundamental questions are the same both in towns and in the countryside; this is true especially as far as the study of the changes that have taken place in the last hundred years is concerned... Hence there is nothing else involved than another kind of application of the same research methods and a different order of importance of the same topics" (1972: 52).

In his article published in 1961 Talve argues for a completely opposite point of view:

> "Patterns and category models which have been developed and employed for the study of rural environment cannot be applied by [modern] ethnologists..."

On the one hand, the material and research questions of rural and urban ethnology are not exactly the same – although they include similar elements. On the other hand, urban ethnology is not only about applying old research methods in a new situation but also, to a very large degree, about developing entirely new methods. It must be emphasized, however, that the juxtaposition of rural and urban ethnology makes no particularly fruitful starting-point. The innovations as well as the usage and customs of peasant culture can often be traced to urban environment; moreover, the countryside has always been present in Finnish towns. The tollgate is no border where country is transformed into town and where countryfolk are transformed into townsfolk.

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Material Culture, Meaning and Interpretation in Nordic Ethnological Research.

From Functionalist to Phenomenological Approaches

Bjarne Rogan

It is a banal fact that society is constantly changing and developing, ethnologists ask new questions, and the discipline of ethnology – as well as other diciplines that study culture – changes perspectives and methods.

This observation is no less true for the field of research that we call material culture studies. Just as production and consumption patterns have changed in society, so has research about artefacts.

This paper discusses some of these changes in research practice, mainly in the Nordic countries, and especially in Norway. When we look back at the history of the discipline, we see that there have been some remarkable changes in research practice since the 1970s.

One important aspect of this state of affairs is the fact that research in museums and research in universities have tended to drift apart. We have seen this tendency within anthropology since the interwar period. Within European ethnology or Volkskunde, the tendency has been clear in most western countries since the 1970s.

But the cleavage between universities and museums in western countries is not my topic here, even if it may – at least partly – be explained as a consequence of shifts in research practice. My focus will be on two very different and contrasting platforms of research, the functionalist school, which once held a strong position in Norwegian ethnology, and the phenomenological approach, which has permeated much cultural research in the Nordic countries.

There is a complex of causes and motifs behind the changed attitudes among ethnologists towards the study of artefacts. I shall organize my argument along three lines:

The first perspective is the change in *research objects*, by which I mean the main topics and periods that we choose to study. During the latest decades ethnologists have changed focus from pre-industrial society to industrial and post-industrial society. There has been a desire among ethnologists to enter our own time. Many have left historical reconstruction and started interpreting the near past or the contemporary culture and society.

The second perspective: At the same time, and as a consequence of this change in the research object, we have started to ask new questions. Formerly ethnologists were primarily interested in the *form* and *construction* of artefacts as well as in their practical *use*, whereas later on they focused on the *meaning* of objects, on *symbolic* values and people's private *memories* and *recollections*. And "people" are no longer artisans and producers, but owners and users – or "consumers", as we often say in modern research discourse. And even if we sometimes stick to old research objects, like pre-industrial agriculture, small-scale fisheries, etc., we ask new questions and use new research tools.

An important consequence of our new way of asking questions is that we no longer use artefacts as sources or as research evidence. We use oral sources or written evidence instead.

The third perspective concerns research theories and methods in the humanities and social sciences. The ethnology practised in the Nordic countries has – during the past 25 years – changed from a diffusionist and functionalist outlook to phenomenological approaches. We have moved away from positivistic methods towards free interpretation. We have left a rigorous objectivist conviction and turned to more casual and perhaps even arbitrary interpretations.

These three trends are closely interrelated. It is hardly possible to say that the change in our research practice is due only to one single factor.

I shall return quickly to the first perspective, just to sum it up, and then concentrate upon the two latter ones, by discussing methodological problems related to the research on the meaning of things – that is the interpretation problem – and then turn to the problem of theoretical paradigms in cultural research and to the

concept of culture itself – all the time keeping a focus on the artefact.

I do not pretend to embrace all ethnological research, of course, as research practice may vary considerably among colleagues even in a small area like the Nordic countries. Not every Norwegian ethnologist in the 1970s was a functionalist, and not every modern Swedish ethnologist is a phenomenologist. But I pretend to discuss tendencies in research that have been clearly observable over some decades.

I Research Object

The bulk of ethnological research has shifted thematically away from the context of work to the context of leisure and everyday life, from primary industries and trades and the countryside to urban topics and the middle class, from production to consumption, from the practical use of things to the social and symbolic use.

For what we used to call "the study of artefacts" – a notion that has lost much of its justification through this process – this means focusing on new types of artefacts. We have turned away from handmade things to industrially produced commodities, from working tools to leisure objects and home interiors, just to mention a few of the most conspicuous cases.

Through the study of the new objects we have moved from a reconstruction of the past to interpretations of our own modern culture. The main tendencies of this development are well known, and there is no reason to enter into a detailed discussion of these empirical aspects of our research.

II New Questions: The Meaning of Artefacts

Our questions about material objects have changed from a focus on form, origin, distribution and function to a focus on meaning and symbolism, emotional and cognitive aspects.

We like to say that things are carriers of social relations and cultural categories. Much mental content can hardly be expressed otherwise than through artefacts. Very often objects can express messages in a subtle and elegant way, much better than words.

Actually, cultural categories must be materialized in things – in clothes, houses, cars, home furnishing and decoration, etc. Social relations would simply dissolve without a material basis. You cannot show – consciously or unconsciously – that you belong to a certain social group, that you follow fashion, that you are rich, that you protest, etc. – except through material objects. That is why material culture is also communication, and several scholars have tried to analyse material culture as a language.

The study of meaning is fundamental for modern research, so fundamental that it is worthwhile to reflect on the relations between the idea and the thing; or, more precisely: the problem of the artefact as a product of human cognition, a product of human mind (see also Skre 1993).

Here lies a great paradox of material culture studies, which may be formulated in this way: *A thing is nothing without an idea* but *The thing does not reflect the idea.* The relation between the artefact and the thought is arbitrary and only a matter of interpretation – unless we have other types of sources that can mediate the content of meaning. Furthermore, the relation between the artefact and the meaning illustrates how problematic our concept of culture is.

The best way to create a distance with our own research practice is to look at a neighbouring discipline, archaeology. Imagine an archaeologist finding an unknown artefact from the distant past, from a period without any verbal evidence.

This artefact is obviously a product of human mental activity in the past. It has substance and texture. We can feel it and hold it in our hands, and it may perhaps even be used for some practical operation. But the thought is gone. The archaeologist has no access to the code that might turn the artefact into a message, that is, a meaning that was perhaps – in some cases – more important than its practical function. Metaphorically we might say: "The artefact is alive, but the original thought is dead". (In my view, however, no artefact has any other life than the lives that we give them.)

This was no great concern as long as the archaeologist posed traditional questions about technical, functional and ecological issues. The problem arose when he started asking about symbolical, communicative and ideological aspects. An axe was not necessarily used only for chopping. Perhaps it also had ceremonial and symbolic functions. Fashion-minded archaeologists have for some time been talking about "material culture as a text" – which has led to a series of problems of reading, decoding and interpreting. When there is no other evidence than artefacts, there can be nothing else than interpretations – more or less reasonable. Or as the joke goes: An archaeologist is a person with a long academic training in guessing what things are!

The point is that the artefact is not a substance where the thought finds its place in a unique and unambiguous manner, to be read like a text afterwards. Material culture is not a mirror that reflects the thinking of those who made and used the objects. We cannot recreate the rationality of the past generations through the technical aspects of their material products.

