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Memory Stored and Reactivated

Some Introductory Reflections

Henning Laugerud

There is nothing in man of all potential parts of his mind more
noble or more necessary to the active life than memory, because it
maketh most to a sound judgement and perfect worldly wisdom,
examining and comparing the times past with the times present, and by
them both considering the time to come, concludeth with a
steadfast resolution what is the best course to be taken in all his
actions and advices in this world.

George Puttenham: *The Art of English Poesy*. 1589

This quotation from the Elizabethan rhetorician George Puttenham (1529/30–1591) is a short and pithy summary of the classical understanding of memory. When we here talk about memory, it is not just in the individual or psychological sense but in the “broader” sense of memory as something both collective and individual, and something “stored” and “reactivated”. Perhaps we can understand memory as the “place” where the individual and the collective meet in a common movement.

In various forms, the perspective of memory has held a central position in many areas of cultural-historical research since the beginning of the twentieth century.¹ This perspective is, however, part of a long and complex tradition. The theme of this issue of *Arv* is also memory, but in this yearbook, the focus is slightly shifted in relation to the earlier research interest in the collective, or the supra-individual memory. In this collection of contributions, the perspective – to a greater degree, but not solely – will be to look at memory as something *both* individual and collective, and the way in which the “individual” and the “collective” can be said to meet – not always without resistance – in memory. Reflection on memory, its art, meaning and significance, has a long tradition going back to antiquity, also in matters concerning human knowledge and understanding of culture.

We shall attempt to encircle the subject through a series of concrete examples from Antiquity, the Middle Ages and early modern times up to our near past, taken from the historic empirical material, where the examples also will serve as *exempla* in the classical rhetorical sense – namely as exemplary.

How to Define Memory as a Cultural Phenomenon?

Memory can be understood as a kind of subsuming of all the experiences an individual or the collective have. Experience is the starting point for all knowledge, but experience is: “no more than a mass of memories assembled,” as George Puttenham writes (2007:128). Memory is concerned with storing some form or other of information in some form or other of individual or collective recollection, because memory is both an inherent capacity and an ability which can be trained and cultivated. Memory, seen in this way, can be regarded as something almost all encompassing, including both the individual and the collective memory – or forgetfulness. The Latin term *memoria* covers several things. On the one hand it referred to memory, that is to say, the mental faculty. At the same time the term referred to the act itself, remembering or recollecting something. But the term also denoted the handing down of historical tradition, while also being able to encompass such things as physical memorials. Memory in this sense is about history, historical understanding and a historical perspective, while at the same time describing something active and dynamic.

Memory is what makes it possible – in the imperfect human condition – to reach beyond the short flicker of the moment, to make the brief view that is a human life into something more. Perhaps we can see this as an effort to overcome the temporality and finality of man, and keep death and oblivion at bay. Through memory we pass on that which we hold dear – in us and through us, as George MacDonald (1824–1905) says:

Hear my voice come through the golden
Mist of memory and hope;
And with shadowy smile embolden
Me with primal Death to cope?
(MacDonald 2002 (1858):70)

Shadows and glimpses of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, to mention the most important theorists of memory of old, our grandparents, everyone we have met during our life, can still be seen as a form of life through the mist of memory in our inner selves – as in a mirror dimly, never as they were then but as they are now – in our recollection, in our memory. An understanding which was central in Old Norse society was that a person’s reputation *after* death was most important. We can read in *Hávamál*: “Cattle die, kindred die, we too shall die; I know of something which never dies, the judgement passed on all who have lived.”²

Memory is a selective process, in which something is forgotten, but for different reasons something *must* be forgotten. Complete memory, perfect recollection, would be a dysfunctional nightmare.³ There is always something, which is not considered “worthy” or necessary to be remembered. Memory and oblivion exist in what can be thought of as a dialectical rela-

tion. Oblivion, our own forgetfulness, is what makes memory necessary, in a way it depends on oblivion. Memory is therefore not a passive condition given once and for all, but a process and an act. To forget is to emphasize memory as a dynamic and creative process, because memory can change. It often happens that something that has been forgotten is brought to light again, and something that has been dead – or perhaps merely dormant – is brought back to life.⁴ Memory, like the god Janus, has more than one face and can be as changeable.

The Historic Tradition

Memory in the tradition after Aristotle – from Antiquity and through the Middle Ages – was regarded as the end process of sensory perception. It had its beginning in the stimulation of the five senses, which created the material for knowledge about the world through a series of inner functions.⁵ It is important to remember that memory is one of the five elements of rhetoric, which also has its own art: mnemonics or *ars memoria*.

Memoria covered two “functions” according to the ancients. On the one hand, it was about storing something in memory and on the other hand bringing it back in the mind, *recollecting* that which one needs from memory. The Latin word *recollectio* means to collect or (re-) collect something, and describes an active and creative process of *memoria*. Memory in the Middle Ages was concerned with knowledge and understanding, and was the dynamic element, which among other things made it possible to internalize knowledge as understanding *and act as a social individual*.

Memory can be defined as an experience which is recollected in the present. An experience in this sense is not necessarily confined to external experiences, but includes “inner” experiences such as thought, imagination, dream and the like. Memory was considered a creative process wherein that which was remembered was what made it possible to relate to one’s surroundings and acknowledge reality.

Boncompagno da Signa (c. 1170–1240) writes in his *Rhetorica Novissima* from about 1235 as follows: Memory is the honourable and admirable gift given by nature to mankind to be able to recall the past, embrace (have a perspective on, or understand) the present, and contemplate the future through its similarity with things from the past.⁶ This prospective relationship includes both the joys of Heaven and the eternal sufferings of Hell which we must perpetually remember (Boncompagno 1892:278). As an extension of this Boncompagno makes a list of virtues and vices, among many other things and phenomena, that can serve as signs for memory, in order to lead us frequently along the paths of memory (Boncompagno 1892:280).

Virtue therefore has a prospective character, it points forward to what one will become, and where the hope of humanity lies. It can do this, says Tho-

mas Aquinas, because it knows the present and remembers the past.⁷ Memory has a moral character which is connected to memory's three aspects of time.

For Boncompagno memory is part of a larger rhetorical context, in which rhetoric is understood as the fundament of ethics and social order. According to him, rhetoric will carry humanity from its fall to salvation. Man's entire existence is, in Boncompagno's perspective, a rhetorical act (see Cestaro 1997: especially pp. 177–181).

Nowadays we have a tendency to view memory as the opposite of "real" knowledge. Memory is all about learning something by heart and is almost understood as the opposite of creativity and "genuine" intellectual achievement. This way of thinking permeates the whole of society, and the modern "intuitive" pedagogy, which is used in schools, is one of many examples. Pupils should learn through a form of introspection, where they take from their inner selves and understand "on their own accord". This has its reasoning in a conception of "knowledge" as something which exists external to ourselves, and which anyone can gather, for example, from books or the Internet, and a romantic idea in which true understanding or knowledge is intuitive and comes from within. But all learning is about storing information in one sense or another. The psychologist George Miller claims, for example:

for learning can be seen as a process of acquiring smarter and richer mnemonic devices to represent information, encoding similar information into patterns, organizational principles, and rules which represent even material we have never before encountered, but which is "like" what we do know, and thus can be "recognized" or "remembered".⁸

It is impossible to think without memory. Man has a consciousness which always bears the past within it: we think and speak with historic references. Our life-world is historic in all of its being. We live in a culture of memory, because man is a being who carries his past within him (Strømholm 1991: 169). What is culture if not memory, understood as both individual and collective? Memory is not simply instrumental, but something which is a fundamental condition for culture.

Memory and Culture – the Collective

This leads us to "collective" memory, or memory as culture. This is clearly seen in the western and Christian cultural tradition; because memory and ideas about memory have a theological history that has been vital to the development of its modern use. Memory is certainly an integral focus of the Church's rituals. Anamnesis, memory, is emphasized by the Apostle Paul as an important part of Holy Communion in the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."⁹

In the liturgy, this relation is shown very clearly. Mass is dedicated to the memory of Christ, both his person and his deeds. It is a mythic repetition of the original rite. In the ritual, the celebration of Mass, Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is not only remembered but made actual, and through this actualization this historical sacrifice is made effective in each believer. The celebration of Mass has therefore a "threefold" time perspective: retrospective, actual and prospective, by pointing forwards to salvation. Remembering something that has been enables actualization and forward looking. In his classic study of 1954 Allan Watts emphasizes this meaning of anamnesis in Holy Communion: "*Anamnesis*, [...] is no mere reminder of a chronologically past event. Strictly speaking, *anamnesis* is much more than the simple sign of a fact distant (in time) from itself; it is rather the actual 're-collection' of a truth which eternally *is*, so that to recollect the sacrifice of Christ is to make it really and effectively present."¹⁰

Understood in this way, it is possible to see the Fall of Man as humanity's loss of memory of its own divine nature and salvation as the re-collection of this divine origin (Watts 1983:81). The celebration of mass is one way of awakening this memory. Anamnesis therefore has a perspective directed at the future because it points ahead towards what is to come, the objective of history, namely mankind's salvation.

The German historian Otto Gerhard Oexle concludes that "Das Christentum ist eine 'Gedächtnis' – oder 'Erinnerungs-Religion', weil das Gedenken der Heilstaten Gottes Hauptinhalt des Glaubens ist. Deshalb entscheidet auch das Gedenken Gottes an die Menschen (wie sein vergessen) über Heil oder Verdammnis. Durch Erinnerung (Anamnesis) wird die Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen konstituiert."¹¹

In this understanding, people are socialized into the Christian culture and belief internalized through "outer" *instruments* such as rituals, images, deeds etc. It is the outer forms which make it possible to adhere to the content of belief. This is precisely where the outer, instructive and preserving practices are important. Without them the entire foundation for the transference of knowledge from one generation to another is lost. In a perspective like this memory is emphasized as not only a fundamental basis for passing on knowledge but also as the basis for thought at all, and therefore a fundamental condition of culture and society. In opposition to this, the reformers of the sixteenth century claimed that church rituals were merely human historical conventions and therefore harmful: they had nothing whatsoever to do with true Christianity. All the old traditions, therefore, had to be removed and the historical – and history – appeared to be a problem. Memory appeared as a threat to the reformatory project. The reformers represented a true revolutionary modernism, demanding that the slate be wiped clean and a new start be made from scratch.¹²

Memory, like rhetoric, has three faces. One is turned towards the past, one

towards the present and the third towards the future. This can be defined as a dynamic understanding of tradition. In this, one can see a number of parallels to the hermeneutics of the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002). What are our “prejudices” in a Gadamerian sense, if not our individual and collective memory? (See Gadamer 1990 (1960): particularly pp. 270–346.)

For several reasons it was absolutely fundamental both in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages that memory was stored in images. Firstly, within Aristotelian and later Scholastic philosophy of knowledge, it was believed that thought and knowledge occurred in visual forms; *phantasms*. Memory was visual, and that which was to be remembered was stored in *images*. In some ways, it can also make sense to claim that collective memory was stored in physical pictures, monuments, church decorations and the like.¹³ These are, however, perspectives which we can find in our own time, as for example in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), who says that “Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen”, the idea that we are thinking in concepts of a visual kind.¹⁴ The classical Roman understanding of the term *memoria* also included the physical monuments (memorials) actually erected to commemorate events and persons, such as the Column of Trajan in his Forum close to the Piazza Venezia in Rome, or the triumphal arches at the Forum Romanum. Monuments like these were physical and visual objects, where memory was “stored”. A similar perspective is in many ways an integral part of the thinking of Pierre Nora, for whom the idea that there are places (*lieux*) where memory is stored, places that carry the marks of time so to speak, is at the core of his whole project. I will return to Nora shortly. His concepts are clearly inspired by the classical art of memory tradition.¹⁵

Viewed in this way, memory has a visual and a sensual side, as all the senses can be stimulated to awake memory, for is it not the taste of a cake which started Proust’s search for remembrance of things past? Memory is a relation between the internal and the external, and we can fairly confidently claim that the collective is mediated by the external. Memory images are not merely mnemonic and static, but directive and initiating. In such a perspective there is no such thing as “dead” knowledge. Knowledge is always based on a memory that is both active and initiating.

Cultural-historical Studies of *Memory*

The first half of the twentieth century saw the start of the first studies of the concept of collective memory in the new cultural and social history.¹⁶ The central figure here was the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), who proceeded from Emile Durkheim’s (1858–1917) theories of social community to develop a theory of memory as determined by these communities. These were ideas and perspectives that also found resonance among

historians at the University of Strasbourg, where Halbwachs worked; these scholars included one of the founders of French mentality history (the *Annales* school), Marc Bloch (1886–1944). Halbwachs himself was on the editorial board of the journal *Annales*.¹⁷ Parallel to that, the German-Jewish historian and theoretician of art, Aby Warburg (1866–1929), studied the significance of memory in the context of cultural history, with a focus on the link between memory and the language of cultural forms.¹⁸ Warburg was the founder of one of the leading European research centres for cultural history, the Warburg Institute, currently located in London.¹⁹

The core of Halbwachs's thought, in highly condensed form, is that social affiliation is crucial for the individual's memory formation, and that memory is constructed in a social group subject to factors that affect the development, self-understanding and demarcation of the group in relation to others. Halbwachs understands collective memory as the storage and transmission of past events that are believed to be significant for a particular social group in a given context and in a given place. He also stresses the significance of places for memory, and the symbolic forms that memories can take.

The French historian Pierre Nora, another of the central actors in the study of collective memory, concretely develops Halbwachs's ideas about the significance of place for collective memory. In his monumental work from 1984–1992, Nora surveys the *places*, both geographical and metaphorical, that constitute the French nation. This is a complex link between something that is a physical place, a concrete object, and is also incorporated in ritual and symbolic contexts.

Another central scholar in this field, which expanded greatly in the 1980s, is the English sociologist Paul Connerton, who in his book *How Societies Remember* from 1989 focused particularly on the transmission perspective. It was especially from the 1980s that the study of memory as a social phenomenon started in earnest.

The German Egyptologist and cultural historians Jan and Aleida Assmann are also two central figures in memory studies today, with their works on cultural memory and memory as constituting culture.²⁰

Halbwachs's works were more or less forgotten until they were revived by scholars like Nora and Connerton. However, we can find a persistent interest in the study of memory and cultural forms and motives in parts of the culture-historical school linked to or inspired by Aby Warburg and the activities of the Warburg Institute (Assmann 1995 (1988)). The interest in memory and the understanding of the past was discussed in a series of works in the 1970s and 1980s in social history, sociology, cultural history and the use of history. This drew on many parallel theoretical traditions. Concepts such as collective memory, social memory, cultural memory and cultural heritage all describe related phenomena but from different perspectives

(Bryld *et al.* 1999). Nor has there been any shortage of critical debate in relation to the use of concepts and theoretical heterogeneity and obscurity.²¹ The sociologists Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins, in an article from 1998, described studies of social memory as a “nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary and centerless enterprise” (Olick & Robbins 1998:106). This obviously has many productive and creative advantages, but it can also pose some problems precisely because of conceptual and methodological deficiencies and obscurities.²²

In Scandinavia the same tendency has made itself felt in the last twenty years in research on cultural history, and we have seen a number of studies tackling collective memory. These studies have often concentrated on institutionalized memory or national memory. When the interest in collective memory started in the 1990s, it was chiefly the construction of national memory that attracted attention. An important theme was national memories of the Second World War, both the “official” ones and the “counter-memories”, certain groups’ alternatives to the official version.²³

In recent years there has been a growing interest in what we can call memory practices, such as historical plays and festivals. These studies are clearly inspired by Paul Connerton and his understanding of social memory as bodily practices, but also by the phenomenon itself, with a steadily increasing historical experience economy and growing numbers of historical spectacles and “re-constructions”.

In addition to this, the last twenty years have seen a great interest in “cultural heritage studies”, often in connection with the perspectives and interests mentioned above. *Cultural heritage* is a concept that came into common use in the 1990s, and it is partly employed alongside or instead of other concepts describing the presence of the past, such as tradition, memory and antiquity (about the physical monuments). Cultural heritage has become a central concept both in the academic, professional conservation and management of physical objects and in the political discourse, not always with clear boundaries between them. Cultural heritage studies have consisted in “finding” or identifying this historical “heritage” and also deconstructing it as constructions and as discourses as part of identity formation (Beckman 1993; Jensen 2008).

Much of the interest evident in many of the memory studies, both internationally and in Scandinavia, has been focused on the deconstruction of memories based on the idea of an “imagined community”. This has particularly sought to reveal memory projects of different kinds.

In a critical essay from 1997, the American historian Alon Confino stated, somewhat polemically, that: “The often-made contention that the past is constructed not as fact but as myth to serve the interest of a particular community may still sound radical to some, but it cannot (and should not) stupefy historians” (Confino 1997:1387). It is important to remember that

ideas about the past, and both collective and individual memory, are constructions and results of selective processes. That is precisely why they are interesting to study. But even an “imagined community” is a real community. A “constructed” identity is no less an identity because it is constructed. Moreover, one may ask whether there are any communities or identities that are not constructed. The notion of authenticity seems to be difficult to shake off; we retain it, not always explicitly or consciously. Memory is a dynamic category; that is its essence, as it were. This becomes clear in a longer chronological view, showing the necessity of a historical perspective.

The dynamic and creative side of memory, however, is very clearly seen in another tradition within memory studies: what we may call *mnemology*, or the study of rhetoric and its mnemonic techniques, and the epistemological understandings and cognitive theories to which these have been related and still are related.

Studies of *Mnemology*

These are traditions that have partly run parallel to other research on memory in the last fifty or sixty years, partly integrated in it, but occasionally also surprisingly absent – perhaps because it has been more associated (not necessarily correctly) with the history of ideas and studies of early history. Interestingly, much of this research has proceeded from, or at least been inspired by, the culture-historical research in the “Warburg tradition”, if we may call it that. One of the leading and perhaps best-known of all students of the art of memory, Frances Yates, worked at the Warburg Institute in London. Her now classical study *The Art of Memory* (Yates 1966) was written there when the art historian Ernst H. Gombrich (1909–2001), a former pupil of Warburg, was its director.

These memory studies are often called *mnemology* today, and they have been primarily aimed at studying how the classical art of memory was used, developed, transformed and re-transformed in the medieval and early modern period, and also how these modes of thought and understanding have had an afterlife. *Mnemology* therefore comprises the study of all forms of mnemotechnique and memory, well-tested techniques and intellectual “aids” and perspectives intended to develop and improve natural memory and create something new.²⁴ John Krois (2002:152) has described it like this: “But it was not just a stage on the way to better methods, it was a way of thinking in itself, employing imagination instead of arguments.” *Mnemology* comprises the study of how the different methods have been devised, understood, implemented and discussed as systems, often from a rhetorical perspective. This form of study allows a critical assessment of the implicit social, political, aesthetic and scientific framework that mnemotechniques and aids have had at specific times and places through history

and down to the present. Some of the classical works in this field that should be mentioned, alongside Francis Yates, are Paolo Rossi's *Clavis Universalis* from 1960 and Herwig Blum's *Die antike Mnemotechnik* from 1969.²⁵ Of more recent date there is Mary Carruthers' epoch-making works on mnemonic techniques and the culture of memory in the Middle Ages (Carruthers 1990 & 1998).²⁶

These perspectives have shifted the emphasis from the referential dimension of culture to foreground the performative aspects, and opened up fields of studies of the cultures of performativity.²⁷ The mnemological perspectives open the way for important approaches to the study of cultural history by exposing and rediscovering the symbolism that gave meaning to history.²⁸

Some Words about This Collection of Articles

Memory is still an expanding field of study. This volume of *Arv* can be read as an attempt to widen the field both theoretically and empirically. The articles in this volume try to broaden the study of memory representations and practices, through studies of Antiquity and early modern times into the present, to show the afterlife of these structures of thought and ways of thinking about and imagining the past.

The articles in this special issue all proceed from one or more of the many perspectives outlined above, in an attempt to combine them in (hopefully) fruitful ways. The long historical perspective, from Antiquity to the present day, is essential for understanding the different perspectives and their traditions. The first articles, by Jørgen Bakke and Henning Laugerud, paint the historical background and practice of the art of memory and its significance in Antiquity and the Middle Ages respectively. For Pernille Hermann the focus is on how a new technology (writing) had consequences for the presentation and understanding of the past as it is expressed in the saga literature. Here she derives inspiration from recent culture-historical perspectives on cultural memory in order to understand how texts work. Literature is also in focus for Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, but here the object of analysis is contemporary literature, based on the ethical and aesthetic effects that traumatic memory can have as textual experience. The significance of action, what can be defined as performative aspects of memory, is a theme discussed in Arne Bugge Amundsen's contribution, a study of church interiors and their significance for memory and identity in local congregations in Østfold after the Reformation. Anne Eriksen also has a concrete empirical point of departure in her study of how memory is actually established through objects (monuments) and actions. Here she also stresses the central point of how memory is established partly through appeals to emotions. John Ødemark discusses the long lines in places of memory (*loci*) and figures, through a

study of some of Vico's figures of memory and how these have survived as fundamental premises for the theory and method of various cultural sciences today.

The study of memory, of mnemonic theory and technique, is not only important for understanding how collectives and individuals within a collective remember, but also for understanding the perspectives and the thinking about culture, cultural history and the significance of memory that defines this topic. The researcher is also "always already" a part of a culture and placed within a cultural determined interpretative perspective. "For if the study of memory focuses creatively on how people construct a past through a process of appropriation and contestation, is the real problem not, perhaps, that people construct the past by using the term 'memory' at all?" (Confino 1997:1403).

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- 1 I will return to this later in the introduction.
 - 2 “Fe dør, frender dør, en sjøl dør på samme vis; jeg vet ett som aldri dør, dom over hver en død.” *Hávamál* verse 77. Quoted here from Holm-Olsen 1993:42.
 - 3 As in Borges’s short story: “Funes the Memorious”, in Borges 1970 (1962):87–95.
 - 4 Umberto Eco makes some interesting remarks both about the relationship between memory and oblivion as well as some significant characteristics of mnemotechniques in his article “An *Ars Oblivionalis*? Forget It!” (1988).
 - 5 These “inner functions” were described in the Middle Ages as the inner sense(es). See Carruthers 1996:47. The “classic” study of mnemonics in the Middle Ages is Hajdu 1936.
 - 6 Book 8, “De memoria”, see Boncampo da Signa 1892:275. Concerning Boncompagno da Signa see Yates 1994 (1966):69–72.
 - 7 Thomas Aquinas 1949:87. For an English translation of the relevant parts see Carruthers & Ziolkowski 2004:153–188.
 - 8 Quoted here from Carruthers 1996:1–2. It is rather obvious today that the “modern” understanding of an opposition between memory and knowledge originates in a misunderstanding.
 - 9 1 Corinthians 11:24: “hoc est corpus meum pro vobis hoc facite in meum commemorationem.” Anamnesis is Greek and means memory or recollection. The term is the same as that used by Aristotle to describe re-collection.
 - 10 Watts 1983 (1954):95, note 1.
 - 11 Oexle 2002:510–512. For a fuller discussion of this see Oexle 1999 and the references there. Oexle emphasizes here that “auch das Christentum [wurde] eine Gedächtnis-Religion und begründete seinerseits eine Gedächtnis-Kultur” (p. 302).
 - 12 This is a perspective that is congruent with the focus of modernity on the Method and the monocausal and a-historical ideal of rationalism. See for example Toulmin 1992.
 - 13 The Latin term, and its classical use, indicates all of these meanings as we have seen above.
 - 14 Wittgenstein 1971 (1922):38. In addition see the discussion by Mitchell 1987:14–19.
 - 15 Nora 1984–1992. The title itself, *Le Lieux de Mémoires*, means “memory places”/“places of memory” and is clearly derived from the concepts of “topoi” and “loci” of classical rhetoric and its teaching on the art of memory (*ars memoria*). See the contributions of Jørgen Bakke and Henning Laugerud in this issue of *Arv*.
 - 16 This is meant as just a brief survey of “memory studies”, to give something of a historiographical background. Folklore studies have in one sense always been concerned with memory as a cultural phenomenon. The term folklore describes a certain kind of transmitted and collectively shared memory. Thanks to Kyrre Kverndokk for good help with this part of the article.
 - 17 Halbwachs 1976 (1925) and 1971 (1941). Excerpts from both have been translated into English and published in Halbwachs 1992, in which there is an interesting biography of Halbwachs that places him and his work in its historical and scientific context.
 - 18 Warburg was also inspired by and worked alongside Ernst Cassirer, who also spent a period at the Warburg Institute in Hamburg. A central concept for Cassirer is “sym-

bolic values”, which is fundamental for his epistemological philosophy and which denotes the suprahistorical categories that have their concrete and historical manifestation in manmade cultural expressions. Man is a symbol-using animal, according to Cassirer, and people understand the world through their symbols. See e.g. Cassirer 1955 (1946). On the historiography see e.g. Assmann 1995 (1988).

- 19 On Aby Warburg see e.g. Gombrich 1970. For a brief introduction to Aby Warburg and the history of the Institute, see the website: <http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/index.html>.
- 20 See e.g. Assmann 1992, 1997 and 2000; Assmann 1999 and 2006.
- 21 See e.g. Anette Warring’s critique of the concept of “collective memory” (1996).
- 22 See e.g. the discussion in Kantsteiner 2002.
- 23 A few examples are Eriksen 1995 and Bryld & Warring 1998. An example of the study of “counter-memories” is Peltonen 1996 (about the memory traditions of the Reds from the Finnish Civil War in 1918).
- 24 Writing is in itself nothing but a mnemotechnical aid, something that is often easily overlooked.
- 25 Rossi’s *Clavis universalis* is translated from Italian as *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language* (2000).
- 26 A brief historical survey is Engel 2002, <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/uni/nec/engel1123.htm>.
- 27 See the ongoing German *Sonderforschungsbereich: Kulturen des Performativen*: <https://www.sfb-performativ.de/>.
- 28 Krois says, based on Yates, that: “The present day trend in cultural studies to reduce history to studies of forms of power repeats the late nineteenth-century trend to treat culture as ‘a world of passion and beauty without meaning’. Yates demonstrated that historical research could show that the surfaces of culture offer more meaning than could be dreamt of in these methodologies” (Krois 2002:160).

The Tears of Odysseus

Memory and Visual Culture in Ancient Greece

Jørgen Bakke

What must now be regarded as classics in cultural memory studies such as Simon Schama's *Landscape and Memory* from 1995 often discuss cases where cultural memory is expressed in the form of images, be they concrete images such as monuments, works of art, popular visual culture, abstract images in the form of literary visualizations, religious visions, or personal memory images (Schama 1995). What has escaped Schama, as well as many other cultural memory students, is that the idea about a connection between visual culture, landscape, and memory is deeply rooted in the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition.¹ One of the main reasons why current cultural memory students have shown little interest in the rhetorical understanding of memory is, I believe, that rhetorical memory (*memoria*) was long relegated to the driest regions of the rhetorical landscape. Contrary to the notion that the ancient rhetorical tradition viewed memory merely as dry and calculated sophistic mnemotechnics, I will argue in the following that the rhetorical idea of memory also represents a cultural impulse towards emotional involvement and profound spirituality.² As will be demonstrated with a reading of one of the most famous *topoi* in ancient Greek literature, Odysseus' journey to the underworld as portrayed in Homer's *Odyssey*, visual culture also played an important part in this ancient Greek rhetorical notion of memory.

Before we can drench our reading in the tears of Odysseus, we must, however, make a brief detour to the apparently arid landscape of *memoria*: now, all ancient commentators agree that images (*imagines*) and places (*loci*) make up the basic building blocks of the kind of technical memory that the rhetorical student must cultivate if he wants to learn his arguments by heart (Yates 1966).³ One technique that is recommended in ancient rhetorical handbooks is to memorize a standard spatial frame like the rooms in a house, where the arguments can be mentally visualized in specific locations.⁴ Having grouped the arguments thus visually and spatially the orator found the process of remembrance a routine matter. The ancient tradition is littered with examples of the virtuoso in the art of memory. Some of them were even

able to remember an absurd amount of words (*memoria verborum*) in a specific order (Yates 1966:9). Quintilian, however, who is one of our main sources for Roman rhetorical thinking, explains that the mnemotechnic devices (*imagines et loci*) used by the skilled orator are merely imitations of natural, spontaneous memory. The mnemotechnic power of place, argues Quintilian, is so persistent that when we revisit a location we can even remember what we were thinking about when we visited this place sometime in the past:

When we return to a certain place after an interval, we not only recognize it but also remember what we did there, persons are recalled, and sometimes even unspoken thoughts come back to mind. So, as usual, Art was born of Experience (*ars ab experimento*).⁵

Quintilian no doubt opens up for a more emotional and spiritual understanding of the power of place as an agent of cultural and personal memory, but apart from this rare philosophical aphorism in Quintilian, most ancient rhetorical literature about memory is, in fact, very dry and technical. In Aristotle's conceptual taxonomy the term *memoria* signifies exactly this technical side of memory.⁶ Aristotle does, however, also talk about another form of memory, which he terms *reminiscentia* (recollection). In the words of Frances Yates, Aristotelian *reminiscentia* represents "a deliberate effort to find one's way among the contents of memory" (Yates 1966:34).⁷ This idea may not sound very "moist" to the modern reader, but in the Aristotelian view of recollection there is at least an inclination towards a broader understanding of rhetorical memory in ancient Greek thought than the technical sense usually propagated by rhetorical handbooks.⁸ In the context of this volume of *Arv* devoted to reflections on memory one might also venture to say that the Aristotelian concept of *reminiscentia* implies a kind of cultural theory of the sort that the German cultural historian Gerhard Oexle (1995) has termed "memory culture", *Memoria als Kultur*. By combining this Aristotelian theory of recollection with Quintilian's view of the natural inclination in the human species of associating our memories with specific places and images, we have a theoretical framework with which we can better appreciate the role of cultural memory in ancient Greece. This ancient Greek anthropology of memory, if I may say so, has so far rarely been used as a theoretical tool in the analysis of cultural memory in ancient Greek culture.⁹ Since Aristotle's concerns with memory are mainly philosophical, this is, perhaps, not all that strange. In the following I will, however, use this ancient Greek anthropology of memory as a point of entry into perhaps the most emblematic work of ancient Greek culture, Homer's *Odyssey*.

The World of Odysseus

The *Odyssey* is a long poem in the epic genre in a tradition that certainly goes back to the early Mesopotamian cultures, the most famous of which is the Gilgamesh epic (West 1997). In a formulaic hexameter verse form associated with a tradition of oral Greek poetry that originated sometime in the Early Iron Age (1000–700 BC), the *Odyssey* tells the story about the journey of the Greek hero Odysseus from Troy in Asia Minor to his homeland on the island of Ithaca off the west coast of the Greek mainland. The reason for Odysseus' journey to Troy in the first place was, of course, the war between the Asian kingdom of Troy and the joined forces of the Greek tribes. In the other epic poem attributed to Homer, the *Iliad*, which deals more directly with the Trojan war, and where he plays a more peripheral part, Odysseus is characterized as a man of clever words and stratagems. He is the diametrical opposite of the protagonist of the *Iliad*, Achilles, who is a fierce fighting machine driven by emotions and superior physical fighting skills rather than by rational thought and argument. The paradoxical thing about Achilles as the embodiment of the fierce fighting machine driven by his emotions is that the *Iliad* introduces him at a point where he is so angry with one of the Greek generals (Menelaus), with whom he had a quarrel concerning a Trojan slave-girl, that he refuses to fight altogether. The subject of the *Iliad* is accordingly not really the Trojan War, but the wrath (*mênis*) of Achilles.¹⁰ The reader of the *Iliad* spends rather a lot of time waiting for Achilles to take part in the fighting. When Achilles finally does turn his wrath towards the battlefield, there is no man that can match him, and it requires the involvement of a god (Apollo) to take him down. Achilles represents the irrational and the violent aspects of human behaviour, whereas Odysseus represents first of all the good as well as the dangerous sides of rhetoric: Odysseus can smooth opposites in a conflict with clever arguments, but he can also deceive his opponents with words and actions. His famous Trojan horse stratagem is a textbook example of how the ancient Greeks viewed rhetoric as much as a social as a discursive practice.

In the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition the *Odyssey* is regarded as the beginning of the geographical genre.¹¹ The *Odyssey*, the journey of Odysseus, is a story about a journey through an Aegean landscape midway between the real and the imaginary.¹² Most important in our context is that it is also a story about going home. Since the *Odyssey* remains the most important rhetorical paradigm for later Greek geographical literature, the mix of real and imaginary places sticks with the geographical genre for a long time. The dramatic tension that the geographical epic about the journey of Odysseus is built on is the separation of the man (Odysseus) from his homeland. Separation is the father of memory, and travel literature, or what the ancients regarded as the rhetorical genre of geography, is closely connected with the kind of memories provoked by separation. It is this device that

makes all travel literature, I suppose, good to think with if one is interested in the anthropology of memory. A common structure of travel literature, both ancient and modern, is the quest, both physical (by travelling) and mental (by remembering), to overcome the separation.

From a narratological viewpoint it is Odysseus-going-home that provides the overall direction of the story in the *Odyssey*, but the narratology of the *Odyssey*, of course, is a complex matter, because the main story of Odysseus-going-home is regularly interrupted by Odysseus-going-some-where-else, to visit the beautiful daughters of the Phaeacians, the dangerous and seductive Circe, the Cyclops, and the Lotus-eaters, all neatly inscribed as sub-narratives in their own insular environments. If we were to read this structure along the lines of the rhetorical art of memory, we might suggest that the half-real, half-imaginary Aegean islands represent the places (*loci*) in its mnemotechnic topography, and Odysseus' antagonists in the insular sub-narratives represent the images (*imagines*). Now, this rhetorical memory-structure of the *Odyssey* promotes a geographical distribution of cultural memory rather than a specific linear story. What especially confuses the linearity of Odysseus' journey is that his rhetorical character makes him adapt so efficiently to insular contexts, and narratives, that they appear like home to him. In relation to the narrative telos of his itinerary (Ithaca) he is actually a lot better at forgetting than remembering. This forgetfulness is, however, an important element in the literary construction of Odysseus as the embodiment of rhetorical skill, because it makes him all the more convincing in the many insular contexts where he appears. His character is so well adapted to the shifting contextual circumstances of his journey that he is very close to being a personification of the rhetorical concept of *kairós* (*ap-tum* in Latin), the right time and place of an argument.¹³ This topos is made somewhat of a drama in book ten of the *Odyssey* where, under the spell of Circe, Odysseus is in danger of forgetting the linear purpose of his journey, and of being consumed by Circe's insular logic. Structurally the poem is thus in danger of imploding in book ten. Odysseus is so convincing that he occasionally blends in completely with the contextual circumstances. A postmodernist might have said that he is without identity. The point in our context is how this "contextual identity" of Odysseus influences the narrative structure of the poem, and how his contextual memories create a tableau of cultural memory in ancient Greece.

One context that certainly confuses the linearity of Odysseus' journey, and thus also the narrative structure of the poem, is the battlefield: as for many soldiers who have combat experience, the battlefield is a place that Odysseus always carries with him in his memories. Because of the intense experiences on the battlefield it becomes a second, but most ambivalent, home for the soldier, and accordingly an important element in the split identity of soldiers. On the battlefield a soldier's comrades become his family,



Figure 1. Achilles caring for his friend Patroclus who has been hurt in the battle at Troy.

and the memory of intense experiences, mutilated friends and loss of life may become as important for the identity of soldiers as the memories of family and home. In the *Iliad* this kind of relationship is exemplified with the case of Achilles and Patroclus, a relationship often regarded as the mythological prototype of a kind of male friendship with homoerotic connotations that was a common feature of ancient Greek gender culture. In an Attic vase painting from around 500 BC (Figure 1) this relationship is visualized in an intimate manner.¹⁴ The trivial event that is portrayed takes place after Patroclus has been wounded. The young Achilles sits down with his friend and is gently wrapping a bandage around his arm. In an unmistakably homoerotic pose exposing his genitals to his friend, Patroclus turns his head away in pain. When Achilles later in the war refuses to take part in the fighting, his intimate friend Patroclus steals his armour and takes to the battlefield. The image that the Trojans see on the battlefield, Patroclus dressed in the armour of his partner, is a spectre of Achilles, whom they fear more than any of the Greek warriors. Patroclus, thus, is also the double of Achilles.

The Trojan hero Hector wants to prove himself, however. He attacks the spectre of Achilles, and kills Patroclus-wearing-Achilles'-armour. It is, in fact, only after Hector has killed Patroclus that Achilles' wrath against Menelaus is overcome by a much stronger wrath against Hector that Achilles takes to the battlefield again.¹⁵ In the course of the narrative the death of Patroclus-wearing-Achilles'-armour is an incidental affair, but its cultural meaning emphasizes how close a bond exists between the two warriors. Patroclus' incidental identity theft emphasizes that he is Achilles' double, and it turns into a cultural allegory of the split identity of the soldier, who longs for home and for his wife, but who is also closely connected to his second family on the battlefield, even – as in the case of Achilles and Patroclus – in a most intimate manner.

What retrospectively connects the character of Odysseus in the *Odyssey* to the battlefield at Troy are the comrades that he lost there, and the battlefield becomes an ambivalent home away from home for exactly this reason. Odysseus is, however, no Achilles, and his response to the loss is mental rather than physical. In book eleven of the *Odyssey* where Odysseus travels to the gates of the underworld, it is among other things the memory of his friends who died on the battlefield that drives him to this inhospitable place. Also Odysseus appears here with a split identity, because he does actually approach the faint memory image of his mother in the underworld.¹⁶ The point here about the narrative status of the places in the *Odyssey* is that neither the battlefield at Troy nor the gates of the underworld (*Erebus*) are places where Odysseus feels at home, but they are places in the spiritual topography of the *Odyssey* that tend to overshadow, and divert, the telos of Odysseus' spiritual itinerary. What ties Odysseus so strongly to his dead friends is that, as with Patroclus and Achilles, the relationship with his comrades is a most intimate bond. What guides Odysseus towards his spiritual telos is first and foremost the memories of his friends, the very same mental faculty that processes the memories of his mother, his wife, his children, his tribe, and his land that plotted his original course homewards. It is in this sense, as a reflection of Odysseus' spiritual journey, that the itineraries of the *Odyssey* are not one, but many, and where, especially, the battlefield and the underworld are dominant directions that threaten to take Odysseus to a home away from home. This tension in the narrative structure of the *Odyssey* can, accordingly, be read as a spiritual drama representing the struggle between remembrance and oblivion.

The Places and Images of the Dead

Odysseus travels to the gates of the underworld in a quest for his dead friends. In order to appreciate the spiritual aspect of the encounter between the living and the dead in the context of ancient Greek culture, it is important

to ask what exactly the ancient Greeks expected from such an encounter. In his classic study of ancient Greek concepts of the mind and the body from 1951, Richard B. Onians pointed at the importance of distinguishing between different layers in the Homeric soul (Onians 1951:93). There is *psukhê*, the respiratory life-principle that has been called the “breath-soul”, and which at the time of death disappears beneath the earth like smoke.¹⁷ Onians also pointed out that *psukhê* represents the last, cold breath of the dying body (*sôma*), and that this cold breath of death is contrasted with the “warm vapour of life”, called *thumós* by Homer. In fact, the binary opposition between body and soul that is so deeply embedded in Western culture and languages is something that in the ancient Greek view first comes about when the *psukhê* departs from its *sôma* at the moment of death. *Psukhê* should, as Onians points out, rather be equated with *eídōlon*, “the visible but impalpable semblance of the once living” that drifts back and forth in the underworld as a mere shadow (*skía*). The *eídōlon* is a flat image-projection of the deceased, a ghost with a mainly visual, but sometimes aural, appearance, but with no physical body (Onians 1951:94–95).¹⁸ The emphasis on the visual appearance of the *eídōlon* is important here because it illustrates how powerful a phenomenon the ancient Greeks regarded the visual as being. The emphasis on the visual is everywhere in Greek religion, in its use of visual art, architecture, and spectacular ritual performances, but visuality also plays an important part in ancient Greek thinking and spirituality. Aristotle thus opens his work *De memoria et reminiscentia*: “As has been said before in my treatise *On the Soul* about imagination, it is impossible even to think without a mental picture.”¹⁹ Aristotle, of course, is talking more philosophically about mental processes, and about the necessity of mental images in the processes of imagination and recollection. What is interesting in our context is that in Homer’s view of the spiritual appearance of the dead there is also a mental activity going on, a form of active, mental image making, because the *psukhê* does not transform into an *eídōlon* automatically. It transforms through a kind of interaction between the world of the dead and the world of the living, involving both mental activities such as imagination, and recollection, but also certain practices. In the case of the active image making of the *eídōla* of the dead it involves rituals of ancestral veneration (Morris 1987). By looking more closely into some passages of the *Odyssey* we can also gain a better understanding of the beliefs invested in this active image making and its place in the ancient Greek anthropology of memory.

The first relevant event is related in retrospect after Odysseus has landed on the island of the Phaeacians, where he was comfortably entertained. Odysseus also contributes to the entertainment one evening by retelling some of his earlier deeds. Among the stories that he was reciting in the palace of the Phaeacians – an epic poem inside the epic poem – Odysseus tells

about how he and his men were eventually released from captivity on Circe's island.²⁰ On releasing him from her spell Circe had instructed Odysseus about a journey that he must make before setting sail for home:

[...] let there be in thy mind no concern for a pilot to guide thy ship, but set up thy mast, and spread the white sail, and sit thee down; and the breath of the North Wind will bear her onward. But when in thy ship thou hast now crossed the stream of Oceanus, where is a level shore and the groves of Persephone – tall poplars, and willows that shed their fruit – there do thou beach thy ship by the deep eddying Oceanus, but go thyself to the dank house of Hades. There into Acheron flow Periphlegethon and Cocytus, which is a branch of the water of the Styx; and there is a rock, and the meeting place of two roaring rivers. Thither, prince, do thou draw night, as I bid thee, and dig a pit of a cubit's length this way and that, and around it pour a libation to all the dead, first with milk and honey, thereafter with sweet wine, and in the third place with water, and sprinkle thereon white barley meal. [...] when with prayers thou hast made supplication to the glorious tribes of the dead, then sacrifice a ram and a black ewe, turning their heads toward Erebus but thyself turning backward, and setting thy face towards the streams of the river. Then many ghosts of men that are dead will come forth. But do thou thereafter call to thy comrades, and bid them flay and burn the sheep that lie there, slain by the pitiless bronze, and make prayer to the gods, to mighty Hades and dread Persephone.²¹

This manual for the journey that Odysseus must undertake consists of two basically different instructions, including both an itinerary of the route and a description of the landscapes that Odysseus will be travelling through. The passage to the underworld is described as a dark place, “wrapped in mist and cloud,”²² with a complex web of rivers and lakes. At this point of the itinerary is the land and city of the Cimmerians where “the bright sun never looks down with his rays” and where “baneful night spread over wretched mortals”.²³ This is the Homeric valley of shadows. It is dark, and everything is wrapped in mist and cloud. It is impossible to apprehend the clear shape and visual appearance of persona and places in this landscape. It is, indeed, a landscape that is barely visible, peopled by persona that attain their visibility first of all through the rhetorical *ekphrasis* presented in the *Odyssey*. The visibility of these places and characters is a marginal visibility of the sort shared by many hardly visible, but none the less visual entities like ghosts, and angels, and other-worldly places like the heavens, Hell, and Paradise.²⁴

One feature of the Homeric valley of shadows that effectively adds to the impression of a world devoid of defined form is that it is first of all described as a hydrological landscape. The first river that Odysseus must cross is Oceanus, the all-encircling world-river, and it thus becomes clear that he is on the very border of *oikouménē*, the inhabited world (Romm 1992:9–44). In addition to some of the rivers of the underworld (Acheron, Periphlegethon, Cocytus, and Styx) the chasm into the underworld (Erebus) is also mentioned in connection with the sacrifice. This chasm is located at a place where there is a rock sticking out of the surrounding alluvial sediments from the rivers of the underworld – a rather precise geological description, in fact,

of a sink-hole (*katavothra*) in a karst landscape. Since karst features are very common in the Greek landscape, this landscape description, no doubt, also has a regional affinity, and these imaginary Greek hydrologies were sometimes also connected to specific locations (Higgins & Higgins 1996:13). The cultural rhetoric of the subterranean landscape as mainly a landscape of water is, however, clearly to enhance its lack of firm shapes.²⁵

The second part of Circe's instruction prescribes, in detail, how Odysseus shall proceed with the sacrifice once he has arrived at the entrance to the deepest regions of the subterranean world. This sacrifice is a typical chthonic sacrifice, and consists of liquids (*khoaî*) and bread (Onians 1951: 272). The liquids appear in peers: *melîkrêton*, a "honey-and-milk mixture", a special cocktail for libation in chthonic sacrifices, and wine and water, which is also a mixture (*krasis*) that belongs together at the symposium in the world of the living (Lissarague 1987). Odysseus is further instructed to dig the compulsory sacrificial pit in the ground. The insertion of this practical prescription for chthonic sacrifice is important because it directly connects this conventional kind of veneration, a ritual practice, with the mental processes of image making that Odysseus is involved in when he recollects the visual semblances (*eîdôla*) of his dead friends. After Odysseus has performed the ancestral offering, he is instructed to sacrifice blood to the dead. It is at this point that he reveals himself as a true pupil of Circe, who is a kind of witch with access to forbidden knowledge. The blood-sacrifice that Odysseus performs at the gates of the underworld is nothing like a mythological prototype of ancestral veneration. It is an extra-curricular act of sacrifice that Odysseus performs, and he must pay special attention to the details of this sacrifice. Circe's manual specifically instructs Odysseus to be aware of how he relates to the topography of the underworld when he performs this sacrifice. The precise location where the sacrifice takes place is near a certain rock (*pétrê*),²⁶ where two of the rivers of the underworld (Periphlegeton and Cocytus) flow into the Acheron. Here is also the terrible chasm (Erebus), which is the ultimate passage to the house of Hades, from which there is no return. Into this chasm no living man, or god, can pass. When he performs the sacrifice, Odysseus must be careful not even to look into the chasm, but the blood must run into it in order to attract the *eîdôla* of the dead on its other side. Odysseus is thus instructed to turn his face towards the stream of the river, but away from the chasm.

The whole point of the unconventional blood-sacrifice is, as in the modern Transylvanian myth of Count Dracula, to bestow virtual presence on the souls of the dead, which will allow Odysseus to communicate with them, but unlike Count Dracula and the "living dead" of modern horror movies, the reanimated *eîdôla* of the Homeric dead cannot physically interact with the living, but they can be seen and heard. They first approach Odysseus as a collective swarm of creatures that have been robbed of their individuality

and reason, *lógos* (Bremmer 1987:84). By drinking blood they can, however, regain temporary *lógos* so that they can communicate in a sensible way. At first Odysseus keeps all the souls of the dead, even that of his mother, away from the blood in order to let the soothsayer Teiresias speak first about his future, as though to remind him that his visit to the underworld is not the ultimate telos of his journey.²⁷ But then one of Odysseus' former crewmen, Elpenor, who is a most recent tenant in the House of Hades, emerges from the chasm (Figure 4). Odysseus immediately recognizes that there is something disturbing about this encounter. This Elpenor did not actually die on the Trojan battlefield, but on the way back from Troy as a crewman on Odysseus' ship. Elpenor's recent death and the unfortunate circumstances that followed it, and even more so the compulsory acts of commemoration that Odysseus and his men had failed to perform, resulted in a most problematic state for his afterlife. His dream-like phantom (*psukhê*) had, at the time of the encounter with Odysseus, not yet transformed into a stable image (*eídôlon*). The unfortunate undead situation that Elpenor finds himself in, and the response in Odysseus when he discovers/remembers that this is the case, reveals to Homer's listeners, and to us (Homer's readers), the processes that are necessary for him to achieve a stable *eídôlon* in the underworld.

Just as Odysseus and his men were about to embark from the island of Circe, Elpenor had, on account of his drunkenness, failed to make use of a certain ladder to get down from a cliff, had fallen down and broken his neck. Because Odysseus was in a hurry to leave Circe's island at that point, the unfortunate Elpenor had not even been buried. That his war comrades had forgotten to perform the compulsory funeral ritual puts Elpenor in acute danger of passing into oblivion. He does not even have a burial place, and having a place, and a visual demarcation of that place, is considered a crucial element in the ancestral culture of remembrance in ancient Greece (Morris 1987). The most immediate way that ancestral presence is visualized is in the tomb, whether it is a built structure or a simple mound (*túmbos*). Grave mounds distinguish themselves from natural features in the landscape as *sêmata*, signs of the topographical locations of ancestral memory. In a most concrete sense the local network of such ancestral signs is the local landscape of recollection, and as in rhetorical *memoria* its most important elements are place-specific images (*imagines et loci*). The *sêma* can be the grave itself, the mound, or grave markers on top of the grave. In later grave architecture the *sêma*-aspect of the grave-marker is often articulated as an apotropaic symbol, a lion, a gorgon, or a sphinx (Richter 1961). The grave is also a *mnêma*, a memorial, or memory image. The active imaging in the maintenance of the image of the deceased represents a very typical feature of ancestral veneration in ancient Greece: it is a *mnêma*, a "memory image", of the deceased that is carved on classical grave sculpture.

Elpenor's undead state, and his ambiguous form, is the result of this forgetfulness of his comrades that have refused him a proper *sêma* as well as a *mnêma*.