Put in another way: There is no one-to-one-relation between the idea and its material expression. One material form may express several messages and vice versa, analogically to natural languages and the linguistic sign, where the relation between the form and the meaning – or between the signifier and the signified – is arbitrary.

These problems exist for the ethnologist as well as for the archaeologist. But the gap of time and the lack of alternative sources make the problems more acute for the archaeologist. Ethnologists have escaped the problem by concentrating on artefacts that can be studied by means of other types of evidence. These artefacts may be either modern objects or old things – but the question posed will very often be what meaning they are given *today*, as antiques, memorabilia, etc.

However, this study of meaning is not without problems on a more theoretical level. Ethnologists – at least the Norwegian ones – have tried to stick to the concept of culture that includes both a cognitive and a physical aspect, that is both ideas and meanings *and* concrete behaviour and physical objects. Culture is something that is situated both in our heads and in our material surroundings. As

stated earlier, a thing is nothing without an idea. But this idea cannot be read from the physical artefact. That is our dilemma, in theory as well as in practice.

To sum up this discussion of new questions and the meaning of things: Most ethnologists have an understanding of culture that, at least theoretically, includes both the artefact and the idea, both the form and the content. But in practical research there have been fluctuations in interest. To earlier ethnologists, the artefact itself was central, and questions concerned form, materials, production, use and function. In later years, questions have shifted to the meaning of things.

Very often modern research does not focus on the object itself. The objects are generally treated as *abstract categories of meanings*. It is not the material aspects that engage our interest, but the immaterial ones. Objects are understood and treated as concepts, as meaning, as symbols of something else. This has also something to do with changes in scientific attitudes, which will be our next topic.

III Changes in Theories and Methods

These changes in research objects and research problems can hardly be fully explained without paying a visit to the shift from the older scientific attitudes to the modern ones.

We have moved away from a rather objectivist and rationalistic point of view, prevailing in important schools in Nordic ethnology like diffusionism and functionalism, towards the dominant scientific attitude in most of the modern cultural research, a phenomenological approach. This approach, with hermeneutics as the prevailing method, has thoroughly affected modern cultural analysis.

Phenomenological Approach

First, two brief remarks on phenomenology and hermeneutics, disregarding the fact that there are different traditions within this field of thought.

A basic idea within the phenomenological tradition is that we cannot perceive reality as it really is. We perceive our material surroundings – including artefacts – through our sensory apparatus. Our consciousness becomes a filter for all sensory perceptions, and understanding takes place only through interpretation of these perceptions. Our interpretation is, of course, coloured by our former experience and our understanding of the world.

From the phenomenological point of view, then, reality – or the material world – is not accessible to the human mind. Objectivity is impossible. Research cannot concentrate on the objective reality as it possibly is. Research must focus on reality as it appears to the subject. It may be claimed that it is the meaning that the subjects invest in artefacts which are the real ones, *because it is the perception of things that leads to action*, not the things by themselves.

If our sensory apparatus deceives us, there is hardly any sense in trying to identify the properties and qualities of the material world through this apparatus. Instead of collecting empirical observations, the researcher must concentrate on *understanding* how subjects *understand* reality. And this understanding depends on interpretation, not on the heaping up of empirical findings.

Hermeneutics, defined as interpretation of meaningful material in order to reach understanding, is of course not a new method in the study of culture. All humanistic disciplines depend on interpretation and understanding. But when our questions focus on subjective meaning rather than on form, use, function, distribution, etc., the interpretations may easily become more self-contained and "closed", more dependent on the researcher's own presuppositions and on rapid changes in what is considered correct research.

For the same reason, hypotheses tend to be more difficult to test critically, to verify or falsify. The result may be that one interpretation fits just as well as another, unless the researcher is extremely critical when trying to understand the content of meaning in a restricted artefact material.

My Swedish colleague Ulla Brück has pointed out this problem in her critique of what she calls "an ethnology that concentrates on meaning and consciousness" (1994: 4, translation BR):

> "With phenomenology as the axiomatic basis started a new discourse in cultural and social sciences, away from positivist observation and description of reality. "Culture" came to mean something very close to the noëma concept of phenomenology, which is meaning. Culture is understood as the way our consciousness interprets the real world.
>
> It is no wonder then that ethnology, focusing on culture as consciousness, does not master the real, material world, when the objective is the fascinating topic of understanding how meaning is created, how dead substance is animated through people's interpretations. This is what material culture studies have become: research on our material surroundings, not through its substantial aspects, but through the perceiving subjects."

This keen interest in interpretation and meaning fits very well with the cognitive concept of culture that came from anthropology to ethnology. With a definition of "culture-as-ideas" and "culture-as-consciousness" it is hardly possible to incorporate the material world in our concept of culture – no matter how much we want to reconcile the two.

Functionalist Approach

But this does not mean that relations between the material and the cognitive halves of culture were unproblematic in older, more positivistic-minded ethnology.

In Swedish ethnology, the prevailing theoretical school from the interwar period until the end of the 1960s was diffusionism, which focused on cultural areas and boundaries, through the study of spreading both material and immaterial elements. I shall, however, concentrate on functionalism, the dominant school in Norwegian ethnology in the 1960s and 1970s, in a milder form perhaps even in the early 1980s. The main reason for this choice is that Norwegian functionalists took pains to formulate a theoretical basis for material culture studies.

For a functionalist it was – as a theoretical principle – impossible to separate the thing and the idea. Thus, the artefact held a natural position within their concept of culture (Kolsrud 1973). But their conception of meaning was extremely limited – as I will show – and the shortcomings when it came to meaning in modern material culture became all too evident.

The functionalist analysis was directed towards questions of integration, coherence and continuity in culture, towards normality and harmony in functions. Their basic presupposition was a normal and rather harmonious society, where everything had a function.

Their concept of *function* often included both effect, coherence and consequence, which was very suitable for the analysis of artefacts – but only when the artefact was a working tool. And working tools were precisely the sort of artefacts that fitted best with the research object of the day, which was the way of life of peasants and artisans.

Professor Knut Kolsrud, who held the Chair of European Ethnology in Oslo from 1961 to 1986, argued for an understanding of *the artefact as a process* and *its integration in chains of behaviour*. His point of departure was the artefact as a carrier of meaning. A tool always has a certain function. Because the designer has built into it this potential action, the artefact will signal this possibility to fulfil a purpose. If this built-in potential for action is understood by another person, it may result in real action.

To quote Kolsrud: The artefact becomes a link in this chain of events, and action and artefact become "a unity between the agent's intention and the reached goal" (Kolsrud 1973: 29).

So far, so good. But when the functionalist focused on the artefact as a process, it was always a linear process. This becomes clear from Kolsrud's recurrent use of terms like "purpose", "intention", "preparedness for action" and "goal-oriented rationality".

The functionalist was doomed to miss the creation and the shaping of meaning as an interactive process. In his theoretical world the user is a passive agent who receives the ready-made meaning – or in the terms of the day: one who understands the intentionality and rationality of the tool.

This conception of *a linear process* is perhaps appropriate with tools, but it does not work with most of our material culture. The creation of meaning is not a one-way transmission from the producer to the consumer. An interesting question today is how meaning is created and reshaped in mass-produced commodities, or in short: the creativity in the meaning production. Very often, the meaning we invest in our objects is not the meaning of the producer!

This means that a large number of artefacts were out of reach for the functionalist analysis: artefacts other than functional tools, like objects that express memories, nostalgia, cosiness, identity, or objects that symbolize age and time, history, otherness, the exotic; or collectables and pieces of art... We do not use objects only for work. We also desire, love and hate objects.

Functionalist thinking was based on linear and causal models. They wanted to explain rather than understand. But then they lost the grip of creativity and meaning. There was no room for symbolism and the polysemous artefact.

Functionalist thinking about the artefact came to a dead end when it was confronted with today's material culture. But the functionalist school – at least the Norwegian version of it – managed to establish a concept of culture which integrated both the material and the immaterial aspect, both the object and the meaning; however, only for a restricted group of objects and only a restricted set of meanings.

There is also another theoretical school in the post-war period that has had a noticeable impact on ethnology, even if it has never been directly adopted, namely structuralism. Even if many researchers of the semiotic school have tried to analyse material culture as communication, structuralist thinking has hardly been interested in the physical properties of artefacts. Once again, the focus has been almost exclusively on meaning.

Structuralist thinking, with its strong emphasis on the dualism between the system level and the manifest level of practical realisations, will probably consider physical artefacts as products of culture, but hardly as culture. In accordance with structuralist focus on the supraindividual system level, there has been a tendency to assert that any given culture has at its disposal a closed repertoire of meanings that may be "plucked down" by the individual members of the group.

Thus, the structures hover above the concrete manifestations. Structuralist analysis has been heavily criticized for its inability to cope with creativity, individual choice and change, and this critique seems at least as relevant as it was for functionalism.

Summing up

I have focused on two important research trends, the functionalist school and the phenomenological approach in modern cultural analysis. Neither of them has managed to treat in a satisfactory manner *both* material and immaterial aspects of our material world. We observe this deficiency in their research practice, and we see it theoretically from their understanding of culture.

The same critique applies to other research schools, like diffusionism which dominated Swedish ethnology for a long period, as well as for structuralism, which has had a certain impact on ethnology in general in the post-war period.

Older objectivist and empiricist schools had a good hand with material aspects, whereas modern phenomenological approaches almost exclusively focus on immaterial aspects. In the study of material culture the objects themselves are ignored, a logical consequence of a conception where "culture" is reduced to ideas and consciousness. Researchers study the representations of objects instead of the objects themselves, which is perhaps after all a good alternative to studying only the objects and ignoring the meaning!

By this I mean that phenomenological approaches and modern cultural analysis have meant a very important renewal of material culture studies. We must not quit the study of meaning, because there is still much more to do in this field. But it would be nice to find a position of material culture research that includes both physical aspects and meaning. But how?

Where to Go Now?

It is a strange paradox that the more our material world becomes filled with commodities, and the more variants of every type are produced, and the more people are crazy about small differences in design, the less we care as ethnologists about studies of form and function, of variation and distribution.

Another paradox: It is us ourselves, as sensing and perceiving subjects, who put meaning and values into things, who elevate some artefacts to works of art, to symbols of social status, to collectables, to memorabilia, etc. We appropriate or objectify our material surroundings. On the other hand: We often claim – and even complain – that material objects have a dominating influence on our daily life and even control our actions. Technical contrivances impose constraints on our daily routines: the personal computer, the telephone, the bicycle, the car, the aeroplane, electricity, the TV set, the watch... Technical innovations have both expected and unexpected consequences for us, of a positive as well as a negative character.

Perhaps we should direct our ethnological gaze towards the everyday objects of our surroundings and start studying what we do with them and what they do with us, how we – consciously and unconsciously – arrange our daily activities, our work and our leisure time, around these material objects.

What I propose for our material culture studies is to have a new look on our everyday technology, its constraints and consequences. But attention: Without returning to an oldfashioned functionalism, and – this is very important – at the same time taking care to avoid a deterministic view of technology. Artefacts are at our disposal all the time. They give support to our customs and habits as well as to more special actions. They regulate our day, they have an impact on our conception of time and place. Almost every habit and routine have its basis in the material world. Things, routines and ritual comportment are closely intervowen.

The challenge is to find an intermediate position where technology is not considered as determining our actions and comportment, but still takes account of the constraints inherent in our material surroundings. In short: I want a study of technology that pays due

respect to social and economic structures as well as to individual choice and creativity.

I will close by a quotation from a book written by a Swedish ethnologist, Jan Garnert, in 1993. His book *Anden i lampan* (The Spirit of the Lamp), represents a study that crosses the frontiers between traditional ethnology and modern cultural analysis, at least in my eyes. In this study of the social and cultural impact of lamp and light technology, he states (1993: 75, translation BR):

> "The technological insights of firemaking, of the torch, of the candle, of the oil lamp and the kerosine lamp were conducive to or conditioned habits and routines that together formed a pattern of behaviour. The description of this pattern is of vital importance for ethnology in the sense that it is from this empirical knowledge and this context that the ethnologist argues about the consequences of habits and routines for human cognition and their conception of what is possible and what is not."

Perhaps objects of study and questions like these may lead to a renewed interest both in technology, material culture and the objects of everyday life. For me, they point a way that is not a return to studies of form and function, and they promise an alternative to the study of meaning, which might otherwise perhaps soon become a reign of terror in ethnology.

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Alterity in Modern Sweden

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I would like to begin by referring to a newspaper article in southern Sweden's largest newspaper Sydsvenskan. It was published in February 1995.

The photograph is out of focus. You can discern a few dark, shadowlike figures against a backdrop of some weakly lightened tall buildings. You can see that some of the figures are wearing hoods. The picture is one of unidentified threat. The headline for the article reads: *We are going to take over Malmö*, followed by: *Respect! We will take over the respect! We will make sure that Rosegarden's reputation as the worst place in town lives on.*

The article refers to an encounter between a journalist and some immigrant youngsters. The introduction to the actual article reads as follows: *When these guys realize that I am a journalist and want to ask some questions, they are drawn to me like flies to a cube of sugar.*

The actual and symbolic arena for this encounter is the housing-project Rosegarden in Malmö, the third largest city in Sweden. The name has the same ring as Tensta, Alby, Rinkeby and Hammarkullen, well-known housing-projects from the so called "million-programme".

In order to shed some light on this encounter in the concrete suburbs, I am going to tell three different stories, all of which I believe have been important in shaping the present situation in these housing projects.

In my dissertation *The Rosegarden and the Black Poetry* I tried to give a description of descriptions (Ristilammi 1994). Different forms, or genres, of a description with strong roots in the ur-his-

tory of modernity consolidated the Rosegarden as a *borderzone of modernity*. And it is in this zone I would like to place my stories.

First Story: Modern Alterity

I would like to begin the first story, that of the *modern alterity*, by citing a Swedish writer, Max Lundgren, who describes how his family moved to a modern apartment in the late 1940s:

> "I had been to Malmö before, yet I was struck dumb when I was standing at the vanload of furniture, looking up at our house. The apartment was on the fourth floor. The elevator was buzzing and I was standing there breathless: with increasing horror I remembered the stories my mother used to tell me about elevators being stuck. I was holding a terrified woman by the hand; my mother was in cold sweat./.../
>
> The apartment had three rooms and a lounge. The living-room had parquet-flooring. Before this my mother had only read about parquet-floors. It was considered as a luxury of almost sinful proportions. Even with our shoes off, me and my sister were forbidden to trod the floor.
>
> Not until long afterwards did I understand what happened to my mother on that October day when we moved to Malmö. She took a step from one era to another; precisely in the same way as thousands of other women did at the same time." (Lundgren 1985: 10f, translation by the author.)

Many areas of this kind were built in Malmö between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. The new areas came to function as front zones in which clear borders were drawn up between what was considered to be modern and what was not.