What Odysseus has to do in order to restore Elpenor's *eîdôlon* is most illuminating: when Elpenor first appears before his comrade, he appears in the form of the "last cold breath of death" (*psukhê*), also characterized in the *Odyssey* as "a blurred phantom of the person such as is encountered in a dream," and not as an *eîdôlon*.²⁸ Odysseus instructively explains to his Phaeacian audience why this is the case: "For we had left his corpse (*sôma*) behind us in the hall of Circe, unwept (*âklapton*) and unburied (*âthapton*), since another task was urging on us."²⁹ The next line of the poem, *tôn mên egô dákrusa idôn eléêsá te thumô*, is usually translated as "When I saw him I wept, and my heart had compassion on him."³⁰ Although it is not altogether clear from the Greek text if it is the seeing that causes the weeping or the other way around, both seeing and weeping figure as active processes in the restoration of the memory of Elpenor. Elpenor's own account of the unfortunate event, and his instructions regarding what Odysseus must do, are as painstakingly instructive as they are moving:

When I had lain down to sleep in the house of Circe I did not think to go to the long ladder that I might come down again, but fell headlong from the roof, and my neck was broken away from the spine and my spirit went down to the house of Hades. Now I beseech thee by those whom we left behind, who are not present with us, by thy wife and thy father who reared thee when a babe, and by Telemachus whom thou didst leave an only son in thy halls; for I know that as thou goest hence from the house of Hades thou wilt touch at the Aegean isle with thy well-built ship. There, then, O prince, I bid thee remember me. Leave me not behind thee unwept and unburied as thou goest thence, and turn not away from me, lest haply I bring the wrath of the gods upon thee. Nay, burn me with my armour, all that is mine, and heap up a mound (*sêma*) for me on the shore of the grey sea, in memory of an unhappy man, that men yet to be may learn of me. Fulfil this my prayer, and fix upon the mound (*túmbos*) my oar wherewith I rowed in life when I was among my comrades.³¹

After having listened to Elpenor's monologue Odysseus promises that he will do all the things that he has prescribed.³² It is most noticeable that Odysseus the Bard explicitly says that all the time when he was conversing with his dead crewman he held his sword over the pool of blood, so that he would not drink of it. There are probably two reasons for this: first, the narrative reason is that he is reserving the blood for the *eîdôlon* of Teiresias, and second, it would probably be dangerous to let the restless and unstable spectre (*psukhê*) of Elpenor taste the blood. That Odysseus is successful at preventing Elpenor from becoming some kind of undead monster, and also restoring his memory image through weeping, remembrance, and seeing, is visualized in the narrative termination of his encounter with Elpenor. In the final line of the discourse Odysseus the Bard notes that Elpenor was all the

time “on the other side” (*hetérothen*), probably on the other side of the chasm Erebus, but at this stage he is no longer a mere *psukhê*, but has attained a firm *eídôlon*. The *eídôlon* of Elpenor has accordingly come about through Odysseus’ remembrance that has manifested itself in emotional response (weeping), dialogue, but first of all through a kind of inner vision that revoked the image of the deceased. It is Odysseus’ reinstated care for this image that is dramatized in the Homeric dialogue between the dead and the living.

The Visual Culture of Memory in Ancient Greece

My reading of Odysseus’ journey to the underworld has so far pointed at the important role of visuality in the ancient Greek anthropology of memory. I have applied the concept marginal visuality to characterize the mode of visual culture that we are dealing with when we talk about ghosts, or images of the dead such as the image of Elpenor encountered by Odysseus. This marginal visuality we cannot see, but it can most efficiently be described in a text, in a liturgical reading, or in a ghost story, and it depends on some form of emotional or spiritual appropriation. In ancient rhetorical theory this form of marginal visuality was termed with the technical term *ekphrasis*, a set of techniques that rhetorical students used to make their listeners or readers see things that they cannot actually see in front of them (Fowler 1991). In ancient Greece, on the other hand, people had images right in front of them all the time, in the agora, in the sanctuaries, in the cemeteries, and at home. It is accordingly a relevant question to ask how the ancient Greek anthropology of memory also manifested itself in concrete historical visual culture. Since the definite historical context of the Homeric epics is still debated by experts, it is, however, not entirely clear which historical visual culture we should turn to. The material culture described in the Homeric epics has some features from historical times, of the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age surely, but they are always already contaminated, from the viewpoint of the modern historian, by intersections between different historical times. Homer’s listeners must have recognized, just as well as we do, that the time of the Homeric heroes is a composite past, pieced together of relics both material and linguistic from different periods. Some of the linguistic features of the Homeric epics will surely have given the impression of antiquity in the Archaic period, whereas others would have been familiar to an Athenian of the fourth century. Homer’s burial customs will have been familiar to people in the Early Iron Age, whereas some features of material culture are reminiscent of the Greek Bronze Age. The most appropriate historical context for the Homeric epics, in our context anyway, is its reception context. In Greek visual culture stories from the Homeric epics are documented in some of the earliest figural representations from the Early Iron Age (Carpenter 1991:8),

and the Homeric epics remained a major reservoir of cultural memory in Greek culture in the classical period and beyond.

One example of concrete visual culture from the Early Iron Age that reflects the role of the visual in the ancient Greek anthropology of memory is a group of ceramic grave markers from a cemetery in the Athenian Kera-meikos, usually referred to as the Dipylon group after the location of the cemetery not far from the later Dipylon Gate in the Athenian city wall where they were found (Boardmann 1998:25). The shapes of these large *sêmata*, which are up to 1.5 metres high, fall in two categories: mixing-bowls believed to be for men's graves, and storage vessels for women. One of the most remarkable features of these vessels from an art-historical perspective is that the pictorial scenes on them have been taken to represent actual stages in the funeral ritual.³³ The scenes have thus been divided into categories according to what stage of the funerary ritual they "depict". According to this snapshot interpretation there are two main iconographic types, *prothesis* (exposition, wake) and *ekphora* ("carrying-out", procession) scenes. I would like to suggest here that these images can also be regarded as memory-images (*mnêmata*) where a similar active image making takes place in their ritual appropriation, as we have observed in our reading of Odysseus' encounter with the images of the dead. One of the most remarkable pieces in the Dipylon group is a large mixing bowl (Figure 2) in the National Museum in Athens.³⁴ The vessel is decorated with two bands of pictorial scenes. The upper pictorial scene runs along the shoulder of the vessel, and is framed by two twin-handles. In the centre between the two handles is the so-called *prothesis* scene, with the deceased stretched out on a bench surrounded by human figures, birds, and animals. Another similar vase in the Metropolitan Museum in New York has a slightly different *prothesis* scene (Figure 3), but it follows the same general design. On both sides of the central scene there is usually a row of "attendants" with arms raised in a gesture of mourning. The rows of attendants actually extend underneath the handle, which are included in the "abstract" decoration of the figural scene. This gives the handles an almost architectural character, and they thus situate the "attendants" inside vaulted chambers. On the back of the vessel the frieze is split into two separate bands. The lower band is decorated with a more organic meander, and the upper by circular patterns separately set off by rectangular frames. The lower scene is a continuous band with repetitive groups of shield- and spear-carrying warriors and wagons. The shield type is of a kind that was probably not in use after the Bronze Age. The neck of the vase is decorated by a monumental, elaborately abstract, and continuous meander.³⁵

This ceramic grave marker from Athens is a concrete pictorial analogy to the ancient Greek anthropology of memory: in the focus of visual attention is the memory image (*mnêma*) of the dead. The central picture could, in-



Figure 2. Funeral crater from the Athenian Kerameikos cemetery.

deed, be a projection of the collective memory image of a commissioned individual burial, but it is not, I believe, a depiction of a particular funeral rite. What is visualized is the spiritual process of remembering the image of an individual, rather than a snapshot of that individual lying dead on a bench. As is illustrated by Odysseus' journey to the underworld, there are basically



Figure 3. *Prothesis*-scene on funeral crater from Athens.

two processes whereby the ancient Greeks believed one can maintain the *eídōla* of the dead: the first is the performance of the proper funeral rites, which includes the erection of a personal *sêma*, the oar of Elpenor, which is “personal” only in so far as it distinguishes Elpenor as one of Odysseus’ crewmen. The “personal” *sêma* here is the vessel itself. Another part of the process of remembrance that Odysseus must be involved in if he is to maintain the *eídōlon* of his friend is, as we have seen, to cry over him.³⁶ The upper pictorial frieze between the two handles thus visualizes the very imaging processes, and can be seen as an inter-pictorial *ekphrasis*. The handles signify passages, chambers, or caves, topographical markers that situate the imaging process in a specific topographical space. The organic meander on the back of the same decorative layer could also be a reference to the hydrological landscape of the underworld. The lower pictorial layer is very different. The continuous frieze with repeated groups of past warriors certainly brings to mind the stream of memory images that is invoked, for instance, in reuse of funeral contexts, or in tomb cult (Antonaccio 1995). Even though these scenes may not be “heroic” in the way that has many times been suggested, they certainly display appropriation of ancestors in a composite past – a continuous, never-ending stream of memory images like the stream of visual semblances that Odysseus encountered in the underworld.

In classical visual culture there are, of course, also more explicit iconographical references to Odysseus’ journey to the underworld. Echoing the dramatic mode of fifth-century Athenian tragedy, the very moment of the subterranean encounter between Odysseus and the ghost of Elpenor is rendered (Figure 4) on a fifth-century Athenian ceramic vessel (Robertson 1992:212). At the centre is Odysseus contemplating the ghost of Elpenor.



Figure 4. Odysseus talking to Elpenor in the underworld.

The captain is sitting on a rock that alludes to the subterranean environment where the meeting took place.³⁷ The spectral resemblance of Elpenor is emerging from the dark abyss to the left of Odysseus.³⁸ In his left hand Odysseus is holding a sword. Presumably this is the “pitiless bronze” that he used to sacrifice a sheep and a black ram with.³⁹ Odysseus is not casually holding the sword after having used it for an act that was terminated in the recent past. He is rather using it actively to keep the shadow of his friend at a distance, exactly as Odysseus underlined in the house of the Phaeacians. Although holding a weapon up against someone is an unambiguously aggressive act, there is no resentment or fear about what Odysseus is doing. There are many things that Odysseus should be afraid of in this wretched place, but the hero has nothing to fear from poor Elpenor.

There is also a third character in the image. The winged boots and helmet, as well as the characteristic messenger-staff (*kerúkeion*) unmistakably reveal him as Hermes. In the Homeric tour of the underworld there is no mention of Hermes, but he plays a key role in this pictorial tableau of the ancient Greek anthropology of memory.⁴⁰ Hermes is the god of rhetoric, and from the perspective of relating the ancient Greek anthropology of memory to rhetorical *memoria*, it is only appropriate that he should be here. It is also important to keep in mind why Odysseus is in the underworld in the first place, that is, to talk to the dead soothsayer Teiresias. The encounter between Odysseus and Elpenor is a secondary incident, and it is the prophecy of Teiresias rather than the dialogue with Elpenor that is the

telos of Odysseus' "insular" journey to the underworld. This is, by the way, also the trivial reason why Odysseus is holding his sword up against Elpenor, to prevent him from drinking of the blood that he has sacrificed for Teiresias.⁴¹ In order to attain his goal Odysseus will use any means possible, but the Homeric trickster prefers persuasion to violence, and he also uses violence as a kind of persuasion. He threatens to use the sword on his comrade, but he never actually does so. The vase painter has also emphasized this by means of pictorial analogy where the gestures of Odysseus and Hermes interact in a cross-referential game of signification. With the same (right) hand as Odysseus is holding a sword in, Hermes is holding the messenger staff (*kerúkeion*), the ultimate symbol of discourse and persuasion. With the same (left) hand that Odysseus signals contemplation and attentive reception (towards Elpenor), Hermes announces the active use of speech. The emphasis on the linguistics of gestures, which is a part of what the ancient rhetoricians called *pronuntiatio* (enactment), is an additional clue to the rhetorical inclination of this tableau.⁴² What the painter reveals to the spectator by placing Hermes in the shadow of Odysseus, where Elpenor cannot see him, is that both Odysseus' sword and his silent contemplation are means of deception. They do not signify what they appear to signify: he does not really mean to hurt his comrade (How could he, since Elpenor is already dead?). What Odysseus does is to employ the means of persuasion, because unlike corporeal violence, persuasion is equally powerful in the underworld as in the terrestrial world. The sword represents no real threat to Elpenor. It is rather a concealed weapon of persuasion, a kind of pictorial oxymoron.

If we supply our reading of the image, once more, with the text of the poem, another rhetorical device also becomes apparent: Elpenor had never received the proper burial rites because Odysseus and his comrades had to leave in a hurry. This is the main concern of Elpenor in his dialogue with Odysseus. Accompanied by tears Odysseus promises that he will perform the proper rites for Elpenor when he returns to Ithaca. These comforting words and the emotional outburst convince Elpenor that Odysseus will take the appropriate measures when he returns to Ithaca. So he is content, and does not bother his captain in life any more. What takes place before our eyes is the persuasion of Elpenor to put off the blood-sacrifice so that Teiresias can proceed. In the company of Hermes it is important to remember that *páthos* is also a rhetorical device (Onians 1951:201).

In our fifth-century pictorial representation of the Homeric tour of the underworld, the tools of rhetorical *memoria* are set in motion in a tableau of the ancient Greek anthropology of memory. What we see is a visualization (*ekphrasis*) of the memories of Odysseus: on an immediate pictorial level

we see Odysseus recalling an image (*imago*) of his lost friend, and we see the place (*locus*) that he visited in order to remember this image. This is an exemplary demonstration of the tools of *memoria*. In the instructions that Odysseus received from Circe about how to navigate in the misty landscape of the Underworld, this *locus* was described with geographic precision.⁴³ In the image the landscape of the Underworld is articulated with typically economic pictorial devices for a fifth-century vase painting, but the artistic simplicity in the pictorial representation of this place is what makes it so memorable. That is precisely the purpose of rhetorical *loci*, to aid the memory of the rhetor by means of spatial simplicity and order. Here, the economic and slightly technical landscape of memory almost gives the image the character of a rhetorical exercise. A similar artificial character is also given to the simulacrum of Elpenor: not only is his ghost-like character emphasized by cutting off his feet, he is also portrayed as an image inside the image. The pose, proportions, and corporeal features of the Polycleitan canon, the primary contemporary artistic expression of the time, are easily recognizable in the execution of Elpenor's figure (Osborne 1998:169).

In its ancient reception context the epic tradition of which the *Odyssey* represents the literary culmination can be characterized as poetic, or rhetorical, if we like, enactment of cultural memory (Gentili 1988).⁴⁴ From this perspective Odysseus' tour of the underworld is about something a lot more central to the poem, and the epic genre, than ancient Greek beliefs about afterlife, which is the cultural context that it is usually connected with (Onians 1951; Bremmer 1987). It represents the intertextual climax of the poem because it both reveals what the poem is about (cultural memory) and what the poem is of (*imagines et loci*). Practical rhetorical mnemotechnics is also built into the poetic structure that the epos is made of, since it is based on a tradition of oral memory (Gentili 1988; Ong 1988). The image of Odysseus in the landscape of the Underworld remembering the image of his lost friend can, thus, be regarded as an emblem of the poem inside the poem.

As a main topos in the ancient Greek anthropology of memory, the journey of Odysseus to the underworld also opens up for a reterritorialization of rhetorical memory to the more moist regions of the ancient Greek landscape of memory. One thing is that the landscape where the meeting takes place is visualized as a subterranean hydrological landscape. Another thing is the importance of the moist tears of Odysseus for the active maintenance of the marginal visibility of the dead Elpenor. As has been pointed out by Richard Onians, the flux of tears plays a very important role in Homer's spiritual imagination: in a description of how husband and wife can long for each other Homer reveals how tears are equated with the very "stuff of life" (*aiôn*): "nor were his eyes ever dry of tears, but there flowed down (*kateibeto*) the sweetest *aiôn* as he lamented for his return."⁴⁵ The *aiôn* that is lost in longing

is also equated with the loss of the liquid (*hugrós*) of life that evaporates at the last breath of life, *psukhê* (Onians 1951:202). In remembering and longing for his friend Odysseus also loses some of his *aiôn*, and it is this flux, the flux of memory, that reanimates the marginal visibility of his friend in the underworld.

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¹ There are, of course, noble exceptions to this lack of interest in the classical rhetorical tradition among modern cultural memory students like the German cultural historian Gerhard Oexle (1995).

² In Roman rhetoric the term *memoria* is consistently used as a technical rhetorical term. See for instance the anonymous *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*. The Greek technical vocabulary is less developed, and inconsistencies are frequent. Both Plato and Aristotle use the term *mnemonikós tékhne* to signify technical memory. See Aristotle, *Topica*, 159b29, and Plato, *Hippias Minor*, 368d. Aristotle's *De Memoria et reminiscencia*, which is an important work for the later reception history of the rhetorical view of memory, is only preserved in Latin translations, and accordingly does not help us much with terminology. On Aristotle's work on memory see Yates, 1966, 32ff. The modern term mnemotechnics is a nineteenth-century construction. All references to ancient Greek and Roman authors are found in the footnotes as here.

³ The classic study of the cultural history of *ars memoriae* is Yates (1966). See also Oexle (1995).

⁴ The Greek poet Simonides from Ceos was, according to tradition, the inventor of this method. See Cicero, *De oratore*, 2.86.351–4.

⁵ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 11.2.17–18.

⁶ This is, for instance, his view in the *Topics*: “memory of things themselves is immediately caused by the mere mention of their places.” See Aristotle, *Topica*, 163b24–27.

⁷ Aristotle's distinction between *memoria* and *reminiscencia* is based on his theory of knowledge, where the visual plays an important part in the imaginative faculty, for “the soul never thinks without an image.” Aristotle, *De Anima*, 432a17. His theory of memory and recollection is found in *De memoria et reminiscencia*. See also Yates (1966:31).

⁸ I use the term “Greek thought” here in a similar way to Jean Pierre Vernant's anthropology of ancient Greek culture. See Vernant (1962). On ancient rhetorical handbooks see Gaines (2007).

⁹ There are especially two areas of ancient Greek cultural history that have been devoted to memory studies during the past decades. The mainly archaeological tradition of studying reused funeral contexts has long been an important tradition. See Antonaccio (1995). Studies of the reception history of the ancient Greek landscape in Imperial Roman culture is another important area. See Alcock (1993) and Elsner (1995). Especially the final area is much preoccupied with the rhetoric of the past, but I have, so far, not seen any explicit

connection being made to the Aristotelian theory of recollection. In have outlined this in more detail in my doctoral dissertation. See Bakke (2008).

¹⁰ This point is also emphasized by the rhetorical placing of the word *mênis* (in the form *mênin*) as the first word in the *Iliad*. See Homer, *Iliad*, 1.1.

¹¹ On the ancient Greek geographical tradition see Romm (1992). For a cultural-historical introduction to the *Odyssey* see Segal (1994), and Hartog (2001).

¹² On Homer's imaginary landscape see Segal (1994:3). For a more archaeological approach see Luce (1998).

¹³ On *kairós* see Demosthenes, *First Philippic*, 110.

¹⁴ Although littered with references to the friendship of Achilles and Patroclus, the *Iliad* does not mention this particular incident. This vase is also the only preserved example of this scene. On the vessel in question see Robertson (1992:58-59).

¹⁵ See Homer, *Iliad*, 16.786ff.

¹⁶ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.204ff.

¹⁷ Homer, *Iliad*, 23.100. See Onians (1951:93).

¹⁸ See also Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.495; and 11.207.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *De memoria et reminiscencia*, 449b31. Translation cited from Yates (1966:33).

²⁰ Circe is important here because she introduces elements of dubious witchcraft to the repertoire of Odysseus' technical skills.

²¹ Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.505-534.

²² Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.15.

²³ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.14-18.

²⁴ On the visual culture of ghosts see Mirzoff, 2002.

²⁵ As is well known the early Ionian, "pre-Socratic," thinkers found water especially good to think with because of its paradoxical qualities. On this subject in Thales of Miletus see, for instance, Kirk & Raven (1977:76-77).

²⁶ Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.515.

²⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.88.

²⁸ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.51. Translation in Onians (1951:95).

²⁹ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.53-54.

³⁰ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.55.

³¹ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.62-78.

³² Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.80.

³³ The established interpretation of these images as snapshot scenes of distinct stages in the funerary ritual – some commentators have even suggested that they represent individual burials – is in my opinion based on the projection of a static concept of how the past is appropriated in cultural memory in Ancient Greece. See Ahlberg (1971:285).

³⁴ Athens National Museum, Cat. no. 990. Boardmann (1998, fig. 45). Metropolitan Museum, Cat. no. 14.130.14; Ahlberg (1971, Fig. 25).

³⁵ The pictorial scenes take up a very broad section of the available space on the vase, and so the space left for abstract friezes is relatively small, in relation to the wealth of geometric patterns on, especially, some of the well-preserved large *amphorai*, for instance the one in the National Museum in Athens, Inv. no. NM 804, See Ahlberg (1971, Fig. 2).

³⁶ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.83.

³⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.447ff.

³⁸ Note the way that the vase painter uses the black background to animate how Elpenor is rising from the deep chasm of Erebus by simply cutting off his feet. For the style of this image see otherwise Robertson (1992:212).

³⁹ Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.33. In the image we see the slain animals stretched along the rock-like outline between the two friends. As Robertson points out, the ram is not rendered as black, "which is awkward to render in red-figure." See Robertson (1992:212).

⁴⁰ There are certainly a number of conventional reasons why Hermes could be present in

the image: first, he is there as the guide of the traveller Odysseus, who is rendered as such with the conventional traveller's hat. Second, he is also present as *Hermes Psychopompos*, the only character among men and gods that knows the way from this world to the Hall of Hades and back again.

⁴¹ At another level of interpretation there is also another reason why Elpenor must be kept away from the blood. Elpenor is, however, not the only shadow that Odysseus keeps away from the blood-sacrifice. In fact he refuses to allow anyone except Teiresias, not even his mother, to drink from the pool of blood. Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.48-50.

⁴² On *pronuntiatio* or *actio* see *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 1.2.3; Cicero, *De inventione* 1.9; and Cicero, *De orator*, 1.142.

⁴³ Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.487ff.

⁴⁴ Not without some historical precedence one could also claim, as Western authors from Virgil to James Joyce have demonstrated, that the Odysseus character is the most powerful expression of Western cultural memory ever. See Hartog, 2001.

⁴⁵ Homer, *Odyssey*, 5.151ff. Translation in Onians (1951:201).

To See with the Eyes of the Soul

Memory and Visual Culture in Medieval Europe

Henning Laugerud

Introduction

In more cultural-historically inspired studies on memory, the interest has often focused on different forms of collective and personal memory as a field of study for the decoding of values, identities and (cultural) conceptions. Somewhat overlooked in more recent research are the conditions connected to *how* and *why* memory “works” and why it is such an important part of the total cultural reality. These questions were, however, central topics of reflection in the historical cultures of Antiquity and the Middle Ages in which we generally root our own cultural memory. In this article I shall therefore take a closer look at how people thought about the subject of memory and why memory was considered so important in the Middle Ages. Memory was understood in terms of a moral and epistemological integrated perspective, and as something creative and dynamic. Memory, and its art – *ars memoria* or mnemotechnics – was of vital importance for what we today would call the “the psychology of knowledge”, of which it was seen as a part.

The understanding of memory in the Middle Ages is related to a way of thinking in which *visuality* and knowledge are tightly interwoven, and we are talking about both optical and para-visuality. In all literature concerning memory, whenever the mnemotechnics or *ars memoria* is discussed, memory is linked to different types of images, or visual representations. As a way of acquainting ourselves with this subject we can start with an example from the literature of Old Norse sermons, the so-called “Stave Church Homily” from the end of the 1100s which introduces this relationship.

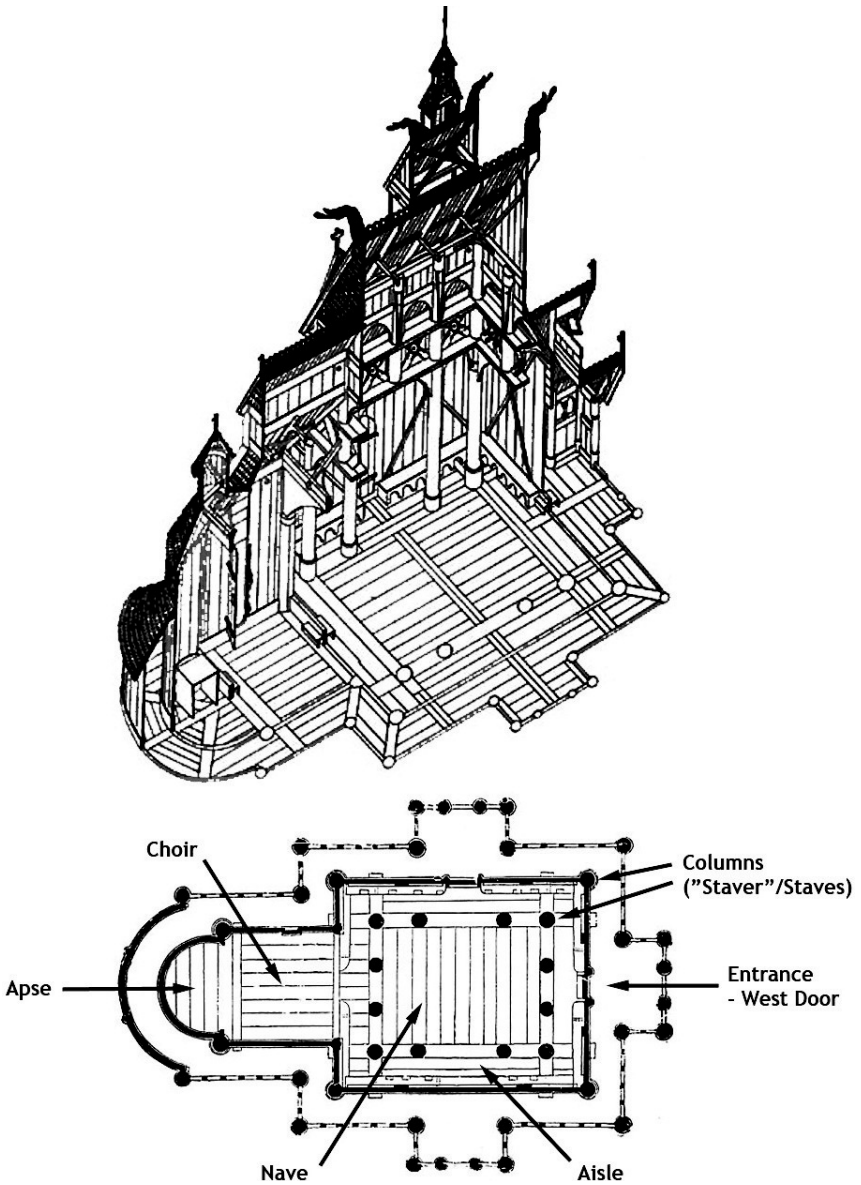
The Stave Church Homily

We can find the “Stave Church Homily” in the *Old Norse Book of Homilies*,¹ a collection of sermons – homilies from the 1100s. The manuscript contains a translation of Alcuin’s (c. 735–804) “On Virtues and Vices”, and a number of sermons for both fixed and movable feasts, ordered chrono-

logically throughout the church year, as well as a sermon on tithes and one on the relationship between body and soul. The body of texts then, goes back to at least the eighth and ninth centuries and represents, for the most part, theological and Christian literature from before the mid 1100s.²

The “Stave Church Homily” is a so-called sermon for the day. “The sermon for the day” was used on the annual celebration held to commemorate the church’s consecration day or *dedicatio*. We can read here how the priest could speak about the *symbolic* and *allegorical* meaning within which it was possible to understand the church’s material building. It is explained how: “*The church and Christianity are known by one and the same word in the books.*”³ This is an allegorical meaning on two levels. Firstly, on a general level as a church: “The choir is a picture of the blessed in heaven, while the nave represents Christians on earth. [...] The four corner posts of a church are the four evangelists, as the wisdom they hold is the strongest supports of the Christian faith.”⁴ This can also be understood on a personal level. “But in the same way that we can speak of the church as an image of the whole of Christianity, we can also say that it is an image of each and every Christian, who, by living in purity, becomes a temple for the Holy Spirit.”⁵ In this context, the corner posts are interpreted in a different manner: “The four corner posts are the four cardinal virtues, which are the strongest supports for all good deeds: they are wisdom and justice, strength and moderation.”⁶ It is not only the parts of the structure of the building which are set into this frame of reference dense with meaning, but also the interiors. The altar symbolizes Christ, the altar cloth is “the holy men who adorn Christ with good deeds”, and the crosses, crucifixes and church bells also have an allegorical meaning beyond that of their immediate references.⁷

The purpose of this allegoric interpretation was to raise the individual believer to God and salvation: “So shall we know that everything which is needed to equip the church or the church services can be translated spiritually and fulfilled in us, if we live so blamelessly that we are worthy to be called temples of God.”⁸ The visible elements of the church building were supposed to awaken the spiritual feelings of the viewer and show the way to higher realities, and in this manner the anagogic character of the visible elements is emphasized. One should see with the eyes of the soul: “hugskots augum” – the inner eye.⁹ A central point of this sermon is underlined here, namely that the hearer’s or beholder’s – the congregation’s – memory be activated: to see with the eyes of the soul means “to see” in, through or by memory. We can read this sermon as fairly specific guidelines for, and a practical use of, the art of memory. The different corporeal and visible elements of the church building, such as the parts of the main body of the church like the nave, choir or pillars, but also pictures and objects in the church, become “places” in which to store the most central truths and insights of faith.



A cut-through plan (top: The stave church from Gol from about 1200) and the ground plan of a medieval stave church (bottom: Borgund from about 1150–1200), to give an impression of the different parts of a church as described in The “Stave Church Homily”. The cut-through plan of Gol was made by Jørgen H. Jensenius and is reproduced here by kind permission.

In this sermon for the day from the twelfth century we have in fact a demonstration of a practical application for the classical art of memory – *ars memoria* – in its medieval version.¹⁰ The church historian Jan Schumacher has pointed out that: “It is part of a long tradition which stretches

back into history, and is in addition a good example of how biblical literature and the classical theory of literature or rhetoric at an early stage in the tradition were intimately related to each other.”¹¹ In order to understand this and why it has such a central position in the Middle Ages, we need to see it in connection with a wider understanding of memory. The art of memory was not just an instrumental technique; it was part of a broader tradition in the theory of knowledge: An “art” and a tradition which ties memory closely to the visual.

Ars Memoria – Memory and Images

Memory was a central component of the classical and the medieval tradition of learning, and was one of the five main parts of rhetoric.¹² Therefore, treatment of memory is not only restricted to psychological aspects, but also covers understanding, knowledge, communication and cognition.

The oldest known systematic work on questions concerning memory is that of Aristotle (384–322 BC). He comments on mnemonics several places, both in the *Topic* and *On the Soul*.¹³ In both places he refers to *ars memoria* as seeing images for one’s inner eye.¹⁴ Mnemonics is therefore about attaching information to images and ordering them visually. The longest commentary on this theme is, however, found in Aristotle’s *On Memory (De Memoria et Reminiscentia)*. His starting point here is that all memory in one way or another is connected to images. Furthermore, he refers to associative structuring in which images and ideas are bound together by some kind of similarity, for example metaphoric. Another important factor for Aristotle is to connect memory with order and regularity or symmetry. Aristotle underlines the importance of organizing the mental images of memory in such a way that one can move with ease from one to another, something that is achieved by storing them in “places” or “locations” (*topoi* or *loci*).¹⁵

Aristotle also places great importance on a mathematical-systematic ordering of images into groups of a certain number – he recommends three or four. This means that elements which belong together are collected in easy-to-grasp blocks of information which allow easy access. In the Middle Ages, Aristotle and Roman rhetoricians were seen in relation to each other, with Aristotle as the one who philosophically and psychologically justified the rules of rhetorical memory (Yates 1994:46). The historically most influential theorists of rhetoric from antiquity are the Roman authors Cicero and Quintilian.

Cicero (106–43 BC) also takes as his point of departure the idea that memory is visual and that one should choose places and images which are striking and easy to remember. Order and symmetry are emphasized as necessary for a good mnemonic technique.¹⁶ The placing and ordering of the sequence of such locations should serve to remember the order of the speech

to be delivered, or in a wider sense the sequence of the elements to be remembered. Therefore, according to Cicero, people should “select localities and form mental images of the facts they wish to remember and store those images in the localities, with the result that the arrangement of localities will preserve the order of facts, and the images of the facts will designate the facts themselves.”¹⁷

Ad Herennium, which was attributed to Cicero and often referred to as “The Second Rhetoric of Tullius”, was the most influential rhetorical treatise from antiquity in the Middle Ages. The author of *Ad Herennium* introduces the section on the art of memory by stating that he will give an account of that which is the treasure house of thought itself and custodian of all the parts of rhetoric.¹⁸ A starting point for the author is an understanding of mnemonics as consisting of places (*loci*) and images (*imagines*). Places are taken to mean something which is a unit within a limited area, and which is either created by nature or man. This has to be something which is easily housed in memory. As an example he mentions a building, intercolumnar space, a discrete corner or an alcove. Images are figures, signs or representations of what one wants to remember. Moreover, this should be ordered in a numeric sequence.¹⁹ As for the content which is to be stored in the image, this can be done in two ways: either one creates an image for each word or one lets the image stand for a complete action or a longer argument. Thus an image, for example an allegorical figure or a personification, refers to a larger “text”, that is, a complex content of meaning which we can define as rhetorical concentration.²⁰ But one can also memorize by seeing something as a linear action or a narrative. An especially important point which is emphasized by both Cicero and the author of *Ad Herennium* is that one has to choose images which are clear and easy to remember.

We find the same recommendations in Quintilian’s (c. 35–95 AD) *De institutione oratoria*. In the explanation of what is meant by “memory places” (*loci*) and how these should be used, he describes how one should place things to be remembered in different rooms of a building. In this way one can “furnish” or fill the rooms up one by one with images which have a determined meaning or reference. One can then move through “the building” and find once more what has been placed there when one needs to bring it forth again. This means that there is no need to go through the whole “house” to find what one is looking for, but instead go directly to the “room” where something is stored or search systematically through a limited number of “rooms” which are located beside each other. Themes which belong together should be placed in adjoining rooms. Quintilian, however, makes it clear that this “memory landscape” does not necessarily have to be a building, but that one can choose almost anything which is easy to remember, like a long journey, a landscape, the wall around a city or pictures. What is required, therefore, are places, real or imaginary and images and symbols

(*simulacris*) which have to be created by oneself.²¹ It is also worth noting that Quintilian points out that paintings, corporeal pictures, can constitute a free-standing “topography of memory”.

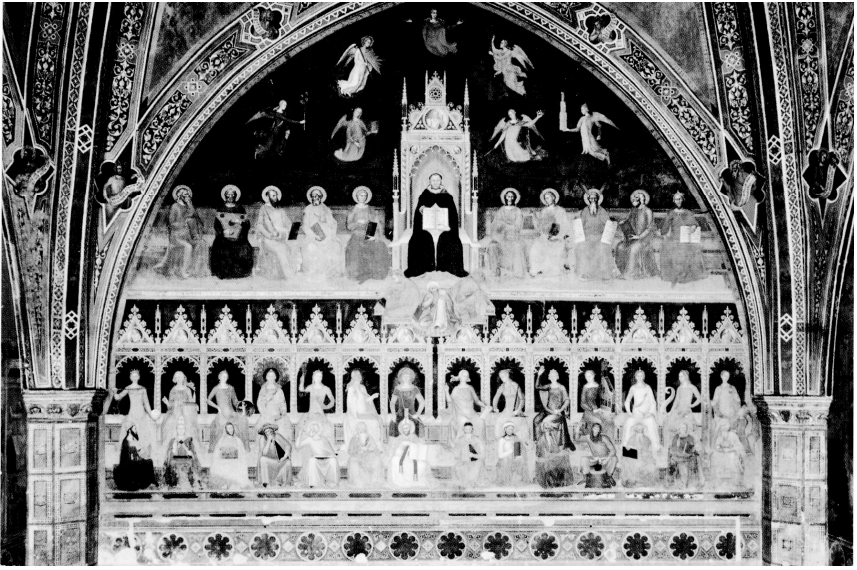
Quintilian thinks of memory as a building with storerooms, filled with the costly goods of wisdom.²² The well-trained rhetorician, the Church Father Augustine (354–430) describes memory in the following way in his *Confessions* book 10:

And I enter the fields and spacious halls of memory, where are stored as treasures the countless images that have been brought into them from all manner of things by the senses. [...] When I go into this storehouse, I ask that what I want should be brought forth. [...] Some things suggest themselves without effort, and in continuous order, just as they are called for – [...] and in so doing are treasured up again to be forthcoming when I want them. All of this happens when I repeat a thing from memory.²³

We can recognize many elements from the classical theory of memory. Augustine placed great importance on the meaning of both rhetoric in general and memory in particular in his thinking on knowledge. Augustine: “conferred on memory the supreme honour of being one of the three powers of the soul, Memory, Understanding, and Will, which are the image of the Trinity in man” (Yates 1994:62).

We find the same basic rules in all works on *ars memoria* in the Middle Ages. In the 1200s, that is, approximately a century later than the “Stave Church Homily” was most likely written, Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225–1274) takes up the art of memory with a starting point in Aristotle and the “Ciceronian tradition”, as Paolo Rossi calls it.²⁴ Thomas introduces his theory of memory in *Summa Theologica*, in book II–II, question 49.²⁵ He lists four basic rules in this text: Firstly, he emphasizes the importance of using images. Thomas recommends choosing images which are suited to the ideas or things which one wants to remember. Secondly, the images should be sequenced in such a way that it is easy to move from one to the other; that is to say, in a well-ordered and clear system. He refers here to Aristotle, who says that such memory places help us to recall what we want to remember by allowing us to move quickly from one place to another.²⁶ Thirdly, one has to concentrate and work carefully with the things to be remembered, so that they become deeply imprinted on memory. The fourth and final basic rule is that one should often repeat or think through the things that one wants to stamp on memory. “Repetition is the mother of learning”, as the old rule of pedagogics says.

Recommendations on the art of memory, *ars memoria*, are full of symbols, personifications, and prominent figures and images: all systematically ordered and located in some kind of space: a building, a city, or a landscape. This also situates the symbolic-allegorical way of thinking or understanding, of which the “Stave Church Homily” is an example, in a slightly differ-



“The Triumph (or Wisdom) of St Thomas Aquinas”, fresco in the Chapter Hall of the Dominican Convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, by Andrea di Bonaiuto from 1366/1367. St Thomas is seated on the throne in the centre (The Throne of Wisdom), surrounded by flying figures representing the three theological and the four cardinal Virtues. On his left and right side sit evangelists and patriarchs, beneath his feet are the heretics whom he has crushed. On the lower level, placed on stalls or niches, are fourteen female figures symbolizing the seven theological disciplines and the liberal arts. This image is in many ways a ‘classic’ schema, presenting both the structure and content of St Thomas’s learning and a way to memorize it.

ent frame of reference and a larger perspective. Symbols and allegories were central elements in *ars memoria*. We see then that the symbolic-allegorical way of thinking is also related to some of the fundamental principles for ordering information and knowledge, and also how to communicate or mediate this knowledge. The many allegorical figures and symbolic personifications, as for example the virtues and vices, are *classic* examples of this. Frances Yates has pointed out that the classical mnemonic instructions remind us more of: “figures in some Gothic cathedral than of classical art proper” (Yates 1994:32).

Images of all kinds, symbols and allegories, are where memory is concerned “effective” for many reasons. One of them is their ability for *rhetorical concentration*, that of being able to compress a large amount of content into one expression: an expression which is syntagmatic in the sense that its references are a selection of several elements which belong together or are joined together. Such a rhetorical concentration is also illustrated by the “Stave Church Homily”, connected both to the “optically visible” (the actual physical building) and the “para-visual” (symbols, metaphors and illustrations in the sermon’s text). Here “the church” is referred to and made vis-

ible both as a physical *place*; the actual church building, and more generally all churches in more of an *abstract* sense; the institution and the community of all believers. But this is also linked to expressions and representations which are actually present in the priest and the local church members. Meaning is therefore *in* the church on a number of different levels. The church as a place, institution and community of believers is always already present in the singular and local: The “macro-cosmos” is close at hand and present in the “micro-cosmos”.

Images also have an emotional and persuasive appeal at one and the same time. The emotional appeal – the pathos appeal – is connected to and strengthens the persuasive appeal – the logos appeal – among other things by making it easier to remember, to take in the message. This is the case for both optically visual and para-visual images. There is a connection here between memory and speech, in our case the sermon, which we must take a closer look at.

Ars Praedicandi – Rhetoric and Memory

The text with which I started, the “Stave Church Homily”, is, as we can see, a sermon. This was one of the most important genres in the Middle Ages:

In the unique mediaeval cultural product which is the *ars praedicandi* the practical aims of rhetorical persuasion, and the need to construct images able to provoke controllable emotions, were combined with more general reflections on order and method as instruments for impressing both the contents and form of orations in the memory. (Rossi 2000:14ff)

Ars praedicandi is the art of preaching.²⁷ This was an important part of medieval rhetoric because preaching the word of God was, and is, the main task of the church: “preaching had a rhetorical function in the clear exposition of Scripture, with the persuasive purpose of winning souls to God – a function and a purpose germane to the universal uses of rhetoric” (Caplan 1972:285).

The good preacher was reliant on a good memory and the ability and opportunity to recover relevant material for a sermon (Caplan 1972:287). Analogies between virtues and vices, symbols and allegories were important for the construction of images which could give the preacher the possibility to build a good structure and a clear exposition. The places (*loci*) are the “headings” the arguments would fall under.²⁸ Here, physical images within the church or the church itself could be useful. These painted images made it possible both to “store” important theological ideas in memory, to recall and present them in a well-structured or coherent manner, and in addition to provide illustrations which could capture the hearer’s “fantasy”. This was something that in its turn would make it easier for the hearer to grasp, memorize and understand the meaning of the sermon. Not only should the preacher find images that could help himself in his sermon, but

also images that could help those listening, the congregation, to remember and recollect the same images and their meaning. It was all about bringing to life or elucidating arguments, to make the hearers *see* with their inner eye. The preacher used the images to illustrate and complement the sermon, while at the same time they gave the congregation the means to grasp the meaning of the sermon. The “Stave Church Homily” is a good *illustration* of such use, where precisely the visible elements in the church, such as the architectonic body and the objects and images which are found there, are used in this way. This takes its place in a long Christian tradition where we can find similar examples in Augustine’s contemporary, Bishop Paulinus of Nola (354–431).²⁹ Here ecclesiology is explained and illustrated with the church building and its parts as a starting point, both as sign and memory. This emphasizes how “*memoria*” is included in what we can call a *cultural system*, or a kind of basic mental matrix for thinking.

Images and Memory – Images as Memory

We can go quite far in saying that the memory aspect of images has been a central part of the theological argument for the justification of their presence in churches, as we find it already in Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) in the 500s. In his two letters to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles he emphasizes that images, by showing the deeds of the past, that is to say, evoking them in the memory of the viewer, should awaken religious feelings and urge the beholder to worship the Trinity alone. Gregory the Great’s interpretation can, as Celia Chazelle has pointed out, be understood along the lines that:

The instruction that the picture provides is indirect; it involves the improvement of knowledge acquired from the narrative, for instance by implanting it more firmly in the memory. [...], that pictures assist their ignorant beholder to virtuous behaviour: in pictures the ignorant “see what they ought to follow”. (Chazelle 1990:140ff)

Both Basil the Great (329/30–379), Gregory of Nyssa (338/9–394) and others among the Greek Church Fathers argued along the same lines. Pictures should remind the beholder of something he or she already knew:

Both Basil and his brother Gregory of Nyssa, however, employed in a Christian context the ancient topos of likening the spoken word and pictures as instruments of communication. For Basil, “what the sermon shows of the story through hearing, the silent picture puts before the eyes by imitation”; for Gregory of Nyssa, the silent picture on the wall “speaks”. (Duggan 1989:228)

The picture then, can “speak” by awakening memory (Duggan 1989:229ff).

One of the most prominent theologians of images in the eighth century during the iconoclasm conflict in Byzantium, John of Damascus (c. 675–c. 749) also stressed the meaning of images as *memoria*. They were a visible reminder and an “instrument” to promote memory in the individual. This underlines the double memory function of images; they should both show

what is to be remembered and awake or call this to mind again in memory. In *De fide orthodoxa* he writes, for example, that when we see a picture of Christ crucified, his redeeming suffering is brought back in memory even though our thoughts were elsewhere.³⁰ For John of Damascus this “reminiscence” also has a moral direction, which he emphasizes in his *On Holy Images*. Events from the past are remembered with the help of images to create wonder, awe or shame and to encourage the viewer to avoid evil and do good, he says.³¹

This way of thinking was systematized and extended in the High Middle Ages, when the symbolic-allegorical understanding of the elements of the church building were even more clearly attached to memory. Wilhelm Durandus (1235–1296), one of the Middle Age’s most important liturgists, underlines the perspective of memory as a justification for why there should be images in churches. In *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* he writes that we adore images as remembrance and memory of past happenings.³² He quotes from Gregory the Great’s *Pastorale* and says that when one internalizes or reflects on the form of outer things, it is as though they are painted in the heart. For the thought of them is their representations.³³ Durandus determines that paintings move the soul or mind more than writing: because with paintings the story or the actions of the past are presented for the eyes as though they were still happening. The story is therefore made present and real by the pictures. In this way the images also become rhetorical “evidence”, *evidentia*. Writing, on the other hand, brings the story to mind again in the same manner as hearing it told, and this moves the soul or mind to a lesser degree.³⁴ In this manner, a connection is established between “memoria” and “imitatio”, which is one of the goals of memory. A representation is consequently a kind of “double imitation”. It resembles that which is to be depicted like a model for the viewer. Thus memory is to be “made operational” by bringing about correct religious affects or spiritual emotions, which should set people on the right path for true faith and deeds. Memory should produce those images which are models for imitation. The beholder should on one level “become identical” as that which he or she “sees” and thereby become a living actuality of “the historical”, so that they themselves can again become visible models for imitation.

From “Outer” to “Inner” Images

In the “Stave Church Homily” it is emphasized that the outer images, the elements of the church building and the pictures and objects that could be seen in the church, should be internalized so that they could be seen with “hugskotts augum” – the inner eye. In this way they would be able to raise the individual believer to God. In the classical memory tradition, we have also seen that those images that were to be used should be internalized to be-

come *inner images*: “by an art which reflected the art and architecture of the ancient world, which could depend on faculties of intense visual memorization that we have lost. The word ‘mnemotechnics’, though not actually wrong as a description of the classical art of memory, makes this very mysterious subject seem simpler than it is” (Yates 1994:20).

The point was that knowledge, that which was to be memorized, had to be internalized or made heartfelt. Memory was part of man’s mental capacities. Thus there is a sliding transition between the outer corporeal images of different kinds and the inner mental images. This is not merely a function of the technique of memory but is also about memory as the place where the outer and inner images meet in a connection that has to do with knowledge.

The visible corporeal images in the church are a re-presentation of events in the past which by awakening the believer’s personal memories – and emotions – also actualize the meaning the images refer to. This historical, or temporal, perspective is an altogether central aspect of memory. Aristotle notes that “memory is of the past”, and stresses that all memory involves time.³⁵ Memory is therefore concerned with something from the past, which is recalled in the present, but this temporality underlines that it is not the “mimetic” or “objective” recollection of the original experience which is the most important. The actual recollection in memory is in a way a new experience. Therefore, this points not only to the past but also beyond it to the present, and to an actualization here and now of an experience or something similar.³⁶ Understanding takes place in a time span that involves both the past and the present, which at the same time can be said to point forward. The same “temporality” is also valid for images. Thomas Aquinas’s emphasis on images as *representatio speciei*, a re-presentation of those things, people, incidents etc. which are depicted, has a memory perspective. It is about re-seeing depictions of “something” once again for one’s gaze; *ante oculus* (Gal. 3:1). This gaze can just as easily be an “internal” as an “outer” one.

In the “memory tradition” of antiquity and the Middle Ages we have seen a fundamental emphasis of the visual: all mnemonics in one sense or another deal with using inner or outer images, where the images are the basic reference for meaning. In this tradition we also find a way of thinking in which letters and words – writing – are also seen as a visual form of mnemonics. Internalizing information or knowledge is about creating and storing inner or mental images, which connect visibility and thinking. These “memory images” are physical-mental pictures which are not only a part or related to an instrumental technique for memorizing, but are understood as vital for human understanding. This emphasis is grounded in the significance of sight as the most important sense. Cicero states that the impressions which stand out as the clearest in our mind are those which are received via the senses, and that of all the human senses, the sense of sight is the keenest.³⁷

Therefore, that which is to be remembered will be held most easily in the mind by creating an image of it.³⁸ This is important since it connects both the act of looking *and* memory to knowledge and understanding.

Memory – Optics – Knowledge

The connections between seeing, memory and knowledge and understanding are central to Thomas Aquinas. This reasoning for the necessity of connecting memory to images is grounded in his theory of knowledge. Abstract or purely spiritual ideas easily disappear from the mind if they are not connected to corporeal images (*similitudinibus corporalibus*), as human understanding has a greater command of sensible objects, claims Thomas.³⁹ According to him the *phantasm* (*phantasma*) is a central category in the understanding of human knowledge.⁴⁰ This is an inner image which is formed in the mind and is the “raw material” used by the intellect to reach knowledge. It is particular (*particularia*) and is, in a certain sense, an interpreted image of the sensible world. It is the “images”, ideas or conceptions, we think with, and they are located in the intellectual capacities of the soul. According to Thomas these are: memory (*vis memoria*), the ability to imagine (*vis phantasia*) and thought (*vis cogitativa*).⁴¹ Within the scholastic tradition based on Aristotle, it was thought that the mind was a “tabula rasa” at birth. That is to say, man is born with the potential to know, think and understand, but does not have actual concrete thoughts and ideas. Only gradually is understanding acquired and the mind filled with thoughts. For Thomas Aquinas, as we have seen, all knowledge is founded on sense experience.⁴² Man’s knowledge has as its point of departure the sensible and visual. As already mentioned, however, it is important to be aware that the intellect can move beyond the sensible. These experiences – knowledge and learning in a broad sense – must be “stored” in memory, that is to say, memorized. Only then can the experiences be made operational and utilized in man’s struggle for knowledge; for remembering is not solely about storing things from the past in memory. “Storing” is a means, the aim is to be able to recall and use what is stored in memory in an actual and new context. “The ‘art of memory’ is actually the ‘art of recollection’” (Carruthers 1996:20). Thomas writes that man not only has memory (*memorium*) of something past – animals also have this – but also the ability to recollect (*reminiscentium*) from memory according to individual will through rational deductions.⁴³

In his commentary on Aristotle’s *De memoria* Thomas also emphasizes that man cannot understand without images (*phantasmata*). The image has similarity (*similitudo*) to a corporeal (*corporealis*) object, but understanding or knowledge is of *universalia* which are abstracted from *particularia*.⁴⁴ It is made clear in this comment: “nihil potest homo intelligere sine phantasmate.” (“People cannot understand without a phantasm.”)⁴⁵ Memory and the

faculty of imagination (*phantasia*) are in the same part of the mind or soul. What we remember are images of sensible things. The images of memory and phantasms are the same “images”.⁴⁶ In his *Summa theologiae* Thomas defines the faculty of imagination as a storeroom for the forms one has received through the senses, and memory as the storeroom of these forms transformed into representations and ideas.⁴⁷ Phantasms are created by the imagination, *imaginatio* or *vis phantasia*, which is an ability to create images. Both this and memory are a part of the intellectual capacities of the soul or mind. The ability to create images is one of the prerequisites of thinking and knowledge.⁴⁸ Thomas is here situated in a tradition with roots going back to thinking in Antiquity. Augustine also stresses memory’s visual character and discusses those things which are memorized as inner images. He mentions, for instance, that what one wishes to remember stands out clearly and is visible, and emphasizes that it is not the things themselves which “come in” through the doors of memory but: “the images of the things perceived are there for thought to remember.”⁴⁹

The inner images are real and are not “merely” figments of fantasy. According to Thomas Aquinas these inner mental images are just as real as corporeal objects and exist in their own right. Mary Carruthers points out: “Thus all stages and varieties of knowledge for human beings, from their most concrete to the most abstract, occur in some way within a physical matrix” (Carruthers 1996:54). We see quite a different way of thinking from ours, in which images are actual expressions of thoughts, ideas and concepts. This is yet another example demonstrating that thinking is carried out in visual categories, and it is interesting that these mental images were in a certain sense understood as corporeal and analogous to the physical images in the church. These relationships are even clearer when we take a look at how Thomas Aquinas understood the act of looking.