The guidelines for these developments (and the public longing for the modern) had been drawn out two decades before at the famous arts and crafts exhibition in Stockholm in 1930, which was a symbolic starting point for the Swedish modernity-project. The

houses were meant to be factory-made, but instead the building-techniques used were still pure craftmanship (see Pred 1995).

A unique feature of the Swedish modern architecture was that already from the very beginning it became associated with the social-democratic political project. Housing became imbued with an ideological message concerning democratic rights and economic equality.

The first buildings in modern style, in a town like Malmö, were not housing. It was commercial buildings, small factories and gas-stations that were the material forerunners of the democratic modernity that the large majority of the Swedish people longed for. They were, in a sense, materializations of an ideological project and functioned as symbols for utopian dreams about the future. "Modernization" became the keyword that summarized the hopes for many Swedes.

However, it was not until after WW II that the Swedes obtained the opportunity to realize the programme which had been formulated in the 1930s. In Sweden, the government tightened control over construction through new loan regulations which established certain minimum norms concerning the size and equipment in apartments.

Rational planning in Sweden became a model for the whole Europe in rebuilding the cities after WW II. The 1950s were a time of consolidation of the Swedish modernity-project. Now planning started for the last step in the project. Towards the end of the 1950s and at the beginning of the 1960s, people were still living in poor and cramped housing conditions in Sweden. The authorities began to plan the one last push to create the "people's home". The run-down and unfashionable environment was to be cleared and the final bits of dirt and impurity were to be washed off the body of society. The Swedish parliament made the decision to produce one million new apartments over a ten-year period; it was called the million programme.

Rosengård, one of the million program's housing projects, was planned for 20,000 people who were to live in apartments produced by three different construction companies. A great effort was made to separate automobile and pedestrian traffic and to

create, between the bodies of the buildings, large green areas which included playgrounds for children. The construction went very rapidly and people started to move into the area before everything was completed; this created a settler's atmosphere. For many, the move also implied a journey through time and up the social hierarchy. Moving was, as in the late 1940s, an opportunity to become modern and to become a leading force in the project of Swedish modernity.

I would like to call this stage the *modern alterity.* You differed from the rest of society by being ahead of it. You could travel through time-space and social space at the same time. In this stage there was no time for looking back. It was a youthful stage, full of hope for the future. The waves of moving to the city, from unmodern to modern areas, can be described as compressions of history in which the geographical movements symbolized leaps along a perceived axis of time. History in this story was something that should have been left behind, or leaped over. The present was a starting-point for the future.

However, the area's back sides became apparent rather quickly. In the frontlines of modernity, it was possible to rely on the strategy which had been drawn up in Sweden in the previous decades. However, by the beginning of the 1970s more and more people in society began to view Swedish modernity as a cracked entity.

Second Story: Social Alterity

I would like to cite a piece from a newspaper article dating from 1972 in one of Sweden's largest newspapers with national coverage:

> "Mama... maaa... maaa... maaa... A child is calling in a weak voice. The echo catches the call and hurls it at the high bodies of the buildings. It rebounds at the concrete floor, resounds along the walls, past hundreds of identical balconies. It is told about Rosengård in Malmö that a little child was calling from the courtyard up towards the windows and bal-

> conies: Mama, I am hungry... A minute later fifteen plastic bags hurled through the air, each containing a sandwhich." (*Dagens Nyheter* 31 May 1972, the author's translation.)

There is an almost poetic tone in this description. It is certainly an urban legend which was widespread during this time – the beginning of the 1970s. *It is told*, it says in the article.

In these negative descriptions modern legends are mixed with impressionistic descriptions of life in the area and statements from dissatisfied inhabitants of Rosengård. A fundamental powerlessness is illustrated here; however, the lack of power is not described in analytical terms but through poesy. Symbols are allowed to speak and appeal to people's emotions, and through this reality is divided into black and white. The press makes use of distinct symbols in its attempt to appeal to the general public. It draws ammunition from the struggle for political power which take place in public, and in Rosengård's case, the debate is most feverish after the publication of each research report.

There are even examples of a poetic symbolic language in these early reports, and despite the fact that the language is toned down, one central train of thought stands out: there is something fundamentally wrong in the planning; it is morally reprehensible. These tendencies are noticeable even in the photographic material – often exemplified here by the popular motif of the little child confronted with hard concrete.

The genres are not bound to any special residential area, but are repeated in descriptions of similar residential areas throughout the country. In Sweden, it is the suburbs of the big cities which have become synonymous to the concept of the suburb.

Malmö's social problems did not disappear despite the fact that the older socially burdened inner city environments had been cleared. Rosengård and the other areas of the million programme began to be criticized by people who did not have faith in the society which had developed in Sweden in the period after WW II. Rosengård was converted into an arena of political struggle, a struggle which would have both positive and negative effects. In Sweden, as in the rest of the Western world, this period was characterized by a rapid blossoming of radicalism. This radicalism is

often described as being anti-modern but I would like to assert instead that the struggle was about the crisis **within** modernity.

As was the case in the rest of Europe, Swedish radicalism started in the universities.

Upon completion of their education, a number of youngsters within the left-wing movement took jobs and began to work in the social sector. Housing projects became arenas for political struggle, both in a symbolic and a literal sense. Earlier on, the administration of social services in Malmö had begun to give attention to the problems which existed in the new housing projects. The statistics showed that there was a great dependence upon social help in these areas, and that problems existed which demanded immediate action.

Within the Malmö administration there existed a desire to reform the social services and to concentrate upon experimental causes of action. Malmö had occupied a spearhead position within the Swedish social services of the late 1960s and early 1970s. New working forms for the social services were experimented within several different residential areas in Malmö, and many of these later spread to other cities.

One of such new forms of work was **neighbourhood work**. In other words, the neighbourhood was to function as a unit in and of itself, a unit in which people would take care of one another. However, what was important here was that solidarity would arise through mutual action. By working together towards a common goal in the neighbourhood, it was believed that solidarity could be achieved. The opposite of this work was passive consumption which hindered a real spirit of community. Solidarity was to be place-oriented, and for the radicals, the residential area was hoped to function as the community building place. Resultantly, identity was also linked to place.

The confrontation with the local power structure was intense. Those people who had planned, made decisions about, and financed Rosengård and other similar areas had, based upon their own experiences, a difficult time understanding the fierce reaction. In their eyes, Rosengård was the terminus of a long struggle against those environments which for them symbolized poverty

and degradation. In their world of experience, it was the struggle against the previous impoverished society which was most important, and this struggle had been conducted with modernity as a weapon. They could not imagine that these new modern residential areas could bear disadvantages with them.

What the architects, planners, politicians, and residents did not understand, was that behind the materiality of Rosengård lay a power struggle whose primary characteristic was that its weapons were varied. The buildings were not merely neutral dwelling machines, but also symbols, and as symbols they risked being exposed to rapid conversion.

The field in which the struggle for modernity was conducted was altered, and with it, the manner in which the battle could be waged was also altered. Consequently, the struggle over ideas did not merely generate the power to create environments, but also the possibility to give them, as well as the work in Rosengård, a new meaning. The borderland created in Rosengård provided a possibility to renew modernity.

This borderland was a way of driving forth the project which had started in the 1930s. What both the radicals and the local politicians perceived as a total disjuncture was actually the creation of a discursive field with a physical grounding in which the modern project could go on and be renewed (and destroyed), and in which one could exchange opinions in words and actions about the design of the modern welfare state.