Thomas takes as his starting point here that perception is about the sensory organs being stimulated by an outer agent, that is to say, that a change takes place in the sensory organ. This can be “material” or “spiritual”. Senses such as taste or touch react to direct contact with their objects, but smell and hearing work via “media”. They are all “material” in the sense that the sensory organs register sensible qualities of the sensed objects by direct or indirect contact with the objects. Perception is to take in the sensed object’s “form” or “similarity”. The sense of sight is, as we saw earlier, the noblest and most subtle of the senses, and sets itself apart from the other senses because the change that occurs in the sensory organ is a “spiritual” change. The “similarity” to the sensed object is received in the eye as a form which gives rise to knowledge and not, like the other senses, to something which only brings about transference of form from one material to another. It is different with sight. The “similarity” which is communicated from the sensed object to the eye is formed of light, and light has a special status in

Thomas's thinking on this subject. It is neither purely corporeal nor purely spiritual, because if it had been merely spiritual, people could not have understood it, as we can only have knowledge about corporeal things. But neither is light purely corporeal because it does not act like a body which has mass. At the same time "light" has a number of metaphysical and metaphoric references which also play a part in Thomas's reflections on the sense of sight and the meaning of light. This discussion is by no means easy to approach because optics here is not just a "scientific" theory of physics; it is directly woven into a theological and metaphysical understanding of reality. For the present context, I shall therefore restrict myself to establishing that light is both material and immaterial, in the same way that the sense of sight also is. Optical sight occurred when the rays from the object of sight hit the eye, either by *intromission* or *extramission*, and so it was a form of corporeal contact between the one seeing and the seen.⁵⁰

We can note the metaphor Thomas makes use of to illustrate how the spiritual-material perception through the eye occurs. He illustrates this with a seal in wax, in which the wax forms itself into a physical likeness to the original seal. The "immaterial" in this is that the wax is not identical to the original gold or bronze seal, but nor is it the case that nothing of a physical nature has happened to the wax. The object has made an impression which is a physical and material alteration of the wax. This impression is an absolutely concrete and corporeal image. The phantasm should therefore be understood as a kind of "physical"-mental impression, which has a permanent effect on the substance of the brain. This "physical"-mental image is quite literally *impressed* on memory. The "images" make an "impression" and in this way have a direct "effect" on the mind. The phantasm therefore has a kind of double nature; it is both physical and mental.⁵¹ The recollection in memory (*recollectio*) then consists of retrieving these images stamped on the rear chamber of the brain and seeing them with the intellect in a manner which is analogous to the way they were seen with the faculty of vision. The metaphors which Thomas uses to describe "the act of seeing" – a seal in wax – connect sight directly to the memorial-phantasm's nature, where the analogy between the outer and the inner "eye" is central. Thomas says for example that the word "sight" refers first of all to the faculty of vision and thereafter in a broader sense to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding.⁵²

Thomas uses a similar metaphor to define images and the nature of images; the visual re-presentation. On the one hand the similarity between an image and its representation can be likened to the portrait of a king on a coin. It is a likeness with a different character. The coin has not become the king, but something of the king's authority and therefore something of his nature rests in the coin. It is the image that guarantees the currency of the coin, and therefore there is a kind of connection between the two.⁵³ Later he

uses this metaphor to illustrate how God's image is impressed on the mind, that is to say, like a king's portrait on a coin.⁵⁴ The relationship between the seen and the seer in the act of looking is therefore analogous to the relationship between the represented and the representation. Founded on a type of common theory of mimesis, but then looking (to view, to see, to see again) is also a way to create images of something, a kind of mental painting.⁵⁵ This connects *memoria*, vision and the inner "physical"-mental images to the corporeal, outer images as visual modalities of knowledge. These images therefore have an effect on the mental capacities; an effect on the mind of man. We shall take a closer look at this.

The Effect of Images on the Mind: Memory, Visuality and Knowledge

In many of the texts which discuss images and the use of images in churches, a recurrent theme is the effect of images on the mind. It was concerned with awakening pious and spiritual feelings or effects. The Council of Nicaea refers to Gregory of Nyssa, who writes that when he saw a representation of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, he was unable to hold back his tears.⁵⁶ The images should be impressed on memory, according to Gregory the Great (c. 540–604), to awaken pious affects.⁵⁷ In the same manner, Wilhelm Durandus also underlines that images are more effective in moving the mind. This is about moving the mind emotionally, and can be termed the "affective character" of images, which has a direct link with rhetoric.

Since Antiquity, rhetoric has been described as an "art of persuasion". It is quite simply about influencing or appealing to a recipient, something which is the fundamental character of any communicative situation. Aristotle establishes this already in the introduction to his rhetoric. This "persuasion" is for Aristotle, as it is for the majority of rhetoricians up until modern times, about winning over an audience to the truth.⁵⁸ With Aristotle as a point of departure there are three such rhetorical forms of appeal: The appeal to the inherent rationality of a subject – *logos*; the appeal to the speaker's or sender's credibility – *ethos*; and the appeal to the recipient's emotions – *pathos*. The emphasis on the ability of images to move the viewer emotionally is related to the viewer's *pathos* in rhetorical theory, but not only. In any case, we can establish that this stresses the rhetorical character of images related to their communicative function. Images should teach and persuade and are as such argumentative, and the appeal to the feelings of the viewer is thus an important part of the argument.

How images could have this affective character has to do with the psychology of perception and knowledge. The visual image can affect the mind more strongly because there is a direct connection between what is sensed and the one sensing, which "impresses" the image in a physical imprint on

the brain; and by a greater “likeness” to the sensed object. If we see this, for example, in relationship to the theory of knowledge of Thomas Aquinas, it is logical that images have a more emotional effect since they are both material and immaterial and are the “raw material” of thought and knowledge. In this frame of reference, it is interesting to note that Thomas Aquinas also has a kind of “theory of affects” as part of his reflections on beauty.⁵⁹ This is primarily connected to a discussion of sacred music, but can also be applied more generally. According to Thomas, beauty moves the mind to devotions and love of God. By the order and harmony which is expressed, for example, in music we can catch a glimpse of the perfect order and harmony which is found in God, and which is the nature of beauty and its source.⁶⁰

We can find this affective aspect again in the understanding of memory, and have once again the relation to the psychology of perception, because perceiving takes place when the sensory organs undergo a physical change through their contact with the sensible. It is in these terms that perception is defined. Emotions are considered to be such a physical change, an affect. In Latin the word, *affectio* means to have effect upon, or “impression”, that is, something that makes a concrete and physical effect. We find this meaning in English, *to affect*, and in Norwegian *effekt* that refers to something which affects something else both in a directly and in a figurative sense. The term’s double meaning as both a physical affect and a state of mind illustrates the connections in this way of thinking. The senses produce ‘affects/effects’ in us and one of these ‘affects/effects’ is memory. A main feature of a memory image is its affective nature. It is, as Mary Carruthers emphasizes, “sensorily derived and emotionally charged” (Carruthers 1996:59). The memory image is not just an abstraction or a kind of mental “ghost” since it is fundamental for rational thinking. Nor is it just a plan or an algorithm to describe a mechanical activity, even though it is also that. We have seen in all the treatments of mnemotechnics an emphasis on the emotional to impress something affective/effective in memory. Memory is concerned with connecting the sensory with affects, the image’s “affect/effect” character, something that applies to all mental images. The images, “inner” as much as “outer”, should awaken “religious affects” with the goal of moving the viewer towards an ethically correct life, and through this to salvation. To remember, in the Middle Ages, was to apprehend, respond and make choices. “Far from being passive and thus (at least possibly) neutral, memory-making was regarded as active; it was even a craft with techniques and tools, all designed to *make* an ethically useful product.”⁶¹ Understanding should lead to personal actions and accordingly memory should awaken emotions in the individual. This affective, or emotional, side to memory was either practical (or mnemotechnical) or of a perceptive and moral character. There is therefore no contradiction here between the moral, and ethically correct, and the rhetorical appeal to the emotions. The acknowledgement of faith’s truths

also has an emotional character. Knowledge should lead to feelings for the divine, in the sense of a personal internalization or making sincere and thereby an animation in the individual believer.

In the rhetorical thinking of both Antiquity and the Middle Ages, emotions were not only considered as an acceptable path to knowledge and “true” actions, but as a condition for this. This is also related to ideas about imitation and examples. By seeing one’s ideal one was to be touched emotionally and moved to act in imitation of this model. The appeal to the feelings of the viewer or the hearer was not an attempt to make relative “the truth”, but was about showing important sides of a subject that was presented or discussed, and which were concerned with knowledge. It was a mediation that showed trust in an inescapable part of man (Kjeldsen 2002: 32). This is a completely different way of thinking from the so-called “modern” Cartesian tradition. With René Descartes (1596–1650) human knowledge was reduced to pure thinking, and feelings were seen as something confused which deflected from the truth and true actions. Emotions led reason astray and were regarded as the opposite of rationality: they were irrational. I shall not go more fully into this discussion here, but merely point out the interesting fact that current research on cognition rejects the separation of reason and feelings. Once again there is a turn towards a more complex understanding of the ways in which human knowledge works, where perception, thinking, feelings and actions, functionally belong together, to a great extent, as it was understood in the Middle Ages.⁶²

This shows mnemotechnics, *ars memoria*, and for that matter rhetoric as a dynamic way of thinking: a way of thinking that was the basis for an optics of knowledge and which describes, where knowledge is concerned, a change or process which also describes an ascent; that is to say an anagogic perspective. Mnemonics here, and in addition rhetoric, is again noticeable as something more than an instrumental “technique”, but rather a visual form of knowledge where vision, “seeing” is central.

Memory in the Middle Ages was understood as an integral part of virtuous wisdom because it was that which made it possible to make moral judgements. This concerns far more than the mere acquisition of a technique for dealing with knowledge when books were not easily available: “it was in trained memory that one built character, judgement, citizenship, and piety” (Carruthers 1996:9). It is therefore not about technology, and later about a technological development in which the printing press and increasing book production made the necessity to remember superfluous. “The choice to train one’s memory or not, for the ancients and the mediaevals, was not a choice dictated by convenience: it was a matter of ethics” (Carruthers 1996:13). Memory was about knowledge and ethical communication, as was rhetoric.

Memory was the foundation of knowledge, something which was also

related to the perspective of memory in Christianity. This is such a fundamental characteristic that we can define Christianity as a memory religion. Augustine makes this very clear in his *Confessions*. Memory is the main theme of his book, in both a personal and an existential and metaphysical sense. The first nine books deal with Augustine's "personal" memory, the history of his life, and whole of the tenth book is concerned with the question of what memory is. Otto Gerhard Oexle, one of the foremost students of the importance of memory in medieval culture, sums up Augustine's position thus: "Memoria ist also Bewusstsein im umfassendsten und tiefesten Sinne. Sie ist jene Kraft, die bei allem Wechsel der Bewusstseinsinhalte immer die Identität des Bewusstseins herzustellen und zu sichern vermag" (Oexle 1999:304). But memory extends beyond the religious and defines in many ways the entire culture of the Middle Ages according to Oexle: "Memoria integriert alle Lebensbereiche, und alle denkbaren Aspekte der Lebenswelt kommen in Memoria zum Ausdruck" (Oexle 1995:39). Memory, both the collective and the individual, was a precondition for thinking and, as Mary Carruthers points out, it was quite simply about a common social memory:

Where classical and medieval rhetorical pragmatism diverges from modern, I think, is in assigning a crucial role to a notion of communal memory, accessed by an individual through education, which acts to "complete" uninformed individual experience. This notion is basic to Aristotle's view of politics as the life of the individual completed in society. Such assumptions put the civic bond on a historically continuous basis, and make the notion of shared meaning less arbitrary and merely occasional than most modern "functional" theories of language tend to do. (Carruthers 1996:24)

Thomas Aquinas's opinions are in accordance with this, although his view of life in the "polis" needs to be nuanced in relationship to Aristotle's. For Thomas it was not possible to achieve the perfect life in this life, as man's goal is salvation in the life to come where the perfect realization of the human lies. Beyond this, it is the same fundamental understanding of communal life as the bearer of meaning and the creator of meaning that we find in *Civitas Dei*. The Norwegian scholar of rhetoric Bjørn K. Nicolaysen points out that for rhetoricians meaning was not something that lay finished and ready for use in language; it was created and was constructive (Nicolaysen 1997:397). Like tradition, memory is a process and not something static. In this perspective tradition can be understood as the framework within which memory works, and which determines what an appropriate memory in an actual situation is. Memory refers to the past, present and future, according to the medievals, and can therefore be understood as integral to a concept of dynamic tradition. This is concerned with interpretation and understanding or knowledge. Knowledge and understanding relate to the past and memory. At the same time this "memory function" (anamnesis/knowledge) is also a

condition for “new thinking” and a forward-looking perspective represented by the visionary. Both of these “movements” in the object are united in a “visual” perspective where the knowing, reflecting and thinking man has a gaze directed at the past, the present and forward into the future. Wisdom, like memory and rhetoric, has three faces.⁶³

Seen in the perspective of memory, knowledge and understanding in the Middle Ages can be understood as an *ars combinatoria* where pieces of information could be combined in different contexts. This was a creative process where possibilities for new combinations could continuously reveal themselves, and where we must also remember that thinking itself was an experience in reality which could be stored in memory to make possible yet other combinations. Albert the Great (1206–1280), the teacher of Thomas Aquinas, states that because memory is about past experience, there is a “break” between the original action of memory when the sensible image was impressed on the mind, and its recollection in the “new” action of memory.⁶⁴ “Recollection then becomes a reconstructive act” (Carruthers 1996:25). Re-construction is not just about doing something one more time in the same manner, but also always has an element of construction, something “newly creative” and creative-dynamic in it. As Thomas Aquinas states, the whole always consists of something qualitatively different from the sum of the individual parts.

Some Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, there are some differences in the conception of recollection and memory between the Middle Ages and our own times. Today we have a tendency to regard memory as the complete opposite of “real” knowledge. Memory is all about learning something by heart and is understood almost as the antithesis of creativity and “genuine” intellectual achievements. This is based on an understanding of “knowledge” as something that exists outside of us, and which anyone can access from, say, books or the Internet, and a romantic idea that true understanding or knowledge is intuitive and comes from within. Our memory has been moved outside of our heads and into books and archives. This is a way of thinking which is radically different from that of the Middle Ages. Mary Carruthers points out in *The Book of Memory* that:

They would not, however, have understood our separation of “memory” from “learning”. In their understanding of the matter, it was memory that made knowledge into useful experience, and memory that combined these pieces of information-become-experience into what we call “ideas” what they were more likely to call “judgements”. (Carruthers 1996:1)

The culture of the Middle Ages was in this respect a culture of memory, as claimed by the historian Otto Gerhard Oexle.

When we turn our eyes towards the theological and philosophical discussion in the Middle Ages, at least from the end of the eleventh century onwards, we see that *images* were accredited with theological and cognitive meaning. Images were regarded as being part of an intricate cognitive process, where on different levels, and of different kinds, they found themselves on an “optical sliding-scale” of an anagogic character. Images and vision were concerned with a spiritual hermeneutics, as physical, inner and ultimately spiritual “images” led the believer to knowledge of God by means of sight. Optical perception in this way describes a process of revelation. Here, corporeal images, inner mental images, and also visionary experiences merged with one another, like elements in the optics of knowledge. All these different types of images, irrespective of which level they were on, could be both inner, mental memory images and visionary images in such a way that it is difficult to say where one ended and the other began. This “mobility” of the images was an important point and part of the reason for their importance. This understanding was based on a way of thinking which presupposed an interpretive ambiguity, where a “text” always had several meanings. As an expression, images were especially suited to communicate ambiguity with symbolic expressions “saturated” with meaning, which we have characterized as rhetoric concentration. In the Middle Ages images were emphasized because of their “ability” to present complex theological interpretations. We find a number of examples in which images were compared with the Word of God, and that they could in fact surpass *Scripture*. Against the background of the theological understanding of the gradual or progressive revelation, it was believed that there was movement from text to images to the final revelation and second coming of God in all its “visibility” on Earth. The images revealed the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures.⁶⁵

Sensory experience was the “raw material” the intellect made use of to grasp universal truths and thereby reach knowledge of God. The images in churches could thus be seen as part of the raw material in the optical process of revelation, adapted to a hagioscopic or sacred gaze.⁶⁶ The spiritual truths were made comprehensible by images of corporeal things, and both the visual representations and the poetic metaphors were, according to Thomas Aquinas, necessary to be able to comprehend divine matters.⁶⁷

This hagioscopic gaze had its origins in the physical images or objects, in what Augustine defined as *visio corporealis*, corporal sight. They were also the basis for what was defined in the Middle Ages as a bodily vision of a higher order, an allegorical gaze where the corporeal images were understood symbolically. Furthermore, the images had a third level where one moved on to a vision of a spiritual nature, in which the images were seen with *oculi cordis*, the eyes of the heart, the inner eye, or according to Augustine: *visio spiritualis*, spiritual vision. It is in this frame of reference that

the memory aspect of images can be brought up as a central element, both as mnemonics and as a form of knowledge and moral category. It was with this spiritual vision the beholder could understand what the images and symbols referred to. In a Thomistic system this was as far as the human rational intellect could reach by itself. Here were the borders of philosophy. Hereafter, God had to receive man and lead him forward. The latter, *visio intellectualis*, intellectual vision, where the believer had direct sight of spiritual matters and the truths of faith, was the anagogic level in this optics of revelation.⁶⁸ The images attempted by “the unveiling of the holy to attract the empathising beholder’s visual immersion, apparently to make him, or her allow themselves to be absorbed by the sacred in the visual encounter – almost as a kind of visually mediated *unio mystica*”, as stated by the Danish art historian Hans Henrik Lohfert Jørgensen.⁶⁹ Images and the church building itself became, through the many levels of meaning and their revelatory or hagioscopic optics, a kind of “permanent vision” which should be memorized and internalized, at the same time as the way in which it can be memorized is incorporated in the image itself.

In the perspective of the medievals, the images and the church building could be seen as this kind of visualization of Christian beliefs. As it is presented in the “Stave Church Homily” they are both a picture of (a metaphor for) the church and the believer’s yearning for the divine. At the same time as they make visible that which is to be remembered, they are also a means of memorizing (and thereby internalizing) this. In this sense, they are also an image of the believer’s own consciousness. The images are both an ideal and a model, which through memory and knowledge are made into an object for imitation and making actual or real, understood on both an individual and collective level.

Through this visualization of faith, practices of faith, different levels of meaning and reflections on knowledge and learning, they are a vision of the unity that belief consists of. Images which cover all the walls and ceiling merge with the room and draw the viewer in. They become a kind of viewing machine, a hagioscope, intended to lead the viewer’s gaze, both the outer and the “inner”, towards the sacred. Just as there is no clear dividing line between corporeal images or “historical” events, that is, “corporeal” and “historical” in our definition of them, and visionary images or events, there is no clear division between viewer and the images. They are already a first step on the path for the viewer to break through the surface and see what lies behind, above and around the physical world: as through a window to the sacred. This was made possible by memory. The medieval rhetorician Boncompagno de Signa (1170–1240) states that we must always remember the invisible joys of Paradise and the eternal torments of Hell, and places his discussion on memory within a moral and mystical framework, where memory is what is to lead man to understanding and knowledge of the ultimate

things. Memory then was seen in the Middle Ages as the basic matrix for thinking, from which all knowledge and understanding derived, both as a human faculty and as an intellectual praxis and capacity.

(Translated by Pauline Ann Hoath)

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1 *Gammelnorsk homiliebok*

- 2 The Book of Homilies exists in a manuscript from c. 1200; this copy was made from texts which for the most part originate from the middle or first half of the 1100s. The Old Norse Book of Homilies is, together with the Old Icelandic Book of Homilies, the most extensive collection of Norse sermons which is preserved. See Salvesen & Gunnes 1971. On the “Stave Church Homily” and *The Old Norse Book of Homilies* see Hjelde 1995, which, for the most part, is a shortened and popularized version of Hjelde’s doctoral thesis from 1990. The manuscript is a part of the Arnamagnæanske Samling (The Arnamagnæan Collection); AM619 4to. The manuscript is published in Indrebø 1966 (1931).
- 3 “kirkebygning og kristenhet kalles med ett og samme ord i bøkene.” *Gammelnorsk homiliebok (The Old Norse Book of Homilies)*, p. 101.
- 4 “Koret er et bilde på de salige i himmelen, mens kirkeskipet betegner de kristne på jorden. [...] De fire hjørnestolpene i kirkene er de fire evangelister, for den lærdommen de inneholder, er de sterkeste støttene i den kristne tro.” *Gammelnorsk homiliebok (The Old Norse Book of Homilies)*, pp. 101–102.
- 5 “Men på samme måte som vi sier at kirken er et bilde på hele kristenheten, kan vi også si at den er et bilde på hver enkelt kristen, som ved å leve i renhet gjør seg til et tempel for Den hellige ånd.” *Gammelnorsk homiliebok (The Old Norse Book of Homilies)*, p. 102.
- 6 “De fire hjørnestolpene er de fire hoveddyder som er de sterkeste støttene for alle gode gjerninger: det er visdom og rettferdighet, styrke og måtehold.” *Gammelnorsk homiliebok*, pp. 102–103.
- 7 “de hellige menn som pryder Kristus med gode gjerninger.” *Gammelnorsk homiliebok*, pp. 101–102.
- 8 “Så skal vi vite at alt vi trenger til utstyr til kirkene eller til gudstjenesten, kan tolkes på åndelig vis og oppfylles i oss, dersom vi lever så ulastelig at vi blir verdig til å kalles Guds templer.” *Gammelnorsk homiliebok*, p. 103.
- 9 *Gamal norsk homiliebok*, 1966, p. 97 line 10. See also *Gammelnorsk homiliebok*, 1971, p. 102.
- 10 A similar understanding of the “Stave Church Homily”, based on Walter Ong’s theories of orality can be found in a very interesting article by Stylegard 2004. An interesting article about the homily as a (possible) source for the architectural history of the stave-churches is Jensenius 2001.
- 11 “Den står i en lang tradisjon bakover i historien, og er i tillegg et godt eksempel på hvordan bibelsk litteratur og klassisk litteraturteori eller retorikk på et tidlig stadium i tradisjonen inngikk i en intim forbindelse med hverandre.” Schumacher 2006:156.
- 12 There is an extensive literature available on rhetoric and the history of rhetoric. A standard historical introduction can be found in Vickers 1998. Another fine introduction, somewhat more theoretically oriented, is Barilli 1989 (1983). It must, however, be noted that in much of the introductory literature on this subject, including Vickers, medieval rhetoric is often treated somewhat unjustly.
- 13 Aristotle does not discuss memory or memory techniques in his treatise *Rhetoric*. George Kennedy has remarked that memory was included in the “rhetorical standard” in about the second century. See Kennedy 1999:98.
- 14 In the *Topics* see 163b 28, and *On the Soul* see 427b 19, in 43a 15 this is linked to thinking

- in general where; “the soul never thinks without an image.” Here cited from Aristotle 1995 (1984):685.
- 15 See Aristotle’s *De Memoria et Reminiscencia*, II, 451b 9–15 and II, 452a 12–15. I refer here to Sorabji 1972: 54 & 57 respectively.
 - 16 See Cicero *De oratore*, book II, 86–88, where *ars memoria* is discussed. The reference here is to Cicero 1979 (1942):462–473.
 - 17 Cicero *De oratore*, book II, 86, 354. Cicero 1979, p. 467.
 - 18 *Ad Herennium*, book III, 16, see: [Cicero] *Ad C. Herennium* (Loeb Classical Library). H. Caplan (transl.). London 1954. p. 205.
 - 19 *Ad Herennium*, book III, 16 and 17. 1954, p. 209.
 - 20 *Ad Herennium*, book III, 20. 1954, p. 215.
 - 21 Quintilian *De institutio oratoria*, book XI, 2, 17–22. Quintilian 1979 (1922):221–223.
 - 22 We find the same picture in *The Proverbs* where wisdom is likened to a house, which is filled with riches. *Proverbs* 24:3–4.
 - 23 See Augustine: *Confessions*, book 10, ch. VIII. Quoted here from Augustine 2002 (1955): 178.
 - 24 See Rossi, Paolo 2000 (1983):10–11. Quintilian also belongs to this tradition. See Hajdu 1936:62–63 & 68.
 - 25 All references are to the edition Thomas Aquinas 1981 (1948). See also Thomas Aquinas 1894.
 - 26 Thomas refers to Aristotle’s *De memoria*, II, 452a13. See Sorabji 1972:104–105.
 - 27 On *ars praedicandi* in the Middle Ages, and its different traditions see Murphy 1974:269–355.
 - 28 Caplan 1927:287, & 293.
 - 29 See Schumacher 2006:157.
 - 30 John of Damascus 1963:88.
 - 31 John of Damascus 1997:21.
 - 32 Wilhelm Durandus 1995: *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, book I, ch. 3, 1. See for example: *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, vol. CXL. Turnhout.
 - 33 Durandus: *Rationale*, I, 3, 4. See also Faupel-Dreys 2000:382.
 - 34 Durandus, *Rationale*, I, 3, 4. See also Faupel-Dreys 2000:382–383.
 - 35 Aristotle: *De memoria*. 449a9 and 449b24, Sorabji 1972:47 & 48.
 - 36 Thomas discusses this in *De Veritate*, Q. 10, art. 2 and 3. See for example Thomas Aquinas 1994 (1954):9–17. On this, see also Carruthers 1996:60. Sorabji (1972:18–21) discusses time and memory more generally in Aristotle.
 - 37 Cicero *De oratore*, book II, 87, 357 (1976:469).
 - 38 Ibid.
 - 39 *ST*, II–II, Q. 49, art 1, see also *ST*, I, Q. 1 art. 9.
 - 40 The concept is partly derived from Aristotle, who uses it in a similar way; see Sorabji 1972.
 - 41 See for example *ST* I, Q. 78 art. 4 and *Summa Contra Gentiles* II, ch. 73, 14 and ch. 80/81, 6.
 - 42 See for example, *ST*, Q. 1 art. 9. For a concise but thorough discussion of Thomas’s understanding of the nature of the intellect see Kenny, Anthony 2000: *Aquinas on Mind*. London, ch. 4, pp. 41–57.
 - 43 *ST* I, Q. 78, art. 4.
 - 44 Thomas Aquinas 1949: *De memoria*. Lectio II, 312. Ref: *Aristotelis libros De sensu et sensato, De memoria et reminiscencia commentarium*. Editio: Raymundi M. Spiazzi, O. P.), Turin-Rome, p. 91.
 - 45 Thomas Aquinas: *De memoria*. Lectio II, 311. Spiazzi 1949, p. 91.
 - 46 Thomas Aquinas: *De memoria*. Lectio II, 326. Spiazzi 1949, p. 94.
 - 47 *ST* I, Q. 78, art. 4.
 - 48 With regard to this see for example Carruthers 1996:51–54.
 - 49 See Augustine’s *Confessions*, book 10, ch. 8 (2002:179).
 - 50 It is beyond the scope of this article to go further into this topic. For a thorough discussion of optics in the Middle Ages see Lindberg 1976.
 - 51 In this context, it is interesting that Aristotle defines the *phantasm* as “a kind of *eikon*” in the sense of a copy of an image. See Sorabji 2004:2–5 & 51–52. See also Carruthers 1996, p.16.

- 52 In *ST*, I Q.67, art. 1.
- 53 See for example *ST*, I. Q. 35, art. 2, ad. 3.
- 54 See *ST*, I. Q. 93, art. 6.
- 55 Carruthers 1996:59. See also the discussion in Toulmin 2001:4 & 74.
- 56 The acts from the fourth session of Nicea II, see *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. XIV, p. 539. The passage referred to is from Gregory of Nyssa (1863): *Oratio de deitate filii et soiritus sancti*, Migne PG 46. 571C. See also Mango 2000:34. After this statement Gregor of Nyssa proceeds to describe the image to recreate this sight for the hearer/reader by means of *ekphrasis*. In classical rhetoric and in the rhetoric of Byzantine homilies, *ekphrasis* had an important function exactly because of this awakening of emotions through creating (inner) images in a hearer/reader. See James & Webb 1991.
- 57 See his two letters to bishop Serenus of Marseille from July 599 and October 600. See Chazelle 1990.
- 58 Aristotle *Rhetoric*, book 1, 2, 1355b 29. See for example Aristotle 1995:2155. See also Fafner 1982:32.
- 59 See *ST*, II–II, Q.91.
- 60 See Eco 1988 (1970):130–136.
- 61 Carruthers & Ziolkowski 2004:1–2.
- 62 For an elaboration of this discussion see: Kjeldsen 2002:32–40 and Toulmin 1992.
- 63 The virtue “wisdom” (*prudentia*) is also represented with three faces which are turned in three directions, one towards the past, one towards the present and one towards the future. See Panofsky 1987 (1955). The three “temporalities” of rhetoric are: forensic, judicial speech directed at the past; epideictic, the language of speeches directed at the present; deliberative, advisory speech directed at the future. Any historical narration, like this one, can in the same way also be defined as incorporating three aspects of time.
- 64 Albert the Great: *Liber de memoria et reminiscencia*, tract. II, ch. 1. See Carruthers & Ziolkowski 2004:137.
- 65 See, for example, Kessler 2000:202.
- 66 *Hagioscopic* from Greek *hagios*, ‘holy’ and *skopein*, ‘to see’. The term was originally used for the peep-holes in churches or choir walls which enabled the Holy Altar to be seen from a distance. See for example Tuulse 1966. For a historical definition of visuality and use of the term see, for example Jørgensen 2003.
- 67 See for example *ST* I, Q. 1. art. 9 and *ST* II–II. Q. 173. art. 3.
- 68 Augustine develops a “theory of sight” in his commentary on Genesis (Augustine 1999). See for example *The Works of Saint Augustine. I/13*. New York.
- 69 “den hellige eksponering at påkalde sig den indlevende beskuers visuelle møde – nærmest som i en slags synsformidlet *unio mystica*.” Jørgensen 2004:183.

Founding Narratives and the Representation of Memory in Saga Literature

Pernille Hermann

Medieval Icelandic Literature

The extent to which Icelandic sagas transmit facts from the Nordic past or are fictions that were invented at the time when the sagas were written is an ongoing debate. The sagas themselves do not make it easy for modern researchers, wanting to classify texts as history or as fiction, to find appropriate ways to decide such a question: What, for instance, can we make of the *Íslendinga sögur* (“The sagas of Icelanders”), a kind of literature that gives the impression that it is history, but at the same time, due to its use of literary devices, does not meet our expectations of reliability and therefore cannot be approached using, for instance, source-critical methods?¹ The dichotomy of history (fact) and fiction (invention) does not do full justice to the sagas, being both a complex and ambiguous kind of literature, shaped from the interplay of orally transmitted memories of the Viking Age and the written culture of the Middle Ages. Neither do the concepts of history and fiction capture the meaning of other medieval Icelandic texts that – like the sagas – developed before the occurrence of these modern notions and which antedate the widespread interest in classifying texts according to such criteria.

“Cultural memory” studies are among the new approaches that offer a theoretical framework valuable for dealing with medieval literature.² Cultural memory has been invoked in saga scholarship, especially in the works of Jürg Glauser (2000, 2006, 2007), and it marks one of the new directions in the field.³ When saga literature, and related genres like *þættir* (“tales”), and texts like *Landnámabók* (“The Book of Settlements”) and *Íslendingabók* (“The Book of Icelanders”) are considered within a framework of cultural memory, attempts to classify the texts from a history/fiction opposition yield instead to the multiple ways that groups of people in the Middle Ages remembered their past and to an investigation of what modes were preferred when reference was made to times gone by.

In this article I point to some aspects of cultural memory thought to be illuminative for the sagas. Inspired by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann and his

term “founding narratives” the sagas are investigated as narratives about the past that orientate people in time and space. Assmann has emphasized founding narratives as an aspect of cultural memory (e.g. Assmann 2005: 75–78),⁴ and the term is interesting inasmuch as it reveals the capacity of certain narratives to construct a significant relationship between present and past. More generally, the article relates to discussions about the connection between memory and literature. In various contexts Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning have discussed the different ways that literature and memory are related (Erll & Nünning 2005, 2006:13). It is the relation that Erll and Nünning define as “memory in literature” that is relevant here, having a focus on literary representation of memory.⁵ Thus, the article homes in on the subtle ways in which memories are represented in saga literature.

Cultural memory is concerned not primarily with the memory of an individual, but with memories shared by groups of people, i.e., with the social frameworks of memory (Halbwachs 1992). Memory communities can be families, people inhabiting the same area, nations and so on. It is when memory takes external form, for example, as narratives, images or performances, that memories and versions of the past can be shared, and therefore media are crucial for the form cultural memory takes. Writing was a relatively new medium when the sagas were composed, providing medieval Icelanders with new possible ways to access the past.⁶ During the High and Late Middle Ages, the saga genre, itself being a medium, took the position as one of the authoritative written genres for mediating and representing the memories of the Icelandic past. The medium of writing made it possible to a higher degree than before to preserve memories of the past. Importantly, however, the sagas were not merely storehouses of memories neutrally keeping memories for posterity. They had a mediating function as well, working as a written space where memories, apart from taking permanent form, were exposed or sidelined, and organized by the use of literary patterns and techniques. In actual fact, the writing of and transmission of saga literature ran parallel with the construction of an Icelandic history, an argument that is highly relevant for any approach to the sagas and the attempts to understand the image of the past that these texts offer. This implies the notion of an essentially literary saga world and the conviction that history rests on narration and literary representation. In relation to such a merger between literature and history Preben Meulengracht Sørensen writes (2000: 28): “It was in the project of literature that the rupture of the past gained its historical meaning ... Seen as a whole, it [Icelandic literature] is a textual recreation of times past.” Key then for any debate about the sagas and the picture of the past they offer are the literary aspects of historical texts. Strictly speaking, the sagas and the texts related to them are outstanding examples of how, in medieval Iceland, history was transmitted in literary form.

It is not my intention in the present paper to discuss who was actually able

to write or to deal with issues such as the social patronage of literary production, but more to discuss the principle of how sagas represent memories and how they participate in the construction of Icelandic cultural memory. I will mention, though, that, as they are transmitted to us, the sagas and, for instance, *Landnámabók*, do reserve a special position for certain Icelandic families and people inhabiting certain areas of Iceland, which strongly indicates that prominent chieftains and families were able to influence, even to direct, saga production; thus the designs, selections and denials of such groups are responsible for the memories and the versions of the past displayed in the sagas.⁷

Memory as Representation

In contrast to empirically orientated studies, studies that relate to cultural memory are not concerned with actual memories or actual events, but with “memory as representation” and “representations of memory” (Saunders 2008:330). They take notice of the processes by which remembered events and experiences are transmitted over time and how they are transferred to representations, i.e., how they are objectified and given a socially graspable form. This focus on the representational dimension of memory goes hand in hand with acceptance of the fact that a fictional tendency is inherent to memorial processes, and that actual memories are transformed to something else due to their objectification and externalization. Mieke Bal (1999) connects the fictional dimension of memory with selectivity and an ongoing interplay of remembering and forgetting: “Because memory is made up of socially constituted forms, narratives, and relations, but also amenable to individual acts of intervention in it, memory is always open to social revision and manipulation. This makes it an instance of fiction rather than imprint, often of social forgetting rather than remembering” (as quoted in Erll & Nünning 2005:262). Ann Rigney has also emphasized the artificial aspect of cultural memory. In affirming the central role of representations she has written that cultural memory is actually “the product of representations and not of direct experiences” (Rigney 2005:15). Needless to say, despite its inherent fictional dimension cultural memory is equally important for any group that invokes the past for orientation and for definition of self as are empirically inclined approaches, which prefer documentation and factuality.

Cultural memory relates to the engagement with the past in the present, not with the past as such. However, cultural memory is not tied up in a present-past nexus; it relates to the future as well, as the representations created in the present can work as guiding lines for future action. Regarding the sagas, Preben Meulengracht Sørensen (1993b) and Vésteinn Ólason (1998), to mention two examples among those saga scholars who have ar-

gued that the picture of the past offered in saga literature, in spite of taking on a dialogue with the past, must to a great extent be understood in light of ideas and memories existing in the thirteenth century, when the first sagas were written. Thus, the past dealt with in the *Íslendinga sögur*, the so-called saga age, which is the period following the settlement of the country (late ninth century) until approximately the time of the conversion to Christianity (1000), is seen through an interpretative web indebted to contemporary experiences and current ideologies. For instance, ideologically, Christianity and the learned knowledge implied in a Christian culture coloured the literary representation of the memories of the pre-Christian past. Politically, the power struggles among Icelandic chieftains and the emigrant society's formal dependency on Norway (1262–64), which is often emphasized, would have influenced the literary "saga world" as well. With reference to this political change and the Icelanders' loss of political independence, Thomas Fechner-Smarsly has proposed understanding the sagas and their versions of the past based on notions related to concepts of "crisis literature". (Fechner-Smarsly 1996). Furthermore, it is not uncommon to believe that narratives about a Golden Age from the past were a preferred form in medieval Iceland, when attempts were made to comprehend the past, i.e. the settlement period and the time before the dependency on Norway, in a meaningful way. When understanding the sagas as narratives of a Golden Age the concept of nostalgia, the longing for a lost world, takes on added relevance. By homing in on the feelings of the recipients, the sagas can then be investigated as media capable of making the otherwise lost past, represented in literary form, accessible to people in the Middle Ages, a type of literature that established a sense of closeness to a lost past that was otherwise inaccessible.

It is difficult to define with precision which present is constitutive for the memories represented in the sagas: not least since the dating of manuscript-based texts like the sagas is a major challenge. Due to their means of transmission, the sagas were open to elaboration and appropriation, subject to what Paul Zumthor calls *mouvance*, referring to the process by which a work is transferred from one textual representation to another. Consequently scholars such as Stefanie Würth (1999) and Jürg Glauser (2000) have emphasized the necessity of including not only the time of initial writing of the sagas but also the time when sagas were transmitted in manuscripts. The focus of handwritten texts is less on textual integrity than on adjustment, thus making manuscript transmission itself, and its occupation at various times and under different circumstances with a text, a relevant object for the investigation of cultural memory.

Before I elaborate on the term "founding narratives" an example should be given of the interpretative web that participates in the shaping of the memories. In representing the remembered past the sagas may use schemata

that organize how the past is recounted. Schemata are “associated with the tendency to represent – and sometimes remember – a given event or person in terms of another” (Burke 1997:49).⁸ One event that is dealt with in quite a few of the *Íslendinga sögur*, as well as in *Landnámabók* and *Íslendingabók*, is the *landnám*, i.e., the settlement of Iceland. Memories of the settlement, an event which according to the literature is anchored specifically in the late ninth century at the time when Haraldr hárfagri was king of Norway, was transmitted orally for centuries, and the sagas without doubt draw upon such orally transmitted memories. The *Íslendinga sögur* treat the settlement in a variety of ways (Nordal 2008).⁹ Some of them exclude or sideline this aspect of the past, while others foreground the settlement in thoroughly recounting individual settlements. When representing the settlement, for instance, *Egils saga* re-enacts a scheme of exodus-immigration-settlement, placing the settlers in a position between old land and new land, that is, in a liminal situation comprising a tripartite transition. For that the narrative of the Exodus of the Israelites and their immigration over sea (Assmann 2005: 17), whether consciously or not, may have served as a model for the saga’s account of Norwegian chieftains who fled Norway and established a colony in Iceland (see also Byock 2004). Furthermore, *Egils saga*’s way of remembering the settlement gives substance to a settlement paradigm that exposes a close, but complicated, connection between Iceland (new country) and Norway (old country), and it underlines how the representation of past, e.g., the settlement, is indebted to a colonial discourse. That representation of memory involves the merging of the past with contemporary patterns is a feature generally recognized as crucial for memorial processes (Burke 1997: 51). Of course, the sagas’ representation of memory relies on more than just biblical prototypes; however, employing re-enactment of a biblical model reminds us of the fact that memories of the pagan past are assimilated with Christian notions, existing at the time when the sagas were written and transmitted. To stress such patterns is one way of demonstrating how in the representations, i.e., the sagas, the settlement is emplotted in a specific way, and it shows how an essentially historical event, the settlement, is indebted to narrative patterns.

Founding Narratives

Assmann defines “founding narratives” (*fundierende Geschichten*) as “myths”, that is, narratives about the past that offer orientation in people’s lives and which have normative and formative power.¹⁰ Furthermore, such narratives respond to a “higher order” (*höhere Ordnung*), which points to their symbolic meaning. The aspect of orientation, as well as the normative and the formative elements, are recognized as basic components of myths – when myth is defined broadly – inasmuch as they relate to questions like

“how did we come here?”, “what happened in the beginning?”, “who are we?”, and “how should we behave?” A founding narrative, i.e., a myth, according to Assmann, transcends the common dichotomy between fiction and history, thus, both narratives about invented and real events can qualify as myths. To use again sagas dealing with the settlement as an example: Concerning the memory of the settlement, the sagas constitute “historical” myths, and they articulate a change from “history” to “myth” that occurs when experience (the factual event) turns into a represented past (cultural memory). Such transition implies that the past is not merely emplotted but also imbued with symbolic meaning, and not simply an entity to be scrutinized for facts.

As in the case with other definitions of myth, so also Assmann’s points to the fact that a myth involves a certain notion of the past, namely that the past is an entity that throws light on present and future.¹¹ It implies that later times can be explained with reference to the past, and that the past is an entity working as an argument for present and future conditions. Such narratives, in seeing the past as an explanation for the present, create a sense of cohesion, in guaranteeing that the past is an argument for present conditions.

Pierre Nora’s notion of memory (Nora 1989) is a useful additional frame for articulating the linking tendency inherent in the sagas, i.e. their capacity to connect past and present, and for the formulation of the mythic character of saga literature. Intrinsic to Nora’s view is the idea that memory works in a temporal continuum, in which the present is an extension of the past and the future is an extension of the present. According to his conception, one defining characteristic of memory, something that Nora contrasts with history, is that memory supports continuity between past and present; it does not illuminate discontinuity, but it relates to the past in terms of a then-and-now restoration. So, in spite of possible historical changes, memory principally supports continuity. Nora’s distinction between memory and history implies a development from memory (“real memory”) to history (“memory informed by history”). It would be fruitful, however, to reconsider this way of thinking of memory and history, and to consider these concepts synchronically, as parallel ways for societies to approach the past, and thereby recognize that societies refer to the past in manifold ways.¹²

Mythic narratives have two functions. The first Assmann describes as a “founding function” (*fundierend*), and it sets forth the present in light of a past that is meaningful, necessary, unchangeable and divinely sanctioned.¹³ Various examples can be given of the “founding function” of the sagas. Once again, accounts of the settlement can serve as an example: In describing what happened when the “world”, understood locally, came into existence, accounts about individual settlements in various districts of Iceland are bound up with the memory of origin and the great people of the past to whom people of the Middle Ages refer when they define their particularity.

Settlements could invoke supernatural intervention and symbolic-ritualistic action, aspects that indicate that this event in the past fulfilled a higher meaning in the sense of being divinely sanctioned. For instance, in *Vatnsdæla saga* Ingimundr's settlement in Vatnsdalr is connected to fate and supernatural intervention, apparently directed by the god Freyr. The necessity of this settlement and its predestination is underlined by the circumstance that Ingimundr more than once rejects the idea of leaving Norway and going to Iceland: "That is very well, seeing that I have made up my mind never to go to that place, and I won't be a successful merchant if I sell my many fine ancestral lands and head off to that wilderness" (Wawn 1997:14). *Petta er af því vel sagt, at þat hefi ek einhugsat, at koma aldri í þann stað, ok eigi verð ek þá góðr kaupmaðr, ef ek sel áttjarðir mínar margar ok góðar, en fara í eyðibygðir þær* (Jónsson 1936:29). In spite of Ingimundr's resistance, fate and divine powers are conclusive, pointing to the fact that this settlement is not a result of human will, nor is it born of coincidence, but has been brought about by being divinely sanctioned.¹⁴

Furthermore, that the past is meaningful in the sense of being a reference point from which the present could gain its quality, finds one of its most unambiguous expressions in genealogies, one of the dominant linking principles in the sagas for connecting present and past (Glauser 2000). Genealogies establish bonds between generations, and people of later times are sometimes linked with settlers. For instance, *Laxdæla saga* reports with reference to name-given settlers that "The people of Eyjafjord trace their descent from Helgi and Thorunn" (Kunz 2000:278). *Frá þeim Helga ok Þórunni er komit Eyfirðingakyn* (Sveinsson 1934:6). In using genealogies as a tool for linking present and past, not merely to settlers, but to people of earlier times as well, the sagas confirm cultural stability and permanence: they do not stress contrasts between present and various fixed points in the past, but create continuity between "then" and "now".¹⁵ Some sagas, such as *Egils saga*, mentioned above, trace Icelanders back to Norwegian forefathers; in emphasizing a Norwegian pre-history they strengthen the close relation between Iceland (colony) and Norway (motherland).

The second function of mythic narratives Assmann defines as "contra-present" (*kontra-präsentisch*). This function poses another light on the present, namely that present time differs from past times; it emphasizes the disappeared and the suppressed, and it brings about awareness of differences between "then" and "now".¹⁶ This article focus mostly on the founding function of the sagas, but there is no doubt that this second function is relevant as well. The fact that the sagas imply dissociation with certain aspects of the past underlines the fact that the sagas were written and transmitted by people aware of belonging to a period that in various ways had removed itself from earlier periods.

The Staging of a Founding Function

But how, more specifically, can we identify the sagas as “founding narratives”, i.e., myths? To answer that question I will analyse one aspect of the sagas concerned with mediation of narration and space, namely now/then relations that are incorporated in the narrative design.

Now/then relations create distinct time levels in the narratives, which, as in the case with genealogies, represent a device capable of constructing a significant connection between present and past. These relations illustrate how the founding function is not merely related to the circumstance that the texts are concerned with events in the past, for instance, the settlement (the narrated past), but also with attempts to link this event with later times (the narrated present). Now/then relations are scattered around in sagas and other texts. The *Sturlubók* redaction of *Landnámabók* will serve as the first example. It says about the first permanent settler, Ingólfr Arnarson, the founding father of Iceland, that: “He made his home at the spot where his high-seat pillars had been washed ashore and lived at Reykjavík. The high-seat pillars can still be seen in the hall there” (Pálsson & Edwards 2006:21). ... *hann tók sér bústað þar sem ǫndvegissúlur hans höfðu á land komit; hann bjó í Reykjarvík; þar eru enn ǫndugissúlur þær í eldhúsi* (Benediktsson 1968:45). Now/then relations also emerge in this text’s references to place-names. The first place that Ingólfr came to was named after him: “Nowadays the place where he landed is called Ingólfrhofdi” (Pálsson & Edwards 2006:20). *Ingólfr tók þar land, er nú heitir Ingólfrshöfði* (Benediktsson 1968:42). References of this sort, to material remains of the settlement in the Icelandic landscape (the high-seat pillars) and to cultural remains (place-names) still existing at the time of narration, demonstrate the existence of disparate time layers, the “now” (when the narrative is told) and the “then” (when the events happened).

Now/then relations are legion in the *Íslendinga sögur*. One case in point is *Vatnsdæla saga*, which refers to place-names that are explained from the events that occurred when Ingimundr settled in Vatnsdalr. The saga says: “They stayed there for a second winter and built themselves a hall which is now called Ingimundarhol (Ingimund’s hill)” (Wawn 1997:19). *Þeir váru þar vetr annan ok gerðu sér þar skála, er nú heitir Ingimundarhóll* (Sveinsson 1938:40). And likewise: “That same autumn some sheep went astray and were found the following spring in the woods – this place is now called Saudadal (Sheep Valley)” (Wawn 1997:20). *Þat sama haust hurfu frá honum sauðir ok fundusk um várit í skógum; þar heitir nú Sauðadalr* (Sveinsson 1938:42). Thus, cultural monuments (the buildings) and natural features (the woods), given names from the time when this region in Iceland was first settled, reveal the time-layers as well.