Thus, the conflict addressed two sides of the same thing; the value of a strong society – of the social state – and the idea of the solidary society. At the same time, the struggle was also a symptom of the economic crisis which contained the seeds of the *crisis of representation.*

The contents of the words and concepts which were in use at the time were no longer clear. After all, what did "modern society" mean? In what way should one understand the concept of "democracy"? What meaning was contained in the word "solidarity"? What was "a good living environment"? During the few years between the late 1960s and early 1970s, values which had seemed to be fundamental to society were put to the question. Parliamen-

tary democracy was criticized and it was thought that solidarity should be built upon and manifested out in residential areas and factories and not through traditional political channels. The process implies a crystallization of Rosengård's genres in which different causal contexts, historical chains of development, utopias, and dystopias are created. In this way, and via the conflict, both the writing of history and descriptions of the future are created along with Rosengård's black poetry.

Areas like Rosengård were considered to be symbolizations of the oppressive nature of capitalist society. The voyage into the future that Rosengård had symbolized in its modern phase, had come to a halt. The progress into the future had stopped short of the fields beyond these areas. In the **social alterity** that Rosengård now had transformed into, time stood still and this was a reflection of the fact that the momentum in the Swedish modernity-project had stopped. While the motor was still running, it was now out of gear.

Third Story: Ethnic Alterity

I would like to return here to the newspaper article I referred to in the outset:

We are going to take over Malmö, followed by: *Respect! We will take over the respect! We will make sure that Rosegarden's reputation as the worst place in town lives on.*

When these guys realize that I am a journalist and want to ask some questions, they are drawn to me like flies to a cube of sugar.

For me this meeting echoes other encounters of a colonial nature. I was talking about youthfullness in my account of the modern alterity and you can connect this to a relativization of time where different people become connected to different places on a time-scale. Rosegarden, and other Swedish concrete suburbs have been transformed from being in the front of the time-scale to being laggers-behind again. The suburbs are treated as a threat with the risk of contamination of the surrounding societies. These structures of feeling are old. They derive from the time when tech-

niques of dealing with indigenous populations in the era of high colonialism were being brought back to western cities and were projected to the "big-city-jungles" here at home (cf Ristilammi 1995a and b). The reporter clearly has a mission to tell a story about otherness among us.

Rosengård is an area whose population comes to a large degree from abroad. This can be seen both as positive and negative. The area can function as an **interface** in which distanced communications can take place between what is understood as ethnic alterity and that which is Swedish normality. In such a process normality and alterity are adapted relationally to one another. A large concentration of ethnic alterity can, however, be perceived negatively, with an increased risk of "ghettoization" and the development of criminal gangs.

Rosengård is comprised of many different smaller areas with different characteristics. It is these surveyable units which are considered to be the home district (home turf) of the inhabitants of Rosengård. The varying character of these units also allows for the social stratification of the area. These are, however, processes which are hidden by the signification which Rosengård has as a sign of modernity's back side. Rosengård is always forced to relate to the processes of stigmatization which want to fix her identity through geographical determinism. The inhabitants are forced to defend their place of living, and thereby their identity, before the people who live in other areas. The question, "Who am I and who am I in relation to other people?" is constantly brought to life whenever contact is made with other people. Consequently, identity is not only something worth striving for, but can also be seen as something which boxes in, locks, and reduces one's possibilities to a positive view of one's own self.

Those kids who met the reporter talked about respect. The only way they can get respect is by echoing, in a mimetic way, the fears that the surrounding society projects onto them. There is a fetishistic bind between the reporter and the kids.

Thus, Rosengård has become a free floating sign which not only signifies Rosengård, but also other similar areas. It is the gap

between the sign and the signification which creates disease and frustration.

Of course it is not free-floating in a way that makes reflection about power-relations redundant. The possibilities for individuals to "freefloat" in this society are very unevenly distributed. It is often said that the youth of today glides in and out of identities as chameleons change colour according to the background. But the kids who meet the journalist in Rosegarden are, I would argue, forced into very specific forms of cultural expressions if they want to assert some form of dignity towards the outer world.

Whether they are materialized in newspapers, research reports, or oral narratives among the people of Malmö, the stories about Rosengård have become something which have to a certain degree lost contact with the reality of the area. However, this does not mean that this narrative or discourse lacks significance for the people of Rosengård. It is through this gap that the symbolic function arises and which makes the poetry of Rosengård possible.

In this arena which Rosengård constitutes, borderlines are maintained which create and recreate modernity to the extent that it must relate to the problems of Rosengård. Post-industrial society is not articulated through a political center, but in its periphery where the borders are extremely obvious. Rosengård is one of these peripheral borderlands.

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Narratives of Modern Dying. Looking for Authentic Death

Finnur Magnússon

Why is it so that death seems to organize so much of our discourse in "now" and "then"? Death's metaphorical strength of polarizing seems endless. Death is constantly spoken of within different discourses being shaped into narratives. These narratives as the author treats them in this essay are found on two different levels. First, within the abstract assumptions of scientific theories; second, in informal as well as formal storytelling among people actually working in Swedish clinics and hospitals where dying patients are being cared for.

Pathological Death

Thoughts of modern death and dying are mirrored within several different social theories and assumptions. On a general level we encounter the idea that modern man has been deprived of the right to his or her own death. Death has become a matter of medical technology and is enclosed in medical institutions. This view is found among several scholars, for instance Zygmunt Bauman, who pinpoints modern death as a deconstruction (Bauman 1992). He claims that modernity seeks to deconstruct mortality. This does not of course imply that death does not exist in contemporary society. In contemporary society death has rather become the Other. Death has certainly always been the Other, but in modern society this Other has gained a specific meaning. Some of the supposed features of modernity as hope, faith and reflexivity, control of body and mind, etc., are according to Bauman threatened by the sheer

knowledge of our own mortality. The deconstruction of mortality does not involve the denial of death as much as resisting the causes of death. The deconstruction of death means a pathologization that has turned death into an illness which can be cured. This is what makes death so frightening. Death has always been frightening and will always remain so. But modern fear of death differs from that of previous eras in its character of being a rational fear. It is rational in the sense that fighting or resisting the causes of death becomes the main project of our life, so when death finally occurs, it is seen as being a failure. Therefore one can say that medical ambitions, taking care of one's own health and body, keeping fit, eating proper food, and not smoking and drinking are only subtitute solutions of insoluble problems.

As the main task of the medical establishment is to preserve life, the dying patient becomes a reminder of the failure of medical care (cf Certeau 1984: 191ff). Placing this statement within a contemporary discussion of modernity, death has become a threat to some of the main features of modernity: rationality, the ability to transcend, the control of one's body and soul, the creation of self-identity and reflexivity (Melucci 1989, Giddens 1991, Mellor 1993).

To summarize this discussion which outlines some central topics in the scolarly discussion of modern death and dying, the following facts may be stated. Death and dying seem to have become the problems to be solved by an individual, instead of being a collective matter as it was in earlier stages of history. Further on, death and dying have developed into medical phenomena treated by the help of experts. Finally, death in its modern shape is believed to threaten some of the grand values of our society, and therefore it has been thrust into the realms of institutions separated from the rest of society.

However, social and cultural theories of the meaning of death in modern society may focus on general tendencies, but they do not always tell us all that much about how death is actually met and dealt with inside wards and hospitals.

Cultural Construction of Death

In my study of the Swedish old age care, I have touched upon some topics concerning the care for aging and dying patients. The study is based on fieldwork as well as interviews with nurses within different sectors of the medical establishment (Magnússon 1993, 1995, 1996).