Also, as when *Landnámabók* mentions Ingólfr’s high-seat pillars, the sagas often refer to physical remains from the past. For instance, a passage in

Egils saga, recording one of the great and successful settlements, refers to a boulder that Skalla-Grímr, famous for his smith-craft, brought from the sea: “The boulder still lies there with a pile of slag alongside it, and the hammer-marks can be seen on the top. It has been polished by the waves and there is no other stone there like it. Four men nowadays could not lift it” (Pálsson & Edwards 1974:78). *Liggr sá steinn þar enn ok mikit sindr hjá, ok sér þat á steininum, at hann er barðr ofan ok þat er brimsorfit grjót ok ekki því grjóti glíkt qðru, er þar er, ok munu nú ekki meira hefja fjórir menn* (Nordal 1933:79). This example not only exemplifies the time layers (that the stone can still be seen), it also emphasizes the greatness of the people of the past (that people nowadays cannot lift it). The latter is further supported when it is said about Skalla-Grímr and the massive boulder: “Then he stepped overboard, dived down into the sea and came up with a boulder which he loaded on to the ship” (Pálsson & Edwards 1974:78) ... *lét þá hlaupa niðr stjóra fyrir stafn á skipinu* (Nordal 1933:78). Skalla-Grímr stands out as extraordinary, revealing how people acting in the beginning of time when the world came into being were outstanding individuals resembling giants. With reference to the use of schemata mentioned earlier for the representation of events and individuals, the likeness of Skalla-Grímr to giants re-enacts the Biblical creation story, noting that in the beginning of time giants lived on earth (Genesis 6:4). This similarity indicates not primarily direct textual loans, but, like the exodus-immigration-settlement scheme, it shows how available models participated in the literary representation of the past. Also, it points to the circumstance that specific events (e.g. the settlement) and individuals (e.g. Skalla-Grímr) were “mythogenic” (Burke 1997), in the sense of attracting schemes and themes that added to them a symbolic meaning.

Now/then relations, of which only a few examples are given here, are essential for the staging of a founding function. They establish a communication situation, a framework within the narratives, so to speak. This framework involves a narrator, omniscient in knowing about past and present, standing at a considerable distance from the events, who addresses an audience that is implied in the narratives, in the role of readers or listeners, but that is not part of the plot or involved in the events in the past. This framework creates a position from which it is possible to look back at the past. The message that the narrator communicates is that cultural remains of the settlement are still manifest and still accessible. In assuring that the past is neither lost nor contradicting the present, this narrative framework substantiates the notion inherent to Assmann’s concept of myth, that the past is an entity that explains the present. Likewise, in linking the time of narration with the narrated past, the texts display a founding function inasmuch as they construct a situation characterized by unchangeability and cultural stability.

With reference to the orality/literacy bipolarity of the sagas, the communication situation constructed in the narratives, strictly speaking, involves a writer who, when writing the text, was detached from the audience and isolated from the reception of the text, i.e. someone who is not addressing real living people, but an audience that is detached from the real present when the narrative is being written. The pronounced difference between oral and written art forms, marked respectively by the immediate presence of an audience and the absence of such, is put in the foreground by Walter Ong, who argues that spatial and temporal distance between writer and audience imply that the writer must “give body to the audience for whom he writes” (Ong 1977:57). According to Ong such a fictionalizing of the audience is a consequence of the medium of writing and it relates to a medial situation where the narrative is not created contemporary with the communication situation, having both narrator and audience as simultaneous participants.¹⁷

As the examples show, the now/then relations engage space in the mediation of the past. Birgit Neumann writes about literary representation of space, that this is a way through which literature may “conjure up innumerable echoes and undertones of a community’s past. Hence, space serves to mediate past events, underlining the constant, physical presence of the multilayered cultural past, which is even inscribed in the landscape and in the architecture” (Neumann 2008:340). Along these lines and concerning the sagas, Jürg Glauser has emphasized the relationship between landscape and memory, and turned our attention to the function of landscape as a guarantee of memory; Glauser writes that “in saga literature it is first and foremost the landscape and the events localised in it which play the decisive role as guarantors of memory” (Glauser 2007:20).

Detailed topography and numerous place-names are among the chief characteristics of both the *Íslendinga sögur* and *Landnámabók*; which, as indicated above, are very often bound up with settlers or settlement events. Through engagement with topography this specific event in the past, marking the origin of a new social space, is exposed as significant. In addition to the examples above, for instance, *Laxdæla saga*’s settlement narrative connects Icelandic topography with the settlement: “Following this Bjorn took all the land between the Stafa river and Hraunsfjord and made his home at the place which has since been called Bjarnahofn (Bjorn’s Harbour)” (Kunz 2000:277). *Síðan tók Björn sér þar land allt á millum Stafár ok Hraunfjarðar ok bjó þar, er síðan heitir í Bjarnarhofn* (Sveinsson 1934:6). This passage too establishes cultural stability, in emphasizing how things have been since the settlement. Obviously, apart from securing the continued existence of the past, passages like this one are indebted to a colonial discourse, as name-giving is essential for the integration of people with new land. But at the same time topography and place-names are a conspicuous way to recall “innumerable echoes” of the past, i.e. the origin of communi-

ties in various areas in Iceland. The detailed topography of the sagas brings about a literary mapping, which inscribes the settlement as a figure in the Icelandic landscape. Other figures in the landscape could be pointed at too, but it seems as if the figure exposing the settlement is comparatively dominant. This mapping imposes a superstructure of meaning on the landscape which is crucial for the conception of “Iceland” and its various localities.

Interpreting Contrasts

Thus far I have emphasized now/then relations that substantiate the “founding function” of the sagas, and examples have been given of how this kind of relations construct a notion of cultural stability and support a continuity between the present (time of narration) and the past (the narrated past).¹⁸ But next to those now/then relations that construct continuity, others underline contrast and discontinuity. For instance, a passage in *Laxdæla saga* tells how: “In those days the valley was thickly wooded” (Kunz 2000:379). *Skógr þykkir var í dalnum í þann tíð* (Sveinsson 1934:165). This presupposes that the landscape has changed between “then” and “now”. Another passage in the same saga refers to customs performed in the past that are left at the time of narration: “Afterwards, the brothers discussed among themselves the holding of a memorial feast, a custom which had become fashionable at that time” (Kunz 2000:319). *En er því var lokit, þá taka þeir bræðr tal um þat, at þeir muni efna til erfis eptir fjoður sinn, því at þat var þá tízka í þat mund* (Sveinsson 1934:73). The latter example tells of burial customs that are left at the time of narration. In fact, the texts include in their narrative design both now/then relations that construct continuity and relations that construct a contrast between narrated present and narrated past; *Eyrbyggja saga* is another example of a saga that includes a number of aspects of the past that are left at the time of narration. Such ambiguity regarding the past reveals that the texts also respond to the second functional aspect of mythic narratives mentioned by Assmann, and in doing so they articulate contrasts between present and past. The co-existence of these two functional aspects and their subtle interplay in the texts are not elements of textual inconsistencies. Rather, when they at times point to parts of the past that have changed or are lost, the texts neatly relativize the memories of the past with an eye to present needs. Furthermore, it becomes clear that distancing to aspects of the past is presupposed in the narratives.

Likewise, the texts may provide significant aspects of the past with an overlay of meaning and actuality, fitting new ideological circumstances. A case in point is *Egils saga*’s account of the finding of what people “now” consider to be Egill’s bones. “Under the altar some human bones were found, much bigger than ordinary human bones, and people are confident that these were Egill’s because of the stories told by old men” (Pálsson &

Edwards 1974:238). *En undir altarisstaðnum, þá fundusk mannabein; þau váru miklu meiri en annarra manna bein. Þykkjask menn þat vita af sögn gamalla manna, at mundi verit hafa bein Egils* (Nordal 1933:298–299). It is implied that the bones had once been moved from the heathen burial mound, where Egill was first buried, to the Mosfell churchyard. In this instance the material objects that demonstrate the continuation of the past in the present are human bones, the bodily remains of Egill Skallagrímsson. The saga tells that “Skapti Thorarinsson the Priest, a man of great intelligence, was there at the time. He picked up Egil’s skull and placed it at the fence of the churchyard” (Pálsson & Edwards 1974:238). *Þar var þá Skapti prestur Þórarinsson, vitr maður; hann tók upp hausinn Egils ok setti á kirkjugarðinn* (Nordal 1933:299). Thus, through a *translatio*, the skull is transferred into a relic and the heathen forefather into a saint-like figure. This transfer reveals the saga’s concern for the conversion theme, and an obvious Christian discourse is at stake. But it also reveals anxiety about losing the past as a point of orientation and is eager to keep in memory even those aspects of the past that principally imply an awareness of difference. The transfer of Egill’s bones and the installation of the skull on the churchyard fence create continuity between contrasting ideologies and between present and past; and the skull, this material fragmentary evidence of the past, connotes that this forefather and the achievements of his family are not forgotten, but continue to be significant, achieving meaning from the new context that is relevant at the time of narration.

Orientation and Narration

Mythic narratives provide orientation to people and have normative and formative power. This makes it relevant also to ask who is actually oriented in the sagas. To answer this I will refer again to the narrative instance, knowing about present and past, as this aspect of narration is crucial for the capacity of the sagas to offer orientation. This narrator addresses an audience, who, as mentioned, is not involved in the events in the past, but is at a distance from the past. For this audience the past serves as a reference point for orientation, materializing itself physically and culturally as it does in their immediate surroundings. The material remains stressed by the narrator bring about a message of cultural persistence; what was constituted and achieved in the beginning of times, when this country was settled, still exists and still has an impact.

The narrator, omniscient in the sense of knowing of past and present, and the time layer constituting the narrated present, relates to orientation, among other things in setting forth the settlement as a “founding event”. But the sagas are manifold and ambiguous, and outside this discourse at times the sagas imply disorientation rather than orientation. Even if the founding quality

of the settlement is very often stressed, this event in the past does not unambiguously have to do with orientation. For instance, a passage in *Grettis saga* contradicts the narrator's discourse, and does not cast the settlement simply as a founding event. Quite to the contrary, it touches on unsuccessful settlements and disintegration between individuals and the new land. Önuendr, coming to Iceland late in the settlement period, is not orientated in the first place. In a verse, he complains about having been forced to leave a rich homestead in Norway for the bare land of Iceland: "Now I've fled my estates – my friends, and my family – but the worst of it is, I've bartered – my grainfields for icy Kaldbak" (Fox & Pálsson 2005:15). In this case, the point of focalization rests in direct speech and is staged as the point of view of a settler, a narrative instance close to the event, and this other voice gives a glimpse of another recollection, indicating that the settlement did not always offer orientation to those who experienced it.¹⁹ The examples chosen here indicate a tendency in the sagas, that orientation is conspicuously related to the time level constituting the "narrated present", and orientation is constructed at a distance, through narration and organization, rather than derived directly from "narrated experience". Further studies along such lines could elucidate the fundamentally uncertain status of the sagas' founding impulses, revealing that this function is not obvious and not omnipresent, but is constructed through literary devices, e.g., through the existence and dominance of specific narrative instances.

Memory and Literature

When sagas are understood from the perspective of cultural memory, it is assumed that we do not have access to actual memories or unmediated memories, and consequently attention is turned to memory as representation and representations of memory. When investigating the sagas as representation of memories, one target of the analysis is to elucidate how memories are constructed through literary mediation, bearing on the plasticity and artificiality of memories.

Even if the sagas and their related genres are considered as mythic narratives, imbuing the past with a symbolic meaning, rather than transmitting experiences as they were, this does not at the same time imply that sagas are not in dialogue with a text-external reality. Medieval Icelandic literature reflects the society that produced it, and – with reference to Paul Ricoeur's theories about the dynamic interrelatedness of literature and reality – in turn the sagas, *Landnámabók* and other similar texts, influenced this society as well. To understand literature from what Ricoeur defines as the "circle of mimesis" involves notification of, firstly, "pre-figuration" of a text-external reality, secondly, "configuration" through the medium of fiction, and finally "re-figuration" by readers and recipients (Ricoeur 1990; Nünning 2005;

Neumann 2008). Among saga scholars Vésteinn Ólason indirectly seems to be a representative of a similar point of view, when he states about the sagas that: “Narrative conventions must certainly be taken into account when we consider our texts, medieval sagas, and yet the world they describe must also stand in some relation to lived extra-textual experience, the experience of the sagaman and his audience, the writer and his audience” (Ólason 2007: 28).

Having the premise that literature in subtle ways is in dialogue with a text-external reality makes even a literary analysis of representations of memory relevant for the understanding of the society that the literature is part of. That assumption is expressed by Birgit Neumann as follows: “If one starts from the premise that literature is not a closed system, but part of the principal meaning-making processes of a culture, interacting with other symbol systems, then an analysis of literary stagings of memory can provide information about a culture’s predominant memorial concepts” (Neumann 2008:335).²⁰ We may assume that medieval literature expresses processes of memory as these took shape in the complex ideological and political contexts where the literature was initially written and afterwards transmitted. With reference to the considerations of the mythic character of this literature and the staging of a founding function, the predominant “memorial concepts” among groups of people in medieval Iceland would have included *stability* and *continuity*, concepts that assured that the memory of the past, i.e. the origin of a new social space and of new communities inhabiting this space, provided orientation for people of later times. More precisely, the now/then relations focused on in this essay, these literary constructions, constitutive for the founding narratives, support the notion that concepts like stability and continuity were among the guiding principles for the conception of the past among groups of people in the High and Late Middle Ages. The narrative framework constituted by the now/then relations reveals awareness of recipients. In speaking to someone, the sagas bring about a communication situation which neatly mediates its message, the founding quality of the past, and which creates a vision of continuity between present and past, constructed in literature, for the real-life audience, i.e. readers and most likely very often listeners, to relate itself to. Through such particularities of literary mediation these narratives, when taking part in the social distribution of meaning in the Middle Ages, could capture a position of immense importance for the formation of Icelandic cultural memory. But the sagas reveal that cultural memory construction proves ambiguous. The representation of memories involves exclusion and inclusion (i.e. not all sagas include settlement accounts), re-enacted schemes partake in the organization of the past; and multiple narrative instances are inherent to the sagas, potentially showing glimpses of competing memories (i.e. not all narrative instances consider the settlement as a “founding event”). Aspects of cultural

memory studies, as I hope to have illustrated in a very restricted way in this article, may provide a theoretical background for understanding the sagas, not as a literature that documents facts, nor as pure inventions, but as founding narratives, a special type of myth, that among their many other qualities have the capacity to offer orientation by invoking a sense of continuity and cultural stability.

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¹ In a summary of the problems of how to read the *Íslendinga sögur*, these hybrids of history and fiction, Preben Meulengracht Sørensen writes that “The debate about how the texts should be read has exhausted itself without any new consensus having emerged” (1993a:148–55). New trends in saga scholarship are hinted at, e.g. in Jochens 1992; Würth 1999; Glauser 2007.

² Here the term “cultural memory studies” is used in a general sense covering multiple studies that deal with societies remembrance of the past. For a state-of-the-art survey of these studies, see Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning’s cultural memory handbook (2008). In the preface to this book, Astrid Erll writes: “This handbook is based on a broad understanding of cultural memory, suggesting as a provisional definition ‘the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts’.” (Erll 2008:2).

³ See also, e.g., Fechner-Smarsly 1996; Zilmer 2008; Hermann 2009. For studies that invoke related notions of memory, such as “social memory”, see e.g. Byock 2005 and Vohra 2008. See also Sigurðsson 2004 and 2007.

⁴ For Assmann’s definition of cultural memory, see e.g. Assmann 2006a & 2008.

⁵ In clarifying how literature and memory are related Erll and Nünning also point to “the memory of literature” and “literature as a medium of memory”, see Erll & Nünning 2005 and 2006:13

⁶ Exactly how the extant written sagas relate to oral art forms is indeed a complicated question. The debate about saga origin is closely interwoven with the “book prose/free prose” controversies which, apart from the debate about orality and writing, also include discussions of historicity and inventiveness. On this controversy, cf. Mitchell 1991:1–6 and Sigurðsson 2007:17–21. It is outside the scope of this article to go further into this discussion. However, tendencies in saga studies show that the time is ripe for serious reconsideration of saga origin and a re-evaluation of the book prose/free prose positions (e.g. Mitchell 2001; Sigurðsson 2007). The search for authorship and clarification of textual loans has been dominant, but the interest in the oral background of the sagas is growing. For studies that, in different ways, deal with sagas and orality, see, for instance,

Andersson 1967, 2002, 2008; Clover 1984; Byock 1984; Mitchell 2001; Danielsson 2002; Sigurðsson 2004, 2007, 2008.

⁷ For discussions of the chieftains in charge of the production of literature see, e.g. Lönnroth 1974, 1976, 1991; Clunies Ross 1998:97–121; Pálsson & Edwards 2006:1–13; Sveinsson 1958; Nordal 2008.

⁸ What is especially relevant to emphasize in this connection is Burke's recognition that we only have access to the past through the representations of cultures (Burke 1997).

⁹ Seventeen of the *Íslendingasögur* start with accounts of the settlement. For a list of these sagas and for comments on the different ways the sagas approach the settlement, see Nordal 2008.

¹⁰ "Mythos ist eine Geschichte, die man sich erzählt, um sich über sich selbst und die Welt zu orientieren, eine Wahrheit höherer Ordnung, die nicht einfach nur stimmt, sondern darüber hinaus auch noch normative Ansprüche stellt und formative Kraft besitzt" (Assmann 2005:76).

¹¹ "Mythos ist der (vorzugsweise narrative) Bezug auf die Vergangenheit, der von dort Licht auf die Gegenwart und Zukunft fallen läßt" (Assmann 2005:78).

¹² For a comment on the often mentioned opposition between "history" and "memory" and the mentioning of different and coexisting modes of remembering, see Erll 2008:7.

¹³ "Sie stellt Gegenwärtiges in das Licht einer Geschichte, die es sinnvoll, gottgewollt, notwendig und unabänderlich erscheinen läßt" (Assmann 2005:79).

¹⁴ For other examples indicating that the settlement fulfilled a higher meaning and was divinely sanctioned, see, e.g., settlement descriptions in *Landnámabók*, *Egils saga*, *Laxdæla saga* and (less obviously) *Hrafnkels saga*. For discussions of a "paradigmatic" settlement, also invoking symbolic-ritualistic action, see, e.g., Meulengracht Sørensen 1974 and Clunies Ross 1997, 1998a and 1998b.

¹⁵ Genealogies, serving as a dominant structural principle in the sagas (Clunies Ross 1993 and 1998:76–96), likewise link individuals with heroes of the pre-history, creating this way a continuity between Icelandic "history" and its "pre-history" (Mitchell 1991:122–126).

¹⁶ "Von diesen Erzählungen her fällt ein ganz anderes Licht auf die Gegenwart: Es hebt das Fehlende, Verschwundene, Verlorene, an den Rand Gedrängte hervor und macht den Bruch bewußt zwischen 'einst' und 'jetzt'" (Assmann 2005:79).

¹⁷ About written textuality and the implications of writing for the distancing between narrator and audience, see Ong 1977:53–81 and 1999:101–103.

¹⁸ For a treatment that focuses on "now" and "then" markers in sagas that underline difference and contrast, see Sveinsson 1958:50–72. That treatment investigates criteria for dating sagas and has an approach that centres around the historicity of the sagas, thus the perspective differs from the present literary analysis.

¹⁹ In an article about the Exodus narrative of ancient Israel, Laura Feldt elaborates on Assmann's argument that this narrative is simply the "founding narrative" for Israel. Feldt's inspiring analysis includes layers of narration and shifts in focalization that she relates to "orientation" and "disorientation" (Feldt 2006).

²⁰ Concerning the relationship between memory and literature called "memory in literature" – along similar lines as Neumann – Erll and Nünning write that: "it is based first of all on the assumption that literature exists in a relationship to contemporary discourses of memory and illustrates functions, processes and problems of memory in the medium of fiction through aesthetic forms" (2006:13).

Timing Memories, Spacing Time

The Art of Memory and the Denial of Coevalness in Vico's *Scienza Nuova*

John Ødemark

“We owe to Halbwachs the bold intellectual decision to attribute memory to a collective entity, which he names a group or society,” writes Paul Ricoeur (2004:120). In this article, I argue that the debt goes further back. I maintain that a concept of “collective memory”; in the sense of memory attributed to a collective entity distinguished from other collectives, was at work at least as early as the eighteenth century, in a discourse where the history of gentile nations claiming to preserve memories and traditions from the time before the flood was at stake. It is my aim to demonstrate this by examining the work of the Neapolitan philosopher and teacher of rhetoric, Giambattista Vico. I shall in particular be concerned with his construal of the “first age” of the history of “gentile nations” like the Egyptians, Chinese and Mexicans, and the way a concept of “memory” and the adjacent “*musaeum*”, attributed to a collective entity, a class of nations at a particular stage in their history, were involved in this.¹

In constructing this extended genealogy of collective memory, I am influenced by the work of Johannes Fabian. Ricoeur’s observation concerning the history of the concept of “collective memory” applies to the level of the object under investigation and the discovery of a new object of study. Fabian, on the other hand, posits that anthropology, one of the disciplines devoted to the study of such an object (called “culture”), was deeply, albeit unconsciously, influenced by the art of memory from the very beginning. Fabian, then, is not concerned with the attribution of memory to the object under investigation. Rather, his focus is how the anthropologist’s own culture and text has been formed by a forgotten mnemonic heritage. In *Time and the Other*, now a canonical work in the critique of anthropology,² Fabian (an anthropologist himself) argued that a spatial and visual rhetoric developed from the *ars memoria* still governed the manner in which anthropology represented others. A broader historical understanding of anthropological representation was crucial, he asserted, due to the discipline’s role as

a custodian of cultural borders. And a rethinking of the history of the anthropological arts of boundary maintenance would imply a reconsideration of how it was influenced by ancient mnemonics:

It is all the more urgent to remedy that situation, because, among the sciences that share the common sources in the rhetoric of images and *topoi* and which employ pedagogical methods of visualizing knowledge, anthropology occupies a peculiar position. It patrols, so to speak, the frontiers of Western culture. (Fabian 2002:117)

The visual and spatial rhetoric is the root of what Fabian calls the “denial of coevalness”, the deeply entrenched manner of performing cultural border control, which is the main target of his book. With this expression, Fabian refers to the way temporalizing strategies relate the ethnographical *present* of others to “our” cultural *past*; the “primitive” or “traditional informant” with whom the fieldworker necessarily shares *biographical* time is denied *Gleichzeitigkeit* in the text that accounts for the observations made during fieldwork (the informant belongs, for instance, to an oral, traditional culture opposed to modernity). In Fabian’s own phrasing, this denial constitutes “*a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse*” (ibid. 31, Fabian’s italics). Surely this temporal figure is also found outside the boundaries of disciplinary anthropology, and perhaps it is even identical with “modernity’s” temporal self-understanding (e.g. Bauman & Briggs 2003). We could illustrate the temporal conception and its use of ethnographic evidence more generally with the blatantly anachronistic use of tribal images in popular versions of the history of art and literature.

Here, then, we actually have photographic evidence for the origin of the expressive forms of culture; the performance of oral literature and sand painting from the present are called upon to illustrate the earliest stages of literature and art.

My goal is to examine Vico’s *Scienza Nuova* (hereafter: SN), a work often seen as a harbinger of “modern” anthropology and historicism, in the context of the theme of “collective memory” and the role of the art of memory in cultural investigation. The SN was published in three different versions during Vico’s life, in 1725, 1730 and 1744.³ It is now safely inscribed in the canon of the human sciences. Vico, however, did not receive his canonization before he was “rediscovered” in the nineteenth century. After this, a range of decisive discoveries in the humanities has been attributed to the Neapolitan philosopher and teacher of rhetoric. Vico has, for instance, been called the “true father of the concept of culture” (Berlin 2000), the discoverer of “aesthetic historicism” (Auerbach 1949) as well as of aesthetics in general (Croce; cf. White 1978). More recently, and more in tune with current intellectual preferences, Vico has been seen as the inventor of a *sematology*, a science of sign located outside the orbit of “logocentric Western metaphysics” (Trabant 2004; cf. Derrida 1976) as well the model for the



Litteraturens grunnformer og de eldste oldtidslitteraturer



Top: Photos illustrating “The Elementary Forms of Literature and the Oldest, Ancient Literatures”, from H. Hertel (ed.), *Verdens litteraturhistorie*.

Bottom: Photo of “Navaho ritual sand painting for sick child” illustrating “Magic and Ritual – Art in Prehistoric Time”, from H. W. Janson, *History of Art*.

topological and rhetorical study of history (White 1978; cf. Schaeffer 1989). What, then, do Vico's texts have to tell us about memory, and more specifically, about the *ars memoria*? I shall examine how the art of memory functions on three different but ultimately entangled levels.

(1) Firstly, on the level of the text, its structure and rhetoric; How is the *ars memoria* used in the composition of the text? How is it used to persuade the reader?

(2) Secondly, on the level of intertextuality: What are the inter-texts it responds to, the discourse of memory it relates to? How does it relate to prior texts on the subject of the memory of "cultural" others?

(3) Thirdly, on the level of reference and cultural and historical data, the SN – through its textual strategies – also constructs a set of *places* for what we have become accustomed to call other cultures (e.g. Egypt, China, and Mexico): What role does memory, and its arts, play in the construction of these places? Is Vico a link in the chain between the art of memory and anthropology – such as Fabian describes the link? Moreover, how does collective memory contribute to the drawing of textual and cultural boundaries?

Before I begin to tackle these questions with reference to Vico's own text, I shall draw a sketch of the wider cultural horizon around the problematic concerning the art of memory and cultural investigation. I shall do this by giving a more detailed description of Fabian's thesis about the relation between the art of memory and the denial of coevalness. Next, I turn to two Vico scholars who have commented upon the role of memory in the SN.

I: Vico and the Denial of Coevalness

Fabian saw the denial of coevalness as the constitutive *aporia* of modern anthropology. On the one hand, the ethnographical object is created through fieldwork, a practice based upon the co-presence of the investigator and the informant; "being there" and sharing time with "native" contemporaries is simply the precondition for any kind of fieldwork. On the other hand, in the anthropological text, what was observed during the time shared with contemporaries is *located* in another cultural time, a past that the observer's culture has left behind, which Fabian calls an *allochrony*.

Fabian identified a salient moment in the history of this spacing of cultural time. This was a work entitled *Considérations sur les méthodes à suivre dans l'observation des peuples sauvages*, published in 1800 by the Italian-born Joseph-Maria Degérando. Degérando, Fabian asserts, formulated a model for comparative ethnology that invested space with temporal value:

It was Degérando who expressed the temporalizing ethos of an emerging anthropology in his concise and programmatic formula: "The philosophical traveller,

sailing to the end of the earth, is in fact travelling in time, he is exploring the past; every step he makes is the passage of an age". In this statement, the attribute philosophical echoes the militant enthusiasm of the preceding century for a science of man for man, one in which religious and metaphysical searches for mankind's origin and destiny were to give place to a radically immanent vision of humanity at home in the entire world and at all times. (Fabian 2000:6–7; cf. Degérando 1969: 63)

We observe that time here is reversed; for the journey of the "scientific traveller" does not proceed from the biographical present towards the future – the future destination is the past of *cultural* time. Thus, the philosophical traveller actually arrives at a place which, in terms of cultural time, is prior to that from which he departed; at "the end of the earth" the beginning time is located. As Degérando continues, "[t]hose unknown islands that he reaches are for him the cradle of human society" (Degérando *ibid.*).

Fabian construes Degérando's move as a secularization of religious time heavily indebted to Enlightenment anthropology. However, he also views this manner of timing cultural space and spacing cultural time as a continuation of the ancient memorial art:

some very important aspects of anthropological discourse must be understood as the continuation of a long tradition of rhetoric with a peculiar cosmological bent. Conceiving outlandish images and moving in strange space, mostly imaginary, was a preoccupation of savants long before actual encounter with exotic people and travel to foreign parts, and for reasons to which actual encounter with exotic people seems to have added very little. The detour through past and current concerns in anthropology [...] has shown that the hold of a visual spatial "logic" on our discipline is as strong as ever; the bodies or organisms of functionalism, the culture gardens of the particularists, the tables of the quantifier, and the diagrams of the taxonomists all project conceptions of knowledge which are organized around objects, or images of objects, in spatial relation to each other. (*ibid.*:113)

Fabian thus situates anthropology, in all its different schools and varieties, in what we could call a cultural historical deep time (going further back than its institutionalized beginnings), sharing a visual root metaphor for producing and organizing knowledge. He argues that, "[i]n the light of connections that are revealed by the studies of Yates [on the Renaissance art of memory] and Ong [on the visualism of Ramus' logic and pedagogy] our present self-understanding as anthropologists appears historically and theoretically shallow" (*ibid.*:117). Fabian further identifies a continuity between the ancient orators visualization of the parts of his speech in *loci* furnished with striking *images* so that he can remember the content of his speech and the ethnographic *loci* and *images* that anthropology inscribes contemporary others in. We could perhaps use Degérando (who formulated the "programme" for the temporalizing strategy) to illustrate the device. Immediately after the passage cited by Fabian, Degérando goes on with the following formulations

Those unknown islands that he reaches are for him the cradle of human society. Those peoples whom our ignorant vanity scorns are displayed to him as ancient and majestic monuments of the origin of ages: monuments infinitively more worthy of our admiration and respect than those famous pyramids vaunted by the banks of the Nile. They witness only the frivolous ambition and the passing power of some individuals whose names have scarcely come down to us; but the others recreate for us the state of our own ancestors, and the earliest history of the world. (Degérando 1969:63)

The *allochrony* placed at “the end of the earth”; the past that can be reached through a cultural time travel *in space*, is comparable to a locus in a memory palace. Degérando speaks about an island, populated with strange *images*, “savages”. These he converts into monuments representing humankind’s primeval history.⁴

As noted, Fabian holds that the ancient “rhetoric of images and topoi” continues to be the intellectual matrix used to map human habitats on the other side of the cultural border between the West and all its “others”. And the intellectual debt to the art of memory and its rhetoric explains the proclivity for the *spatialization* of the time of the other. On what appears to be the historical level “proper”, this applies to the spatial confinement of historical time in *epochs*, since, etymologically speaking, these are “places to stop and look around”, which is “undoubtedly identifiable as a theory of topoi devised to give firm foundation to [...] discourse” (ibid.:111). However, it also applies to the social scientific time more generally: “The rules of the art of memory did not only prescribe visualization. Inasmuch as they spoke of moment between ‘places’ of memory they called for *spatialization of consciousness*” (ibid., my italics). Anthropologist thus still move around (in the footsteps of ancient orators) in such preordained spaces; the passage through space is like “the passage of ages”.⁵

Fabian has furnished anthropology with something similar to a split temporality (cf. Bhabha 1994) – a kind of ghostly and hidden *allochrony*, which, even if forgotten in ideology, in textual practice “re-enacts” the manner of composing places and filling them with memory-images invented in the rhetorical tradition. In a certain sense, then, Fabian has done for anthropology what he claims the discipline is – or has been – doing to its objects. If Degérando found the cradle of humanity among present savages, Fabian locates the cradle of present anthropology in the ancient *ars memoria*. How can we relate Fabian’s construal of the historical and mental linkage between the art of memory and anthropology to Vico – who, according to dominant voices in the reception, is both the “true father of the concept of culture” and the sign-orientated exception to Western metaphysics (as we saw was claimed by Berlin and Verene)? To begin to answer that question I shall examine two – apparently – opposed views of the role of the art of memory and the collective memory of “foreign cultures” in Vico.

1. The SN as a theatre of memory

The philosopher and Vico scholar Donald P. Verene sees the SN as a theatre of memory modelled upon the renaissance memory theatre of Giulio Camillo. He does this with reference to F. Yates's *The Theatre of Memory*, which resurrected Camillo's basically forgotten attempt to represent and remember the total natural and cultural history of the world with memory-images distributed on a theatre stage (Verene 1981; cf. Yates 1966:129–172). The SN, Verene further asserts, is “a theatre of memory because *all of human history* moves within it”. Moreover, it is “a theatre of memory in which *humanity* originates and confronts itself (Verene 1981:106 and 99, my italics). Like the memory theatre of Camillo, which aimed to depict a whole cosmology on its stage, the SN represents a totality; but unlike the theatre of Camillo, the totality in Vico's case is restricted to the anthropological domain. For in Vico, it is only the *human* part of the cosmos, the “total human world”, which is staged, and thus we are approaching something resembling an anthropological history construed as an art of memory (ibid.:107). According to Verene, this total anthropological *topos* – the space or stage where *all* the images and figures of human history are placed – is what Vico called his “ideal eternal history”. But as I shall demonstrate, this *topos* is divided according to what we could call religiously defined counter-concepts, namely pagans vs. Hebrews and Christians (cf. Koselleck 2004). I shall argue that this division has implications for the use of memory as the key to the SN, and that a particular concept of *collective memory* actually plays an important part in the definition of its object, nations organized around what Vico calls “pretentious” and “conceited” memories, *boriose memorie*.

2. The memory cult of Egypt

The literary scholar Giuseppe Mazzotta also has comments upon the role of the *ars memoria* in the SN. In doing this, he has focused upon the relation to the memories of the Egyptian “other”. Mazzotta construes the SN as a *rejection* of the combination of *ars memoria* and hermetic mysticism represented by Giordano Bruno. In line with Renaissance Neoplatonists such as Pico and Ficino (the tradition to which Camillo also belonged), Bruno believed ancient Egypt to be the source of a recondite wisdom about the cosmos, and the art of memory one of its most profound expressions. This “myth” of Egypt as a source of scientific knowledge and cultural and religious forms survived as a story of cultural continuity in salient strands of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century history. According to Mazzotta, Vico opposes this myth by *historicizing* it:

The *New Science* [...] begins with the outright rejection of the myth, popularized by Giordano Bruno, and endorsed by seventeenth-century archaeologists (such as Marsham, Spencer, and Van Heurn), that Egypt is the land of magical knowledge. [...]

Bruno had theorized that Egypt is nothing less than the begetter of an *ars memoria*. For Vico, however, Egypt is the museum, or memory-theater of history. [...] This projection of Egypt in terms of time and its cult of memory, which appears as an idolatry of death and its grim preservation, recalls and extends a crucial strain of the myth of Egypt, which has never been far out of the orbit of Western consciousness. (Mazzotta 1999:123–125)

Egypt, then, is not the locus of a secret and sacred universal knowledge about nature. Its *ars memoria* is a product of the religious “other”, the paradigmatic idolater of *Exodus*, and consequently not a source of esoteric knowledge. Hence, knowledge of Egyptian memories will give historical and cultural information about the world view of a particular “historical culture”, and not reveal the secret constitution of the cosmos.

On the surface, the interpretations of Verene and Mazzotta concerning Vico’s use of the *ars memoria* appear to collide. However, this is not necessarily the case; for practical and analytical purposes at least, we can make them converge in a harmonious fashion here. Verene primarily speaks about the art of memory as a model for the composition of the text. Mazzotta, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with Vico’s relation to (a) his intellectual predecessors and scholarly opponents, and (b) their attribution of wisdom and a range of cultural genres and practices – not least, the art of memory – to an Egyptian source. Thus, the two commentators enable us to see a splitting, roughly corresponding to the pole of the writing subject and his collective “cultural” object, in what Fabian appears to construe as a unified memorial code underlining all cultural investigation of “others”. In section III and IV I shall examine Vico’s use of memory in the composition of his own text. But before we can proceed with that task, we need to get a grip of Vico’s historical master story, the ideal universal history and how this is used to space the time of the “other”.

II: The Shape of Pagan Time

According to Verene, the “ideal eternal history” was the total, anthropological *topos* of the SN. But as I shall show, this *topos* is reserved for others, nations placed on the religious “outside” with reference to theological criteria. At the same time, the basis for this historico-religious division are two Egyptian antiquities or historical memories; “pillars” taken from the Egyptians themselves and used in a struggle against what Vico calls their “vain” and “conceited” – *boriose* – memories. Hence, as Mazzotta observed, memory names the relation to Egypt and the “collective” object of the SN, but the historical memories of the “other” are also as a poetic resource in the composition of the text.

In his autobiography (hereafter: *Vita*), Vico accounts for his work and the “ideal universal history” (in the third person singular):

He always takes account of *the essential difference* between the Hebrew and the gentiles. The former from the beginning arose and stood steadfast on the practices of an eternal justice. The pagan nations [*pagane nazioni*], however, by the sole guidance of divine providence, underwent with *constant uniformity the successive variations of the three kinds of laws corresponding to the three ages and languages of the Egyptians. The first law was divine, under the government of the true God among the Hebrews and of various false gods among the gentiles.* The second was heroic, or peculiar to the heroes who stood midway between gods and men. The third was human, or peculiar to human nature as fully developed and recognized as alike in all men. (*Vita* 172 and 59, my emphasis)

This organization of historical time consequently only applies to the “*pagane nazioni*”; the nation only assisted by providence and not divine grace (cf. 1744:§136).⁶ The “anthropological” and historical topos of Vico’s memory theatre is actually reserved for a totality of pagan nations.

In all the editions of the SN, the ideal universal history is based upon what Vico calls Egyptian pillars.⁷ In the 1725 edition of the SN, the Egyptian pillars were placed toward the end of the text, in a section entitled “The Origins of this Science found in two Egyptian Antiquities”.⁸ Here two historical divisions are grafted on to each other to give temporal shape to gentile history:

This whole science is founded, therefore, upon *two great pillars* [*moli*], as it were, of Egyptian antiquity, that is, of those Egyptians who used to mock the Greeks, who were grossly ignorant of them, by saying, that they were still children. *One is the Egyptian’s division of all their earlier times into three ages, those of the gods, the heroes, and man. [...]. The other is a further division, that of the languages that were spoken from the beginning of the world up to the Egyptians’ final times,* to which Porphyry refers in Johannes Schaeffer’s *De philosophia italica*. The first was a language of hieroglyphics or sacred characters, i.e. a language of the gods, of the sort that Homer said was older than his own language, a divine language that explained all things human. This is the reason for the formation of the vocabulary of Varro’s thirty thousand gods among the Latin peoples. The next was the language of symbols or emblems [...]. The last was an epistolary language, i.e. a language of vulgar letters and words for settled meanings, used for carrying out their final practices in everyday life. This division of languages corresponds precisely, both in its parts and order, to the division of the ages and, therefore, to the division of the three laws of the gentes, divine, heroic and humane, as demonstrated above. (1725:402–405, my italics, cf. 1744:§52)

These pillars or *moli*, a term that also carries the association of obelisks and pyramids,⁹ are taken from various authorities, and combined with the historical division of the Roman antiquarian Varro. Consequently, we have three different ways of spacing the time of pagan/gentile history taken from three different authorities whose *loci* are grafted onto each other so that they make up a system of correspondences that characterizes the ages of pagan history:

<i>Herodotus</i> ¹⁰	<i>Schaeffer</i>	<i>Varro</i>
gods	hieroglyphs	obscure
heroes	symbolic language	fabulous
men	epistolary	historical

The pillars and the further system of correspondence that Vico relates them to are constructed by erasing what we could call an ethnic or national division. In *Vita* (and in terms similar to those used in the 1725 edition and repeated in the later versions), Vico states that he takes his “ideal eternal history” from the Egyptians. He adds that they always “‘twitted’ the Greeks for being children who did not know anything about antiquity”. Thus, this manner of timing pagan history is intimately related to an interethnic *polemic* regarding historical age and memories reported in classical sources.¹¹ Behind the inter-semiotic and inter-cultural unit at the base of the ideal universal history we find a struggle between Greek and Egyptian “ethnocentrism”. This Vico further relates to what he calls the “contest of antiquity”, that is to say, the inclination that all nations have to believe that they, their own gods and wisdom were the first in the world (e.g. 1744:§49). On the one hand, the contest is identified and given a place in the text by Vico. On the other, it is erased in the name of the ideal universal history – this in the sense that the different ethnic claims to be the first nation are all declared to be void, and reduced to a function of the same error, namely what Vico calls the “conceit” or “arrogance” (*boria*) of the nations. If Vico can report that the Egyptians “twitted” the Greeks for being children, this certainly does not imply that he accepts their priority as expressed “in their own terms”. In fact, the Egyptian pillars which furnish the foundation for “this whole science” are turned against the Egyptians and their *boria* and used to undermine their conception of history. In the 1744 edition of the SN, Vico performs this rhetorical operation of using the terminology of the Egyptian “other” to encompass and accommodate his memories within the ideal universal history. Here *boria* is also linked to a concept of “memory”:

the antiquity of the Egyptians will help us with two pretentious memories [*boriose memorie*], examples of that conceit [*boria*] of the nations by which [...] every nation barbarian or civilized has considered itself to be the oldest and to have preserved its records from the beginning of the world; a privilege we shall see, of the Hebrews alone. These two pretentious memories [*boriose memorie*] we have observed to be, first the legend that their Jove Ammon was the oldest of all the Joves in the world, and second that the Hercules of all the other nations had taken their name from the Egyptian Hercules. That is, that all nations had passed first through the age of the gods, the king of whom was by all these nations held to be Jove; and through the age of heroes, who considered themselves sons of the gods, and of whom Hercules was believed to be the greatest. (1744:§53)

Thus, we could say that these conceited/pretentious memories constitute both an object of Vico’s science and his moral/religious antagonist.

If the pillars form the basis of the ideal universal history, they are also encompassed by the Hebrew conception of time and history, for the Hebrews alone, Vico asserts, have “records from the beginning of the world”, i.e. the Hebrew Bible. Thus, Vico enters “the contest of antiquity” himself, and decides the quarrel in favour of the Hebrews. This relation between Hebrew



Memory-image from Petrus von Rosenheim, *Ars memorandi*, 1502.

and Egyptian time is nicely illustrated by the “Chronological Table” inserted before the beginning of book one (concerning “the establishment of principles”) in the SN of 1730 and 1744. While the table is “based on” (*descritta sopra*) the “Three Epochs of the Times of the Egyptians, who said that all the world before them had passed through three ages: That of the gods, that of the Heroes and that of men”, the historical *limits* of the times and ages measured by these pillars are determined by Biblical history. The “universal flood” comes before any other event recorded in the table. What positions was this framework for timing *boriose memorie* a response to?

The hieroglyphs, which Vico associated with the first age of history, was closely linked to the art of memory in early modern European thought. Moreover, the mnemonic art had been used to patrol the border between the “West and other cultures” long before the emergence of modern anthropology, not least, due to its close association with hieroglyphs. It had served this function not (only) as an unconscious model for the representation of others, but as an explicit object of cross-“cultural” comparison. The hieroglyphs of the Egyptians were actually puzzlingly close to the composite memory-images treated and illustrated in the European literature on the art of memory.

Paolo Rossi has noted how ethnographic information about nations writing with hieroglyphs also had a feedback effect upon the European view of the mnemonic arts:

The fact that non-European civilizations had been able to achieve systematic representation and communication of concepts by means of hieroglyphs or images instead of letters of the alphabet not only seemed to confirm the feasibility of the *ars memoria* and Lullism, but also suggested the possibility of devising a universal language which could be “read” and “understood” independently of the difference between contemporary languages, nationalities or historical situations. (Rossi 2000:78)

The comparative relation that Rossi points to is thus based upon a particular inter-cultural “iconicity”; a (perceived) resemblance between a certain kind of signs across cultural boundaries, and their function as vehicles of memory. In view of this, the “cultural boundary work” made with reference to the mnemonic capacity of different writing systems turns out to be more complicated than the one Fabian described – where the art of memory was the (hidden or forgotten) intellectual instrument used inadvertently to represent “others”. In Rossi’s description, “non-Europeans” and “hieroglyphic nations” in the ethnographic present of the early modern period also furnish “cross-cultural” evidence for the “feasibility” of the ancient art of memory (which Fabian will turn into the cognitive model for the same anthropology). In view of the ethnographic evidence, the art of memory appeared to be firmly rooted in a common human capacity. Early modern ethnography, then, actually had its share in investing the *ars memoria* with prestige.

In some cases, the use of *memoria* as the common trait, the *tertium comparationis* shared by both “us” and “them”, in a comparison of how memory was stored in different cultures (roughly on the formula: “they” store *memories* in images/“we” store *memories* in letters) even led to the praise of the signs of “the other”. A salient example is the *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579) of Diego Valadés, a Franciscan from Mexico, who published his work in Perugia. Lina Bolzoni describes it as a kind of cultural translation:

Perhaps the richest and most fascinating example of how mnemonics and the illustrated book can intersect is found in *Rhetorica Christiana*. [...] To those who deny the human dignity of indigenous peoples, Valadés offers a reinterpretation, a new cultural translation: the mysterious and unsettling images of pre-Columbian civilization in Mexico are contained in a framework that makes them accessible to Western culture. It does so by associating them with a remote antiquity that the West regards with reverential fear (the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt), as well as with a modern and commonly accepted component of Western culture, the art of memory. (Bolzoni 2001:221–222)

Valadés in fact uses the idiom of the art of memory (with its terminology of “places” and “images”) to describe the Mexican script. He notes the lack of alphabetic letters, but immediately responds that past events nevertheless were “transmitted easily to the coming generations”.¹² This was because the native “hieroglyphs” *took the place of letters*. At this stage, the idiom of the *ars memoria* appears to be the *model* for the description of the Mexican signs. From this, however, Valadés moves on to compare the Amerindians’

system of representation with the *ars memoria*, and thus puts his own model for description in the comparative balance:

Images [like Mexican hieroglyphs] are specific forms and marks and representations of the thing we wish to remember: these it will be appropriate to place *in determined places*: as images there can be horses, lions, precious stones. For the *places* correspond to the wax or paper, and the images take the place of letters, the disposition and *collocation* of the images corresponding to writing and the pronunciation to the letter. (cited in Palomera 1962–63:444, my translation into English, my italics)¹³

Here the “denial of coevalness” of contemporary Mexicans, and the attendant collocation of the images from Mexico and Egypt in the same *place*, aims to remove the Mexicans from another available common place, one set aside for illiterate “barbarians”. The traditional metaphors of the *ars memoria*, which at least since the time of Plato figured memory as a kind of writing (cf. Ricoeur 2004:17ff), supplies Valadés with the rhetorical resources needed to do this.

In *Rhetorica Christiana*, the Franciscan Valadés worries that other orders are taking the credit for what he takes to be an invention of the Franciscans in Mexico, namely evangelization using native images as an instrument of persuasion and as aids to remember scripture. Surely the Franciscan had the Jesuits in mind, for the Chinese mission of this order soon followed the example of the Mexican Franciscans and applied images for the purpose of intercultural communication and evangelization (Baily 1999). The most famous case is that of Matteo Ricci, who also made a memory palace with Chinese characters (Spence 1983).

Vico aims not only to end the infatuation with ancient Egyptian wisdom, but also the recognition of present “cultural others”. In the SN, the use of hieroglyphs serve as the evidence against the “arrogant”, “conceited” and “vain” conceptions that the nations have about their own history:

A poverty of words of settled meaning led all the first people to express themselves by means of objects. At first these must have been solid objects but later they were carved or painted objects [...]. We certainly have the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, which are depicted on their pyramids, but other fragments from antiquity, with the character of carved objects of the same sort as magical character of the Chaldeans must first have been, are everywhere to be found. The Chinese also, who vainly vaunt [*vanamente vantano*] an origin of enormous antiquity, write in hieroglyphics, which goes to show that they originated no more than four thousand years ago. [...]. Meanwhile, in our most recent times, travellers have observed that the Americans write in hieroglyphics. This poverty of articulate words in the first [gentile] nations, which was common throughout the universe, proves anew that the Universal Flood occurred before them. (1725:§96–97)

Here, then, Vico inscribes Valadés’s Mexicans and Ricci’s Chinese in a locus already occupied by idolatrous Egypt, and thus makes both past and present nations cohabit in the same historical space, the first age of the ideal universal history. In comparison with what Bolzoni calls Valadés’s “cul-

tural translation”, we see that the collocation of the past and the present in the same space – and the denial of coevalness that this is predicated upon – can produce different judgements of “cultural” value. But Vico’s rejection of the collective *boriose memorie* of the nations does not imply a rejection of the rhetorical and conceptual resources of the *ars memoria*. Rather, what he aims at could be likened to an anamnesis, namely what Vico considers a “correct” re-membering of the nation’s origin and its rejoining to the framework of Biblical history.

III: The SN as a Theatre of Counter-Memory

I shall now turn to the manner in which memory informs the composition of the SN itself.

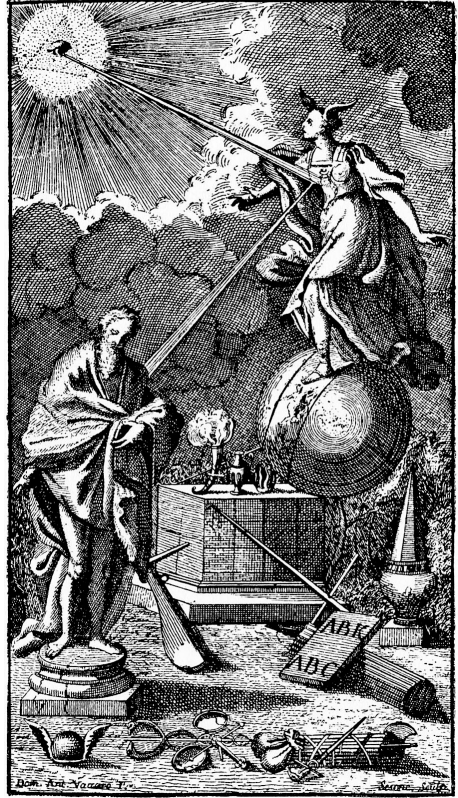
Vico’s use of this as a model in the building of his text is evident already in the incipit of the SN of 1730 and 1744. In fact, the whole first part of the SN, entitled *Idea dell’ opera*, is introduced with a painting [*dipintura*] serving as frontispiece, but also as a memory-image.

After the frontispiece, the reader encounters a sub-section furnished with the following caption: “Explanation [*Spiegazione*] of the picture [*dipintura*] placed as frontispiece to serve as introduction to the work”. The text of “the idea of the work”, then, is actually an extensive ekphrasis that explains the image.¹⁴ Thus, the book opens with signs in both the visual and the verbal register. Verbally, the SN starts by calling upon an ancient authority:

As Cebes the Theban made a table of moral institutions, we offer here [*diamo a vedere*] one of civil institutions. We hope it may serve to give the reader some conception of this work before he reads it, and, with such aid as imagination may afford, to call it back to mind after he has read it [*serva al leggitore per concepire l’idea di questa opera avanti di leggerla, e per ridurla più facilmente a memoria, con tal aiuto che gli somministrì la fantasia, dopo di aver letta*]. (1744:§1)

This particular use of the image – at once an entrance to the text and its final and condensed memory – is authorized with reference to the classical example of *The Tablet of Cebes*.¹⁵ This is not primarily to authorize doctrine, but rather to give authority to the intersemiotic arrangement, and to the memorial function of the image. The common trait around which authority is forged is accordingly both thematic and semiotic; both the moral things of Cebes the Theban and the “civil institutions” that will be the subjects of the SN are framed in a dual semiotic discourse, which put pictures at the beginning. At the border of the book, then, the image both prefigures and summarizes the vast text mass of the SN.

On the one hand, Vico’s frontispiece is itself encompassed by a temporality measured with reference to the reading of letters, and thus controlled by the time of verbal discourse; it is inserted in a temporal frame by the temporal adverbs “before” and “after”. The standard for the measuring of time



The picture placed as a frontispiece to serve as a introduction to Vico's *New Science*.

here is surely the time of reading (letters). But on the other hand, the memory-image also escapes this verbal frame, for it is suggested that the viewer/reader should make his “imagination” work *on* the image – *before* the reading of letters begins – and that the image, through this work, will serve as an aid to the recollection of the ideas of the SN *after* reading it. Thus, the frontispiece as a memory-image not only bridges different semi-otic registers, but also work and life. Vico suggests that the joint effort of the reader’s imagination and memory will create a place for the SN in his mind, and thus enhance its possibility of having a practical afterlife.¹⁶

In line with Verene, we could therefore say that Vico models the space or place of his text and science on the poetics of the art and theatre of memory. Furthermore, we observe that he is deploying the memorial function of images to invite his reader into his text as a locus of (new) memory.¹⁷ The topos of memory, however, is used polemically against the *boriose memorie* produced by the gentile nations that are the opponents as well as the object of the SN. This polemical function of memory becomes even clearer if we consider the way Vico inscribes his predecessors in the matrix of the *ars memoria*.

A bit later in the text, the reader is asked to reject all previous scholarship on gentile history. Vico begins his exposition of what he calls the “principles” of the SN by turning to memory (ibid. §330ff.). The claims made for the radical difference from all prior work on the same subject – a difference that Vico associates with the historical novelty of his science – is at this place in the text predicated upon memory. To illustrate the rhetorical force invested in memory here, I shall briefly outline the textual environment within which the claim of novelty is formulated. As we shall see, the reader will once again be implicated in the text in by Vico’s use of the idiom of mnemonics.

The beginning of book 1 (following immediately after the section dealing with the “idea of the work”) is organized as follows:

Section 1	Notes on the chronological table, in which the materials are set in order
Section 2	Elements or axioms
Section 3	Principles

We encountered the chronological table when treating the ideal eternal history above. Now we note that book 1, which contains the table, begins with a visual representation (as the “idea-section” also did).¹⁸ After the principles follows a section with axioms or elements. The purpose of these is

to give form to the materials hereinbefore set in order in the Chronological Table, we now propose the following axioms, both philosophical and philological, including a few reasonable and proper postulates and some clarified definitions. And just as the blood does in animate bodies, so will these elements course through our Science and animate it in all its reasoning about the common nature of the nations. (ibid. §119)

Thus, the elements/axioms are intended to give further verbal form to the subject matter already processed visually in the chronological table. In the next section, concerning the principles, the elements/axioms that are the life blood of the SN are put to the test. The reader is invited to do this:

Now, in order to make trial [*fare sperienza*] whether the propositions hitherto enumerated as elements of this Science can give form to the materials prepared in the Chronological Table at the beginning, we beg the reader to consider what has hitherto been written concerning the principles of any subject in the whole gentile knowledge, human and divine [*tutto lo scibile divino ed umano della gentilità*]. (1744:§330)

As we know, Vico has already suggested that the reader store the SN in his mind by using the *dipintura* as a memory-image. Now Vico will describe the (pitiful) state of the art in the investigation of his topic in the idiom of memory. The mind of the reader will be a zone where Vico’s memory-image and the historical memories of other scholars will confront each other. “[T]he principles of any subject in the whole gentile knowledge, human and divine [*tutto lo scibile divino ed umano della gentilità*]” have not been

satisfactorily accounted for. Yet again Vico turns to memory, but now to diagnose the work of other scholars, and to forge a new place for his own science of “the knowledge” of the gentiles:

all that has so far been written is a tissue of confused memories, of the fancies of a disordered imagination [*tutti luoghi di confuse memoria, tutte immagini di mal regolata fantasia*]; that none of it is begotten by intelligence [*e niun essere parto d'intendimento*], which has been rendered useless by the two conceits enumerated in the Axioms [§§125 and 127]. For one the one hand the conceit of the nations, each believing itself to have been the first in the world, leaves us no hope of getting the principles of our Science from the philologists. And on the other hand the conceit of scholars, who will have it that what they know must have been eminently understood from the beginning of the world, makes us despair of getting them from the philosophers. So for our purpose we must reckon as if there were no books in the world [*Laonde, perché la boria delle nazioni, d'essere stata ogniuna la prima del mondo, ci disanima di ritruovare i principi di questa Scienza da' filologi; altronde la boria de' dotti, i quali vogliono ciò ch'essi sanno essere stato eminentemente inteso fin dal principio del mondo, ci dispera di ritruovargli da' filosofi: quindi, per questa ricerca, si deve far conto come se non vi fossero libri nel mondo*]. (1744:§330)

The dominant role of the scheme of the *ars memoria* in this invitation to experimentation is underlined by the poetic parallelism employed to articulate the rejection of other scholars (“*tutti luoghi di confuse memoria*”/ “*tutte immagini di mal regolata fantasia*”). Surely, Vico here employs the constitutive formula of mnemonics to express his verdict – it is the same formula that we saw Valadés use to describe Mexican script above: memory-images (“*immagini di mal regolata fantasia*”) are located in memory places (“*luoghi di confuse memoria*”). Both images and places, however, are products of cognitive error. The work of Vico’s predecessors and contemporaries actually turns out to be a memory theatre comprised of misconception of the nature of history. The loci crafted to accommodate memory-images as well as the images installed on them are to be condemned; for they are not the products of “intelligence” or “understanding” (“*e niun essere parto d'intendimento*”). Until now, then, there has been no rational discourse on the subject of the knowledge of the gentiles.

According to Vico, his text is not included in the total topos of tradition. Consequently, this use of a traditional topic furnishes a new place *external* to the tradition that it opposes. Nevertheless, Vico clearly still needs the memorial root metaphors to mark out this new scientific place. It is, perhaps paradoxically, exactly to promote the radical newness of Vico’s science of history and tradition that the ancient art of memory is called upon.

I shall now turn to the level of cultural reference and examine one particular example of how the idiom of memory, in this case closely linked to the concept of “museum”, is used to correct the interpretation of pagan history made by preceding scholars. As we saw, two Egyptian pillars, artefacts of the “other”, formed the basis of the ideal universal history. My example

concerns how Vico tackles the traditional tale about two columns from the time before the flood, found in Mesopotamia. In a certain sense, these pillars inscribed with antediluvian “astrological memories” form the antithesis to the Egyptian pillars.

IV: Collective Memory as a “Museum of Credulity”

The term *museo* occurs both in the 1730 and the 1744 edition of the SN; in both places it is linked to a derogatory term. In 1730 we find the phrase *museo della impostura*, and in 1744 we read *museo della credulità*. In both editions, this particular *museo* furnishes the space within which Vico places a tale from Josephus. In other words, there is constancy in the use of derogatory language to describe this particular museum space *and* the tale from Josephus. Let us briefly recapitulate the story from the *Jewish Antiquities*.

At the beginning of this work, Josephus recounts a tradition about how the children of Seth erected two pillars inscribed with wisdom and astrological lore in Mesopotamia. These pillars were constructed because Seth’s father, Adam, had disclosed that God – on subsequent occasions in the future – would destroy the earth by means of water and fire. Seth’s children, Josephus tells, were “the inventors of that peculiar sort of wisdom which is concerned with the heavenly bodies, and their order”. To conserve their astrological knowledge, they raised two pillars made of different materials. “They inscribed their discoveries on them both, that in case the pillar of brick should be destroyed by the flood, the pillar of stone might remain, and exhibit those discoveries to mankind” (Josephus: chapter 2:3).

Josephus ends the second chapter of the first book and the account of this attempt to salvage human wisdom about the heavens against the wrath of God by acknowledging at least partial success to the wise masons, and regarding one of the pillars; he writes that “this remains in the land of Siriad to this day” (ibid.). Thus, it appears that the product of the primordial wisdom from the time before the flood can still be found in Syria.¹⁹ Hence, this object would not belong inside the framework of the ideal eternal history, for as we saw above, Vico uses the deluge as an absolute temporal and theological boundary.²⁰ How is the pillar accommodated in the SN where the Egyptian pillars are reemployed to locate all pagan “culture” and its “*boriose memorie*” inside the framework of Biblical history?

Josephus is indeed criticized for transmitting an erroneous belief. Still, it is not the Jewish chronicler, but the Chaldeans, the gentile inhabitants of the land where the pillars were raised, who are the prime target of Vico’s attack.²¹ The supposed relict from the time before the flood is assigned its proper place in the correct “museum”, and it is classified as belonging to a particular group of nations. Consequently, this relocation and classification

could be seen as one particular example of Vico's struggle with the erroneous loci and images transmitted in "all that so far has been written" on the early history of the gentile nations.

The erroneous temporal conceptions of this class of "cultures" are explained with reference to the same general principle; Vico views the alleged antediluvian memories as an expression of the *boria* of the nations, their "natural" proclivity for regarding their own "culture" as the most ancient in the world. Immediately after dealing with the pillar of Josephus, Vico will tackle the claims made by the Chinese and supported by Jesuit missionary to China about the age of Chinese history. Consequently, the turn to Josephus, the voice from the past, also prepares for a confrontation with the text of Chinese missionary ethnography from the present:

This false opinion of their great antiquity was caused among the Egyptians by a property of the human mind – that of being indefinite – by which it is often led to believe that the things it does not know are vastly greater than in fact they are. The Egyptians were in this respect like the Chinese, who grew to so great a nation shut off from all foreign nations, for the Egyptians were similarly shut off until Psammeticus, and the Scythians until Idanthyrsus. [...] For the same reasons, the Chaldeans did not fail to enter the lists in this contest of antiquity. They too were an inland people [...], who vainly boasted [*vanamente vantavano*] that they had preserved the astronomical observations of a good twenty-eight thousand years. This was perhaps the reason that Flavius Josephus the Jew erroneously regarded [*credere con errore*] as antediluvian the observations described on the two columns [*colonne*], one of marble and one of brick, raised against the two floods, and thought that he himself had seen the marble one in Syria. So important was it to the ancient nations to preserve astronomical records [*conservare le memorie astronomiche*], whereas this sense was quite dead among the nations that followed them! Wherefore this column finds its proper place in the museum of credulity [*è da riporsi nel museo della credulità*]. (1744:§49)

Vico qualifies the museum to which the pillar belongs with the deprecating term "*credulità*", it houses fictive or legendary objects believed to be true. Hence, the pillar is also an example of an image/object produced by a "*mal regulata fantasia*" and located in a spatio-temporal place of "*confusa memoria*" (in Syria, before the deluge), and the "museum of credulity" serves as the designation of the locus where the pillar from the *Jewish Antiquities* should be correctly placed. The artefact, which Josephus had transported out of the space of a fictive tradition and objectified in empirical space (Syria), is transported back to its "proper place", and (what Vico takes to be) Josephus's claim to have *seen* the pillar in Syria is declared "empirically" void.

The metaphor used to designate the space of the other and his erroneous conception of historical time at this place in the text is then "*museo*". Vico appears to be alluding to a material act of classification; placing objects in the right room *within* a museum, or placing it in the right *kind* of museum. Hence, this seems to be a literal instantiation of the transport of images back

to the correct loci. At least, so we could think from the perspective of the current, common understanding of the term “museum”. However, as Paula Findlen has shown, “*musaeum*” was not restricted to collections of material artefacts in early modern terminology. Rather, the key notion was that of an *enclosed* mental or material space. The concept came to subsume, Findlen claims, a range of other intellectual concepts. It “became the axis through which all other structures of collecting, categorizing and knowing intersected: interweaving words, images, and things, it provided a space common to all” (Findlen 1989:63). Thus, “*musaeum*” designated the encompassing conceptual and physical space as well the objects and artefacts encompassed in these spaces. Accordingly, we could further say that Vico is moving the pillars (*colonne*) from Josephus back to their *correct place*, namely the place where *erroneous* “collecting, categorizing and knowing [...] intersects” in a “museum of credulity”. At the same time, he also establishes a science *about* this space – in polemic with the erroneous image/locus collocation of Josephus and “all other scholars” who have given credence to the “*boriose memorie*” of the gentile nations. As we have seen, the framework used in timing these memories in a correct and scientific manner is the ideal universal history, based upon two other pillars, the re-figured pillars (*moli*) of the Egyptians.

Vico is consistent in his use of the “museum” to frame the pillars. In the SN of 1730, Josephus’s tale is also associated with the term. Here, however, the museum is not a product of “credulity”, but of “imposture”; the pillar pertains in the *museo della impostura*, a phrasing that appears to put the blame on the curator and not (only) a *credulous* audience, and hence invests the *museo* with more agency, but also enhances the curator’s guilt. In addition, the pillar is more explicitly identified as a member of a comprehensive class of nations making erroneous historical judgements about the age of their history. Concerning the pillar made by the children of Seth, Vico here writes that “the antiquity of which is to be placed *together with the others*, as we shall see, in the museum of imposture” (“*la quale anitchità è da riporsi con l’altre, che noi vedremo, nel Museo dell’ impostura*”) (1730:64, my emphasis). As stated above, it is noticeable that the concept of “museum” appears to be a “constant” conceptual and rhetorical resource for Vico in the identification and appellation of this space of the “cultural” other. Besides, this persistent commitment to root metaphors of memory can also be observed on the level of text building; the level where conceptual and semantic content is processed and pulled out in a chain and given logical and discursive form in a “new science”. Indeed, the phrase “*è da riporsi*” (“finds its proper place”) also reflects back upon Vico’s own activity of classification, and image/locus collocation. Thus, his scientific correction of the errors of the scholars in the interpretation of gentile memories operates as a kind of polemical *ars memoria*, which relocates the images/objects discoursed upon

– and timed – by other scholars in the new framework of the ideal universal history.

Vico moves from this relocation of the pillar to a consideration of a group of past and present “cultures”. With reference to the theme of spacing time, we once again note that Vico’s museum unites past and present nations in the same temporal place. The pillar from Josephus actually turns out to be an example of a general error pertaining to a whole class of nations enclosed in the “museum of imposture/credulity”. When dealing with ideal universal history we saw that the use of hieroglyphics constituted a “cross-cultural” common trait in the first age of history. Here a geographical characteristic is added: the nations have spent their early history in geographical isolation. Thus, in the paragraph treating the pillars from Josephus, we have both a semiotic and a geographical common trait that binds different nations together in the same typological time and space:

• [geographical location] “The Egyptians were in this respect like the Chinese, who grew to so great a nation *shut off from all foreign nations*, for the Egyptians were similarly shut off until Psammeticus, and the Scythians until Idanthyrsus. [...] For the same reasons, the Chaldeans did not fail to enter the lists in this contest of antiquity. *They to were an inland people*”.

• [form of writing] “But the Chinese *are* found writing in hieroglyphs just as the ancient Egyptians did (to say nothing of the Scythians, who did not even know how to put their hieroglyphs in writing).

The relocation of the pillar from Josephus leads to a further description of a class of nations sharing the same chronological notions (1). Next, these foreign conceptions of history are explained by way of analogy with awakening in the middle of the night in a small room (2).

[1] But the Chinese are found writing in hieroglyphics just as the ancient Egyptians (to say nothing of the Scythians, who did not even know how to put their hieroglyphs in writing). For many thousands of years they had no commerce with other nations by whom they might have been informed concerning the real antiquity of the world.

[2] Just as a man confined while asleep in a very small dark room, in horror of darkness [on waking (translator’s insertion)] believes it certainly much larger than groping with his hands will show it to be, so, in darkness of their chronology, the Chinese and the Egyptians have done, and the Chaldeans likewise. [*com’ uomo, che dormendo sia chiuso in un’ oscura piccolo stanza, nell’ orror delle tenebre la crede certamente molto maggiore di quello che con mani le toccherà; così, nel buio della loro cronologia, han fatto i chinesi e gli egizie e, con entrambi, i caldei.*]. (1744:§50)

Vico here moves from geographical space (“isolation”), through “cultural” space defined in terms of semiotics (“hieroglyphs”), to the bedroom where an individual *pars pro toto* figure is awaking and waiting to turn memory into perception and time into space. “Isolation” applies to all the

mentioned nations in the first age of history. This geographical *confinement* – a spatial enclosure akin to the enclosure of the physical and mental space of the *museo* – leads to an explanatory analogy. With respect to their knowledge of history, the isolated and hieroglyph writing peoples are comparable to a man sleeping in a “*piccola stanza*”, who wakes up in the middle of the night in total darkness, and in his fear believes his room (*stanza*) to be much larger than it is. The target of the analogy is unmistakably the historical self-understanding of the gentile nations and their *boria* (as they were awakening to history in the first stage of the ideal eternal history, the nations, out of fear confused a “very small” temporal stretch of history with a vast chronological abyss). Thus, the analogy substitutes space for time; it explains a historical experience with one of physical space at a particular time (at night) when it is difficult to perceive the surrounding room (in darkness).

We could say that the move from the level of the collective memory (the gentile nations) to that of individual sensory experience accomplishes a spacing of the historical memories of “the other”. Moreover, it is surely also possible to construe this as a passage from “place” to “place”, and thus as related to the passage between the loci of memory, which Fabian saw as the hidden constitution of anthropological representation. But again we observe that the concomitant denial of coevalness to the present “cultural” others is intrinsically related to a reinterpretation of what other scholars had taken to be the possible non-Biblical origin of the European tradition.

The analogy between the man waking in darkness and the nations actually leads directly to a concern with present “cultural” others and the understanding of their historical memories. Vico now enters a polemic with those Jesuits in China who had accepted the claims of the Chinese for their ancient wisdom and their chronology:

It is true that Father Michele Ruggieri, a Jesuit, declares that he has himself read books printed before the coming of Jesus Christ. It is true further that Father Martini, another Jesuit, in his *Sinica historia* ascribes a great antiquity to Confucius, which has led many into atheism [...]. Nevertheless Nicolas Trigaut, better informed than Ruggieri or Martini, writes in his *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* that printing was in use in China not more than two hundred years before in Europe, and that Confucius flourished not more than five hundred years before Christ. And the Confucian philosophy, like the priestly books of the Egyptians, in its few references to physical nature is rude and clumsy, and it is almost wholly devoted to a vulgar morality, the morality commanded to the people by their laws. (1744:§50)

Trigaut’s construal of Chinese history is here opposed to that of two other Jesuits missionaries to China, Ruggieri and Martini, whom Vico believes have been far too liberal in their assessment of the age of Chinese history, and thus reproduced the *boria* of Chinese ethnocentrism in European culture (much as Josephus had transmitted traditional errors). Moreover, this “cultural translation” threatened the belief in Biblical chronology (cf. Nic-

colini 1949, vol. 1: 34–35; Rossi 1984:174–175). Vico's concern is, we could say, with making the *stanza* of both natural and cultural historical time more *piccola* than the writers whom he wishes to refute.²² As a corollary to this, he also rejects the “recognition” of “the other” accomplished with the *ars memoria* as a matrix for “cross-cultural” comparison. Above, we saw that Bolzoni, regarding Valadés's “cultural translation” of Mexican glyphs in the idiom of the *ars memoria*, stated that he “offers a [...] new cultural translation [...] by associating them [Mexican hieroglyphs] with a *remote antiquity that the West regards with reverential fear* (the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt), as well as with [...] the art of memory” (cf. above, my italics). In relation to this translation, then, Vico's use of the art of memory establishes a counter-translation that establishes Egypt and present “cultural” other in the same historical place, the first age of the ideal universal history.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have shown that the *ars memoria* furnished Vico with an intellectual tool which he uses for different purposes, and that a concept of collective memory marked the space of the history of a class of pagan others. Firstly, on the level of the composition of the text, Vico employs the idiomatic resources of the *ars memoria* to *distance* himself from other scholars (and their erroneous attribution of images of/from other “cultures” to wrong historical and temporal places). Secondly, on the level of the object of investigation, memory defines and explains salient characteristics of Vico's scientific object (the *boriose memorie* of the gentile nations relocated to the *museo della credulità*). Thirdly, in between these levels (between the subject of writing and its gentile object), Vico also applies the matrix of memory to communicate with, and persuade, his reader (the *dipintura*/memory-image, the “trial” of previous scholarship with reference to the principles of the SN) of the soundness of his science.

With reference to the Vico scholars I have used, we could further conclude in the following way. Although Vico, as Mazzotta observed, refuted the hermetic cult of the Egyptian art of memory, this art is “still” one of the resources he uses to argue his case and make an intellectual space for his new science. In this sense the SN can be considered as related to the cultural model of the theatre of memory, as Verene maintained. *Pace* Verene, however, the memory theatre into which the reader of the SN is invited is not “a total anthropological topos”, it is reserved for a class of pagan others who share a particular kind of “erroneous” memory as a historical common trait.

Finally, how can we relate this reinterpretation of the status of memory in Vico to the wider intellectual context Fabian is concerned with? One the one

hand, the SN is surely an example of the spacing of the time of the “other” (a denial of coevalness to present Mexicans and Chinese). Vico, however, turns to memory in an explicitly polemical context, and he uses the mnemonic model in an explicit way. The *ars memoria* is consequently here not (yet?) a “hidden” mental habitus that destines cultural inquiry into the spatialization and visualization of cultural time. On the contrary, it furnishes Vico with a rhetorical and conceptual tool with which a confrontation with other scholars *and* the gentile nations themselves can be organized. This relation between memory and “cultural” time is thus more complex than the one Fabian has described. In particular, the case of the SN shows that the art of memory should not be construed as a unified code underlying all anthropological discourse and producing temporal “denial” and judgements of cultural worth in a similar way. Rather, in our case, it serves as the framework within which different views (missionaries and other scholars) of the value of historical memories of gentile nations are negotiated. Vico’s “anthropology” of memory is actually developed as a counter-memory to the hermetic tradition, and the denial of coevalness to present Chinese and Mexicans is intrinsically linked to a project that seeks to deny Egypt a place at the origin as a source of primordial wisdom. In this process, long before the concept of collective memory devised by Halbwachs, a concept of “collective memory” marked the space for an inquiry of memories conceived to be the “others” of “true” history.

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- 1 For the intellectual context of Vico's work, and the issue of the chronology of gentile "high cultures" in relation to Biblical history in particular, see Rossi (1984).
 - 2 First published in 1983.
 - 3 In citing from these works, I first list the year, and then, in the case of the 1725 and 1744 editions, the paragraph referred to (not pages). Citations from the 1730 edition, which has not been furnished with numbered paragraphs, will be to pages.
 - 4 We should here note that there is also a link between Vico and Degérando. Degérando was of Italian origin, and he had also stayed as a refugee in Naples, Vico's hometown. A few years after formulating the "temporalizing ethos of an emerging anthropology", he published a history of philosophy that became celebrated. *Histoire comparée des systèmes de philosophie* was published in 1803, three years after his programme for comparative ethnology, but in all probability based upon studies from the time before 1800. Here Degérando actually treats Vico quite extensively; not least of all, he comments upon the way Vico uses the form of writing to measure historical time in his ideal universal history: "Trois grandes périodes se montrent à lui au milieu des monuments de l'antiquité: celle des dieux, celle des héros, celle des hommes, ou les périodes des temps obscurs, fabuleux, historiques. A ces trois époques il fait correspondre trois langues: la première *hiéroglyphique* ou muette, la seconde *symbolique* ou par métaphores, la troisième *conventionnelle* (Degérando 1847, v.4 [1803] 151).
 - 5 These loci also constitute the topics of the discipline, the intellectual themes that the study of individual cultures will have to link up to, if they want to be more than mere travelogue: "anthropologists have been visiting and revisiting familiar intellectual places – marriage, couvade, mana, incest, totem and taboo, culture heroes, kula, potlatch, Crow kinship system and so on." Furthermore, regarding the history of such themes and topics, some of them are as old as the art of memory itself: "*through time*, often with astonishing continuity down to the beginning of recorded Western intellectual history, philosophers, *philosophes*, and anthropologists have returned to the same common places (often copying from each other) – savagery, barbarism, cannibalism" (ibid.:178, n. 7, Fabian's italics).
 - 6 There is a point in historical time when both the pagans and the Hebrews live in theocracies, controlled by divine law, but this shared "historical place" and socio-political organization is also rigidly separated, for the monotheistic religion of the Hebrews is true while that of the pagans is polytheistic and false.
 - 7 Vico is consistent in his use of architectonical metaphors to describe the NS; this is indeed rhetorically consistent with Verene's idea of the theatre of memory as its cultural model.
 - 8 They were moved to the first parts of the 1730 and 1744 edition (1744: §52–§53). Thus, the pillars are a "constant" building block that is moved around in the architectonics of the SN.
 - 9 Cf. Battistini on "moli": "gli obelischi o anche, nel lessico egittologico instauratosi a partire dalle metà del Quattrocento, le piramidi, qui mimeticamente evocate da Vico per connotare la saldezza dei propri principi" (Battistini in Vico [1725], fn. 1, p. 1874).
 - 10 Herodotus is not named in the 1725 edition; he is, however, listed as a source for the three ages in question in 1744 (§52).
 - 11 The topos was used by the Greeks themselves. For instance in the *Timaios* "Plato, [...],

seemed to state [...] that the Greeks were mere children by comparison to the Egyptians, whose splendid records covered millennia of Athenian history that the Athenians themselves had forgotten – not to mention the tale of a lost continent to the west, Atlantis, where civilization had once bloomed” (Grafton 1992:41).

- 12 Cf.: “Mas aunque parezca que esa carencia de letras era un grave defecto para poder consignar los sucesos pasados, en realidad de verdad no lo era, pues todos esos acontecimientos se transmitían a los venidores como por la mano” (cited *ibid.*:443)
- 13 “Las imágenes son ciertas formas y notas y representaciones de aquella cosa que queremos recordar: las cuales convendrá que las coloquemos en determinados lugares: como imágenes pueden ser los caballos, los leones, los libros, las piedras preciosas. Pues los lugares corresponden a la cera o a papel, y las imágenes hacen las veces de las letras, correspondiendo la disposición y colocación de las imágenes a la escritura y la pronunciación a la letra”.
- 14 Forty-two paragraphs are devoted to this.
- 15 This was a first-century dialogue, traditionally (and erroneously) ascribed to Cebes, the disciple of Socrates. In this work, an allegorical painting furnished the occasion for a discourse on morals.
- 16 Predictably, commentators have pointed towards Ripa’s *Iconologia* as a model for the iconography and emblematic character of the frontispiece. It is not my intention to interpret the image, only to comment upon its function in the text.
- 17 Among others, P. Rossi has already commented upon the memorial function of the *dipintura*: “L’uso delle dipinture e delle immagini in vista di un rafforzamento della memoria è legato a quella trattatistica della “memoria artificiale” che ebbe gran voga nel secolo del Rinascimento” (Rossi in Vico 1977:85–86, n. 1).
- 18 To be sure, we are not dealing here with an ekphrasis in the strict sense of the term. All the same, we are confronted with a crossing of semiotic registers here as well; the verbal part of the text refers to ideas and subject matter that Vico first represented in the visual and spatial register.
- 19 Immediately after this, Josephus moves on to the destruction of the world by water, i.e. one of the cataclysms Adam warned his progeny about. The caption of the next chapter is, “Concerning the flood; and after what manner Noah was saved in an ark [...]” (*ibid.*).
- 20 Walter Stephens has described the status of the column in some strands of early modern thought in the following way: “The Sethian columns are a monument because they do not represent just any knowledge. In fact, during the evolution from Josephus to the early eighteenth century, they came to represent *all* knowledge, rather than a few astrological discoveries. Because they are submerged by and triumph over a *universal* Flood, the Sethian columns represent the resistance of all *memoria literarum* to all forms of obliteration. In short, they represent the encyclopedia, the totality of human knowledge, conceived as a *quid*, a ‘lump sum’ rather than an infinite semiotic web of relationships” (Stephens 2005).
- 21 Josephus’s *Contra Apion* or *Against the Greeks*, where the author is mocking the vanity and “ethnocentrism” of the gentile Greeks, is a model for Vico’s notion of the “boria” of the nations.
- 22 Jesuits in China, like Martini, had actually applied the wider temporal framework of the *Septuagint*, which in comparison to Vulgate chronology allowed for an additional thousand years between creation and the present, to accommodate a Chinese chronology that appeared to be dangerously “deep”; actually, so profound that the bottom fell out of the Vulgate chronology. This use had even been sanctioned by Rome (McCalla 2006:41).

Churches and the Culture of Memory

A Study of Lutheran Church Interiors in Østfold, 1537–1700

Arne Bugge Amundsen

In most Norwegian communities the cultic space of the church was the most important place of assembly from the Middle Ages onwards. Since it was a place of great symbolic importance,¹ what happened in and to it was of major significance. The symbolic importance meant that the interpretation of the church building and its interior had many levels and actors.² On the ideological level it was the theology and theologians of the Christian church that dictated the normative interpretation, while the church's liturgy – the written rules for how the Christian cult was to be performed – “translated” the ideological interpretation into standard practice.

The artefactual character or materiality of the church building meant that it was also open to the “users” to interpret and use it for their own purposes.³ The norms for interpretation and use tended to come from above and outside, but it was in the local community and the congregation that these norms had to be translated and adapted.⁴

The Christian cult buildings and their fittings were not static. When the understanding of religion, piety, or respectable behaviour changed, it was in the church that people chose to manifest this in a concrete fashion. In a pre-modern society the church interior was scarcely regarded as a “historic monument” or “cultural heritage” that had to be protected from any change to shared eternal historical and cultural values. Precisely because the church interior has been linked to the way it has been used in different periods, it has been subjected to continuous modifications and negotiations about its use. During such processes one may envisage that certain objects and spatial dimensions quite easily become antiquated and are removed, while others are given new interpretations and uses. In the first case one can study how objects lose their meaning or are stripped of meaning, while in the second case one can see the outlines of a kind of biography of artefacts, as their meaning potential is so great that it makes sense to retain them even under new regimes of use and interpretation.

A special dimension of this concerns how the church interior has functioned as an expression for and a framework around religious memory. This

can be defined more exactly as a question of how collective, value-determined memories have been cognitively placed in or removed from church interiors.⁵ The ways in which this has happened can often be best studied in historical periods when changes in ideology and use have been dramatic and caused conflict. One such period was the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

Church Interiors in Radical Change?

The so-called Reformation that gradually gained a foothold in Northern and Western Europe in the sixteenth century was an ecclesiastical and religious rebellion. This movement was concerned, among other things, with the meaning of the church interior, the images and sculptures, vestments and altars.⁶ The most radical of the Reformation leaders claimed that God and religious truth could not be expressed in visual and physical forms, and that it was both blasphemous and confusing for believers if churches were filled with images, symbols, and adornment (cf. Gilje & Rasmussen 2002: 153ff). The Norwegian Reformation – imposed through Danish military power in 1537 – was of the more moderate Lutheran variant, and the doctrinal father himself, Martin Luther, gradually took a more nuanced view of the church interior. The Lutheran view was that, for example, images and liturgical equipment were a support for “weak minds”, for those who could not learn the religious truths solely by reading, listening, and singing “the Word of God” (Flemestad 1991: 109–115; Christie 1973 I: 99ff).

The Danish-Norwegian Lutheran church law in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contains remarkably little about the appearance of church interiors. The most necessary changes were to be implemented, the liturgy was to be reformed, and church interiors were to be “cleansed”, but at the same time it was important not to provoke the “common people” unnecessarily. The very first Danish-Norwegian Lutheran church law of 1539 ruled that all images that were objects of “idolatry” were to be removed from the churches. The same ruling was repeated at synods in Antvorskov in 1546 and Copenhagen in 1555.⁷ The synod in Bergen in 1589 is famous for its declaration that churches should have altarpieces without pictorial images (Christie 1973: I, 19). Yet the question still remains of what effect the Reformation actually had on the existing church buildings and interiors. Opinions have differed, but in recent years the consensus increasingly seems to be that a remarkably large proportion of the Catholic church fittings were allowed to remain in Norwegian churches after the Reformation – at any rate until the start of the seventeenth century.⁸ If this is true, it is conceivable that the Reformation did not entail such major changes of the church interior as a space bearing and framing religious memory.

Even the Lutheran tradition understood and emphasized the value of the

churches as an expression of a kind of historical continuity, and we find an example of this in the Danish bishop Peder Palladius. In his visitation book from the mid-1550s, which presumably reflects the consultations and discussions he had with priests, churchwardens, and congregations in the diocese of Sjælland, he states in several places that the churches are old and that they should be revered and honoured. It was essential to show respect for the work of the ancestors and to show consideration for the needs of posterity. The churches were also to be kept clean and tidy. The cemeteries had to be accessible so that people could visit their parents' graves, not to pray for them, but to contemplate that they themselves would die one day (Palladius 1925–1926: 27ff, 39f).

Palladius was also concerned that people should go to church, and that it should be “dearer than all other places in the world” to them: “your parish church is the house of God”. It was the parish churches that the bishop was concerned with, not churches that were independent of ordinary congregations such as monastic churches and cathedrals. For even if there were pulpits, baptismal fonts, and altars in these churches too, they lacked an ordinary congregation and the correct preaching of the word of God (Palladius 1925–1926: 38ff).

Østfold in the Reformation

To be able to look in a more concrete way at the different processes of change in Lutheran church interiors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I have chosen to make a concentrated investigation of the situation in Østfold, a county southeast of Oslo. When the Reformation was implemented there were around 44 churches⁹ in use in Østfold. Twenty-six of the medieval buildings were of stone, and they were allowed to stand untouched for a long time. The stone churches were solid, and that made it tricky to motivate the peasants to build new churches.¹⁰ The fate of the medieval stave churches was much more varied. In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they were replaced by more solid log churches. The Reformation thus did not lead to major changes in the actual number of churches. It was not until more than a hundred years later that old churches were replaced on a larger scale, and this process was primarily due to the far-reaching decay suffered by the medieval stave churches. In addition, it is conceivable that it was not until this time that there were sufficient financial resources in the local congregations to build new churches (cf. Nilsen 1987: 67).

Church Interiors Viewed through a Bishop's Eyes

From the century of the Reformation there are very few sources saying what happened to church interiors in Østfold. The synod in Bergen 1589 placed

the emphasis on the churches having separate pews for men and women, a pulpit and two chairs in the chancel. One of the chairs was to be used by the priest when he heard confession before communion; the other was for the bishop when he visited (Fæhn 1994: 167). No similar synods are known from Østlandet, but there are detailed descriptions of the visitation trips made by Bishop Jens Nielsen (1538–1600) in this diocese in the 1590s. Jens Nielsen visited most of the churches in his large diocese, which also comprised Bohuslän in present-day Sweden.

It is striking, however, how little these accounts have to say about the churches and their furnishings. What is commented on most often is the state of the churches, whether they are in decay, or if the furnishings are “beautiful”, and the bishop always urged the congregations to ensure that churches and cemeteries were well maintained. On some occasions he also commented on new altarpieces, pulpits, or seats for the congregation. There is little information about Catholic church furnishings. He described the large pre-Reformation altarpiece in Ringsaker church as “a very beautiful altarpiece, than which there is no more beautiful in Norway” (Nielsen 1885: 304), and he evidently was not outraged or disturbed by the fact that it had a series of saints’ images. Only in a few cases did Jens Nielsen actively intervene to remove Catholic furnishings. During his tour of Bohuslän in 1594 he ordered the parish priest to get rid of the “images” in Näsing church, and he gave the same order about the two small stone altars standing on the south and north side of the nave in Forshälla church. He merely mentioned that the two altars had a *skruff* – a kind of canopy – but nothing about whether they bore images of saints. Instead of altars the churches were to build pews. There must have been a delay in the implementation of the order in Forshälla, for the bishop had to repeat it in 1597 (Nielsen 1885: 117, 151f, 502). In that year Jens Nielsen was in Skjeberg church, and there he “reminded” the parish priest, Søren Nielsen, about “a small bell hanging in the chancel”. This must have been a mass bell, which was rung in the days before the Reformation when the words instituting the Eucharist were read at the altar. This custom had been continued in Skjeberg, and therefore the bishop asked the parish priest to take it down and put it away so that it could no longer be used according to the Catholic rite (Nielsen 1885: 485).

The final example of the bishop’s intervention against Catholic church furnishings is interesting. In 1597 he was visiting Onsøy, and in a conversation with Lady Dorte Juel at the manor Elingård and the parish priest Hans Bang he was told that in Ingedal church, a chapel of ease under Skjeberg, “there are many images to which many people go to pray”. After this conversation the bishop wrote a stern letter to the parish priest Søren Nielsen in Skjeberg – a church he had just visited – asking him to remove these “statues and images” immediately if he wished to avoid a formal reprimand (Nielsen 1885: 551). Exactly what kind of images these were is not stated by the

bishop. It is not inconceivable that the images had something to do with the fact that Ingedal church was a votive church, whose reputation lasted well into the nineteenth century (Eriksen 1988: 36ff). The local parish priest, in other words, had not bothered to mention this when the bishop came on his visit, and it is uncertain whether the bishop himself had ever been in the chapel of ease and seen the images whose removal he demanded.

A possible interpretation of Jens Nielsen's strategy in his encounter with pre-Reformation church furnishings is that he only demanded the removal of objects linked to some form of "abuse", for example, when saints' images went hand in hand with a belief that saints could intervene in people's lives,¹¹ when the mass bells were used to support Catholic doctrine about the sacraments, or simply when they were in the way of new furnishings, as was the case with the side altars in Forshälla. If so, this corroborates the view that the Reformation did not entail major and immediate changes in church interiors.

Preserved and Changed

If we turn to look at the sources from the start of the seventeenth century which give a more systematic overview of church interiors in Østfold,¹² the picture becomes more complicated. These sources *can* be interpreted as showing that very much was removed or changed in the first 75 years after the Reformation. This particularly affected saints' altars, saints' images, and liturgical equipment. The traces that exist of the opposite are strikingly few and so distinctive that one suspects that the opinions held by Jens Nielsen and other sixteenth-century clerics about necessary changes in Lutheran church interiors were selective and did not cover what had actually happened since 1537. It may very well be the case that Jens Nielsen's comments from the 1590s concerned the last of what remained of Catholic furnishings in the churches of Østfold, and that he merely completed a process that was almost accomplished.¹³

We can start with what we know for sure to have been preserved. Even the Lutheran church required an altar. It was from the altar that Lutheran priests conducted the liturgy and administered holy communion – which was one of the seven Catholic sacraments that was retained – so it was no problem to keep the old communion tables in the church chancels. The only change that was made was to remove the saints' relics there. This meant that the altars were literally emptied of their content and adopted for use in a new religious cult.

Baptism was the other of the two sacraments that the Lutheran church retained from the Roman Catholic church. This meant that the old fonts likewise did not immediately pose a problem in Lutheran churches. One issue, however, concerned the placing of the font. In the Catholic age the rule was that the font stood by the main entrance to the church, at the west wall of the

nave.¹⁴ This practice seems to have continued after the Reformation. The font in Moss church, which was built in 1607, stood “according to the old custom” at the far end of the nave, right up until 1735.

What was a new phenomenon in the seventeenth-century Lutheran church interior in Østfold, however, was the baptisteries or *dåpshus*. Thirteen churches in Østfold had structures of this kind.¹⁵ Most of them seem to have been installed in the first decades of the seventeenth century, but very few have survived. They consisted of a railing around the font, enclosing an area large enough for the priest and the people accompanying the child to be baptized. Perhaps these baptisteries were physically dependent on having the font placed at the entrance to the church in the west. It is uncertain whether it worked in the way that can still be seen in Glemmen church, that on the other side of the aisle there was yet another enclosure with a railing where the women awaiting churching after childbirth could gather with their escort (cf. Fett 1909: 20). It is not obvious why these baptisteries were installed. One possible explanation may be a desire to prevent parts of the christening rite from being performed outside or at the church door. This had been the case with the Catholic rite of baptism, in which the initial exorcism of devils was undertaken before the child came into the actual church. This was not possible in the Lutheran baptismal rite, but it continued to be practised in many places as late as the start of the seventeenth century. The Oslo bishop Niels Simonsen Glostrup (c.1585–1639) mentioned this in 1619 both in Hobøl and in Eidsberg,¹⁶ and these were among the Østfold churches that acquired baptisteries. Exactly when the baptisteries in these two churches were constructed is unknown, but it is striking that the oldest known baptisteries are from the years around 1617–1619. In other words, they may have come into existence at the urging of Bishop Glostrup, perhaps connected with an attempt to remove Catholic “abuses”.

Some of the Catholic altar equipment was also retained. The Lutheran communion liturgy required wine in a cup (chalice) and bread on a plate (paten). The chalice and paten tended to be of silver or gilt silver, and the very value of the metal meant that this part of the church property was not discarded if it could still be used. There are also several traces of pre-Reformation chalices and patens being kept in Lutheran churches. The pre-Reformation altars had had candlesticks, and this was also something the Lutheran churches needed. In the seventeenth century there are many records of “ancient” candlesticks of iron, tin, and wood still surviving, but little of this has been preserved to modern times.

The priest’s vestments and the textiles that covered the communion table were also needed in Lutheran churches. This was fragile material which quickly deteriorated in cold, damp churches, but it seems as if they were kept in many cases, and without confessional scruples, as long as they could be used.

A final part of the pre-Reformation church fittings which seems to have been retained for the most part is the church bells. If we confine ourselves to extant church bells, this was the case in at least eleven of Østfold's churches,¹⁷ but we may presume that none of the existing church bells was replaced as a consequence of the Reformation. More special were the many occurrences of "monk bells", the small mass bells which hung in the chancels of churches before the Reformation. In the Lutheran liturgy there was no use for these bells, yet they were kept. As we saw above, Jens Nielsen demanded the removal of these bells in Skjeberg in 1597 because they were being used in the Catholic way. In the light of this it is striking that bells of this kind are mentioned in Østfold churches as late as the eighteenth century, and some of them still survive. The probable explanation is that the bells were retained, but their use was changed. A possible explanation can be found in an account from Rakkestad in the late eighteenth century, which states that the bell in the chancel was used every time the sacristan came forward in the chancel to say his special "introductory prayer". From Eidsberg we learn that the small bells that hung in the chancel in all three churches in the parish in the 1790s were used to signal "the end of the service", more specifically, when the sacristan read the "closing prayer" (Wilse 1963: 29, 39, 41). If this was the case in the other churches where the "monk bells" were retained, it means that these bells had undergone a change of function. They were "translated" from a Catholic to a Lutheran liturgy. The two "sacristan prayers" referred to at Rakkestad and Eidsberg were not an established part of the liturgy before 1685, but they seem to have come into use in the diocese of Akershus from the 1640s onwards (Fæhn 1994: 50f). We have no information from Østfold about what the bells might have been used for before this time. One possibility, of course, is that they were rung to mark when the priest was about to begin his sermon or when confession and communion were to start. The person who controlled the use of these bells was presumably the sacristan, whose title in Norwegian, *klokker*, comes from the word for a bell, *klokke*; from his fixed seat in the chancel of the church – the *klokkerstol* – he acted as a kind of master of ceremonies and directed or marked the beginning and end of the different parts of the Lutheran service. The old monk bells thus became an important symbol of this liturgical function.

Of special interest from our point of view is what happened to the images in the churches. The objects that seem to have been least problematic to retain were the crucifixes, depicting Christ on the cross. In eleven of Østfold's churches there were medieval crucifixes in the seventeenth century.¹⁸ They may originally have been placed over cross altars of the type found in Våler church, they may have adorned the main altar, or they could have been part of the chancel arch. The probable reason why the crucifixes survived is that depicting Christ suffering on the cross was also acceptable in Lutheran



The interior of the old church in Trømborg, Østfold, as it was at the time it was demolished in the 1870s. It still has its early Lutheran elements: Pulpit, cathedra altarpiece, gallery and pews.

piety, where meditation on the passion of Christ was a central component. In Rødnes the medieval crucifix was even incorporated as the central panel of an altarpiece from the first part of the eighteenth century.

Apart from what has been mentioned hitherto, however, it is striking how little was preserved of interior details from pre-Reformation times. Admittedly, we do not know so much about how the churches of Østfold were decorated in the time before the Reformation, but the proximity to rich farming areas, nobility and manor houses makes it probable that many of the churches had lavish and ornate altarpieces and saint's images in relatively large numbers (cf. Christie & Christie 1959: I, 131). In practice most of this must have been removed, and this may have happened as early as the sixteenth century. The reason why so little has been preserved is presumably twofold. Firstly, the "adornment waves" in the seventeenth century had the result that medieval interiors – to the extent that they still survived – were perceived as antiquated and ill-suited to the purpose; secondly, it was important to remove the last memories of the time before the Reformation. Communion tables, fonts, vestments, communion vessels, and church bells could be neutralized or reinterpreted for the Lutheran use of the churches. This was not so easy in the case of side altars, altar images, altarpieces, saint's images, and other sculptures or pictures.

We know very little about how the local congregations reacted to the removal of important furnishings from the churches. Yet perhaps we get a tiny glimpse of the drama this caused, from an episode in Skiptvet. The church

in Skiptvet was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and it must have been furnished with objects reflecting this, even if none of them is preserved. Around 1570 Ingeborg Kjellsdatter had had a vision in which the Virgin Mary revealed herself sitting on a throne in heaven. The Virgin had asked the woman to urge people to stick to the old faith and the old saints.¹⁹ The description of the Virgin of the vision corresponds to a traditional depiction of her. Perhaps Ingeborg Kjellsdatter's experience was a final appeal to heavenly and earthly powers to stop the transformation of the interior of Skiptvet church. The removal of the Marian iconography from this and other churches was a conspicuous way to mark a radical change in religious memory.

The Old in the New

In view of the fact that most saints' images seem to have been removed in the sixteenth century, it is interesting to see that there are occasions when they were reused and reinterpreted. The altar in Trømborg is described around 1724 as a "stone foot, and upright image of Mary". The church had been sold in 1723 to private owners who modernized it. The old altar was then regarded as "both too small and insignificant". This contained no clear critique of the image of the Virgin or the links to the Catholic period; it simply did not suit the style of the times to have such modest furnishings. And so the altar was dismantled. The medieval stone table of the altar was reused as a door slab in front of the west entrance, while the image of the Virgin was taken by a farmer who lived near the church.²⁰

In Rokke church a wooden sculpture of St Olav was kept. Its use and interpretation are uncertain, but there was obviously a flourishing local narrative tradition about this figure, for instance that "the Rokke four-leaf clover", as it was called, had kicked the head of a man walled into the north wall of the church. This could be a variant of a legend of St Olav, and it suggests that people continued to identify the figure as the saint-king. What kind of altarpiece the church in Rokke had after the Reformation is unknown,²¹ but in 1685 it acquired a new one. The person responsible for making it was the carpenter Lars Ovesen of Fredrikshald. He did so to the best of his ability, but he simultaneously made use of three medieval sculptures that may already have been in the church. A sculpture of St Catherine was given a book in her hand, evidently a more Lutheran symbol than a wheel, which alluded to her martyrdom.²² A book was also given to another sculpture of a female medieval saint.²³ Finally, Lars Ovesen removed a crozier and a mitre from a third figure of a saint and placed it on the top of the altarpiece to represent Christ with the cross-flag. How these figures were placed or used in Rokke church before 1685 is unknown.²⁴ It is possible that the Roman Catholic saints' attributes were replaced with books and cross-

flags long before Lars Ovesen used the sculptures. If so, it is not inconceivable that they stood on the altar – perhaps together with a “reinterpreted” figure of Olav – until the new altarpiece was installed in 1685.

The most remarkable example of the reuse of Catholic church furnishings can be found in Onsøy church, which, after a fire in 1590, was fitted out with a large pre-Reformation altarpiece from the 1520s. It was a brilliant work of art, donated to the church by Lady Dorte Juel of Elingård, whose family had previously given it to a monastery in or close to Oslo. No attempts were made here to reinterpret the many saints’ images in Lutheran terms. It may have been accepted for the same reason as Bishop Jens Nielsen used the Catholic altarpiece in Ringsaker church at the same time, that is, because it was “a very beautiful altarpiece”.²⁵

What, then, replaced the Roman Catholic church furnishings? If we concentrate on the period up to around 1700, we see four phenomena that were particularly characteristic of the new Lutheran church interior: pulpit, altarpiece, pews, and galleries.²⁶ Behind this were fundamental ideas in the new Lutheran view of what divine service was. The priest was supposed to preach “the Word of God” to the congregation, and when he did so he was God’s representative on earth. The Eucharist was the administration of the body and blood of Christ, but when it happened, the congregation had to be fully aware of what they were receiving. Calm and dignity had to prevail in the congregation. During the service they therefore had to maintain a certain order and keep their faces turned towards the priest and the altar, with the men on the south side and the women on the north side of the nave. As the population rose in the seventeenth century, many churches became too small, so that galleries were needed, to hold the young and unmarried parishioners especially.

Pulpits

In the 1550s Peder Palladius was concerned that the pulpit should be designed so that it was elevated above all the seats in the church, “to the honour and glory of God’s blessed word” (Palladius 1925–1926: 30). We know very little about when Østfold’s Lutheran churches were given pulpits, but it is most likely that it happened during the first decades after 1537.²⁷ The pulpit was placed on the north or the south side of the entrance to the chancel, so that the priest could see and be seen by as many people as possible when he delivered his sermon. The oldest surviving pulpit in Østfold, and probably also in Norway, is from Degernes church (Fett 1909: 18). It bears the date 1554 and has a simple form, with four sides and panels. Many of the churches probably received pulpits of this type at roughly the same time, but whereas many of them were replaced as a consequence of a preference for new styles and better church economy in the seventeenth cen-

tury, the Degernes pulpit was retained. The only thing that happened to it was that figures of the apostles were added to it in 1698, in keeping with the baroque taste.