One of the purposes has been to outline the ethnography of death where diffent types of narratives are important. These narratives show important changes in dealing with death and dying among the staff. Furthermore, they also function as "seismographic" readers of some social and cultural changes within modern society.

In spite of extensive literature claiming the opposite, a vast quantity of evidence shows that death no longer seems to be a matter of taboo (Ariés 1978, Gorer 1965, Mellor 1993). Today, a nurse working in a clinic where the death of a patient – young or old – is frequent, does not regard death as an exclusively pathological or medical matter. Death and dying are being defined more as cultural or social phenomena. This becomes evident in narratives as well as the carefully woven rituals and habitual behaviour found within everyday care. In working with dying patients, one is bound to cope with emotional difficulties and sometimes crises that are always present. A nurse experiences pain and suffering, she witnesses the decay of human bodies, and she learns to distinguish between different types of deaths, as, for example, death which comes as a relief or a surprise, or death which is beautiful or nasty. She may spend some time establishing relations of friendship with a single patient, and then she suddenly finds this relation being abruptly broken off by death. Furthermore, the nurse may even at some time in her career have witnessed some acts of brutality and ignorance from her colleagues. In other words, she has most likely experienced the double-faced character of care.

Janus-Face of Care

Nurses respond to these experiences of death in many different ways. This leads us to a complicated field of **narratives of dying and death** among them.

The intertextuality of the narratives is quite clear. They almost always have the character of two-sided retrospection. By remembering and narrating examples of different patients and their death, the nurses emphasize changes in the care for the dying, changes which they regard as progress. Quite frequently nurses use history to give legitimacy to their present situation. They refer to the time when death was a taboo, when death was never really spoken of and when dying patients were ignored and did not always get proper care.

This means looking backwards to the Swedish medical institutions of the 1970s. It was during this period that some problems involved in the care for the dying were pointed out. This was especially the case within the geriatric care system. Incidents – like the one when a confused young man murdered at least twelve old people at a geriatric ward in 1979, exposed bad conditions within the care system. This, among other incidents, raised a series of questions by scholars, politicians and media people, all pointing in the same direction: Swedish medical establishment was in a really bad shape, when it came to the care for the aged and for the dying. The critique voiced in the public debate shows signs of the general critique of modern society, being unable to give proper care to dying and disabled patients. The medical establishment became a symbol of the degeneration of modern society.

Undoubtedly the public critique was justifiable. It pinpointed the dilemma of modern medicine, which has the tendency to regard death in the same terms as Michel Foucault and Zygmunt Bauman put it – as a pathological matter (Foucault 1973, Bauman 1992).

In the narratives we find a firm structure, including repeating comments on bad care, disciplinary punishments of patients and dying patients being left alone, not getting sufficient pain killers or any kind of soothing treatment. When a patient died, it was the

hospital's, the doctors' and the nurses' failure. The conditions are commented upon in detailed descriptions. For instance, when morgue attendants were called to pick up dead patients for the removal to the morgue, the calling nurse never mentioned the word 'dead' or 'corpse', instead she said: "We've got this patient to be collected". When the attendant came, the rest of the patients were to stay in their rooms, and the corpse was transported out, using the back door.

There are close connections between the critique voiced in the public debate, and the narratives of experienced nurses. Yet, there are differences to be found. The narratives of the nurses are two-sided. They do not only point out flaws and mistakes, but also comment upon the existence of close ties of friendship actually present in everyday care. In this way the narratives of the nurses point out the tension between the two definitions of the construction of death, the **pathological** versus the **cultural**.

On a more general level the narratives of the nurses can even be seen as an expression of the critique coming from inside the medical establishment. They may be seen as moral tales, that is, by looking back you describe a situation which is not only different, but actually less humane or decent than the present one. In this way the narratives express the relation between "good" and "bad", a relation which is one of the foundations of all the care, social or medical (Magnússon 1996c).

The narratives thus enable us to discuss some features of modernity that have to do with the inbuilt **mechanisms of sequestration** – as well as the **transformation of intimacy** – seeking for authenticity in social relations (Berman 1982, Mestrovic 1993, Giddens 1992).

Intimacy of Dying

The narratives strive for creating continuity in a world which is characterized by discontinuity frequently caused by the dying of patients. In the relatively slow pace of wardlife, close and intimate relations between the old and the staff are created and these are

based on different foundations. This is a topic which is recurrent in interviews with different generations of nurses. You look backwards on your carreer and reminisce about patients to whom you have become attached. In their tales, nurses often comment upon the state of emptiness which frequently follows the death of a dear and beloved patient. When death occurs, a vacuum is bound to arise. Let me quote an interview:

> "We once had an old sailor. He used to sit at the same table all day. Then he suddenly died, but in my mind, he is still sitting there. He died a year and a half ago."

Mourning among nurses becomes a natural state of things, as an integral part of everyday care. Memories tend to pop up unexpectedly as, for instance, when noticing the obituary of a patient when reading a newspaper. These memories are collective as well as individual matters. Dead patients worth remembering become legends frequently commented upon. However, death and dying are not only spoken of, changes of attitudes are revealed in practice as well. Narratives and habitual routines, rituals and behaviour become a sort of safety-valve. The ward becomes a place where the power of habits keeps away uncomfortable phenomena to create order in a world of chaos.

The combination of narratives and action even seems to create a picture of nurses as some kind of pioneers within modernity. The nurses seem to be seeking the **authentic death**, where individual routines and strategies are allowed. This permissive attitude seems to be nearly unlimited. A long list of examples showing permissive attitudes could be made. A nurse has told me of a situation were a Polish immigrant woman demanded that her deceased husband should be dressed up in his old confirmation suit, of course completely unfitting, a certain number of socks and his old cap. In spite of difficulties, the nurses were able to dress the corpse according to the wishes of the widow. The jacket was cut apart at the back and sewed onto the corpse. Parents of stillborn babies are allowed to bring their baby to a nearby lake or a wood, where they just sit holding the child in their arms, engaged in their grief. Corpses are carefully washed, candles lit, the room decorated and

nurses pay farewell in a ritual manner, both individually and collectively. The corpse is commented upon in terms such as "nice", "peaceful", "at ease", etc. It has become more and more common that a corpse is actually photographed. For some time it has even been customary that stillborn babies are photographed and their footprints made in plaster.

Seeking the Authentic Death

Thus death and dying within the contemporary Swedish medical establishment, as expressed in narratives as well as in action among nurses, become phenomena that stretch far beyond the limits of medical or biological discourse. In fact, we witness a tendency to sidestep medical discourse in the care for the dying. The task of the doctors and nurses seems no longer to be to preserve life at any cost, but rather to ease pain and suffering. Today the expression 'dignified death' is used – meaning the same as authentic death.

Studying death and dying within the contemporary medical establishment allows us to survey a **transformation of intimacy** within modern society, as well as the inbuilt force that **separates anomalies** from the rest of modern society.

Death threatens and frightens and causes thoughts of anxiety among nurses, as it reminds them of their own mortality. But the disturbing thoughts often arising are seldom neglected. In fact, many nurses choose their occupation just because the dilemmas and existential thinking about death and dying give them some sort of satisfaction.

Today people tend to create relationships were the individual is the central issue. This is quite evident in the world of arenas separated from society, such as wards and medical institutions. In the relations to the dying patient the authenticity or purity in social relations – as described by Anthony Giddens – may be found (Giddens 1992). The feeling of loss and emptiness following a patient's death has very little to do with either the failure of the medical system or religious brooding. These feelings of uneasiness are

connected with a pure regret at a person's loss. This tendency towards the state of intimacy – where purity or authencity in relations is sought – is to be found at different levels of everyday ward life, but especially concerning the patients' death.