In some other churches in Østfold, the first generation of sixteenth-century pulpits stayed in place. Otherwise it seems as if many of the first, simply designed pulpits in Østfold were replaced during the seventeenth century. The earliest example appears to have been Hobøl church, which was given a new pulpit in 1602. In a number of other churches the pulpits were replaced in the 1620s and 1630s. Some of this new generation of pulpits had inscriptions stating the position the priest had when he preached his sermon and what "the Word of God" meant to those who heard it. This was the message that was also underlined when many of the pulpits in this period were fitted with a canopy.²⁸ The oldest known inscription of this type in Østfold is on the new pulpit in Hobøl church from 1602. Here both texts are in Latin, and they are the two classical passages for pulpit inscriptions: Luke 11:28, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it", and Luke 10:16, "He that heareth you heareth me". Somewhat more complex was the new pulpit in Idd church from 1656. The texts were identical to those in Hobøl, but whereas Luke 11:28 was in Danish, Luke 10:16 was in Latin. This shows that the new type of pulpit literally spoke two languages, one directed at the congregation and one directed at the priest. The congregation were supposed to hear and heed "the Word of God", but they also had to hear the priest's speech as divine speech and follow his authority as expounder of the meaning of "the Word of God".

Another and perhaps equally common way to underline the message of the sermon was to furnish the pulpits with pictures or sculptures. As a rule it was the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John who were depicted. This gave the congregation a pictorial impression of the New Testament texts on which the priest based his sermons. Even more painstakingly made was the pulpit in Eidsberg church from 1662. It was adorned with figures of the apostles, but in addition it was given a sculpture of Christ himself. A number of angel heads were also placed on the pulpit, and on the steps up to the pulpit there were figures depicting Adam and Eve.²⁹ The canopy over the pulpit also had angel heads and female figures allegorically representing the five central Christian virtues: *caritas*, *spes*, *fides*, *constantia*, and *pietas*,³⁰ the virtues that the priest's sermon exhorted the congregation to display.

The pulpit in Onsøy church from 1594 is distinctive. Its four sides have paintings of the fall of man, the birth of Jesus, the crucifixion, and the arms of the donors. In addition it has three Latin inscriptions recording these three important events in the Christian story of salvation. In isolation it is conceivable that this pulpit is heavily oriented to hope and penitence. The donor, Lady Dorte Juel of Elingård, had been widowed in 1588, and by inscribing

the names of her late husband and herself in the pulpit through the coats of arms, she also put the story of salvation into her own pious universe: everyone shall die, but through the birth and passion of Jesus, salvation awaits those who believe.³¹

Altarpieces

Altar adornments are the trickiest question as regards the changes to the early Lutheran church interior. We have seen that a few of the churches in Østfold were able to reuse a selection of their medieval sculptures as altar images. In most cases, however, we do not know what kind of images or altarpieces the very earliest Lutheran churches were furnished with. It may have been possible, for example, at first to retain the crucifix, which according to Catholic tradition was the minimum decoration over a high altar (Christie & Christie 1959: I, 108). Some pre-Reformation crucifixes were indeed preserved in the Østfold churches, as we have seen.

What is clear, however, is that instead of the Catholic pictorial universe that disappeared during the sixteenth century there came a Lutheran textual universe. An interesting example of this is, once again, connected to Bishop Jens Nielsen, who had small prayer texts printed in several different years. He took these texts along on his visitation tours and distributed them among the priests. It looks as if one idea behind these texts was that they were to be placed on boards hung in the churches.³² None of these prayer tablets is preserved, but the initiative shows how important it was for the Lutheran clergy that instructive and meditative texts were a part of the new ideal of piety and that such texts were visible inside the churches.

This becomes even clearer when we look at the oldest known Lutheran altarpieces in Østfold, those known as the catechism altarpieces. As the name suggests, these mostly lacked pictures and sculptures, consisting solely of texts with a central position in Martin Luther's small catechism. This was the foundation on which the Lutheran clergy instructed their congregations in the new doctrine, and in the countryside some of the priest's sermons actually consisted of an exposition of different parts of the catechism. The idea on which these altarpieces was based seems to have come from Denmark, communicated to Norway through the Bergen bishop Anders Foss at the end of the 1580s (Bugge 1991: 88; Fæhn 1994: 169). Tablets like these are known from Vestlandet from the latter part of the sixteenth century, and that is where most of them are to be found, but about ten of them were also set up in the churches of Østfold in the early seventeenth century.³³ They normally displayed the main texts in the catechism, especially the Lord's Prayer, the commandments, and the words instituting the last supper.

We may assume that the catechism boards had several functions. A fairly obvious function was to show that the catechism was a book with letters that

could be read, and when the priest expounded the catechism from the pulpit, the congregation could see the texts he was explaining. Another function was to tone down the pictorial character of the church and underline the significance of “the Word of God”. It therefore seems natural to view the catechism boards as an attempt to move the Lutheran church interior in a radical Reformation direction. Yet another function was to show the congregation what “the Word of God” actually looked like, that it had a visible and material dimension. Along with the fact that very much of the pre-Reformation pictorial decoration was actually removed, the introduction of text-based altarpieces must have been a very strong signal that Lutheran piety placed the emphasis on reading, meditating, and contemplating “the Word of God”. At the same time, it is interesting that this part of the new church interior was not introduced until two or three generations after the Reformation.

The Sjælland bishop Peder Palladius can provide us with a key to how the Lutheran clergy envisaged the use of such catechism altarpieces. In his visitation book he has what must be read as a description of the principles for a proper church interior. It was supposed to have a pulpit, font, and altar, as had been the practice “from time immemorial”. The font was to stand at the back of the church, the pulpit on the south side of the opening into the chancel, and the altar in the chancel itself. In the pulpit the priest was to preach the word of God, and point with one hand to the font to remind the congregation of their baptism. With the other hand he was to point towards the altar and explain to the listeners how important communion was. These two sacraments “are the two seals that hang on the letter that was given from heaven by Moses and by our Lord Jesus Christ, where the ten commandments, the creed, and the Lord’s Prayer are written”. This letter was to be the believers’ “proper letter of indulgence”.

The congregation, according to Palladius, were supposed to sit with their backs to the font and know that one only needs to be baptized once, but turn their faces towards the altar, because communion is something they will enjoy until their death. The font, the pulpit, and the altar symbolized water, spirit, and blood, reminding all believers about eternal life (Palladius 1925–1926: 30ff).

Here Palladius describes not just an ideal for the physical appearance of a Lutheran church interior, but also an ideal for how it was to be used and to function in the minds of the believers. In his presentation the church becomes an image of the dynamics of Lutheran piety. And the “new letter of indulgence” that the two sacraments confirmed thus consisted of three key texts: the ten commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the creed – or the central texts of the catechism board. In this way Palladius has also given an indication of how these boards could be used to teach people the right faith and instruct the congregation about the meaning of the church interior. In

both respects the church was perceived as something that could maintain the memory and awareness of the believer's life from birth to death.

A catechism altarpiece was donated to Berg church in 1615 by the feudal lord Gerlof Nettelhorst of Os. Unlike many other such altarpieces it bears only the words with which the Eucharist was instituted.³⁴ The same applies to the catechism altarpieces in Idd and Skjeberg from the 1650s.³⁵ On the one in Idd church from 1656, the main panel bears the words that instituted the Eucharist, but they are enclosed by traditional stylistic elements from the baroque, and the altarpiece itself is divided into a main panel, an upper piece, and a top. It may have been for financial reasons that the donors, the parish priest Niels Olufsen Dorph and his wife, did not have the altarpiece painted with a picture of the last supper. However, Dorph may also have had ideological reasons for giving it this design. A baroque catechism altarpiece was intended to signal that even new ideals of style could be combined with a radical Reformation theology that was critical of images.³⁶

When the only text on these altarpieces is the words of the institution, this is a significant reduction compared to the older examples. It was no longer all the central texts of the catechism that were displayed, and the link to the priest's instruction in the catechism from the pulpit was no longer as explicit. Instead the text on the board was more closely linked to the administration of the Eucharist. The didactic dimension of the boards was thus weakened, and the function as text was more closely linked to the actual altar. But the altarpieces still bear "the Word of God" as text, not as image. It may have been fear of excessive dominance of pictures in the church that led to the retention of this form for catechism boards.

When such altarpieces appear in such central churches, coming from such important donors as in this case, it is all the more striking if we consider it in the light of the fact that a completely new type of Lutheran altarpiece arose in the churches of Østfold in the mid-seventeenth century. The old type of simple, text-oriented altarpieces were increasingly replaced by more complicated constructions dominated by painted images and sculptures. These altarpieces follow a certain pattern that could be modified to suit the circumstances (cf. Flemestad 1991: 121f). Since the altarpiece was placed on the actual altar, where the elements of the Eucharist were blessed, and since it was the visual impression that struck the communicants as they received the Eucharist, Jesus's crucifixion or the institution of the Eucharist were the main motifs in the lower panel of the altarpiece. The motif could be cut into three parts or there could be a painting inset into the altarpiece, often flanked by two representatives of the old covenant, Moses and Aaron. Over the picture of the crucifixion was a picture of the resurrection, showing that Jesus overcame death, and the top piece showed the ascension. Placed around the pictures of the resurrection and the ascension there could be images or sculptures of the evangelists or the apostles. On top of it all it was

common to have a sculpture of Christ with his feet on a globe, holding a flag of victory in his left hand and raising his right hand in a benedictory gesture. This pose of Christ's went under the name *Salvator Mundi*, the Saviour of the World. It was not unusual for this iconographic model to include a royal monogram. Apart from the royal monogram, the description above corresponds exactly to the altarpiece in Eidsberg church from 1651. The earliest examples of this type are probably those in the churches of Råde, Tomb, and Våler, where they were installed in the late 1630s. As time passed, more and more churches acquired them.

The new programme for baroque altarpieces, in the style that replaced the catechism altarpieces, are simultaneously an expression of the increasing use of pictures in the Lutheran churches of Østfold. This change occurred especially in the latter part of the seventeenth century. A "picture programme" took the place of a "text programme" in the design of the most central part of the church, the altar. To put it another way: it was not until over a century after the Reformation that a distinct Lutheran pictorial world arose³⁷ and made itself felt in earnest in the churches of Østfold.³⁸

The Ordered Interior

The Lutheran Reformation represented a concentration on preaching "the Word of God" and thus required designing the church interior to suit the activity of "listening". The congregation would no longer be able to move freely around in the nave, but were placed so that they could hear the priest's sermon. The material expression of this was the seats or pews. It is uncertain whether there were seats in medieval churches too.

In the 1550s Peder Palladius had many opinions about the design and use of church pews. The congregation had to sit and stand by turns, but they were not supposed to kneel in the pews or sink as they sat in them, as that could make them sleepy. Nor were they supposed to sit with their backs to the priest. And Palladius recommended using the material from the discarded saints' altars to build pews (Palladius 1925–1926: 33, 37).

We do not know how early the churches of Østfold were fitted with Lutheran pews, but the top of a seat in Hvaler church bears the date 1569. We should probably envisage that Lutheran church seats in an ordinary farming district in Østfold were linked to the different farms in the parish. Each farm had its seat, distributed among the man's side in the south of the nave and the women's side in the north. There was room for adults and children, the family and its servants. It is possible that the first Lutheran seats were actually just booths of a kind where people could stand, giving them something to lean their backs against (Fæhn 1994: 169f).

In 1634 King Christian IV addresses the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in Akershus diocese, asking them to ensure that galleries were built in

all the churches. Christian IV was concerned that his subjects should be pious, penitent, and anxious to avert divine punishment being visited on the community. At the same time, the seventeenth century was a period of population growth. The pews in the nave could not hold all the young persons who had to attend services. It was therefore necessary to build galleries in the churches so that these groups – in fitting order – could contribute to the welfare of the kingdoms. The King's order seems to have propelled the development of church interiors that was already in progress. Bishop Jens Nielsen mentions newly built galleries in several churches as early as the 1590s (Nielsen 1885: 94, 313, 350, 475). The oldest gallery named from Østfold is in Berg church, which acquired a west gallery in 1613. Most of the galleries, however, appear to have been built in the second half of the seventeenth century, and in this period several of the existing galleries were also expanded.

The nave and the chancel of a church had been separated in the Middle Ages by a partition or a physical boundary, which in practice made it difficult for the congregation to see everything that took place in the chancel. What happened to these chancel partitions after the Reformation is not easy to determine. The placing of pulpits in the space leading into the chancel might indicate that the old chancel walls were removed or at least reshaped. In view of this it is interesting that new chancel partitions were built in several churches in the seventeenth century, often designed as a baluster at the bottom and perhaps latticework above it. The opening between the chancel and the nave could be marked with a door in this railing (Fæhn 1994: 173). This meant that the congregation were not prevented from seeing what the priest was doing at the altar, while simultaneously marking that the chancel was the special domain of the priest (and the sacristan) and a place for the holy of holies that a Lutheran Christian encountered during a service, namely, confession and communion. Chancel partitions of this kind are known from nine or ten churches in Østfold.³⁹

Whether there was a partition or not, it was clear that, even in Lutheran churches, the chancel was a special part of the sacred space. This was where the altar stood and the priest administered the confession of sins and distributed divine grace through the Eucharist. The bread and wine were given at the altar, but everyone who took communion first had to confess his or her sins and hear the remission of sins from the priest. As mentioned earlier, the synod of Bergen in 1589 ruled that there should be a chair in the chancel where the priest could sit while hearing the confession. Some of the early confessionals may have been from before the Reformation (Christie & Christie 1959: I, 108), but there is no evidence of this in the sources. It is not until the seventeenth century that confessionals are mentioned in Østfold. Very few churches had separate rooms for these seats, so they tended to be placed by the north wall of the chancel. The first record of a separate con-

fessional in Østfold is from Idd church, where one was set up in 1629. We know nothing about what it looked like. It may have been a simple chair for the priest, but where there was enough space for it the practice was probably what we know from Moss church, where a confessional was set up in 1637 with a place for parishioners to kneel while making their confession.

The order that is often associated with the Lutheran church interior seems to have been implemented especially in the seventeenth century. That was when the galleries, chancel partitions, baptisteries, and confessionals were installed. It is likely that pews had largely been in place already in the sixteenth century. Chancel partitions and confessionals, however, were in one way or another a continuation of pre-Reformation tradition, and the division of the church into a man's side and a woman's side was probably not a Lutheran invention either. The most typical Lutheran dimension in the design of the interior was the systematic arrangement to achieve the collective concentration on listening to "the Word of God". The pews were a counterpart to the pulpit. In addition there was the civilizing dimension that can be detected behind King Christian IV's initiatives: the interior of the church was to be designed so that everyone, according to rank and position, should take part in the collective cult in order to ensure the well-being of the kingdom.

The Lutheran Place of Memory

So far this study has concerned how the Lutheran authorities thought and acted in their encounter with church interiors which had to be changed in line with the new religion and the new ideals of piety. Of course, they had an administrative and ideological power on their side, yet the legislative basis for the changes had been modest and laconic. As a result, for example, bishops and priests had to interact and negotiate with local congregations to be able to implement the desired changes. The importance of this negotiation situation was not lessened by the fact that the Lutheran Reformation allowed the local churches to remain a kind of freeholders: tax revenues and landed property were the churches' only source of capital and income, and major investments in most cases had to be financed through donations and extra contributions from private actors. These people could thus act with a great degree of independence on the matter of how their donation was to be used in concrete, material form.

Most of Østfold's parishes consisted largely of peasants, and there were not so many rich and powerful individuals who could make their mark on the church with their joy of giving and their need to show off. In such places, objects could be given by a group of peasants together or by a local official. More interesting are the cases where individual families or constellations of well-off donors set their stamp on a whole church in the course of a few years. A good example of this is Eidsberg church. Eidsberg was a large and



In 1678 a merchant in Christiania, Anders Andersen Trøgstad, set up this epitaph in the church of Trøgstad, Østfold. The epitaph was dedicated to the eternal local memory of his mother, his father, his grandfather – and himself. (Photograph: Arthur Sand)

rich living for a priest, and it was the seat of central civil officials such as the bailiff and the district judge. In 1651 the parish priest Hans Bertelsen Mule (died 1667)⁴⁰ and the bailiff Jens Nielsen Biering donated the church's new altarpiece, and both had their names centrally placed on it. Around 1658 the parish priest Mule set up a large epitaph (215 by 129 cm) to himself and his family inside the church, and in 1662 Mule and Biering paid for a new pulpit. It too was adorned with the initials of the donors and their wives.

In Trøgstad church there is a parallel from the mid-seventeenth century. In 1655 the former bailiff Jørgen Nielsen Holst (1599–1676) and his wife Maren Jensdatter Pharo (1612–1702) set up an epitaph to themselves and all their children. Several of the children were dead by then, but the husband and wife were still alive. An inscription recorded that the epitaph was donated to Trøgstad church “in honour of the name of God” and “for the adornment of the church”. The donors were depicted in a praying position under Christ on the cross, and the epitaph bore the inscriptions “Memento mori” (“Remember that you will die”) and “Jesus Christ's blood makes us clean from all sins”. Posterity would perhaps emphasize that Jørgen Nielsen Holst was a powerful landowner and an unpopular bailiff (Amundsen 2004: 58f, 65). Yet he and his wife were also to attend services in Trøgstad church for 21 and 47 years respectively after 1655, regarding the epitaph to themselves and their family, where they could read that they would die and that their only hope was Christ and his forgiveness of their sins. What today's observer might see as a funeral monument to people who enjoyed power could thus have been read at the time just as much as a collective reminder of the transience of this world and of pious Lutheran ideals.

Both Eidsberg and Trøgstad are examples of how officials and big landowners could act to influence the design of local church interiors in the mid-seventeenth century. In the southern province of Østfold the situation was different. Especially in parishes like Rygge, Råde, Tune, Onsøy, and Borge there were large noble estates where the owners were able for generations to set their mark on the local churches as donors and pious Lutherans. Onsøy church is an example of the form this could take in practice. The church and its furnishings were destroyed by fire in both 1582 and 1590. This made it possible for the noble owners of the manor of Elingård, Sir Henrik Brockenhuus and Lady Dorte Juel, to shape the interior of the church at their own expense and in keeping with their own taste. Between the two fires, in 1588, Henrik Brockenhuus died, so it was his widow who was given the responsibility for the final redecoration of the church: the pulpit, font, church bells, and much besides. In addition, as we have seen, she moved to the church a large pre-Reformation altarpiece. Some of this was paid for out of the church revenue, while she gave advances to cover the rest. As late as in 1603 the church owed her almost 1,000 riksdaler (Lavold 2001: 167).

The most interesting thing about this is that Lady Dorte exploited the

situation to turn Onsøy church into a memorial to her late husband, herself, and their families. The church bell from 1593 tells of this scenography. It bears the inscription: “Lord God help me on this island to live honourably and to die blessed [...] in the year 1593 the honourable and well-born Lady Doritte of Ellin, widow of the late Henrich Brockenhusis, had this bell cast in Oslo at the church’s expense, Lord God help me in my need for the suffering and death of your dear Son”. Parts of this inscription are a direct quotation from Bishop Jens Nielsen’s sermon at the funeral of Sir Henrik Brockenhuus.⁴¹ Even though this inscription could not be read every day by the Onsøy congregation, there was scarcely any doubt as to who had designed the new interior of the local Lutheran church. This was continued by Lady Dorte Juel’s son-in-law, Chancellor Jens Bjelke, who inherited Elingård and lived there until his death in 1646. He had seven large paintings of “Bibelsche Historier” (biblical stories) hung in the chancel of the church. In addition he erected a sepulchral chapel in an extension of the chancel, where he and his family were laid to rest. It was only the manors of Tomb in Råde and Holleby in Tune that could boast of their own chapels. On the other hand, the owners of Elingård, for example, could incorporate the local parish church in their symbolic universe.

Both in peasant communities like Eidsberg and Trøgstad and in places dominated by the nobility, such as Onsøy, there were individual actors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the financial power to modernize church interiors by furnishing them with specifically Lutheran objects, while simultaneously making the church into a private memorial. The private character should not be understood here as something separate or closed, but more as an expression of a desire on the part of the bailiff, the sheriff, the parish priest, or the lord of the manor to show his family and household off as pious, exemplary, and responsible Lutheran Christians. While they were still alive, the donors knew that they were a part of God’s great plan for the world – which was also the Lutheran king’s plan, namely, that everyone should display repentance and submit to the rules that applied to all people. Everyone was fated to die, but in life they had to act as dictated by their position in society. After their death, the gift to the church, so to speak, was fulfilled: the donors had done their duty, maintained the honour expected of their station, and contributed to the piety of the community. The material expression – the pulpit, the altarpiece, the epitaph, the church bell – changed the church, while simultaneously transcending time by being a reminder or sign of true Lutheran piety.⁴²

The Reformed Church Interior as a Place of Memory

There are no systematic studies of what happened to the Norwegian church interior after the implementation of the Lutheran Reformation in the 1530s.

This study of churches in Østfold, however, allows us to draw some conclusions, even if the situation may have varied in different parts of the country.

The starting point for this investigation was a desire to shed light on how the Christian cultic space, in a period of particular change, was subject to new interpretations and new uses, with both continuity and change, and how this was able to affect the function of this space as a framework for and expression of religious memory. The Reformation entailed a sweeping physical change, especially of the churches' interiors, and these changes took place in several phases. In the sixteenth century a great deal of the Catholic furnishings were removed, but the extent of this cannot be determined with certainty. The objects removed must have been things that, for ideological reasons, could not be reinterpreted; a new religious memory was to be created. The change in interpretation came from above and from outside, but it could not be ignored locally. The pre-Reformation furnishings that were retained underwent a Lutheran reinterpretation and a change in function. The sixteenth century also involved a Lutheran reorganization of the church interior, but the scope of this process cannot be determined either, although there are traces of pulpits and pews from the first decades after the Reformation. The same applies to the development of a Lutheran text universe which replaced the Catholic pictorial universe; boards with printed prayers and altarpieces with catechetical texts were closely connected to the instruction of the congregations by the Lutheran priests. Through these parts of the reformed church interior it became clear how a new religion actively used texts, images, and objects to create new, value-based memory structures.

The seventeenth century saw the continued development of the Lutheran text universe, but church interiors were increasingly furnished with images again. The new policy for the design of baroque Lutheran altarpieces once again moved towards pictures as meditative and cultic objects. An important factor in this development was obviously that culturally and financially strong groups contributed to the look of the church interior with objects that they perceived as modern expressions of piety and religious exemplarity.

The Lutheran ideologists and authorities also took the material character of the church interior very seriously. They had no historical awareness of any need to preserve interiors, but they were fully aware that Lutheran piety and the order of service required a physical reorganization of the interior, and that there was a form of historical continuity in the churches and cemeteries that was important and venerable. This organization had four focal points: baptism, sermon, communion, and confession. In addition, the interior was organized along a gender boundary and a social boundary: the arrangement with pews and galleries regulated the relationship between the sexes, age groups, and social groups. The use of baptisteries and possibly separate rooms for the churching of women after childbirth both cemented inherited customs and forced the rituals into an acceptable Lutheran form.

At the same time, the priest's position as mediator between God and the congregation was made clear through the use of objects such as chancel partitions, pulpits, pulpit texts, and confessionals.

A crucial question still remains: who was responsible for these processes of change? A period as unconcerned with conservation as the time after the Reformation must have exerted heavy pressure on old and new contexts of use and interpretation. There is a great deal to suggest that the processes took place along different lines of negotiation. The *ideological negotiation line* meant that in practice it was not possible for anyone to oppose the new Lutheran religion. Tradition, custom, or previous donations were not good enough arguments to stop the changes in the church interior. In this field the ecclesiastical and civil authorities had a great deal of power and control over what happened. Along the *economic negotiation line* it was necessary to consider what was possible. Here the economy of the local churches dictated the limits to what could be done. One response to this dilemma was to remove Catholic interiors without replacing them with anything new; another was to recycle and reinterpret them. The seventeenth-century design of church interiors in Østfold also shows that the *social negotiation line* was of great significance. Without contributions and demands from financially and socially strong actors, it would not have been possible to achieve an aesthetically and ideologically complete Lutheran interior. These were actors who transcended the autonomous economy of local churches, and they could make demands as to what the church interiors should look like. The result was a church interior as a place of memory: the new interiors and their material design marked the prominent symbolic and religious position of individual actors, and these actors simultaneously helped to create ideologically and ritually appropriate church interiors.

(Translated by Alan Crozier)

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¹ On the medieval view of church building, see Härdelin 1991.

² See Amundsen 2005: 178ff. On the situation in the Middle Ages, see Lindgren 1991.

³ On the material and ritual dimensions of the church interior, see Pedersen 2001.

⁴ The art historian Margrethe Stang (2009: 27ff) has recently discussed the relationship between popular piety and church furnishing in medieval Norway along these lines and in connection with the archaeologist C. Pamela Graves.

⁵ This problem is also considered in Amundsen 2001.

⁶ The fronts in the discussion between Catholics and Protestants is analysed in detail in Amundsen 2006.

⁷ Rørdam 1883: 80, 250, 461, cf. 472 – Bishop Peder Palladius's circular to the clergy of Sjælland. The synod of Antvorskov seems to have presupposed that Lutheran churches should have just one altar, and that all the saints' altars would be removed and the main altars "cleansed" ("ut in templis tantum unum altare sit cum suis licitis ornamentis"), *ibid.*, p. 250. Peder Palladius has the same outlook in his visitation book from the mid-1540s: churches are to have a font, pulpit, and just one altar, but he was open to the possibility of taking images from the side altars and hanging them on the wall, Palladius 1925–1926: 30ff, 36ff.

⁸ Henrik von Achen (1981: 35) maintains this about altarpieces in Bergen and Hordaland, while Sigrid Christie (1973 I: 16ff) points out that different dioceses may have had variations in practice.

⁹ The number is approximate because in some cases it is difficult to say anything certain about the status of some of the medieval churches in the sixteenth century.

¹⁰ It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that a number of them were demolished and replaced with new, more modern churches. A total of eight medieval stone churches were demolished in Østfold in the period 1860–1878: Askim, Degernes,

Trømborg, Aremark, Borge, Torsnes, Tune, and Onsøy. In addition, the medieval church if Spydeberg was destroyed by a fire in 1841 and replaced by a new church.

¹¹ His own highly negative attitude to the invocation of saints in emergency situations is revealed in a sermon he delivered in Oslo in 1582 (Nielsen 1885: 599f).

¹² A survey of the source material can be found in Hoff 1996.

¹³ In Sweden the Catholic church interiors seem to have survived the first hundred years of the Lutheran Reformation (Ångström 1991), but it is difficult to draw any clear parallels with Norway, since the Swedish Reformation followed a different course from that in Norway and Denmark.

¹⁴ This applies at any rate as the main rule in the high and late Middle Ages (Solhaug 2001: 70ff).

¹⁵ Trøgstad, Askim, Eidsberg, Rødenes, Aremark, Idd, Skjeberg, Ullerøy, Borge, Glemmen, Tune, Onsøy, and Hobøl.

¹⁶ Fæhn 1994: 112; Glostrup 1895: 73; cf. 38 (Tinn 1618).

¹⁷ Medieval church bells have been preserved until today in Båstad, Rakkestad, Degernes, Os, Ullerøy, Heli, Rødenes, Hvaler, Askim, Eidsberg, and Våler.

¹⁸ Eidsberg, Rakkestad, Rødenes, Idd, Enningdalen, Ullerøy, Glemmen, Rygge, Våler, Spydeberg, and Tomter.

¹⁹ On the woman's vision, see Laugerud 2001: 135f.

²⁰ Wilse 1963: 41; Christie & Christie (1959: II, 132) seem to think that the altar had images of both Saint Mary and Saint Gertrude, but this must be due to a misreading of Wilse's wording.

²¹ Sætrang (1915: 272) refers to an inspection from 1673 where it is reported that Rokke church needs an altarpiece. This can be interpreted to mean that the church at this time did not have one.

²² The figure has however retained a (defective) sword in his left hand.

²³ It is possible that this was originally a depiction of Saint Barbara or Saint Gertrude (Christie & Christie 1959: II, 132).

²⁴ It is fully conceivable that the figures were actually stored in another, more centrally located church (cf. von Achen 1981: 34).

²⁵ For a discussion of how the reinstallation of the altarpiece in Onsøy can be interpreted, see note 33.

²⁶ In a few places there was also a musical instrument, an organ, but little is known about this in the churches of Østfold before 1700. The only exception seems to be the organ in Christi Herberg church in Halden from 1682.

²⁷ Jens Nielsen occasionally has comments on churches in the 1590s which did not have a pulpit, but none of the examples are from Østfold.

²⁸ Nine clear examples of pulpit inscriptions from the period 1602–1685 are preserved or known from historical sources: Hobøl (1602), Rødenes (1619), Torsnes (c. 1620), Skjeberg (1623), Berg (1629), Våler (1630s), Idd (1656), Svindal (1685), and Aremark (no date).

²⁹ It is also possible that the figures represent *spes* and *fides*, as in Askim church from 1697.

³⁰ Charity, hope, faith, constancy, and piety.

³¹ This is a different interpretation of this pulpit from the one proposed by Henning Laugerud. He has focused on the fact that the depiction of the birth of Jesus is in accordance with the Birgittine tradition and thus can possibly be associated with the fact that in Onsøy there may have been Catholic sympathies among the clergy, the common people, and the nobles in the manor of Elingård (Laugerud 2001: 136ff). Bente Lavold (2001: 167ff) has made a similar interpretation of the reason why Dorte Juel re-installed a pre-Reformation altarpiece in the same church. It is interesting, however, that in 1594 both the parish priest, Hans Bang, and Madame Dorte Juel acted as "informers" to Bishop Jens Nielsen, tipping him off about the Catholic images in Ingedal church. This cannot

easily be reconciled with the suggestion that at the same time they set up a crypto-Catholic pulpit in their own church in Onsøy. Both Lavold and Laugerud have also sought to trace Dorte Juel's possible Catholic sympathies to her son-in-law and her grandson, Jens and Ove Bjelke. At any rate, it does not harmonize with the fact that Jens Bjelke had paintings of "Bibelsche Historier" hung in Onsøy church in the early seventeenth century.

³² Nielsen 1885: *94f, 308. The bishop may have known of the earlier practice of hanging up texts from Martin Luther's small catechism on boards in the churches (Bugge 1991: 87).

³³ Less clear is the background to the catechism altarpiece that stood in Hvaler church between 1735 and 1759. Where it originally stood is uncertain. There is a great deal to suggest that it was not the piece with the text that was used in Hvaler but the reverse of the board, painted with naïve portrayals of Moses, the crucifixion, John the Baptist, and the Lamb of God with the flag of victory.

³⁴ On the other hand, the arms of the donor and his wife have a dominant position above the main text, and the whole is crowned by the monogram of Christian IV. Perhaps this was going too far for later generations, for at the end of the seventeenth century the altarpiece was given a new top with paintings of the crucifixion, John the evangelist, and the apostle Peter.

³⁵ Only the altarpiece in Idd is preserved, but the one in Skjeberg seems to have been similar in appearance.

³⁶ The altarpiece in Skjeberg church from 1654 was fairly similar to the one in Idd. It has not survived, but it had the words of the institution as the central panel. The donor was the noble army captain Frans Jonsen Hornes, and the occasion was perhaps his (second) marriage (Sollied 1934: 272).

³⁷ How distinctively Lutheran this altar iconography actually was is a theme in the research literature (Flemestad 1991: 121f).

³⁸ A Lutheran pictorial world began to make itself felt in private homes at the same time (cf. Achen & Nielsen 1993: 7ff).

³⁹ Trømborg, Varteig, Tune, Onsøy, Hovin, Heli, Skiptvet, Hobøl, and Tomter. There may also have been a chancel partition in Degernes church.

⁴⁰ On the parish priest, see Rudie 1966: 472.

⁴¹ The funeral sermon was published in 1590; it is presented in detail in Amundsen 1991: 118–121.

⁴² On this interpretative dimension, cf. Amundsen 2001: 48.

Memorial, Sentiment and Exemplarity

Anne Eriksen

Among the numerous monuments in the Fortress Square of Akershus castle in Oslo, one memorial stands out due to its design and location. While most of the monuments are of recent date and contemporary design, pertaining to World War Two, the memorial of Peter Blankenborg Prydz, situated under the large trees where the square most resembles a park, tells of other origins. It was erected in 1786, and its elegant neo-classical forms and pastel colours bespeak its period.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the Western world has been in the grip of what Agulhon (1980) has called “statuomanie”. Public space in cities, towns and communities has been strewn with monuments to great men and heroic deeds. The monuments have played an important part in establishing *lieux de mémoire*, most often as part of nation-building processes, but also related to other projects of collective identity (Nora 1989; Gillis 1994). Despite trends towards a more reflexive attitude during the latter part of the 20th century, monuments and the erection of new monuments are still of vital importance to the politics of public space, with ever new groups and events claiming their memorials (see e.g. Young 1993).

A hundred and fifty years’ practice of designing, inaugurating and relating to monuments, all building on a logic that has become close to self-evident, can make it difficult to see an older monument – like the one dedicated to Peter Blankenborg Prydz – as anything else than just one more of the same, only older. However, it is the argument of this article that the slender monument in pink sandstone and marble is the expression of a memorial culture that differs from the modern one. It is based on a logic of exemplarity and sentiment peculiar to the eighteenth century, and it speaks of memory in ways that are not identical to the historicized ideas of later periods.

Peter Blankenborg Prydz was born in Denmark in 1721. Losing his father at an early age, he entered the Royal Military Academy in 1730. Slowly and methodically building his career, Prydz not only advanced as an officer, in his spare hours he also taught himself French, German and English, and some Greek. In 1766 he had attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and

from 1770 he was appointed Head of the so-called Mathematics School in Christiania (present-day Oslo). The academy had been founded by the king in 1750 to educate military officers, and is reckoned as the oldest institution of higher education in Norway. When Prydz was called to take over the school, it had suffered some years of decay due to funding problems and weak management. It had also fallen victim to political scheming, and a tendency to favour educational institutions in the Danish part of the realm rather than the Norwegian.

Prydz remained Head of the Mathematics School until his death in 1782, and built its reputation as an excellent academy, admitting an increasing number of applicants over the years. It also seems to have been commonly agreed that Prydz's rather early death could be related to his self-sacrificing and unassuming work for the school. As all available resources were used on the academy and its students, Prydz's family dwellings were draughty and in ill repair. After catching a severe cold when following his students on wet ice to survey land during the winter of 1781, Prydz never quite recovered, and he died the following summer (Sinding-Larsen 1900). Four years later, the monument was erected on the initiative of some of his former students. Its design is also due to one of them, the architect and later professor Jørgen Henrik Rawert, who in 1786 – the year of the monument's inauguration – commenced a four-year engagement as teacher in mathematics at his old school in Christiania.

How can this initiative be understood? What did Prydz's former students want the memorial to represent? And what kind of public space did they help to create? The article will try to answer these questions by investigating the cultural context of the monument, comparing it both to more traditional memorials and to new ideas of commemoration and civic virtue emerging during the eighteenth century.

From Royal Glory to Civic Virtue

Public monuments were extremely scarce in Norway in the eighteenth century. In Christiania, the only other one was a memorial erected at the end of the plague in 1654. This monument does not so much commemorate the victims of the plague – only one of them is mentioned by name – as the men who had it erected. Unlike many plague columns and crosses placed in city squares throughout Europe, the one in Christiania was erected in the new cemetery established to accommodate the victims of the plague, just outside the city centre. Nevertheless, the monument belongs to the European tradition of stones, crosses, columns and so on that were erected to thank God for the cessation of an epidemic as well as to atone for the sins that had unleashed the divine wrath in the first place.

Another public monument, now lost, is known to have existed outside the



Erected in 1723 at Fredriksten (Halden), the obelisk commemorates the death of the Swedish King Karl XII and the end of the Great Nordic War in 1718. It is one of the first public monuments in Norway. Drawing in British Museum.

fortress of Frederiksten (by the present-day city of Halden). It is reported to have been erected in 1723, commemorating the death of the Swedish King Karl XII and the subsequent end of the Great Nordic War in 1718. During the siege of the fortress, the king was felled by a fatal bullet. According to a text written by F. W. Thue in 1795, the memorial marked the place where the king fell. Thue gives quite a lengthy presentation of the monument. He quotes its inscriptions in Latin and Danish, and describes the design and ornaments. The tall monument, surmounted by a gilt crown, was pyramidal in

shape with a square base. The base contained eulogies to the Swedish and the Danish kings respectively on two sides, while the third held a long Latin text describing the war in more detail. On the fourth face, an image showed “a sitting armed female *en antique*, crowned with the *corona murali*, holding in her right hand a laurel branch, in her left a spear and in the same hand a shield with the arms of the city of Frederikshald and above it the symbol of Emanuel. Over this large emblematic figure was the word: Friederichshald.”¹ Thue also informs us, without citing reasons, that after only a few years, the Danish king ordered the monument to be dismantled. Local history reports the monument to have been made in Copenhagen (Forstrøm 1915). It is not known who had taken the initiative for it, nor who paid the expenses. But a monument of such quality and size must have appeared as something very much out of the ordinary in the small provincial town of Frederikshald.

The obelisk is a traditional monumental form in Europe, frequently used to celebrate victories or other important royal events. Obelisks were symbols of triumph and glory. Together with triumphal arches and fountains, they were regular elements in the ephemeral architecture constructed to celebrate royal weddings, funerals or entries into cities (Petzet 1984:443). Their flattened sides were well fitted for placing inscriptions, allegorical figures and coats of arms, supplying the messages with an authority and austerity close to that of the original Egyptian obelisks with their hieroglyphs – signs believed to contain the most profound and divine wisdom (e.g. Ødemark 2005).

Each of these monuments, the plague stone as well as the obelisk commemorating the end of the Great Nordic War, represents European traditions of considerable age. As public monuments (as opposed to memorials in private chapels, for example) they were accessible to all. Nonetheless, they also made public space their own in celebration of actors and forces beyond the reach of most people: God and royalty. In this way, the monuments made a double claim to collective memory. They stated to whom commemoration was due, as well as what space it rightfully should occupy in the community. The monuments asserted clear distinctions between the object of commemoration and the subjects offering it. Monuments were the privilege of princes, memorials spoke of authority above the secular and temporal (Berggren 1991:21ff). The monument to Peter Blankenborg Prydz differs from this in several ways. It represented new ideas and fresh ways of thinking. Above all, the novelty is found in the fact that this monument celebrates one single individual in his role as a citizen. What makes him worthy of commemoration is not birth, family or rank, nor brilliant military exploits, but simply his civic deeds. And those who erected the monument were not his family, his clients or his regiment, but former pupils and fellow citizens.

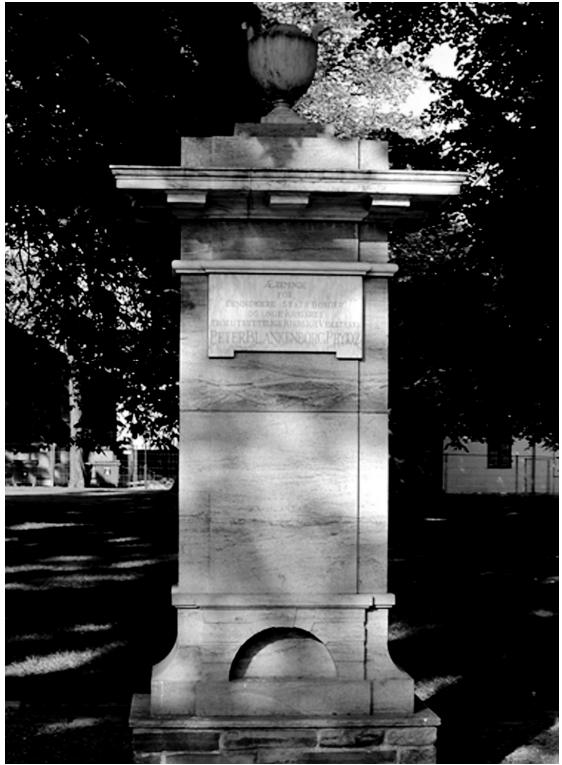
In his book *Naissance du Panthéon* (1998), the literary scholar Jean-Claude Bonnet argues that a “cult of the great man” emerged during the Enlightenment, gradually supplanting the idea of kings and nobles as the only ones worthy of admiration, eulogies and commemoration. The “great man” could be a politician or a military hero, but just as often he was an author, a *philosophe* or – gradually more important – a public benefactor. As a background for this “*métamorphose de la gloire*”, Bonnet discusses the period’s infatuation with the concept of fatherhood. The idea of the good father could be applied to the king as well as to ordinary family fathers, thus creating a set of values and norms applicable across rank and social class. It implied a kind of levelling that prepared the grounds for new understandings of greatness and glory, relating heroism more to individual deeds than to birth. Bonnet quotes Montesquieu who described the new kind of heroism as one that did not require super-human qualities: “Great deeds do not require genius: Not to be above men, but to with them”, and goes on to comment: “Far from dividing, the glory fit for the new era installs a solidary community and a strange kind of closeness which is remarkable as the most singular trait of the cult of the great men during the eighteenth century.”² A decline in the traditional genre of funerary oratory is also seen as an important stage in this development towards new kinds of heroism and commemoration. Gradually losing its former status, the eschatological dimension of funerary oratory grew weaker, while the orators rather turned their attention towards the merits of the deceased during his life on earth.

A decisive point in the French tradition that Bonnet investigates was reached in 1758. That year, the French Academy established a new topic area for their annual competition in eloquence. Instead of presenting the usual panegyric to the king, the competitors were invited to give a eulogy to a great man of the nation. The new idea was very well received, and for a number of years the annual event presented authors and philosophers with an arena and a genre where they could articulate their views on greatness, virtue and heroism. The genre developed gradually. It was taken to serve both political and literary strategies, and was eagerly adapted by a number of the young and ambitious persons who later would play active roles during the Revolution: Condorcet, Marat, Robespierre and de Staël. One reason for its popularity was that, contrary to what one might believe, the genre did not produce “a dusty row of epics exclusively turned towards the past”, but proved an effective and forceful weapon for discussing the present as well as the future.³ Despite the fact that this minor rhetorical genre later sank into oblivion, it is Bonnet’s conclusion that it played an important role in the shaping of a new kind of heroism. The Pantheon of stone, inaugurated in the former church of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris in 1792, was preceded by a “Panthéon in paper”, he contends.

In his analysis of the “statuomanie”, the historian Maurice Agulhon goes deeper into the political radicality of the monuments erected to commemorate the lives and deeds of the new kind of heroes. What was at stake was not just a new kind of heroism, but also new ideas about society, authority and citizenship. He points out that the sheer number of statues in modern societies makes it difficult to understand how dramatically radical the monuments to persons who were not royal, noble, or saints once seemed. Erecting monuments to individuals whose merits were both personal (not inherited) and secular was an expression of the same kind of liberal humanism that later developed into the politics of democracy (Agulhon 1988:143). A society in which citizens erected monuments to celebrate each other for deeds and personal merit was a very different one from the traditional world of Absolutism. Not only did the king lose his close to unique right to be presented through monuments, the royal privilege to decide which monuments were to be erected, and where they should be situated, was also heavily undermined. Agulhon describes how the Restoration King Louis XVIII tried to regain control. Permission to erect monuments was severely restricted, and the king also ordered a number of the monuments of the Ancien Régime, dismantled during the Revolution, to be re-erected (Agulhon 1988:144ff). The restoration of monuments corresponded closely to the attempts at restoring an older political order.

Faithful, Untiring, Fond

Unlike the iconography that became dominant during the nineteenth century, the monument to Peter Blankenborg Prydz is not a realistically sculpted figure on a base; neither does it present a portrait or bust. Rather, its design corresponds closely to the aesthetic model identified by Agulhon as typical of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century monuments. In this period, people “still preferred the stele, pyramid or obelisk on which the commemorated person was identified merely by an inscription or at most by a profile portrait in a medallion.”⁴ In Norway, the taste for such neo-classical models appears to have lasted well into the 1840s, with the Prydz monument as an early example (Schnitler 1914). It has a base of hewn blocks of chalk, while the body is in pink sandstone and composed of architectural forms in sober neo-classical design. The face of the monument is adorned by a plaque in white marble and above it a medal in the same material. The reverse side carries another plaque. The stone is crowned by a wide cornice, surmounted by an urn, both in white marble.⁵ The side turning towards the central square has the following inscription (translated here):



The monument to Peder Blankenborg Prydz as it can be seen today.

Memory in Honour
of
the zealous Citizen
and
young Soldiers' faithful untiring fond Supervisor
PETER BLANKENBORG PRYDZ⁶

The side turning towards the park has a longer inscription:

This memorial
was erected by some of the
Soldiers,
who in the military Academy in Christiania
had acquired
knowledge and good morals.
They understood that they became better
Men and Citizens
because the Head of the Foundation
was faithful untiring fond
in his Office.
Therefore they
wanted this Stone
to keep the Memory of
that of which their Hearts
eternally will tell.⁷

Additional inscriptions on the sides of the monuments give the years and dates of Prydz's life, and the year of the erection of the monument.

The inscriptions have a distinct focus on Prydz's personal merit, not his kin or rank. It is his work as Head of the school that has earned him his merit, and made him worthy of a memorial. Even if this implies his office, and thus Prydz's military ranks, the inscription centres on his personal qualities, and the *ways* in which he has filled the office. He is commemorated as a loving father to his pupils, not primarily as a military officer. The same understanding is expressed by the mentioning of the personal qualities that his pupils have acquired, and – most vital – by telling what they feel in their hearts. Prydz is commemorated as a citizen, by other citizens.

The qualities that Prydz demonstrated and that his pupils acquired can be summed up in the term "civic virtue", an expression highly popular in this period. It can be defined as those personal qualities and habits that are important for the success of the society or community. The concept is ancient, but as cultural historians like Simon Schama, Tine Damsholt and others have pointed out, the eighteenth century was characterized by a lively interest in developing and praising such virtue: "the deeds and self-awareness of the citizen, called civic virtue, were understood as crucial for the common good."⁸ It was frequently associated with the notion of patriotism, understood as the willingness to place the common good above personal convenience (Damsholt 2000:124; Vinje 2008:94). Schama (1989:xv) writes that this enthusiasm amounted to a veritable "patriotic cult of citizenship". The concept was most often used in the singular, but could be specified in a number of ways: as fidelity, industriousness, diligence, courage, perseverance and so on. The twice repeated formula of the inscription "faithful, untiring, fond" thus can be read as one such way of expressing the overarching quality that is being celebrated: the civic virtue embodied by Prydz.

Nonetheless, the monument was hardly an expression of political radicalism or a dramatically new understanding of society. Like France, Denmark-Norway was a monarchy of absolute rule during this period, but the praise of Prydz and his virtue as a citizen should not be read as a subversive message. What speaks against such an interpretation is that, even if civic virtues are stressed, the monument does not hide the fact that Prydz was an officer in royal service, and he is honoured as such. He had the rank of lieutenant-colonel, led a military academy, and his memorial was erected at the fortress, which, formally, also was the royal residence in Christiania. Furthermore, the architect, professor Rawert, writes that the fund-raising for the monument was organized by the chamberlain (and nobleman) Rosenkrantz, who also donated a substantial sum himself. Permission to set up the monument in the fortress square was gained from prince Carl of Hessen, Commander-in-Chief of the army in Norway, and also the country's titular

Governor-General (Rawert 1796). In practice, this is equivalent to being granted royal permission to erect a monument on royal grounds.

Rather than implying a critique of absolute rule, the historical context of the monument seems to mirror a scene depicted by J. N. Wilse in his description of the parish of Spydeberg in Østfold published seven years earlier (1779). At the end of this topographic text, the author has inserted a fable about the future. The protagonist, a man named Philoneus, wakes up from a dream and finds himself transported to the year 2000. Invited into a hill (which has been transformed into a kind of museum or palace), he is shown all the improvements that have occurred since his own time. One of the novelties is that monuments now are being erected in honour of persons who have made themselves remarkable through virtuous deeds. Moreover, citizens who have contributed to the common good might themselves gain permission to erect memorials to their works. Philoneus is shown a picture of a flock of citizens supplicating before a prince, who grants his “joyful permission” to such a project. The next image shows the monument erected, carrying the inscription “Honor ex utilitate” (Honour from usefulness). Wilse adds that even if “some ambition and selfishness may be involved, the Fatherland still will rejoice in the fruits” of such works.⁹

Witse’s text leaves no doubt that the virtuous deeds of the citizens belong to the public sphere and are part of what constitutes a good society. In a public sphere, civic virtue is useful, and here it shall be praised. But there is no ambiguity about this sphere being defined and controlled by the king. It is he who grants permission, and thus he who acknowledges the deeds as useful and honourable, worthy of public acclaim. Public space is royal domain. On the other hand, the reign of this absolute monarch also seems to have been encapsulated by the ideas of fatherhood. The king is depicted as the loving father of the citizens, and it is as such a father that he demonstrates his magnanimity. The situation imagined in this scene, and the one made real by the monument to Prydz, can be seen as expressions of the ideas of a social contract, a dominant political idea in this period. According to Damsholt, this theory represented an attempt at explaining absolute rule in new ways. “Instead of being absolute monarch ‘by the Grace of God’, some variants of the ideas about the social contract tried to explain royal sovereignty with a basis in individuals and civil rights” (Damsholt 2000:80). In this perspective, monarchy is given “popular origins”, being understood as a kind of voluntary transference of sovereignty (Damsholt 2000:82).

Enter Stage: The Sentimental Philanthropist

A history of the Mathematics School was published as early as 1796. Its author, the officer and teacher Diderich Hegermann, had not himself known

Prydz, but quotes the praise of some of Prydz's former pupils, among them Professor Rawert, who had published an extensive eulogy. Hegermann also conveys a picture of the memorial and quotes its inscriptions. Commenting on its location, Hegermann writes:

The choice of place will impress the passing philanthropist in a pleasant way. By the entrance to a public assembly square and pleasant walking grounds, this beautiful stone appears to the eye, surrounded by young and larger trees, whose fresh and older branches spread themselves over the urn. The eye as well as the soul will rejoice in the sight. To this add thoughts of the worthiness of the man himself, and of the judicious pupils who erected the memorial – all this will occupy the spectator, delight him and awaken fond emotions.¹⁰

The “fond emotions” were an important part of the logic of the new memorials and monuments. Hegermann's choice of words and expressions situates the monuments within a larger complex; the period's cult of sentiment and its strong emphasis on sentimental education. Developing individual sensibility became an important part of educational programmes. The ability to express strong emotions in the appropriate manner and on the right occasions was seen as a hallmark of the well-educated person. Such emotional expressions – not least tears – were also ascribed ethical importance. They were signs of the individual's capability to feel empathy and compassion, and seen as the unfalsifiable expressions of genuine sentiment and an authentic personality (Vincent-Buffault 1991). Strong emotions were signs of a noble character and a prerequisite for high morals. In this way, sensibility became closely related to virtue. Analysing the ideas of *sensibilité* as expressed in the French *Encyclopédie*, historian of ideas Ellen Krefting notes that this term did not imply any opposition between emotions and enlightenment. Quite to the contrary, sensibility in this period was regarded as “the central motor in the natural ‘genealogy’ of both reason and morals”. She goes on to observe that “perhaps the most distinguishing feature of sensibility as an eighteenth-century category was its social aspects. Contrary to the subjective and destructive character of *passions*, emotions were regarded as fundamentally collective and communicative phenomena. They represented something that only could emerge between human beings, they were created and exchanged within a social space.”¹¹ Replacing the older notions of individual passions with those of sentiment made it possible to develop a culture of communicative sensibility, characterized by its specific set of codes of behaviour, signs and material expressions. This confluence of sentiment, civic virtue and social implications is what ensures that the sentimental spectator called forth in Hegermann's description, will also, by definition, be a “philanthropist”.