In this way pessimistic prophecies of the denial of death and the alienation of the dying within Swedish modernity seem not to be confirmed in the everyday reality of clinics, wards and hospitals.

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Narratives of Estonian Nationalism

Slade Carter

Albert Lord and Oral Narratives

The folklorist Albert Lord defined traditional oral narrative songs as songs that have been conveyed by voice over generations. The building blocks for the narratives are particular thematic phrases, around which songs are created during performance. In the oral narrative tradition, what takes place is not merely performance, but composition (Lord 1960: 4, 5, 21, 22). Lord called this process "composition in performance" (ibid.: 4).

In Lord's view, while a printed text is a fixed composition, the traditional oral text is processual (Lord cited in Finnegan 1992: 41). Songs continually evolve through the words of the performers, the singers of tales. In Lord's research, the singers were the oral poet-composers of Yugoslavia, the *guslars*.

For Lord, when singers begin to memorise songs, they are not true oral composers but mere performers. Performance of memorised texts is, in his opinion, not creative but reproductive (Lord 1987: 313, 314). Literacy usurped the position of tale-teller from the singer of tales. The singers' tradition was buried by the book.

Hypothesis

Lord's theory that the printed word spells the end of the process of composition in performance is, I contend, erroneous. In the context of literacy, the audiences of printed texts (namely, readers and listeners) partially take on the roll of singers of tales (or composers

on the point of performance), alongside the text's authors and performers.

Lord believed that the audience may influence a text's formulation and delivery by its presence at and reaction to a traditional performance (Finnegan 1992: 97). Unlike Lord, however, I maintain that the audience receiving a performance using apparently "set", printed texts, can in fact shape and therefore participate in composing texts. The printed text, as an arrangement of signs that are coherently interpretable by an audience (Hanks 1989: 95), is not, in a sense, fixed at all. Textual coherence comes on the point of performance, that is, the enactment of texts. The audience of printed texts takes part in composition in performance not by its utilisation of particular verbal phrases, but by its reception of and reaction to a set of ideas believed to exist in texts and the context of performances.

Composition in performance has continued in two different yet not unrelated realms of Estonian cultural life – the national epic, *Kalevipoeg* (1857), and the Song Festivals. *Kalevipoeg* was compiled by the physician Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald. The work is a long poem based on Estonian oral literature. It relates the tales of the mythical giant Kalevipoeg, who is portrayed as the last warrior king of independent (pre-Christian) Estonia. But one cannot change the words on the printed page. How then can it be considered part of the ongoing use of composition in performance? The answer lies in the nationalistic ideas expressed in the epic, which were subsequently employed by new generations of Estonians, thereby "extending the text" of *Kalevipoeg*. The original *Kalevipoeg* was not a fixed product because it spawned other original works using its formula: the audience of *Kalevipoeg* were to become composers in the steadily evolving nationalism of the nineteenth century.

In performances at the Song Festivals, which began in 1869, the audience is fundamental to continuing composition in performance. Although pieces sung at the festivals have been written before performance, I will argue that composition continues in the receptions and reactions of an active audience in the context and moment of the performance event.

The function of the audience, with the creation of *Kalevipoeg* and the establishment of the Song Festivals, has led to what I consider a national oral-literary formula for composition in performance. I use "formula" here to mean a repeated expression of meaning in the context of particular performances. Texts are **meaningful** because they are received in a particular way by an individual and/or group. The national oral-literary formula combines elements of literacy (printed texts) and orality (the use of Estonian oral literature in *Kalevipoeg*, the singing at the Song Festivals). It is the formulation and expression of ideas of nation and nationalism (that is, the assertion, reification and celebration of the unity of the nation in the image it makes for itself) through various performances.

The Creation and Performance of *Kalevipoeg*

After a century-long closure, the re-opening of the University of Tartu in 1802 brought together the first group of nationally-minded, educated Estonians (Kurman 1982: 278). Under the shadow of six centuries of foreign rule, a small but enthusiastic Estonian intelligentsia developed. The publication of the Finnish epic, *Kalevala*, in 1835, had advanced the Finns into the family of "civilized nations" (Wilson 1978: 51). If an epic could be found among the Estonians, they too, it was felt, could move to the level of other European peoples with national epics (Kurman 1982: 278).

Kreutzwald, who committed himself to *Kalevipoeg* in 1850, did not find a single great poem of Kalevipoeg's adventures. He therefore had to supplement existing folk materials to make the epic a coherent whole (ibid.: 280–281). About 75% of the work is based directly on Estonian oral traditions. What remains is Kreutzwald's own creation or is based on Finnish material (ibid.: 286–287). Importantly, however, less than half of the data Kreutzwald used was originally connected with the name or figure of Kalevipoeg (ibid.: 287). Hence, the character of the epic *Kalevipoeg* was considerably invented by Kreutzwald. But whatever its faults as a transcrip-

tion of oral narratives or as a work pseudo-mythology, *Kalevipoeg*, as the first major Estonian literary text, earned a place as **the** classic of Estonian literature that would inspire many creative works.

Although in Estonian folktales Kalevipoeg is often a character of fear (Oinas 1979a: 377), in Kreutzwald's epic he is a heroic warrior king. Kalevipoeg perishes on earth on the eve of foreign occupation. He is sent by the gods to the gates of hell where he is chained to guard the devil until he might manage to free himself (Oinas 1979b: 223). His freedom will herald a new era of happiness for the Estonian people (Kreutzwald 1982: 266).

The problem of Kalevipoeg's return to earth is that, in leaving the underworld, he may release demons and thereby destroy the world (Oinas 1985: 57). Despite this ambiguous predicament, the dream of freedom following Kalevipoeg's release had, in effect, left the text of the epic open-ended. Kalevipoeg at the gates of hades, a metaphor for the enslaved Estonian nation, is imprisoned **until** he breaks free. The text may thus, firstly, be extended **by imagination**. It may be extended further by actively working towards the text's alteration. In other words, the destiny of Kalevipoeg might be altered through the pursuit of nationalistic goals.

In his foreword to his early 1853 edition of *Kalevipoeg*, Kreutzwald forbids future generations to alter the spelling in the work and claims personal copyright of the text (Voigt 1990: 252). Kreutzwald has, it would seem, "fixed" his text. But the inability to change the words on the page does not mean the death of its compositional properties. Authors cannot, after all, control the powers of their readers (Tyler 1986: 135). Readers can compose meaning while reading texts. After all, texts would be boring and unimaginative if everything was clearly laid out and explained to readers (Stern cited in Iser 1980: 51).

Interpreted textual meaning itself may not be what the author intends. This being the case, the printed text is, in a sense, not fixed at all. Kreutzwald did not envisage the nationalistic significance that could be "composed" on the basis of his epic. The fact that Kreutzwald doubted the ability of Estonians to develop independently as a nation (Raun 1987: 56) makes the readers' powers

to attach meaning to texts especially pertinent to the case of *Kalevipoeg*.

The ability to compose meaning from a text does not even necessitate a reading, for its ideas may merely be known to exist through those who have read the work. Indeed, the significance of *Kalevipoeg* is not in its intrinsic value (as a record of oral literature) but in its incentive effect (Turunen 1982: 280).