Within this cult of sensibility, a number of techniques were developed for the training of sensibility and for inciting its expression. A new aesthetics of landscape and nature was part of this. Contemplating natural beauty gave

occasion for strong feelings and for their expression. While the notion of the sublime sought to describe human emotion and experience of transcendence in confrontation with the unspeakable greatness of, for example, mountains, glaciers or waterfalls, the new landscape gardens were places for the staging of other emotions. Systematically arranged to call forth affections, they were filled with altars of friendship or love, hermitages, real or fake tombs, memorials to virtues and virtuous persons from history or mythology, in addition to romantic paths and surprising, picturesque vistas. Walking in such a garden had educational value. Reacting to its stimuli in the “correct” and expected way meant demonstrating a highly cherished sentimental competence and revealing not just emotion but also virtue.

This is the context not merely for Hegermann’s description of the Prydz memorial, strongly based on a vocabulary of sentiment and sentimental expression, but also for the erection of the monument itself. Through their initiative, Prydz’s former pupils demonstrated knowledge of fresh ideas on civic virtue, as well as of the new repertoire of sentimental techniques. In acquiring permission and erecting the memorial, they showed their own competence in the field. Not least, the inscription’s reference to what these former pupils feel in their hearts makes this explicit. At the same time, they contributed to the staging of a new sentimental landscape in Christiania. Offering “pleasant walking grounds”, much sought after by the bourgeois citizens of this small provincial town, Akershus, which was more than just a fortress and a royal residence. It was also the city’s main recreational area. The monument, so pleasantly situated among the trees, transformed it into an arena for the public expression of a new and fashionable competence: That of demonstrating “delight and fond emotions”. The monument was a memorial to a recently deceased officer, but it was also an instrument restructuring public space by inviting those passing by to show themselves to be genuine philanthropists: truly sensitive and virtuous citizens.

On Virtue and Exemplarity

Developing a theory of examples and exemplarity, the literary scholar John D. Lyons (1989:5) defines example as “a connection between a general statement or maxim and local or specific realisation of that maxim”. In this way, examples create links between the general and the specific, as well as between a greater whole and its smaller part. At the same time, exemplifying serves to illustrate as well as to confer authority: The actual and concrete illustrates the general maxim and makes it more understandable, while the maxim, on the other hand, lends its authority to the local and specific. For this reason, the example can also work as a model: It specifies how a certain maxim, general value or moral principle can be

made relevant, local and concrete. Lyons notes that the exemplum “denotes both the model to be copied and the copy or representation of that model” (Lyons 1989:11).

Memorials to civic virtue can be understood in such a perspective. They illustrate abstract notions of civic virtue through a specific case, while they also make it clear that the case in question – the deeds and life of an individual – represents more than itself. The memorial points to the general notion of which it is part. At the same time, it supplies a model to imitate, inviting other citizens even to outdo the deeds of the person honoured by the monument. Bonnet emphasizes that the eighteenth century’s new notions of heroism and “great men” are built on a strong belief in the effectiveness of models. The great men – and their monuments – served as *exempla* to other citizens. They were not just for admiring, but also for imitation, and were seen as important resources for more or less institutionalized educational programmes (Bonnet 1998:34ff). The emotions called forth by monuments, eulogies and patriotic “galleries” carried value as expressions of a noble character and a compassionate heart, but were also supposed to generate a desire for emulation. The greatness of the great men consisted of their own realization of civic virtue, as well as their ability to inspire the yearning for such virtue in others.

In our case, the logic of exemplarity and imitation does not only concern the supposed effects of the monument erected to Prydz, but relates directly to his own life and deeds. Most obviously, the manifest message of the monument is that the virtue that the pupils show in erecting it is simply an example of what they have learned from Prydz. The monument’s inscription states that “they understood that they became better Men and Citizens”. One of the hallmarks of such citizens is precisely to recognize the virtue of others and to show their gratitude in appropriate forms. Thus the erection of the monument is not just an act in memory of Prydz, but also an execution of virtue learnt from him.

The monument’s iconography makes the logic of exemplarity even more explicit. Above the plaque on the front of the monument we find a medallion in white marble. On it can be seen the goddess Minerva holding out a laurel wreath to three small genii. One of them carries a globe and a pair of compasses, the other a map and a square, and the third some brushes and a palette. Together they represent the core curriculum of the Mathematics School. Above their heads can be read: “For virtue and industriousness”.¹² This is a representation of the Mathematics School’s medal. In 1776, Prydz had applied to the king for such a medal to be bestowed on the best pupils at the end of each three-year course. Permission was granted, and the medal paid for by the king himself, who is also depicted on its rear and named “king, father, benefactor”.¹³ The prize was first awarded in 1777 and then again every third year.

The medal was an important part of Prydz's pedagogical programme. In actual practice, the medals were used to reward merit in specific disciplines, such as mathematics or drawing. Placing the medal with its maxim on the memorial makes it work in more general ways. Its motto, "for virtue and industriousness", very literally supplies the general maxim that is the one main element in Lyons' definition of example. But in this case, the definition's second element, the actualization, is tripled. On the one hand, it refers to the real medal instituted by Prydz and awarded to his pupils for their virtue and diligence. On the other hand, the former pupils in their turn bestow it on their master, in recognition and praise of *his* virtuous and industrious life. The memorial can be read as praising the familial love uniting Prydz, as the father, with his grateful sons.¹⁴ Finally, the medal is not only displayed in memory of this fond relationship, but is also intended as a means to the further education of those passing by. They are invited to admire the monument with its copy of the medal, but also themselves to strive towards the realization of the same virtue – in the hope of earning similar merit.

Exemplarity, Temporality and History

What makes this memorial different from the monuments produced during the "statuomane" reign in subsequent centuries? Are the differences solely to be found in the iconography and the comparative uniqueness of the monument at the time of its inauguration, or is it possible to discern a culture of commemoration built on other values and other ways of thinking than the more recent?

For a large part, even the later monuments to great men – and some women – were erected in praise of their "civic virtue", even if the term itself went somewhat out of fashion in the nineteenth century. The persons to whom memorials were dedicated were thanked and praised by their fellow citizens, normally for contributing in some way to the common good. Through the monument, they were represented as paradigmatic, as models in some way worthy of imitation as well as admiration. But, what makes a difference, and an important one, is historization. Even if monuments in the eighteenth century and later normally were dedicated for deeds done and merits earned and to persons already passed away, the particular *pastness* of persons and actions seems less prominent in the early monuments. They are not presented as historical in a modern sense. The deeds are not primarily deeds of the past, but deeds of high and constant virtue.

The educational aspect of monuments and public commemoration kept its importance during the nineteenth century, in the same way as we still today are invited to contemplate monuments to learn from them. Still, the contemporary lessons are historicized in other ways than the older ones,

while the rhetoric of learning seems to be just that: phrases, words, empty rhetoric. The genuine belief in the strong efficacy of monuments, expressed in words as well as in the numerous techniques of sentimental education so typical of the eighteenth-century memorial culture has dwindled. A text like Hegermann's, with its simple certainty about the emotional effect of the monument and its conviction that the citizen thus affected will by definition be a "philanthropist" – a person of high civic virtue – could hardly be presented in the same self-evident way a century later. Hegermann's calm conviction is not the expression of naïveté about what was a comparatively new medium – the public, civic monument – but is rather based on the fact that the monuments and the discourse about them were integral parts of a larger complex. The cult of civic virtue, together with sentimental education, the appropriate new aesthetics and the strong belief that ethical, aesthetic and emotional values supported each other, created a system of meaning, expressed and developed in a number of concrete practices and techniques. The new monuments were one element in this complex system.

Ideas on exemplarity maintain a key position in this memorial culture. It is their exemplarity that makes individuals and deeds worthy of memory and imitation. However, such a logic presupposes ideas about constancy or sameness: The virtues or ideals made real in certain acts or by certain people must in some way be understood as expressing values that are constant, independent of context or period. Lyons writes that examples "in the sense of copy are only possible if the act or object in question is seen as corresponding to an earlier act or object that is the *same*. In this respect, time is an important dimension of example revealing an identity that appears across chronological boundaries" (Lyons 1989:11, italics in original). For this very reason, exemplarity is regularly reported to have been in crisis during the entire modern period, in step with changes in the understandings of temporality (e.g. Hampton 1990; Gelley 1995; Rigolot 1998). Theories of example and exemplarity were developed in classical rhetoric. In medieval times, pictorial and literary *exempla* turned exemplarity into a much-used didactic genre, presenting moral and religious teachings as narratives. Renaissance humanism was nourished by examples. Lyons summarizes it by saying:

Example is textual, in keeping with the humanist emphasis on philology. Example is historical and thus suited those who wanted to recover the wisdom of antiquity. Example could be conceived as a tool of practical social change, as a guide to action in keeping with the strong moral purpose of many early humanists. Finally, example is the product of a system of collection and commentary and thus suited to the predilections of a class of professional scholars [...] accustomed to the complicated task of sifting records for concise statements of precedent, classified under abstract rubrics. (Lyons 1989:12)

In spite of this, a gradually emerging historical consciousness came to undermine the logic of examples. From humanism onward, the understanding grew that the immediate historical context was more important to the meaning of objects and acts than their reference to pre-existing models, be they taken from authoritative texts like the Bible, or seen as the articulation of timeless and unchanging virtues. Scholars differ in their views on the radicalism of this crisis and on the fate of exemplarity in the modern era. In historiography, Reinhart Koselleck argues that the idea of history as *magistra vitae* – the exemplary teacher of life – reigned well into the eighteenth century. In an empirical investigation of Danish history writing, Bernhard E. Jensen (2009) has followed similar ideas into the present. Rather than discussing questions of decline and dissolution, the literary scholar Mark S. Phillips has analysed changes in British history writing during the eighteenth century. His contention is that during this period, the thematic range of historic literature was largely expanded. New groups of readers, with considerable “sentimental competence” not only demanded new topics, concerning civil life as much as politics and warfare, but also more emphatic ways of presenting traditional themes. History could well keep its exemplary nature of *magistra vitae*, but its teachings were no longer reserved for an exclusive political elite (Phillips 2000).

The development described by Phillips can be seen as part of the same complex as the monuments to “great men”. The historical genres, as well as the memorials, told of civic virtue and of the exemplarity of persons and deeds. Exemplarity was what made them interesting and relevant. It was the conceived “sameness” of situations, challenges and values that made past individuals and acts objects of identification and empathy, despite a new understanding of the impact of period and context. To readers – or more generally: citizens – with great sentimental competence, the temporal distance might rather work as proof of the value of this competence, strong enough to conquer it. Empathy, itself a hallmark of the virtuous citizen, made exemplarity stronger than historicity, and kept history exemplary.

Representing not only something of the past, but values to realize and goals to strive for in the future, exemplary history acquired a temporal structure of its own, articulated in the memorial culture. For the sake of convenience, the monument to Prydz has so far been termed a memorial, in modern Norwegian *minnesmerke*, but the contemporary terms used were *ære-minde* or *ære-støtte*, words now obsolete. The word *ære* means honour and the two terms indicate that the monument was erected in honour of Prydz as much as in memory of him. It is an “honorial” as much as a memorial. In this context, the second word in the first term *minde* (memory) correspondingly means reminder rather than recollection: the monument is intended to serve as a reminder of Prydz, his deeds and his honour. Even if Prydz himself was

a person of the past when the monument was inaugurated, this logic implies that his honour was not. The point of the monument is not just to keep alive the memory of the man, but also to guard his honour from oblivion. His honour – expressed through his civic virtue – is *not* a thing of the past, but rather a matter for the future: It will be imitated and passed on by other citizens thanks to his good and constant example. It will maintain its social and cultural reality.

We do not know much about how the monument to Prydz was inaugurated, even if the eulogy published by Professor Rawert in his journal *Det Danske Krigsbibliotek* in 1794 and again in 1796 may have originated as an address for this event. However, insight into the rationale of “honorials” may be gained from an address held some decades later, and from another monument, but still within the same universe of civic virtue and sentimental education. In 1833, the young poet Henrik Wergeland was called upon to speak at the inauguration of a monument in Christiania, dedicated to the politician and minister Christian Krohg (1777–1828). After leading the work that enabled *Storting* (Parliament) to reject the changes to the Norwegian constitution suggested by the king of the Swedish-Norwegian union, Karl Johan, Krohg had acquired status as a national hero. Five years after his death, his monument was inaugurated on Constitution Day, as one of the first attempts at creating a public celebration of this day. The monument obviously belongs to a more explicitly patriotic or even nationalistic context than the Prydz monument. But despite its more overtly political focus, Wergeland’s address may shed some light on the message and function ascribed the older monuments at Akershus. They both are parts of the same cult of citizenship and civic virtue.

Wergeland’s address does not say much about Krohg, his life or deeds, which may have been assumed to be known to those present. Instead, the rather flamboyant speech is about the *meaning* of the monument and the ways it was intended to work. “Citizens! We are standing beside a triumphal monument to civic spirit, an altar to the Fatherland!” – such are Wergeland’s opening words.¹⁵ He then goes on to praise Krohg’s deeds and virtue, without being specific, but stressing his greatness. Woven into this, Wergeland speaks highly of the monument itself, and the act of erecting it:

It is in that act, a nation erecting a monument to honour one *single* citizen, apart from the *touching* experience of observing those same noble emotions that enapture us in the *individual*, just as lively and as by one beat of the pulse, and move through the hearts of an entire nation ... which, in the greatness of this act, while we feel satisfied with our own part in its heart-warming effect, something that moves the most delicious, if not the most limpid powers of our souls, to a conjuring *hope*, to a fancy that we will not let go or ascribe imagination alone, but which we produce from the same sacred depths as our religious faith ... yes, which is the soul that does not feel, that the greatness of this act fills the *mind* with sacred joy and sweet faith: that we please that glorified spirit in his highness and increase his bliss

by the love we bestow on his memory, by the honour, that seems us too great for the mortal? ¹⁶

Even with Krohg's greatness as its unquestionable core, this highly emotional outburst is first and foremost about *erecting* a monument. It is about the virtue (and strong emotions) of those carrying out such an act, and the supposed effect of their deed. The inauguration of a monument becomes in itself a virtuous deed that both increases and imitates the greatness of the one honoured by it. And while the monument in a certain sense works retrospectively, augmenting the bliss of Krohg as a "glorified spirit" who has now passed away, its expected impact on the future is just as important. These future effects are a recurring theme in Wergeland's address. The monument is erected to the benefit of the young, Wergeland contends. Addressing all the country's young citizens – male and female – he points out that the intention of the monument, erected by "the Fathers", is to bear witness to future generations. "We" – the young – are committed through it. During "our" lives the monument will instruct us about our duties to the fatherland. Young Norwegians will:

erect a Christian Krohg in their hearts, and each year, on Constitution Day, they will compare their own deeds with his, measure their own accomplishments and contributions to the nation's good against his. And to each other we shall say: let us love this memorial, because it taught the young man the meaning of being a citizen, the woman the ranks of citizenship. Let us become *living* memorials of the best citizen! May the Fatherland not have *lost* him, but see him *risen* in its thousands! ¹⁷

Musings over the implications of the act of erecting the monument fill very large parts of the address, while the exhortations to the young take up most of its second half. The structure of the address illustrates clearly the temporal dimensions of erecting a memorial – or "honorial" – in this period. The retrospect is only the starting point for commemoration and memorials, it is just as much a question for the future. The monument is, above all, a reminder for the young, telling them about their commitments and the virtue that is expected of them, but also showing the way to true honour and glory. Despite the comparative uniqueness of Wergeland's poetic talents, the ideas expressed in his address can be seen as representative for the period's cult of virtue and belief in the importance of a sentimental education of all citizens – men and women alike.

The monument to Peter Blankenborg Prydz was of course erected to praise and honour him, and in this way, his former pupils expressed their gratitude to the deceased school-master, officer and citizen. But as the discussion has shown, the monument and its inauguration also have other implications, as through their project, the pupils also showed that they were quite well versed in the new ideas about heroism and virtue. They demonstrated their own competence as sentimental and virtuous citizens in a civil society. Furthermore, they contributed to creating a new kind of

public space, or a public arena for a new kind of performance: That of expressing appropriate emotions when confronted with exemplary deeds. And finally, using Wergeland's address to the later Krohg monument as the key, they inaugurated what was in itself an educational programme to this end.

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¹ “et siddende armeret Fruentimmer en antique, kronet med corona murali, holdende i den højre Hånd en Laurbær-Qvist, og i venstre Arm et Spyd, samt i samme Haand et Skjold, med Vaaben, og overtegnede Symbol: Emanuel. Over denne store emblematiske Figur stod det Ord: Friderichshald” (Thue 1795:75).

² “Pour faire de grandes choses, il ne faut pas un si grand génie: il ne faut pas être au-dessus des hommes; il faut être avec eux; Loin de diviser, la gloire qui convient aux temps nouveaux instaure une communauté solidaire et une étrange proximité qui est l’aspect le plus marquant comme le plus singulier du culte des grands hommes au XVIIIe siècle” (Bonnet 1998:40, translated here).

³ “Loin d’être une poussiéreuse rhapsodie tournée exclusivement vers le passé, le genre de l’éloge se révélait donc une petite machine de pouvoir qui intéressait le présent le plus immédiat et l’avenir de la cité” (Bonnet 1998:111, translated here).

⁴ “à l’époque directorale, consulaire et impériale, on préférait la stèle, la pyramide, l’obélisque, sur lesquels le personnage n’était identifié que par l’inscription et à la rigueur, par l’apposition d’un portrait de profil en médaillon” (Aguilhon 1998:174, translated here).

⁵ The original sandstone was subject to heavy deterioration, and the monument was replaced by a copy in 1986.

⁶ “Æreminde for den nidkiere Statsborger og unge Krigeres troe utrettelige kierlige Veileder Peter Blankenborg Prydz.”

⁷ “Dette minde reistes ved en Deel af de Krigere, der i Christiania Krigs Skole havde faaet Kundskab og Sæder. De skønnede at de bleve bedre Mennesker og Borgere fordi Stiftelsens Tilsynsmand var troe utrettelig kierlig i sit Embede. De ville derfor at denne Steen skal minde om hvad deres Hierte evig sige.”

⁸ “borgerens handlinger og selvbevidsthed, betegnet som borgerdyd, tillægges afgørende betydning for almenvellet” (Damsholt 2000:102, translated here).

⁹ “lad være nogen Ærgerrighed og Egenkiærlighed deri havde Deel, saa glædede sig dog Fædrenelandet ved Frugterne” (Wilse 1779:454, translated here).

¹⁰ “Valget af Stedet giør et behagelig Indtryk paa den forbigaaende Menneskeven. Ved indgangen til en offentlig Samlingsplads og behagelig Spadseregang, fremstiller sig for Øiet denne smukke Steen omgierdet af unge og større Træer, hvis spæde og ældre Grene udbrede sig over Urnen. Saavel Øiet som Sielen forlyster sig ved dette Syn. Hertil Tanken om Mandens Værd, og at skjønssomme Lærlinge gav Mindet tilværelse – dette sysselsætter Under Beskuelsen, glæder og opvækker rørende Følelser” (Hegermann 1796:57, translated here).

¹¹ “Tvert imot ble sensibilitet på 1700-tallet betraktet som den sentrale motoren i både moralens og fornuftens naturlige ‘genealogi’ [...] Men det kanskje mest karakteristiske trekket ved følsomheten som kategori på 1700-tallet, var dens sosiale aspekter. I motsetning til lidenskapenes subjektive og destruktive karakter, ble de nye følelsene nemlig sett på som grunnleggende kollektive og kommunikative fenomener. De var noe som bare kunne oppstå mellom mennesker, de ble dannet og utvekslet i et sosialt rom (Krefting 2003:8, translated here).

¹² “For Dyd og Flitighed.”

¹³ “Konge, Fader og Velgiører.”

¹⁴ Both Hegermann and Rawert use the word “father” when speaking of Prydz and his pupils.

¹⁵ “Medborgere! Vi staae her ved en Borgeraandens Triumfstøtte, ved et Fædrenelandets Altar” (Wergeland 1923:328, translated here).

¹⁶ “Det er i den Handling, at et Folk resier den *enkelte* Borger et Æresminde, foruden det *rørende* i at see de samme ædle Følelser, som henrykke os hos det *enkelte* Menneske, ligesaa livligen i eet Pulsslag bevæge sig igjennem et heelt Folks Hjerter ... der er denne Handlings Storhed, i det vi føle os selvtilfredse med den Deel vi Selv have i det opløftende deri, Noget som rører de lifligste om end ikke klareste Evner i vor Sjel til et tryllende *Haab*, til en Indbildning vi ikke ville give slip paa eller alene tilskrive Fantasien, men som vi udlede fra samme hellige dybde som vor religiøse Tro ... ja, hvilken Sjel føler ikke, at Storheden i denne Handling rører til den *Tanke* fuld av hellig Fryd, til den søde Tro: at Vi glæde den forherligede Aand selv i hans Høide og forhøje hans Salighed ved den Kjærlighed vi vise hans minde, ved den Hæder, der tykkes os for stor for den dødelige?” (Wergeland 1923:331f, translated here).

¹⁷ “Og til Hverandre skulle Vi sige: lader os elske dette Minde; thi det lærte Ynglingen Betydningen af at være Borger, Qvinden Ranger af at være borgerinde! Lader os vorde *levende* minder over den bedste Borger! Fædrenelandet *tabe* ham ikke; men see ham *opstanden* i sine Tusinder” (Wergeland 1923:336f, translated here).

Memory, Meaning and Presence

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen

The current rise in interest in cultural memory studies seems to be due to several developments. The national base for cultural memory is being challenged by globalization, making local narratives about the past seem less natural and therefore open for reinterpretation and for alternatives to emerge. The change in the media landscape is offering a wide array of new ways of accessing news and information that has had a dual effect. It has made it easier to present and pursue knowledge that would otherwise be hard to get to, as regards both distant historical pasts and the nostalgia connected to personal memories, such as television clips from one's youth that have not been on the air for decades but now appear on the Internet. The other effect of the new media is its focus on the novelty of things and on events taking place in the present. The interest in cultural memory can be seen as a counter-reaction to the valuation of all things new, now and here, to a field that merges the practice of remembrance with the object of remembrance. It is an antidote to the idea of newness, but not in a gesture of privileging the past over the present by simply reversing the values of the two.

The mediation and involvement in a practice of remembrance separates the study of cultural memory clearly from that of history, which is not interested in the effects of history but in the truth. Memory is unreliable and emotional from a historian's point of view, but memory is also foundational to cultures that constantly create bridges between the past and the future. The focus on the cultural side of memory suggests that there is something shared and meaningful, but in effect cultural memories can also be subversive, xenophobic or possess other qualities that do not fall into noble categories, just as the connection between propaganda and the creation of cultural memories has a long history.

Another way to be sceptical about the idea of collective memory, beyond the sense of whether a common reservoir of memories even exists, lies in a shift in the importance of the individual's uses of common references and to the function of memory as something that enables a certain mode of being.

The significance of memory to the present is not so much just about meaning as meaningfulness or revelation, but as a catalyst of presence. I will argue for this in three steps. I shall first present Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's work on this issue and the implications of his distinction between meaning and presence, as well as his reluctance to value cultural memory in the sense of a shared memory that puts value on culture rather than on individual experience that relies on memories to create effects. After that I focus on Don DeLillo's novel *The Names* (1982) which develops similar themes in the form of a novel. Set in Greece, *The Names* combines topics as diverse as archaeology, terrorism, religion, science and media in a meditation on the uses of memory. Finally, I shall pursue the role of presence and developments in the semiotics of monuments, which in the case of traumatic events is an area where ethics and aesthetics intersect.

Meaning vs. Presence

In his 1997 book *In 1926: Living at the Edge of Time*, Gumbrecht questioned the idea that we can learn from history as a tenable explanation and legitimization of the historical interest in present-day culture. Instead he argues that one should not disregard or be ashamed of a fascination with past life worlds as a primary motivation. In his own book this fascination is executed as a massive experiment in trying to get closer to 1926, a year that preceded the author's birth and which was chosen in part because it was not an obvious threshold year (Gumbrecht 1997:426).

Gumbrecht's book is based on numerous sources, books, newspapers, etc., and it is driven by a fundamental fascination with the web of diversity and convergences in Western cultures and particularly the objects and phenomena that were part of the world of 1926, from radios to long-distance swimming. Two long chapters, "Codes" and "Collapsed Codes", trace the metaphysics of the everyday world and demonstrate how some codes function in some respect, but are also challenged in other aspects. Particularly the collapsed codes are of interest when the distinction between male and female is blurred by the new roles and fashions for women, or by the new logic of equating individuality and collectivity through the figure of strong leaders (Gumbrecht 1997:383 *et al.*). Gumbrecht's project is rich in details as well as perspectives on the structures that shaped an age culturally, artistically and politically. However, one of the two closing essays of the book is entitled "After Learning from History" and it asks what can be done with the past in a situation where historical studies do not legitimize themselves as providing instructions for the future. Gumbrecht's own answer is essentially twofold. He sees the engagement with history as rational when it provides a reservoir of other ways to help imagine a different future (Gumbrecht 1997:435), but even more than that he makes a defence of fascination

and the desire to feel simultaneity with another age as a primary reason to pursue historical studies.

The defence of fascination continues in Gumbrecht's three books published between 2003 and 2006, which were conceived as a trilogy on presence. *The Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (2004) deals with the philosophical issues of presence and the institutional problems of privileging hermeneutics in the humanities. *The Powers of Philology* (2003) shows how the discipline of textual scholarship also is closely related to desires to be in touch with the past, whereas the seemingly contrary subject of sports in *In Praise of Athletic Beauty* (2006) demonstrates a strong connection to the past.

One aspect of the tie between sports and memory is the nostalgia for players and the remembrance of their prime (Gumbrecht 2006:236), but more importantly watching a game produces moments of high intensity because of the backdrop traditions produce in the form of affiliations to and affections for clubs, comparisons with other great players and the singular epiphanies of form, where historical references are always at play. At the same time, Gumbrecht emphasizes more than once how both athletes and spectators can be lost in focused intensity, where the mode of being is the meaning of the event (Gumbrecht 2006:51–52). Memory and presence are thus linked in an intricate and sometimes paradoxical way.

The same mode of being where the past helps to build a stronger sense in the present is evident at the end of *The Production of Presence*:

As the rhythms and the appearances of Japanese theatre were conquering my body and my imagination, I remembered the Pentecostal tongues from the Christian tradition. I also remembered those faces with their suddenly blurred forms and their half-open eyes that we all see at some special and very rare moments of our lives: sweet faces and threatening faces indeed. (Gumbrecht, 2004:151–152)

The performance does not produce meaning as much as it produces a mode of being that is also particularly bodily, but it still relies on the imagination and the memory of the spectator, whose experience is enhanced and made more intense by the recollection of something outside of the performance.

There is a distinctive ambivalence or decisive demarcation in Gumbrecht's approach to memory. Given his substantial involvement in history and particularly the history of literature, he is of course not in favour of a culture or a way of life that simply indulges in the present with no interest in history, but it is rather the idea of collective memories that record too much with too little interest in the uses of memory that is of little value:

What can we do about such presence, not only about that which is present in the prolonged latency that dates from 1945, what can we do about the impression that it is not enough to just be there, with composure, as Heidegger recommends? Clearly, the

endless accumulation of textual and other materials that document what had actually happened in a historical moment of reference will not help. Nor will, as I already mentioned, the renewed and ever more profound [textual] analysis of similar sources. It is such insistence and repetition that produces the impression of a tautology typical of the so-called “Memoria Kultur” in which many German intellectuals and academics are indulging today. (Gumbrecht 2009a:94)

The individual fascination is given its due against the more dominant ideas of collective memories and the building of a culture remembrance. Again, this is not a denial of the existence of shared memories, but the point is that in many practices of remembrance the content of memory need not be shared, but it is rather the cultures of sports, theatre, etc. that enable a certain way of accessing the past, without the need of a shared narrative.

Collective and individual memories cannot avoid intersecting, but it is important whether the guiding perspective is one or the other. It could be claimed there is both an abundance of memories about the past focusing on very distinct cases as well as lack of counter-memories, which is what novels and projects like *In 1926* seek to create by showing that the stereotypes and commonplaces of a certain time should not stand alone. The value of such counter-memories is that they make history more nuanced and, not to be overlooked, function as small revelations of an unknown past that is made manifest through a photograph, a quote, a poem, etc., that does not change the big picture but may generate a particular value to some individuals.

The insistence of a mode of remembrance where the aesthetics of a work, rather than its content, provides an experience in which the artwork, novel, or play demands an investment of time where a meditative-like atmosphere can arise. Under the heading “Der Rhythmus der Erinnerung”, Gumbrecht writes about Péter Esterházy's book *Keine Kunst*:

Denn der meist beschwingte Rhythmus von Péter Esterházy's Sätzen spült Erinnerungen an die Oberfläche seines Textes, gute, ambivalente, schlechte und unerträgliche Erinnerungen, die wie unter der Hand die Erinnerungen seiner Leser werden, willkommene, unwillkommene und manchmal vielleicht sogar bleibende Lese-Erinnerungen (Gumbrecht 2009b)

The interaction between the meaning of Esterházy's texts, which is of course shared by all readers, blends with the personal experience of each reader with the text, which also produces effects that cannot be understood in terms of meaning. The balance between meaning and presence is thus an ongoing process in the confrontation with all kinds of objects, but some objects or situations create a certain atmosphere, *Stimmung*, impression or even epiphanic moment (Gumbrecht 2004:118 et al.). This desire for presence calls for another way of thinking about making sense: “let ourselves be caught by an oscillation where presence effects permeate the meaning effects” (Gumbrecht 2004:123).

From a broader perspective this approach holds as a result of the recognition that aesthetics and practices of remembering play a role in the formation of collective memories, because good stories, amazing figures, and beautiful imagery are more likely to prevail. This should be considered when thinking of the way memory is passed on in society:

What I want to discuss is whether those modified concepts of “aesthetics” and “history”, as the two main frameworks within which I propose to approach cultural objects, might – and should – have an impact on the ways we think about our teaching and go about fulfilling our pedagogical commitments. (Gumbrecht, 2004:122)

Gumbrecht’s criticism of cultural memory is ultimately a critique that can help to sharpen the focus on the complexities entailed by concepts such as collective memory, in the tradition of Maurice Halbwachs; the places of memory, in Pierre Nora’s work; and cultural memory in the sense of Jan Assmann. It also suggests that the cultural memory, although Gumbrecht does not embrace the term, can in a different way also strongly influence the personal level of experience – a novelistic argument that harmonizes with Gumbrecht’s thinking, is found in the work of Don DeLillo.

Memory and Presence in Don DeLillo’s *The Names*

Don DeLillo (born 1936) is considered one of the great American novelists, not least because he writes in distinct prose about major American traumas such as the murder of John F. Kennedy in *Libra*, the cold war in *Underworld* which eerily forecasts the attack on World Trade Center through its cover and the sustained interest in terrorism in his work, and his latest novel, *Falling Man* about the 9/11 attack on the USA. There is also another side to his writing in which the events and places of the novels are much more generic and in which he develops a more meditative novelistic space. Two such examples are the short novels *The Body Artist* and *Cosmopolis*, as well as the both hilarious and disturbing *White Noise* and the only novel by DeLillo set outside of USA, *The Names*, which takes place primarily in Greece, with some chapters located in the Middle East and India.

The Names is to some degree an overlooked masterpiece in DeLillo’s work. Like *White Noise* it maintains a subtle balance between comedy and a profound vision of how meaning is created and undermined in the fragile life of human beings. The first-person narrator James Axton is working on risk assessment with a base in Greece, mostly so that he can be near his son Tap and ex-wife Kathryn, who is working at an archaeological excavation on an island in the Greek archipelago. A number of American friends and acquaintances pass through the pages giving voice to all kinds of ideas of how the world should be interpreted, and as a subplot in the essentially plot-less novel, Axton is tracing a cult-like terrorist group that eventually also tries to kill him.



Figure 1.

The novel begins with a Proust-like opening with Axton's confession that for a long time he avoided going to the Acropolis, one of the world's most canonized places of cultural memory: "The weight and moment of those worked stones promised to make the business of seeing them a complicated one. So much converges there. It's what we've rescued from the madness. Beauty, dignity, order, proportion" (DeLillo 1982:3). And he goes on to say that there is an ambiguity in exalted things: "We despise them a little" (*ibid.*). Instead Axton remains in the chaotic world below for most of the novel until he discovers that the Acropolis is not the mute place he envisioned that it would be, but a place where people from all over the world come and fill the air with all their languages (Figure 1):

The Parthenon was not a thing to study but to feel. It wasn't aloof, rational, timeless, pure. I couldn't locate the serenity of the place, the logic and steady sense. [...] Everyone is talking. I move past the scaffolding and walk down the steps, hearing one language after another, rich, harsh, mysterious, strong. This is what we bring to the temple, not prayer or chant or slaughtered rams. Our offering is language. (DeLillo 1982:330–31)

DeLillo – like Gumbrecht – shifts the focus from the content of the object of cultural memory to its ability to create certain states of mind (and body) in the people engaging with these objects. The ruins are a vehicle for a much larger concern, that of culture and the miracle of language, which in this

scenario is not just about Greek Antiquity but about the whole ability to communicate with a symbolic tool that has been evolved over millennia by ordinary people.

The same combination of a displacement of the content and a focus on the production of certain modes of presence facing objects from a distant past is presented in the novel by the mentor of Kathryn, the charismatic Owen Brademas. He explains that he had a desire to decipher the languages that were found on tablets, to break the code and understand what these people had been thinking. Unfortunately, most of the messages he found concerned trade and accounting (DeLillo 1982:35). Instead, he explains, the writing systems themselves became a fascination, and he became devoted to understanding the basis of writing.

Kathryn is also smitten with a desire for engaging with the past as she carefully digs deeper and deeper into her tiny hole in the excavation. Axton observes this almost meditative practice with equal amounts of incredulity and envy of this tiresome work, with its way of simplifying the view of the world while being focused primarily on a search for the evidence of other people being there (DeLillo 1982:30).

All of these activities demonstrate a shift from acquiring meaning to the desire to be present in a certain mode. One that includes a connection to the past, but which is still focused on the present. The desire for presence over meaning is further revealed in the novel's last chapter that follows Axton's walk to the Acropolis. This chapter is easily recognized as the novel Axton's nine year-old son Tap supposedly is writing and which has previously been described as full of spirited misspellings (DeLillo 1982:313). In six pages the short story is set in the Midwest of the USA, probably in a Pentecostal church, where a child watches his parents and other members in the ceremony begin talking in tongues. He is not able himself to do so and ends up running out of the church leaving behind him an angry priest among others (DeLillo 1982:334–339).

The chapter can be read as a commentary on several aspects of the novel. It further highlights another mode where presence takes over meaning, but this time under false pretences by the illusion that speaking in tongues makes sense at a higher level. Whereas the main part of the novel has been sceptical of the idea of making sense or has poked fun at the many theories about the world that people hold, the celebration of language at the Acropolis and then the warning about the misuse of nonsense for a seemingly higher purpose redeems sense-making and rationality, even though rationality and sense may not be solid or lasting, but they avoid a confrontation with the things of the world themselves.

The thing itself is a recurring obsession in the work of DeLillo, playing on the distance between word and thing, and the desires of finding a way to see the world as it is, and the impossible return to an adamic language where

signs did not live a life of their own. "Objects are the limits we desperately need," Axton meditates at one point (DeLillo 1982:133). Later the Indian mystic Singh teaches Axton about how the world has changed and acquired a self of its own with fatal consequences for man's being:

The world for thousands of years was our escape, was our refuge. Men hid from themselves in the world. We hid from God or death. The world was where we lived, the self was where we went mad and died. But now the world has a self of its own. (DeLillo 1982:297)

This is of course not a theory that should be taken at face value, but the idea is not so far from the concept of world that has played a central role in modern philosophy, which is transformed here into a longing for a way of being in the world less dependent on meaning.

The terrorists, who are also recurring figures in the universe of DeLillo, are people who create meaning through their actions. In *The Names* the absurd strategy of the cult group is to kill people whose initial matches the name of the city they are located in. This arbitrary relation creates significance through the use of force, and it is symptomatic throughout DeLillo's novel of how violence works as a superior way to create meaning which the intellectual has no efficient response to. It has been suggested that the name "Axton", which is mispronounced by several other characters (LeClair 1988:200), should be read as a pun on "act on" thereby enhancing the passive and confused role that most of DeLillo's protagonist's play.

DeLillo's novel is thus a thought-provoking and faceted meditation on the relationship between meaning, being and memory and the desire that can be attached to these. The convergences with Gumbrecht's central theses should be obvious with regard to the different states things and events can confer on people, and how interpretations of the world often are of little use, especially if they overshadow the emotions of certain ways of being in the world.

What is also common to DeLillo and Gumbrecht is their observation of their own fascination with religious feelings while remaining sceptical of religion and belief. Both *The Production of Presence* and *The Names* end with references to the Pentecostal tradition of tongue speak, which by its meaningless use of words seems to epitomize the conflict between meaning and presence. Gumbrecht is aware of the proximity between the states of being that he describes and what could be taken for a religious experience, since they share the fundamental features of being beyond meaningful explanation and representing an enchanted and elevated state (Gumbrecht 2003:66; Gumbrecht 2004:152), but he does not subscribe to any metaphysics beyond this, as is also the case for DeLillo. Instead it could be argued that they are both involved in reclaiming a vocabulary for certain experiences and states of mind that have typically been reserved for religious experiences, and they do so while being very specific about the often mundane objects that enable

these states to occur and which are dependent on the attention to something being displaced in time.

Another point of convergence is on the emphasis on violence and power as central categories. In DeLillo's work the violence is for real, whether it is the killings in *The Names*, of John F. Kennedy in *Libra*, or the 9/11 attacks in *Falling Man*. Gumbrecht is more interested in the culturally acceptable forms of violence that can be found in sports, where the use of force is restrained but nevertheless is played out, although he reflects on the nature of power and its relation to space by defining power as the ability to block space with bodies (Gumbrecht 2004:114).

Gumbrecht's view of sports is multifaceted, and the grace of the athlete and not least the forms that arise spontaneously in great plays in team sports are no less central than the fascinations that are linked to the relationship between sports and violence. This aspect is central in certain sports where the athletes' proximity to death, the physical fights in boxing and the suffering that athletes endure is central:

All sports that feature a direct confrontation between two opponents – a duel in the most literary sense – stage a scene where composure in the face of gestures of destruction is the highpoint of the production. (Gumbrecht 2006:164)

The violence does not create meaning, but it fascinates, just as the figure of the terrorist and war in general is central to the historically oriented desires in most cultures, where the absence of meaning is replaced by the use of power.

A final point similarity between *The Names* and Gumbrecht's book on sports is the binding of sport and memory together in the stadium. DeLillo describes a scene where the National Gardens, the Olympic Stadium and the Acropolis can be viewed from the same point (DeLillo 1982:64). In another scene the view of the stadium is carefully inserted within a central dialogue on the changing meaning of names, as if to silently mock the ideas of getting names right (DeLillo 1982:240).

Gumbrecht, on the other hand, reflects on the presence of these huge buildings in the middle of our cities that are only used on game days, which in most sports counts for less than twenty times per year and then only for a few hours (Gumbrecht 2006:225–227). But, at the same time, when not in use they serve as reminders, not unlike the temples of Antiquity, of something of value that has taken place, as flexible signifiers that change with the spectators' own histories. This begs the question of whether there are areas where the content of memory is so crucial that presence effects must play a secondary role, or whether the paradigm of oscillating between presence and meaning can be an ethical answer to the problems of representing content?

Semiotics of Remembrance

A culture's fascination with ruins and artefacts from another era is of course just one aspect of the way that the past can make its mark on the present. Another central domain is the way that commemorations are produced as signs that tell about certain aspects of the past, particularly monuments that are public, and which are produced not by the remnants of what it signifies, but as signs that tell about the past in certain way and with a prominent placement in the public space. I shall argue that this represents a significant development from an iconic mode of signifying towards a symbolic relationship between the monument and the events, and that it also forces a more temporal involvement of the spectator.

The atrocities of the Second World War and in particular the mass killings carried out by the Nazi regime are among the most traumatic events in European history. The latter is also an event whose enormity makes it difficult to comprehend and thus also to represent in a meaningful and fulfilling way. Nevertheless, it is a traumatic event that needs to be remembered, and this is carried out in numerous ways. Concentration camps transformed into memorial sites and museums that show sites of the killings are some of the ways that, even in the absence of clear signs, the atrocities still have a powerful effect on people, which can be enhanced by a narrative and information about what took place.

Yet, the camps are remotely located and not part of a public, traversed space, and do not completely fulfil the need to create memories of the Holocaust. With this in mind, there have been heated debates about how the event can be represented, such as in Claude Lanzmann's critique of Steven Spielberg's movie *Schindler's List* which according to Lanzmann (Loshitzky 1997:111) did not grasp the impossibility of grasping the Holocaust on film. There has been much debate over whether the Holocaust is unique (Rosenbaum 1996) and whether it is an event of such enormity that gives it the properties of the sublime and thus an impossible to represent (Thomsen 2008:114).

The issue here is not whether there are more or less true representations, but rather to consider alternative representational modes. One example of an iconic representation of the Holocaust is the Holocaust Memorial in San Francisco by George Segal (Figure 2). The sculpture is in many ways straightforward: a man, completely white as if both generic and innocent, stands behind barbed wire looking out, and looking at the observers of the sculpture. Behind him are white bodies that appear to be dead and piled up in a way that does not bear any of the signs of care that a culture under normal circumstances would give to their dead. The sculpture is entitled "The Holocaust" and with that information it is almost impossible not to interpret these figures as a tiny part of a larger whole. It is another representation in the tradition of the unknown soldier's graves that can be found



Figure 2.

throughout Europe, in which one anonymous individual has come to represent each and every one of the victims. In this sense Segal's monument is very powerful in its way of insisting on an individual and lonely figure, and not a group of standing figures, that can represent the dignity of a single person against a background of a mass that signifies the enormous number of victims.

Peter Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial in Berlin works in a very different way, and there was much controversy prior to the establishment of the monument in this central and spacious location in Berlin (Figure no. 3). The monument itself has a purely conventional, in Charles Sanders Peirce's terms symbolic, relationship to the Holocaust. It is of course possible to suggest that the monument is also iconic, but it is not viable to claim that one iconic interpretation should have priority over others. Typically the blocks can be seen as individuals, although they bear no resemblance to the human form, or to coffins or barracks, which they do resemble but only to a certain extent. The idea of a giant labyrinth also comes to mind, which does not have any direct relation to the Holocaust, but could be seen as an interpretation of the mental state both of the victim's world view, and of the complicated relationship with history that the Holocaust has generated. But in the end it is up to the spectator to find out how this means something and how it is related to the Holocaust.



Figure 3.

Originally the monument was intended to consist only of the 2711 blocks of reinforced concrete, but though Eisenman's monument was created to stand alone, it has been supplemented with an information centre below the ground, which was built following pressure from the public and from the politicians in charge of the building (Leggewie and Meyer 2005:253–264). The official website of the monument describes the function of the information centre:

To complement the Memorial, the architect has designed an underground Information Centre in the southeastern corner of the field of stelae, accessible via two flights of stairs or a lift. With its impressive architecture and original formal language, the centre consists of several rooms, some lit by natural light, and has a total exhibition area of around 800 square metres. It will provide the *necessary background material* on the victims commemorated here and on historic memorial sites.

A central function of the Information Centre is to *back up the abstract form of remembrance inspired by the Memorial with concrete facts and information* about the victims. This includes, for example, recording as many names of murdered Jews as possible. Personal and biographical details of individuals and families will also be presented as examples.

(Source: <http://www.holocaust-mahnmal.de/en/thememorial/informationcentre>. My italics)

So, two strategies of representation are at work here, both the classic iconic, documentary and a more daring symbolic form. It is also important that

Eisenman's sculpture and the practices that are involved when visiting the monument implicitly demand that the spectator walks around the monument and finds his or her own path through the blocks. Whereas an iconic sculpture rather easily can be interpreted as signifying something and then left, Eisenman's monument suggests a relationship whose exact nature cannot be revealed through a traditional interpretation, but must be experienced in a process that has no logical beginning or end, but which is open to interpretation by the visitor, who again is most likely aware that this is a Holocaust monument and thus will make some sort of meaning out of it. But perhaps "meaning" is not the right word, and thereby this monument embodies a way of producing a presence in the way Gumbrecht describes, because traditional hermeneutic strategies do not lead to a satisfying result. This seems to be in line with Eisenman's intentions, as is evident from an interview with *Der Spiegel* when he was asked about what kind of emotion he wanted to make the monument generate:

I said all along that I wanted people to have a feeling of being in the present and an experience that they had never had before. And one that was different and slightly unsettling. The world is too full of information and here is a place without information. That is what I wanted. (*Spiegel Online*, 5 September 2005)

In Peirce's semiotics the third dominant mode of representation is the indexical mode, whereas the proximity to or the effects of the signified can be deduced. The concentration camp that has been cleaned, preserved and turned into a museum can be said to indexically represent the atrocities that took place there, even though they do not give away what actually happened there or even the sense of how life was lived and taken. Well-kept lawns that meet the visitor belie what the place looked like, but still the place has a capacity to move, perhaps because – much like in Eisenman's monument – there is an absence of the horrors, a dearth of visual references, and that it is not a sculpture that can be overlooked but a place that should be walked and thus acquires a temporal extension.

It is also noteworthy that Daniel Libeskind's Jewish museums in both Berlin and Copenhagen are constructed with floor plans that contain a message – in Berlin The Star of David, in Copenhagen "Mitzvah" – that the ordinary visitor is not trained to be able to "read" during his or her walk-through, but which in effect contains information about the museum that transforms its use from merely being a space with displays into a space that is loaded with a very abstract meaning that again cannot be interpreted in a certain way, but which demands a certain investment of time and attention to make this mode of being into museum.

In this way, the relationship between meaning and presence becomes crucial, both to fulfil the individual's desire for understanding in a way that does not only rely upon meaning, but also on sensual, bodily experience, and for pedagogical purposes that again can be made to serve more collec-

tive ambitions. In the end this relation mimics the condition DeLillo describes so well in the encounter between the cultural expression and understandings of a different age that we can meaningfully study, while at the same time being in awe of the impervious aspects of the universe that are only heightened by the thought of those who felt the same kind of awe but differently, whether this is inspired by a hole filled with pottery, the ruins of a temple, the horrors of a place of killing, or a stadium that has and will be emptied and filled over and over again, and that stands as a promise to the beautiful form that has appeared and will appear again.

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Places of Literary Memory

Undset's Life and Literature in Narratives of Place

Torunn Selberg

In this article I want to discuss how the Norwegian author Sigrid Undset's life and works are located in present-day narratives of place, linked to a selection of sites of very different character. I proceed from a statement by the anthropologist Edward T. Bruner, that places are not passive, but take on meaning and are constituted by the narratives that surround them (Bruner 2005:12). Narratives of place are not created out of nothing, however; they are connected to the materiality of the place and to its past, and in an interplay between the narrative and the material the place is charged with meaning and history. From this perspective a *place* is more than a geographical location in space. The narratives are not just local, created within the boundaries of the place. In my view, discourses and grand narratives circulating outside the site become localized in narratives of place, and thus narratives are constantly created which can emphasize new aspects of a place's past and materiality, while others end up in the shade. Here I wish to discuss how a writer's biography and works add new dimensions to narratives of place.

Narratives of place can be found in many genres and expressions, and actors at different levels take part in the construction of such narratives; ordinary people, local enthusiasts, cultural entrepreneurs, and local bureaucrats. It is a matter of creating locality, not just to seem attractive to others, but also about local identity. In our time the tourist industry is a significant actor in the creation of narratives that "reinscribe difference in places. In a global market, where tourists have a wide choice of similar destinations, it has become vital to make a distinctive pitch ... places have to market their specificity" (Coleman & Crang 2002:3).

The places to be discussed are Lillehammer, Rome, and Nord-Sel in Gudbrandsdalen. *Lillehammer*, a small inland town in East Norway, was Undset's home town for 30 years. The town has a history going back to the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1994 it hosted the Winter Olympics, as a result of which it was no longer just a small town in Norway, but a part of the bigger world. In stories about Undset's life, *Rome* occupies a significant

position, described as the framework for her artistic breakthrough, and it is also the background for the action in her most famous early novel: *Jenny*. Rome is a cosmopolitan city, the capital of Christendom, with a history going back more than two thousand years. *Nord-Sel* is a small community in Gudbrandsdalen and the home of Undset's most famous character, Kristin Lavransdatter in the novel of the same name. Parts of the novel take place here, and in the 1990s the district was the scene for the film version of the novel. There are farms here that can trace their roots back to the Middle Ages. The relationship between places and Undset's life and literature is expressed here in different categories and memory practices: musealization, theme park, strolling in the footsteps of the past, and historical plays, all expressions with a broad appeal on either side of the millennium.