The effect of the work was first felt by the Estonian intelligentsia. It prompted Hurt, Eisen and Kallas to record folklore (Laugaste 1990: 272). The thematic material of the epic inspired artists, including the writers Friedrich Kuhlbars and Jakob Tamm and the composer Rudolf Tobias (Rubulis 1970: 67–68; Normet 1987: 690). Kreutzwald's epic thus became an springboard for other songs – hence his title, *lauluisa*, "the father of song".

Like Lord, Lewis has questioned the possibility of a printed text ever being a processual text. He wrote that oral myths communicate possibilities about the world to their listeners. However, when myths are written down, the author is in a position to control their meaning. This may lead to a "tyranny" of the written text as the meaning of myths are controlled, not communicated (Lewis 1993: 21–22). For Lewis, written literature is a "frozen" text for it can only be told one way (ibid.: 21). But Kreutzwald's writings gave only one interpretation of Estonia's mythical past. Kreutzwald had also left the ending of *Kalevipoeg* free for the reader to determine. People would extend the text of the epic beyond its sorrowful yet hopeful conclusion of Kalevipoeg's possible release from hell. They would do so when they participated *en masse* in the Song Festivals. At these events, people would witness representations of collective national aspirations and symbols of which they felt a part.

The Extension of the Text: The Song Festivals

Johann Voldemar Jannsen organised the first Song Festivals. He was the editor of the newspaper, *Eesti Postimees*. In the press, Jannsen promoted the festivals, which were based on German and

Swiss models (Tall 1985: 450). Ten thousand people attended the First Festival (1869), and thousands more were able to read about it in the papers (Raun 1985: 396).

The festivals that followed were staged about five years apart. Audience levels grew rapidly and the festivals became a great source of national pride, taking on an increasingly "national" character. At the Fourth Festival, settings of Estonian folk songs were used for the first time. By the seventh festival, the music was entirely that of Estonian composers (Tall 1985: 453, 454).

The Song Festivals served a sense of national unity. The writer Aino Kallas observed of the participants: "... they are all like brothers, and even the unknown become known" (cited in Tall 1985: 454). They became known not through personal introductions but through a common understanding of a set of notions about Estonian's future (that, ultimately, Estonians might determine their own destiny as a people).

The Song Festival was an ideal forum for the continuation of composition in performance using nationalism as its performance thematic base. National sentiments could be expressed and witnessed by thousands, in the feelings of "brotherhood" described by Kallas. Just as Lord's *guslar*s had used themes in performance-composition, Song Festival performers and audiences came to anticipate displays of nationalism as a theme within the context of performance. In addition, like the *guslar*s' performances, the exact outcome of Song Festival events could not be predicted in spite of the use of printed texts in performance. Thus, the Song Festivals became momentary events using anticipated themes: compositions in performance.

To some extent, Song Festival audiences and performers could by living under a "tyranny of nationalism". But even nationalism, when "performed" (enacted), will be different in its manifestation from earlier events. This is especially evident in the Song Festivals during the Soviet rule.

Under Soviet occupation the Song Festivals were officially oriented away from the notion of a common, united people, culture and destiny that had characterised the festivals of the First Estonian Republic. Instead, the Soviets sought to underline the glories

of Soviet Estonia (Clemens 1991: 112). Singers were compelled to carry pro-Soviet placards and pictures of Lenin. Communist officials opened the festivals with long speeches celebrating Estonia's place in the "friendly family of the Soviet Union". Estonian songs were taken from the repertoire and replaced by the Soviet ones (Clemens 1991: 112).

Estonia would be "integrated" into "multi-national" Soviet culture. The Song Festivals would acquire a "truly popular character" and express the "people's innermost feelings and thoughts" (Käbin 1971: 119–120). Thus, as a popular event, the Song Festivals were seen by the Soviet authorities as a means to establish a "Soviet formula" of performance among Estonians.

A similar attitude was taken towards *Kalevipoeg*. It was portrayed as a great achievement "of the people". It was a popular creation and was thus endorsed (see Laugaste 1951: 319).

Despite the attempts by the authorities to make the Song Festivals events that were "Soviet" in character, they failed to do so. The Song Festival singers of tales (that is, both stage performers and audience members) continued to make use of already-established formulas. They continued to express nationalism openly at the festivals. They did this by dissenting against the authorities. The end of the official program was followed by a series of nationalistic works, sung *impromptu*. Among these songs was Gustav Ernesaks' version of Koidula's *Mu isamaa on minu arm* ("My Fatherland is My Love"), which became an unofficial national anthem. Despite the authorities forcing the organisers to exclude the song from the repertoire in the festivals of 1960 and 1965, it was still sung spontaneously by audiences on both occasions. The militia's attempts to force people to sit down or leave were fruitless (Küng 1980: 221, 222).

The significance of the audience meant that compositions became only truly composed on the point of performance. The atmosphere of the performance and the experiences it brought for the individual and the crowd were, in effect, the composition of texts. Composers of printed texts do not merely have themselves in mind, but an audience. Even if two individuals could read musical notation with equal skill, they would not share the experience

of the music until it is heard. Texts at the Song Festivals sprang to life in the context of the audience's role. Thus, an Estonian choir performing in Moscow, even though it engages in performance, is removed from the context of the Song Festivals. As the performance event has altered, the audience's reactions cannot be the same, even if the written texts employed are the same. Hence, texts cannot have the same sense of meaning in different performance contexts.

The National Oral-literary Formula

The production of *Kalevipoeg* was instrumental in the Estonian shift from what Branch calls "micro-identity" to a national identity. Estonian identity altered from its foundation in communities based on ties of kinship and locality to a national identity that embraced larger groups of similar people (the nation) (Branch 1994: 36–37). Nations, Kapferer observed, replicate and promote notions of likeness, not difference, in order to strengthen national identity (Kapferer 1988: 191). As the product of "all Estonians", *Kalevipoeg* served as a nucleus for the promulgation and reproduction of likeness that otherwise had not existed or, if it had, had not been evident.

Kalevipoeg, in a nationalistic reading, embodies ideals of ethnic unity and independence. The Song Festivals enlisted these themes in the context of performance. The audience anticipated the employment of the themes (such as singing forbidden patriotic verses spontaneously) but could nevertheless not predict the outcome of performance before its occurrence. It was this anticipation of ethnic celebration and anti-Sovietism that made the Song Festivals so important on the path to Estonian independence from the Soviet Union, the so-called "Singing Revolution".

At the Song Festivals, the audience used a set of ideas, a formula, for composing. This formula, the national oral-literary formula, is the public expression of national unity in performances. The formula owes something to themes of *Kalevipoeg*. The text of *Kalevipoeg* was extended by granting it a sequel: Kalevipoeg

might be feed from the devil's door and return to earth if the reader of the epic could **imagine** it. The "imaginings" of Kalevipoeg's liberation and the ensuing happiness for all Estonians led people to become active participants in the national movement.

Conclusion

Text is not merely the transmission of meaning intended by an author. Textual meaning awaits realisation until a text is performed or enacted, resulting in the interdependence of text and performance (Bakker 1993). This enactment requires an audience for it to be a true text (that is, weighted with meaning(s)).

Kalevipoeg is not a "frozen" text for it asked its readers to imagine (and from these imaginings **compose**) something beyond its printed words. Kalevipoeg's predicament would be altered. The text was thus "extended", as people took up its themes (of national survival and liberation), most prominently at the Song Festivals. Predicting the outcome of these performance events was, however, impossible. People used the Song Festivals as a place and a moment in time to continue to sing their tales (of nationhood) on the point of performance.

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ISBN 9985-9000-6-5
ISSN 1406-9962