Many tendencies, events, and ideas come together in the use of Undset's biography and literary universe. The examples to be discussed here all come from the 1990s onwards. There has always been an interest in Undset's works, but in the 1990s something happened which may have heightened the interest. In 1995 *Kristin Lavransdatter* was made into a film that was seen by two-thirds of the Norwegian population, which according to the American scholar Ellen Rees (2003) led to "Kristin-mania". Tordis Ørjasæter's biography of Undset, *Menneskenes hjerter*, appeared in 1993, winning the Brage Prize and attracting many readers and considerable attention, and in 1996 there came a follow-up dealing with Undset's relationship to Rome. The interest in Undset can be linked to other contexts. One has already been mentioned, the constant attribution of "greater value to the differences between places" (Knudsen & Waade 2010:6). Creating narratives of place with both an inner and an outer appeal is a part of that process. The narratives of place discussed here can also be positioned in what is now called "literary tourism": "that is, tourism focused on geographic spots and sights that are connected to authors and/or their literary creations. ... Increasing numbers of people read and plan their travels based on the concept of following a writer in his/her tracks, alternatively following a route from a novel, or to experience something they have seen in the cinema" (Sjöholm 2010:156). Both narratives of place of various kinds and historical tourism are a part of society's production of social memory (see Eriksen 1999). The different narratives of place here all concern giving places cultural capital by both emphasizing and creating certain pasts. They are a part of a traditional practice of memory ranging from museums and musealization to more (post)modern forms such as experience tourism and theme parks.

Sigrid Undset

Sigrid Undset (1882–1949) is one of Norway's best-known writers. She was the daughter of the archaeologist Ingvald Undset (1853–1893) and Charlotte

Gyth Undset (1855–1939). Her mother was Danish, and Sigrid was born in Kalundborg in Denmark. The family moved to Kristiania in 1884. Sigrid's father died when she was just eleven years old, and when she was young she had to support her mother and sisters by doing clerical work. She made her debut at the age of 25 with the novel *Fru Martha Oulie*. In 1909 she won an artist's scholarship to go to Rome (1909–1910). There she met the artist Anders Castus Svarstad, who became her husband; she had three children with him but they later divorced. She converted to Catholicism in 1924, which was a highly controversial choice at that time. She was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1928, "principally for her powerful descriptions of Northern life during the Middle Ages", as represented in the novels *Kristin Lavransdatter* and *Olav Audunssøn*. The *Kristin Lavransdatter* trilogy (1920–22) has been translated into over 70 languages and is still widely read, and constantly appears in new editions.¹ This novel has been admired both by a broad readership and by literary scholars (Bergusson 1995). Together with her breakthrough novel *Jenny* (1911), *Kristin Lavransdatter* is her best-known novel and is also reckoned as her best work (Bliksrud 1988:12). In 1996 the first part of *Kristin Lavransdatter* was made into a film, directed by Liv Ullmann, which achieved enormous popularity, as noted above (Rees 2003). *Jenny* was dramatized by NRK in 1983, with Liv Ullmann in the leading role. Dramatizations through film both reinforce and concretize the places in books, and they generate an increased interest in the background to the action in the novels and the films. Many places go to great lengths today to become locations for cinema and television films, thus becoming interesting for literary tourists.

The places examined in this article are connected to Undset's biography and to the novels *Kristin Lavransdatter* and *Jenny*. Both her home of Bjerkebæk in Lillehammer and her stay in Rome take up a great deal of space in biographies of Undset (e.g. Ørjasæter 1993; Slapgard 2007), and whole books have also been written about Undset's relationship to both Bjerkebæk and Rome (Rakeng 1999; Ørjasæter 1996; Skille 2003). Places described in *Kristin Lavransdatter* have also been written about in separate works (e.g. Mørkhagen 1995).

Undset died in 1949, but an interest both in her life and in some of her works has been maintained in the Norwegian public sphere since then, with an extra upswing in the 1990s and later. Her works are counted as part of "the Norwegian cultural heritage", and still have a prominent place in the general consciousness, as evidenced in the use of her biography and novels in present-day narratives and markers of place. The last great biography appeared in 2007, and in 2000 *Kristin Lavransdatter* was voted by Norwegian book-club readers as the best novel of the twentieth century.

Being Where the Art Was Created: Bjerkebæk and Lillehammer

Bjerkebæk in Lillehammer was Sigrid Undset's home from 1919 to 1949. After Undset's death her son Hans Svarstad (1919–1978) lived here until he died, and his wife Christianne occupied the house until her death in 1996. The state took over the buildings in 1997 from Christianne Svarstad's heirs. Bjerkebæk today is an artist's home that has been turned into a museum. The state is the formal owner, while management is in the hands of Maihaugen, one of Norway's oldest and biggest open-air museums, devoted to pre-industrial peasant culture. When the property was taken over, the houses were restored to the way they looked when Sigrid Undset lived and worked there. In 2006 the foundation stone was laid for a visitor centre, and in 2007 her home was opened to the public.

Bjerkebæk, which is situated on the ridge above Lillehammer, consists of two connected brown-stained log buildings which were moved from Gudbrandsdalen. They represent an image of a medieval farmstead. When Undset moved to Lillehammer she was working on *Kristin Lavransdatter*, and being close to both Gudbrandsdalen and the museum of Maihaugen was important for that. This is what the guides tell visitors as they show people round Undset's home.² Both Gudbrandsdalen, which is the setting of the novel, and Kristin herself are thus a part of the atmosphere in the old log buildings at Bjerkebæk.

A tour of Bjerkebæk involves the rooms, the furniture, the pictures, and not least of all, the places where Undset worked, in short, the materiality of the house. But the objects that are emphasized are accompanied by narratives which together give insight into Undset's life at Bjerkebæk and her personality. When the pictures of her father are shown, visitors are told about the archaeologist Ingvald Undset, about Sigrid Undset's close relationship to him, and hence also about her childhood, about how learned she was as a child, and about her father's illness and premature death, and how this meant that she had to assume responsibility for the family at a very early age. Among the paintings there are some by Anders Svarstad; for instance, the guides tell how the first picture that Undset herself bought was painted by Svarstad, who did not know at the time that he would later be her husband. Pictures of saints and other religious objects lead to the story of how Undset converted to Catholicism and her life as a Catholic. The places where she wrote *Kristin Lavransdatter* are pointed out, and the participants in the tour can see the same view that Undset saw as she was creating the medieval milieu in the books. And an old telephone is pointed out as the one on which she received the announcement that she had been awarded the Nobel Prize. As a museum Bjerkebæk is a memorial to Undset's life and her great breakthrough as an author.

Undset's connection to Lillehammer is another theme of the tour. Visitors



Undset at her desk at Bjerkebæk.

are told that she did not have any “natural” ties to the place, but it was not by chance that she moved there. Some of her artist friends from her time in Rome were then in Lillehammer, which at that time was known as “the artists’ town”, and it is particularly emphasized that the surroundings – represented by the proximity to Gudbrandsdalen and to Maihaugen – were of great significance for her work with *Kristin Lavransdatter* and the later medieval novels. At the same time, guides say that she isolated herself from the “ordinary” Lillehammer by means of a high fence that prevented people from seeing in, and a closed gate in the fence.

Although many people find that a visit to an author’s home adds new dimensions to the experience of the works, it is a subject of debate whether it really gives any insight into the literature. Some people think that it is the text and the text alone that gives understanding, and that authors’ homes and narratives about their lives only spoil the experience of the work of art itself, while others say that being where the work was created gives a richer reading experience (see e.g. Skille 2001; Krogstad 2005; Brown 2008).³ This is also a distinction that reflects a scholar’s and a layman’s approach to a work of art. In her article “Når poesin tar plats” the ethnologist Connie Kapstad Reksten discusses the current interest in visiting the home of the poet Olav H. Hauge during what has become the Ulvik Poetry Festival in memory of Hauge. She shows that the emergence of new poetic places is a striking feature of our times, which she calls a *stedliggjøring* (“place-making”) of lit-

erature that is difficult to understand on the basis of literary scholarship, which is concerned with the text alone. She thinks that when poetry “takes place” in this way, it is literature as action, as something that people do, experience, and visit (Reksten 2007:176). For most people a visit to the home is a way to experience the artist herself. The idea behind the musealization of artists’ homes is that when the books – and the art – become fixed in materiality and become experience, it gives flesh and blood to the reading experience. Having been there and seen the place is a sensory experience that gives the visitor something that neither books, reproductions, nor films can convey (Meurling 2006:25).

Bjerkebak, Lillehammer, and the Townspeople

In a little book of memoirs from Bjerkebak, Odd Rakeng (1999:7) writes that the inhabitants of Lillehammer were never allowed to see inside the original home or to glimpse the fascinating people who lived in it. Bjerkebak was a secretive place, while simultaneously occupying a prominent place in most people’s minds. When Bjerkebak was opened as a museum, the journalist Kristian Skullerud (2007) wrote in the newspaper *Gudbrandsalen/Dagningen*: “Very few of us have been inside Bjerkebak. We have seen. We have heard. We have walked past. We have imagined it – what it was like. Where she sat and wrote ... about love and the meaning of life itself.” And Skullerud is excited: “will the open doors at Bjerkebak bring us closer to works that are still as relevant today?” The question he asks is whether giving the general public access to an author’s life will help to spread knowledge about her works. In the musealization of artists’ homes there is an aspect of democratization when an inaccessible place that provokes interest and curiosity is opened to people other than the initiates (see also Reksten 2006).

The musealization of Bjerkebak, as of so many other artist’s homes, is a matter of localizing an internationally famous person, linking the life and works to a specific place. An artist’s home is a resource when the locality and distinctiveness of a place is to be narrated. The town was given a memorial site to a great author, and became central in the shared memory of the works.⁴ Skullerud writes about Bjerkebak, for example, that this was where “she found the key to her life’s work. This was where she found Kristin, Lavrans, Erlend, and Jørundgård. This was where she found what she was searching for in her life” (Skullerud 2007). Writers or artists can become a trademark for a place.⁵

The project of musealizing Bjerkebak started a short time after the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer. The Olympics had generated a tremendous interest in Lillehammer as a place, so that people in the outside world knew what Lillehammer was, and where in the world the town was located. Being



Bjerkebæk with the old timber houses.

seen and assessed from outside can lead a place to see itself with new eyes; the narrative about the place can become more distinct and take on new values. Properties of a place that are familiar and taken for granted can stand out and be evaluated in new ways. The local character becomes sharper. The cultural promise that the Olympic Games also entailed (Klausen 1999) led to a greater interest in Lillehammer's local culture and what the town could show off.⁶ The local culture took on a new meaning⁷ thanks to the Olympic Games and the magnificent opening ceremony which made Lillehammer a place in the world. The anthropologist Odd Are Berkaak writes about Lillehammer and the Olympics and about the dilemmas the town faced when it was to be made into a modern Olympic city: "That of being simultaneously local and global, framing the place simultaneously as an inside and an outside. Through large-scale media performances the Olympics display the host city's unique and particular difference from all other places on the planet at the same time as making it universally translatable and accessible from radically different positions" (Berkaak 1999:138). Undset as an international figure with a local connection fitted into this picture. For an artist's home to become a memorial site it is not enough to donate it to public ownership; it must be regarded as interesting in the present day, with relevant cultural capital (Meurling 2006:26). Local cultural capital in dialogue with ideas and narratives in the outside world provide this relevance. When Bjerkebæk became accessible to the public after the death of Christianne Svarstad, the time was ripe to show off Undset's life at Lillehammer, and to position it in the growing interest in making authors' lives and works take place.

Walking in Famous Footsteps: Rome

In the novel *Jenny* the leading character says: "I don't think there is any city one can be as happy in as in Rome." Of Rome it is also said that it was a city of great importance in Undset's life, and that it was a city she loved, even though she only visited it three times in her life. Jenny is often present in the narratives about Undset's youthful stay in Rome, and Tordis Ørjasæter writes, for example: "In many ways she is Sigrid Undset's own youthful dream" (50). She also describes Jenny as Undset's alter ego at several places in the book *Sigrid Undset og Roma*, and writes that Undset undoubtedly put a great deal of herself into the novel (52). In the narrative of Undset's Rome, the literary universe and the biography of the author merge, and the novel *Jenny* becomes a source for the narrative about Undset's Rome. Like the move to Lillehammer and Bjerkebak, the journey to Rome is presented as a watershed in life; she "said farewell to her old life," Slapgard writes. While Bjerkebak is the framework for her great breakthrough, Rome is the scene of her awakening and liberation as an artist, a person, and a woman (see Ørjasæter 1996).

Between 1996 and 2006 the travel agency "Temareiser Fredrikstad" arranged trips to Rome "in Sigrid Undset's footsteps", with her biographer Tordis Ørjasæter as guide.⁸ On this trip people were told: "We put our clocks back to 1909 when Sigrid Undset came to Rome for the first time. We walk along the streets where she lived – Via Gregoriana, Via Frattina, Via delle Orsonine – and follow both Sigrid Undset's and 'Jenny's' footsteps to Monte Pincio, the Spanish Steps, the Villa Borghese gardens, Tiber Island, the Sistine Chapel, the Protestant Cemetery, the Scandinavian Association, and much, much more" (Temareiser Fredrikstad brochure). As we see from this description, visitors are taken to the places where Undset – and Jenny – lived and walked. In this context the locations become places where the author Undset is remembered, places where she wrote and places that she wrote about. Rome thus becomes a literary site which derives meaning through the mixture of the imaginary and the real (Herbert 2001). "In Undset's footsteps" is a tour on which Rome is experienced through Undset's and Jenny's narratives and gazes, communicated by Undset's biographer. Rome's streets, squares, and monuments become sites of memory that highlight narratives about Undset's life in the same way as objects and pictures do at Bjerkebak. At the same time, some of these places are also famous monuments in the city of Rome, such as the Spanish Steps and the Sistine Chapel, which most tourists want to visit, while others – such as the Via delle Orsonine and the Scandinavian Association – are for people interested in literature, making the trip to Rome more than a visit to well-known tourist attractions (see also Magnussen 2004). Ørjasæter emphasizes that the tour does not include museums because Undset did not visit museums, whereas she did visit many of Rome's churches, as the group also does. It is supposed

“literally to go in Undset’s footsteps”. Each day is devoted to a special aspect of Undset’s time in Rome, and each day begins with a lecture and reading of extracts from her works (see also Magnussen 2004:77ff). Ørjasæter says about Rome and Undset: “Rome did something to her, as it does to so many of us”, and thereby creates a relationship between Undset and the participants on the tour, bringing them into Undset’s world. Rome, as many people know, is an overwhelming city. *The Rough Guide to Italy* (p. 676) says: “There’s more to see here than in any other city in the world, with the relics of over two thousand years of inhabitation packed into its sprawling urban area. You could spend a month here and still only scratch the surface. As a historic place, it is special enough; as a contemporary European capital, it is utterly unique.” It is a city with more than two millennia of history, but the Rome that is experienced in Undset’s footsteps is the city at the start of the twentieth century. It is a Rome that once was full of Scandinavian artists, but which was also full of the same historical monuments that thousands of tourists still come to see. But even these eternal monuments are experienced through Undset’s eyes, for example, when the group visits the Forum the leading character is the daughter of the archaeologist who also loved Rome, and her father’s book *Fra Akershus til Akropolis* is one reference. When the group strolls around the Capitol, the reference is to Undset’s first travel letter – printed in *Morgenbladet* – which is about the church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, which is on the Capitol, famous for its statue of Santo Bambino.⁹ The visit to the Spanish Steps, the artists’ quarter in Undset’s time, concerns the time she lived there, with the rooftop terrace that she loved, from which Svarstad painted the view.¹⁰ But Ørjasæter emphasizes that Rome today is not the Rome that Undset – or Jenny – once lived in. But the timeless monuments, the churches, and the landscape that Undset saw and experienced can also be experienced today. The tour in Undset’s footsteps shows a world that is vanished yet eternal. The narrative about Undset manoeuvres the travellers through the countless other narratives that exist in Rome.

The Narrative of Rome and Norway

While some cities and places achieve their distinctiveness through a link to an author or a character in a novel, Rome is known for so much. The narrative about Undset is only one of countless stories, about the city of art and Christianity. But it is also a narrative about *Norwegian* Rome. The story of Undset and Rome was not created to attract more tourists to Rome, but to make Rome distinctive. It was created for a Norwegian audience, and it is a way to experience a Norwegian Rome. When the participants follow in Undset’s footsteps it is about the many ways of seeing Rome with Undset’s – and hence a Norwegian – gaze. With *Jenny* in our hands we can walk into

Sigrid Undset's life, writes the travel journalist Arild Moldstad (1999), and into the Roman landscape that stimulated her to write the book. An important and exclusive visit during the tour is the one to the Scandinavian Association. This was a haunt not only of Undset, her parents, and her character Jenny, but also of Bjørnson and Ibsen. The association moved around to different premises in Rome, but the books, objects, and furniture are the same, giving the participants insight into the life of Scandinavians in Rome over many years.

Walking in the footsteps of literary persons is a form of tourism in which *experiences* are staged, the tourist *gaze* is replaced by the production of experiences that demand active participation (Sjöholm 2008). It is a matter of "embodied and performed as well as visualised engagement with places and tourist activities" (Coleman & Crang 2002:7). Those who are on the tour are as much participants as observers. The city takes on new dimensions through a narrative that links the different places and different periods in new ways; they belong to the same universe and the same time, as a separate narrative world is created (Magnussen 2004:77ff, see also Kaijser 2002). At the same time, participation – the act of walking to and in places about which one has read – gives a sense of recognition. And like a visit to an author's home, a walk in the author's footsteps can also give new dimensions to the literary universe. Choosing someone's footsteps and thereby emphasizing one narrative among Rome's many, and simultaneously integrating well-known monuments, sites, and churches in this narrative, makes a heterogeneous city accessible, and includes a cosmopolitan city in a Norwegian universe. At the same time, the participants can also make the city their own, by linking it to their own literary experiences.

A Literary Pilgrimage?

Walking in the footsteps of writers and their characters is a modern form of travel. Yet walking in someone's footsteps is also an ancient mode of travel, namely, a pilgrimage. Tours with literature as the superstructure also tend to be called "literary pilgrimages". In Rome we can walk in many footsteps, even those of Peter and Paul. Rome is also a site of pilgrimage and a holy place. In the book *Contesting the Sacred* (1991), John Eade and Michael Sallnow emphasize three things that fill places of pilgrimage with power. They are places where the sacred has manifested itself, or they have a relationship to a holy person, or they are an illustration or a concrete representation of a sacred text. Jerusalem is an example of a place of textual pilgrimage; on the one hand this city is the prototype for reliving the places where Christ walked, preached, suffered, and died. On the other hand, a walk through Jerusalem is also a journey through a specific text, Jerusalem's holy places are a part of a route that embodies Christ's biography as it is told in

the gospels and makes it real (Eade & Sallnow 1991:6–9). The world of narratives and experiences that is created in the tour in Undset's footsteps derives its strength from the link to, if not a holy person then at least a person of significance. And the route that is followed also embodies both her life and parts of her literary universe. The "stations" along the way are places where her artistic work came into full bloom, and through the tour places are linked to her texts, which simultaneously give the many historic sites a meaning of their own. Although *Kristin Lavransdatter* is set in the Norwegian Middle Ages, the character is also present in Rome when Ørjasæter says that Undset was in Rome three times: the first time as a young artist and in love, the second time as the mother of her first child, and the third time as a pilgrim. These three trips can be found as a theme of the three volumes of *Kristin Lavransdatter: The Wreath, The Wife, and The Cross*.

Making History: Sel in Gudbrandsdalen

The community of Nord-Sel is Kristin Lavransdatter's home, and is the scene for parts of the novel about her. The filming of the novel that was set here revealed even more strongly the relationship between Kristin and Nord-Sel. A medieval farm was built for the making of the film in 1996, with several houses and a stave church that was consecrated as a church slightly later.¹¹ After the film was made, the buildings remained standing, later being turned into Jørundgård Medieval Centre. The brochure about the site says that the farm is situated in almost untouched cultural landscape.¹² We are also informed that the reconstructed pilgrim route to Trondheim, which Kristin followed, goes right past the farm. Up to 15,000 visitors come every summer. Overnight accommodation is also offered, even in Kristin's own bed, and those who choose to get married in the stave church can spend the night in the bridal loft – in Kristin and Erlend's bridal bed.¹³ The Medieval Centre is described as a tourist magnet, and we are furthermore told that:

The Centre consists of 16 buildings and a stave church and is located right beside the E6 about 15 km from Otta. Nord-Sel church is close to the statue of Kristin Lavransdatter. ... We have special activities on certain days, such as log construction, smith-work, weaving and various crafts, and baking. Items from the shooting of the film are on display in the different buildings. Information/orientation can take the form of personal guiding in several languages, or self-guiding. Jørundgard has activities for children and adults alike. Stilts, skittles, high jumping in the barn are just some of the activities you can fill the day with at Jørundgard. For those who would like a meal with the taste and ambience of the Middle Ages, Jørundgard can offer several dishes. Jørundgard accepts orders for various events, tours, school classes, confirmations, weddings, birthdays, etc. Plain overnight accommodation is available, for example, in Kristin's bed. (www.jorundgard.no)

It is the novel and the narratives about it that give these new-old buildings and the activities their meaning. The description shows that Jørundgård

stands out as a (post)modern theme park with Kristin and the Middle Ages as the theme. At Jørundgård, the era of the novel and the life of its heroine are put on show and turned into a reality. Visitors can take part in the past, do old-fashioned work, eat medieval food, and even sleep in Kristin's bed. Jørundgård Medieval Centre *materializes* the narrative about Kristin Lavransdatter.

For several years a play has been staged in the setting, *Kristinspelet*. The performance is part of the Kristin Days, the aim of which is to "increase knowledge about the links that Sigrid Undset had with the district, and about medieval culture, based on the novels about Kristin Lavransdatter and on the medieval farm of Jørundgård", as we read in the presentation of the event (www.Kristinspelet.no). The play is a dramatization of the first volume of the novel, *The Wreath*, originally by the dramatist Tormod Skagestad, and has been staged in the theatre. But as it is now performed at Jørundgård Medieval Centre it is not as a stage play but as a historical pageant.¹⁴ At the opening of the performance in the summer of 2004, the chairman of the local council said that the ambition was to make *Kristinspelet* into the most important medieval pageant in Norway.¹⁵

Historical Plays and Memorial Sites

The desire to set up historical plays is spreading. In the last fifteen years more than 400 local spectacles have been staged all over Norway (Nygaard n.d.). Historical plays are stagings of local events from the past; the plot can be taken from myths, legends, or real historical events, which are brought to life, and as far as possible the performance is supposed to coincide with the date of the event. The time and place of the historical play make it realistic, and it establishes continuity between past and present. Historical plays are always staged outdoors, and buildings and landscapes are a part of the action; it is often stressed that the surroundings now are the same as they were for the historical characters and the events, which again helps to create continuity between past and present. The plays are performed on historic ground, but the ritual repetition of a historical play can also *create* a historical foundation, as is the case here. The plays have a ritual character, they are repeated at the same time and in the same place, and the spectators – or should we say, participants – often come back again and again (e.g. Nygaard n.d.; Gran 1997). "Historical plays lie somewhere between an identity-creating ritual and an aesthetic theatrical performance," writes the theatre scholar Anne-Britt Gran, "they operate with an understanding that is both ritual and theatrical aesthetics ... they are ritual for the initiated and theatre for the uninitiated" (1999). Another characteristic of the plays is that they are staged in collaboration between professionals and amateurs. The plays are supposed to be rooted in local and re-

gional cultural life, with participants from the region itself. The leading roles are played by professional actors to ensure the artistic quality, while the amateurs guarantee the local connection and hence that the play seems realistic and authentic (Gran 1999).

Kristinspelet satisfies all the requirements of a historical play, apart from one: the plot comes from a historical *novel*. The characters in the play are literary, not historical, figures. Moreover, the place where it is performed is also a stage set, built for the shooting of the film version of the same story. But the plot from the Middle Ages, the backdrop looking like a real medieval farm, and the conventions of historical plays together create a local past that seems authentic. As such, *Kristinspelet* fulfils the expectations of the audience to witness historical events. Figures from a literary universe, recreated in the framework of a historical pageant, become historical persons. The performance bestows a past on the district. Historical plays are narratives and interpretations of past events on the site; they are thus places of memory. Such memorial sites let us remember the past, but in this case they also *create* the past. The transformation of the novel into a historical play turns the place into a medieval site, and Kristin the heroine of the novel becomes a part of the social memory of the local community.

Kristin Lavransdatter as a Historical Source

Sigrid Undset has often been praised for the way her historical and ethnological knowledge finds expression in the medieval novels (e.g. Berguson 2005; Bliksrud 1997; Mørkhagen 1995; Ystad 1982).¹⁶ Claudia Berguson writes that Kristin Lavransdatter “presents a medieval landscape and history with such accuracy that the trilogy has gained its place in public sentiment as a key source of Norwegian origins”, and she refers to Trond Berg Eriksen (1997), who writes that “in the Norwegian public sphere the memory of life in Norway’s age of greatness is almost exclusively kept alive through the works of Sigrid Undset” (Berguson 2005:344). It is therefore not unnatural that the novel, through its transformation into a historical play, is perceived as a source for a local past. This makes parts of Undset’s literary universe useful in narratives about the past of certain places. What has now happened in Sel is a part of a widespread interest in asserting local pasts. The novel about Kristin Lavransdatter that is an element of a national collective memory roots the action in this district, and the play reinforces the rooting of the characters from the novel. Simon Coleman and Mike Crang (2002:3) write, with reference to the archaeologist John Fowler: “Preserving local heritage can shade into a recreation of what might (or from the perspective of the present, should) have been, blurring into straight make-believe.” By dramatizing the narrative and inserting it in a Medieval Festival, the local past is lengthened, making it appear like a place with traditions going back to the

Middle Ages. The village of the novel is “interacting with and blended into ‘real life’ local community and actually changing the identity of the actual place” (Sandvik 2010:142). A universe of memory is created, linked to ideas about the Norwegian Middle Ages, portrayed through the genre of historical play, which makes the locality into something else when the popular story of the Middle Ages is located in the district of Nord-Sel.

Narrative, Materiality, and Place

On the guided tour through Bjerkebæk, narratives accompany every object and every room. The materiality takes on life through the narratives about Undset’s life and works. Without the person and her literary creations, Bjerkebæk would be like any old house. The narratives make the objects and the rooms in the house into something special, something they would not be without them. Rome is overwhelming materiality with a multitude of narratives and histories. A Norwegian artist’s life and a Norwegian literary universe are overlaid on this diversity, to steer the experience of the place in a specific direction. Rome is seen through a specific gaze and linked to a specific time, with the creation of an unambiguous narrative world and a lucid universe of memory. In Sel the narrative of Kristin Lavransdatter is materialized in the newly built Jørundgård, and simultaneously a narrative about the Middle Ages is created in the place. This is done by transforming a film set into a medieval centre that serves as the framework for a reinterpretation of the novel about Kristin as a historical play. The three narratives of place thus represent different relationships between place and materiality, and an expression of the diverse ways in which the relationship between place and literature is expressed today.

Many scholars refer to an increased emphasis on locality in a globalized world (e.g. Harvey 1993; Robertson 1995; Coleman & Crang 2002). Places are constantly being re-narrated and portrayed as unique and more different from other places, but this is done in a language that has to be understood from many perspectives (see Berkaak 1999). In presentations of locality and the distinctive character of places, there is a great deal of space for the past and the cultural heritage. These are categories that are understood and valued in many contexts. A widespread narrative about the Middle Ages has a prominent place in this interest in the past; it is a narrative that many communities and cities wish to engage in dialogue with (e.g. Eco 1985; Gustafsson 2002). In the article “Dreaming of the Medieval in *Kristin Lavransdatter* and *Trollsyn*” (2003), Ellen Rees points out that in the mid-1990s there arose a new interest in medieval culture in Norway, fired in part by the millennial celebrations of the Norwegian Church, by growing national self-awareness *vis-à-vis* the EU, by pride in the winter Olympics at Lillehammer, and by the restoration of the pilgrim route to Nidaros. Recreations

and reconstructions of medieval life increased in popularity, as we see, for example, in Sel.

One and the same author with her literary universe is linked to different places and put forward in very different forms. Changes of genre, and mixing fiction and realism in new ways alters the message and the meaning of the narrative. Here we have been concerned with an author's biography and literary universes which are interwoven into narratives of place. The author's life and fictitious characters are used to emphasize different materialities and pasts, and thus help to create and recreate places through ever-new narratives that are created locally. But the local narratives derive meaning from different contexts, such as the production of locality, literary tourism, cultural heritage, and memory. Literary tourism can be about understanding an author and her literary universe: can one get closer to the works if one is present in the place where they were created, whether that is Lillehammer or Rome? Following in the author's footsteps helps a person to grasp a heterogeneous city through a gaze, and to link the many places in the city to memories of a life and a literary universe. Moving this universe to a genre that is associated with the interpretation of bygone local events, as is done in Nord-Sel, is a way to create locality, memorial sites, and a past through aesthetic presentation and ritual experience.

(Translated by Alan Crozier)

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- 1 For example, the latest Penguin edition in 2005.
 - 2 I have gone on three guided tours, in 2007 and 2009
 - 3 Nan Bentzen Skille writes about Bjerkebæk that the home was created by the artist herself from the bottom up, and therefore can be both a supplement and perhaps also a corrective to perceptions of the author's works. Skille writes that Undset was very proud of her home; when it was finished she thought it was "the most beautiful home in Norway" (Skille 2001: 15). Skille describes her first encounter with Bjerkebæk and goes on to say: "when I then read Sigrid Undset's books, the memory of this visit lay in the back of my mind and made my reading experience richer. It is as if I now hear in stereo what I used to hear in mono: the theme of the work, the instrumentation, the variations – they are all there as before, but the sound has taken on a new dimension. ... A richer reading experience; that is a good reason for preserving an author's home."
 - 4 In 1995 the celebration of the Sigrid Undset Days began at Lillehammer, later developing into the Norwegian Literature Festival.
 - 5 Helen Watkins and David Herbert, in their article "Cultural Policy and Place promotion: Swansea and Dylan Thomas" (2003), discuss how a post-industrial city like Swansea, in its quest for a new identity, wants to highlight itself as Dylan Thomas's city. A post-industrial town like Odda now makes a special theme of the literature festival and other activities linked to the author Frode Grytten.
 - 6 Undset had been part of the culture programme connected to Fakkelfstafetten (The Torch Relay), in which local cultures had an opportunity to display themselves. This took place in a location in Gudbrandsdalen – not far from Lillehammer, where the historical person Sinclair meets the fictitious person Kristin Lavransdatter (during the Olympics also called Kristin Langrennsdatter), although there were 300 years between them. Odd Arne Berkaak writes about this: "one characteristic common to the local ceremonies was that local and national mythical themes were mixed and matched and, in a highly creative way, reconstructed to a surprising extent. ... Our observations revealed that even in regionally peripheral local communities post-modern creativity and reflexivity are well developed" (Berkaak 1999:83).
 - 7 Conversation with Nan Bentsen Skille, 14 July 2009.
 - 8 I have taken part in three tours (partially) in 2005 and 2006
 - 9 This is a wooden figure that is said to have been carved from an olive tree in Gethsemane.

This statue is at the centre of a popular Christmas ritual in which children give presents to the statue; this is the subject of Undset's first travel letter, "The Children in Araceli".

- 10 A few years ago, a plaque – unveiled by Ørjasæter – was set up stating that Undset lived here during two periods.
- 11 The construction of Jørundgård took place in collaboration between the local council and the film company because the chairman saw a possibility to create something extra out of this and wanted more than just a film set. There were old houses and farms at Nord-Sel but they were not from the Middle Ages and could not be used. A completely new "old" farm was therefore built (conversation with Borghild Krossli, chair of the board of Jørundgard Medieval Centre, 8 July 2009).
- 12 It is said that the reconstructed farm is on the site of an old farm – Jørundstad – which fits Undset's description. That farm disappeared during the great flood in 1789, which also changed the course of the River Lågen. It is important that this is the only place where one can turn through 360 degrees without seeing an electricity pylon or any other modern thing (conversation with Borghild Krossli, chair of the board of Jørundgard Medieval Centre).
- 13 In summer 2009 the actors who played the leading roles in *Kristinspelet*, July 2009, got married here.
- 14 I have seen one performance of the play.
- 15 In 2010 the Kristin Days ceased to be held due to lack of capital (www.kristindagene.no).
- 16 On the other hand, her descriptions of the mental life of the characters have provoked debate; it is questioned whether a modern author is capable of understanding how medieval people felt and thought (e.g. Berguson 2005), and Ellen Rees (2003) described the film about Kristin as "modern stories set in period costume".

The Flexible Space: Finland-Swedish Descendants in North America

Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch

Our sense of identity is in constant dialogue with our spacial environment. Spaces influence our identity and provide structural frames for it. They can challenge, but also reinforce, our beliefs of who we are. Conversely, we ourselves are instrumental in construing and constructing spaces on different levels.

Space, then, indubitably becomes an important factor in the study of ethnic identity. In the present article I aim to discuss different types of Nordic spaces and Nordic space-making. I propose to do this by focusing on a particular group of Scandinavian Americans, namely, descendants of Finland-Swedish immigrants.¹

In order to correspond to the research project “Nordic Spaces/ Nordiska rum” of which I am a member, I have opted for the term “Nordic” to describe phenomena related to the Nordic countries (i.e. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) (Gradén & Larsen 2009). However, in those cases where “Scandinavian” is the established term connoting all five Nordic countries, such as the designation “Scandinavian-American”, I have departed from the above practice. Furthermore, it is important to note that the overwhelming majority of interviewees in this study would identify themselves as “Scandinavian”, whereas “Nordic” would be an unfamiliar concept.

The source material for this study consists of interviews with North Americans of Finland-Swedish descent, who, in one way or another, have taken an interest in their ancestry stemming from the Swedish-speaking minority population of Finland. The interviewees were predominantly second and third generation immigrants, i.e. children and grandchildren of Finland-Swedish immigrants. Many of them also had parents or grandparents from other Nordic countries. Finland-Swedish descendants’ relations to their ethnic background therefore often go beyond a “simple” identification with the nation of origin. The majority of the informants lived in urban areas without any prominent Nordic presence on the North West and North East coasts of North America.²

In a previous study (Österlund-Pötzsch 2003), I found this group to have what I referred to as an *American Plus*-attitude to their ethnic background. In other words, while the informants defined themselves as American or Canadian, their Nordic heritage was perceived as a mainly positive addition – a plus or bonus – both in terms of identity and lifestyle. The *American Plus* ethnic identity is personal, flexible and contains a large degree of individual freedom within the enveloping social and cultural framework.³ My hypothesis is that my informants in this study accordingly demonstrate a similar sense of flexibility in creating and partaking in Nordic spaces.

As a concept, “space” is no less complex than the inherently evasive term “identity”. In popular usage “space” is often used interchangeably with “place”. According to geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, whose writing on place and space has been especially influential, space represents freedom and place represents security. Space becomes place when we endow it with value (Tuan 1977:136). Echoing Tuan, “space” will here be employed as a wider and more abstract term whereas “place” is taken to refer to something more concrete and specific. In this way, space(s) can be said to encompass place(s).

French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre used the word “place” to refer to the everyday or confined space. Lefebvre described the social production of space as a triad, consisting of the physical or perceived (first space), the mental or conceived (second space) and the lived space (third space), which is social and relational (Lefebvre 1991:38f.). These concepts can be helpful in analyzing ethnic spaces, and I will therefore return to Lefebvre’s triad at the end of my article in order to appraise how it compares with the categories of space derived from my material.

Ethnic spaces are where ethnic identities are constituted. Where, then, can spaces for Nordic identities be found in North America? The geographical region most likely associated with the designation “Nordic” or “Scandinavian” on the North American continent is the Midwest, where waves of immigrants from the Nordic countries started arriving from the 1830’s onwards. In some American communities, Nordic traditions and influences have become a distinct part of local culture and identity. These communities are generally recognized as Nordic (Scandinavian) spaces, and are, as such, in a constant process of reformation and renegotiation. Local identity politics play a decisive role in maintaining the concept of “Scandinavian town”. Driven by the prevailing marketing and tourist potential of ethnic heritage, economic factors, too, are becoming increasingly influential. This type of heritagemaking in Scandinavian-American communities has been the object of recent ethnological/folkloristic attention.⁴

Accordingly, for many people Nordic space in North America is a decidedly physical place with a historical link to settlers from the Nordic countries. For others, however, it can be a no less real although not necessarily

localized space. These different levels of Nordic space and space-making are what I wish to illustrate by looking at how Finland-Swedish descendants reflected on their ethnic background.

That Finland-Swedish identity in North America constitutes a stellar example of the elusiveness and diversity of ethnicity is hardly surprising considering the complex nature of Swedish-speaking identity in Finland. The Finland-Swedes are by definition in a position of permanent “in-between-ness” – sharing their language with the Swedes in Sweden and their nationality with Finnish-speaking Finns, as well as maintaining many cultural markers of their own. Socially, as well as geographically, the Swedish-speakers in Finland display a surprising degree of heterogeneity. That it is possible to talk about Finland-Swedes as a distinct group is due to a political, social and cultural consolidation process during the late 19th and the early 20th centuries that managed to amalgamate the Swedish-speaking lower and upper classes into a specific category or ethnic group (see e.g. Lönnqvist 2001). Coincidentally, this is also the time frame during which the majority of Finnish immigrants emigrated to North America.⁵

The emigration from Finland peaked between 1880-1930, a few decades later than that from other Nordic countries. In North America, this gave Finland-Swedes the important advantage of being able to identify themselves as Swedes – an already established ethnic group – in order to avoid the low status usually conferred to more recently arrived immigrants. A further incentive for doing so was that the term “*finlandssvensk*” (“Finland-Swede”) was only introduced as late as 1914, in other words after the majority of emigrants had already left the country. In Finland, Swedish-speakers had earlier often referred to themselves simply as “Swedes” (Tandefelt 1995:6).

Finland-Swedish immigrants settled in the same areas as other Scandinavians.⁶ In some aspects, the ambivalent position between nationality and linguistic group remained, at least initially, in the new home country. Finland-Swedes who arrived in areas with substantial Swedish populations often joined their societies and churches. Some Finland-Swedes joined Finnish-speaking immigrant organizations, but for many the Finnish language constituted too much of a barrier. However, despite having the language in common, the identification with the Swedes from Sweden was not automatic. Many Finland-Swedes felt that they were not accepted as “fellow Swedes” and, therefore, often preferred to establish their own organizations⁷ (cf. Myhrman 1972:519f.; Riippa 1981:315; Roinila 2000:104f.; Österlund-Pötzsch 2003:49f.).

Many of the first generation immigrants both worked and socialized predominantly within Finland-Swedish and Nordic circles and often lived in small, tight-knit communities. Not surprisingly, the descendants are generally more geographically dispersed than their forefathers. The Finland-Swedish assimilation process was, on the whole, fast and efficient. In fact, it was

successful to such a degree that many second and third generation Finland-Swedish descendants today would describe themselves solely as “American”. As a result of belonging to the Swedish linguistic and cultural sphere, a large number of Finland-Swedish descendants grew up thinking of themselves as of “Swedish stock”. Therefore, they did not connect their ancestry with Finland, something that the interviews often echoed:

I know very little of my Finnish background because I was raised always to believe that my mother was Swedish and had nothing to do with Finland at all (...) When I met my husband he said, you know, where is your family from. And I told him and he said, “Oh, you are one of those Finn Swedes.” And I said, “What are you talking about?” So I asked my father and I said, “Are we Finnish or are we Swedish?” And he said, “You are Swedish!” So I believed him again and I was like twenty. But I have learned. (Edith SLS 2001:45)

I was looking for Gamla Karleby in Sweden. So that’s probably the very beginning of realizing this Finnish connection. I was around thirty then. And I just suddenly found it in Finland! (Janice SLS 2002:34)

Especially descendants of Finland-Swedes who married another Scandinavian have often discovered that their ancestors came from Finland only when they began engaging in genealogical research. Consequently, very few of my informants made a clear distinction between “Swedish” and “Finland-Swedish” (cf. Österlund-Pötzsch 2003).

Physical space

Since few of the interviewees lived in Scandinavian communities, their sense of Nordic space assumed different dimensions than among those descendants whose identity has been shaped in relation to a geographical place and local heritage politics. Nevertheless, the aspect of *physical space* still carries great importance for the ethnic identification process of Finland-Swedish descendants. A number of informants taking part in this study grew up in Scandinavian communities such as Georgetown, CN, “Swedeville” in Norwood, MA, and Ballard in Seattle, WA. Many of them recalled a childhood world which seemed to be immersed in things Scandinavian:

We were brought up like in a Swedish household. A lot of the things [mother] cooked. I thought everybody ate that, but when I grew up I found out it was all Swedish. The food, you know, pickled beets. Christmas Eve, we were near the church, she would have open house with food from one room to the other room. My brother and I were in a dance group, a Swedish one, when we were little. They have older ones, too. But at the time there was a big influx of Swedes. And we belonged to a Swedish church and they used to have Swedish services for a long time, both English and Swedish. I was raised with [Scandinavians]. (Edith SLS 2001:45)

Nordic culture was not perceived as different or ethnic, but as the norm. For these families the social sphere was solidly Finland-Swedish/Nordic. Sever-

al of the descendants described how their view of Nordicness or Scandinavianness was formed in such environments:

My American-Swedish heritage was cemented there. I thought everybody in the United States probably was about Swedish (...) Oh, I didn't know other people until I went to school and got older. Then we all realized: "Wait a minute. Some of these people are from other places. How sad!" (Karen ÅEI 90)

I don't know I could say how old I was before I realized that there were people who weren't Petersons, Andersons, Svedberg, Svensons, Carlson, Swanson, the Petersons, and Andersons, that was Lagerqvist and all that. They stuck together. (Allan ÅEI 12)

The big concentration of the Swedish people and the *Ålänningar*⁸ was actually Chapel Street (...) Oh, I've got a picture of all the ladies in Saunder's Road sitting on the stairs of the Peterson house. They were all good friends, and they probably all belonged to the ladies' song circle at church. It's amazing, my mother and my aunt and Mrs Peterson and Mrs Johnson and Mrs Anderson. Almost all of them were *Ålänningar*, the ladies. (Ethel ÅEI 29)

Today, most of the old Finland-Swedish neighbourhoods and communities have disappeared. However, a few informants still live in areas which have a noticeable Nordic presence. The feeling of living in a "Nordic space" was described as contributing to a sense of familiarity and security.⁹ For some, the physical Nordic neighbourhood had been replaced by a mental neighbourhood, in the form of a circle of Scandinavian friends. Comments such as the following were not uncommon: "I find that I associate more with [people of similar background]. A good many of our friends have Scandinavian backgrounds" (Larry SLS 2001:51), and, "We have pretty much stuck with the Scandinavians I would say as far as friends were concerned" (Vince ÅEI).

Visits to Scandinavian neighbourhoods and towns were popular ways to connect with a Nordic dimension among the informants in this study. A third generation Finland-Swede in Seattle, WA, revealed that he, in his occupational role as physician, visited the "Scandinavian" district of Ballard every week to see patients although he did not need to. "I do that because it is a real win for me" (Peter SLS 2002:49). Alan, who lives in Alaska but often visits Seattle underlined that he always makes a point out of visiting Ballard when he is in town: "I love it here in Ballard. You know, you come to a Scandinavian area and it is fun to go into the stores and see the stuff that is also familiar to us. It is the same with Poulsbo [a "Norwegian heritage" town in Kitsap county, WA]" (Alan SLS 2002:50). Nordic communities also, thus, constituted popular holiday destinations. Larry, whose grandparents had emigrated from the Åland Islands, was one of several informants who planned visiting a well-known Scandinavian "heritage town":

There is a place in Maine called New Sweden. (...) So we are anxious to go up there. This will be our 45th wedding anniversary coming up at the end of August. And we



Scandinavian shop window in Ballard, Seattle, WA. (Photo: S. Ö-P)

are going to go up there and spend a few days just to explore it and see what it is about. (Larry SLS 2001:51)

Even a purely commercial enterprise such as the department store chain Ikea can, due to its strong Swedish/Nordic image, be regarded as a distinctly Nordic space. Many of the interviewed Finland-Swedish descendants testified to feeling an affinity with Ikea. One informant who often visited the store emphasized that, apart from admiring Nordic design, eating Swedish meatballs in the cafeteria was essential to the whole experience of the visit (Alan SLS 2002:50).

Temporal space

For the majority of the informants in this study, feelings of ethnic identity were to a great extent connected to *temporal/situational space-making* – in other words, a Nordic space associated with a distinctive set of circumstances, rather than a physical, more static, ethnic space. In many cases, the physical and the temporal levels of space-making interact and reinforce each other.

Social networks, such as societies and churches, held immense significance for first generation immigrants. Today, such arenas still constitute im-

portant Nordic spaces, but in a different capacity. As is generally the case for groups of European-ancestry in North America, membership in traditional ethnic societies has dwindled among Finland-Swedes since the mid 20th century. The descendants' needs and lifestyles are different from those of the first generation immigrants, and the traditional format of ethnic societies no longer attracts new long term members. On the other hand, special occasions, such as Christmas parties and festivals arranged by ethnic societies, do interest many descendants, and are seen as enjoyable ways of participating in Finland-Swedish/Nordic culture. This was discernibly the case among many of the interviewed third-generation Finland-Swedes. For Brian, and several others, the temporary visits to Nordic spaces were the main avenues of maintaining links to one's ethnic background:

I try to get my daughter interested, but she is like me when I was a kid so I understand that, but when there are food festivals and things like that I can always get people to go and do different foods. We love to do different types of foods. They'll do folk dancing and my wife likes to watch folk dancing so we will go and visit when that happens. (Brian SLS 2002:35–36)

This type of Nordic space-making commonly brings together many of the most popular “trademark” ethnic customs, as in this example of a Christmas time Lucia-celebration one informant has helped to organize for many years:

It has become a wonderful tradition because it used to be just the dancers would get up and the Lucia Queen comes through. Well, we've developed a story around it both biblically based and traditionally based. So we have 600 people in three different settings in our church on the Saturday closest to Santa Lucia. And we serve all the traditional foods for the supper, and the cardamom bread and lots of good coffee. And then the *tontes* come in and dance, and then the gingerbread-cookie, the *pepparkaka*, the *pepparkaka*-dancers come in and dance. And there is a choir for the men and women of the church that are singing traditional Swedish songs. (Clyde SLS 2001:44)

Clyde's account of the Lucia-celebration conforms with an established consensus of what elements constitute a “Swedish occasion”. The different ethnic markers all contribute to emphasize the festive character of the performance. The temporal Nordic space described above denotes something different from the quotidian. Importantly, participation in temporal space-making requires no long term commitment, but can still convey a sense of being part of a larger group or network. Carolyn, who characterized herself as “not a joiner”, testified that she nevertheless enjoyed visiting Nordic events:

It was the 150th anniversary of the first Scandinavians to come to the US. And they had a big celebration in the Golden Gate Park. My husband was out of town but one of my daughters and I went to that and enjoyed the folk dancing and all of the crafts and being together with the Scandinavian people. So when I can I try to do that. I'm not a member of any form of organization. I watch out for things like that. (Carolyn AEI 34)

Despite the prevailing trend of declining membership in traditional ethnic societies, some of the interviewees still sought out established Finland-Swedish societies in order to develop a more tangible connection to a familiar environment. In a few cases, the informants' parents had passed away and they consequently felt that membership in an ethnic society restored a lost link to the past, as Karen, a second generation descendant, described:

It felt nice, it felt good, it felt like you were among family even though I had no memory of these people. It was because we went to these lodges we learnt to do the dances. We heard some of the singing and we kind of joined in a few phrases. We heard a little more of the language. We had a lot of fun with that and we stayed with them until we moved here ten years ago. (Karen ÅEI 90)

In a similar vein, another informant reflected that one of the main reasons her membership in a Finland-Swedish society with many first-generation members was so important to her was that they reminded her of her parents: "They speak just the way my mother and father spoke, and it just thrills me that they speak like that" (Greta SLS 2002:47), she explained.

The churches and the many activities arranged by the congregations were often at the core of the immigrants' social lives and many of their descendants still consider this the most important Nordic space. For many of the informants, attending church connected aspects of childhood memories with those of lifestyle and *Weltanschauung* in a meaningful way – something which was reflected in many of the interviews:

We belonged to a Swedish church (...) All my friends from childhood that I've kept come from the church (...). The Lutheran religion. I know in Sweden people don't go to church so much. But it didn't do anything like that to us. We are all members in good standing and work in the church and do a lot of work for the church. (Edith SLS 2001:45)

Considering the strong connection often observed between religion and ethnicity, it is hardly surprising that many of the descendants described church as the place where they felt especially close to their ethnic background.

Going to church was very important to my family, and it has become a big part of my life now, as it is with all my brothers and sisters. Very much involved in the church. That's from going to church with your parents and your grandparents all the time. The churches were part of that heritage too, because we went to St Peter's in the Bronx for many years and (...) everybody spoke Swedish there, and everybody like, another colony, you know, it was the same thing. (Karen ÅEI 90)

Lutheranism was in fact often described as an integral part of the Finland-Swedish heritage. One third generation Finland-Swede stated firmly, "In my family, my grandfather said 'you must be a Lutheran because you are a Finn, a Swede Finn!'" (Alvin SLS 1999:93). After having reflected upon the relationship between church-attendance and ethnic background, a couple of the interviewed descendants concluded that they went to church as much for cultural as for religious reasons:

It's a cultural thing. I never saw [my mother] going to church very much, but the kids all had to go. And my sister became very religious and her children as well. Very church-going and all the way through their family. But on my side, after I had been confirmed I stopped going to church. [But] I was married in a Swedish Lutheran church. (Clarence SLS 2001:46)

In North America, ethnicity among groups of European descendants has increasingly become a private matter (Alba 1990; Waters 1990). For the overwhelming majority of the interviewed descendants, ethnic tradition is above all associated with the home environment, rather than an active participation in public societies and events. Arlene, a third-generation descendant who liked visiting Scandinavian-American museums, festivals and societies, still emphatically underlined that although she was very proud of her cultural background she did not think it needed to go beyond the family: "I think that if you have a very special cultural background and if you just carry it on in your family, this very special vein, it doesn't need to fit into any picture larger than our family" (Arlene SLS 2002:39). For many, ethnic tradition is intertwined with family tradition, and perceived as an intrinsic part of holidays and celebrations. Not surprisingly, Christmas was the most typical holiday for the private home to be transformed into a Nordic space. Comments such as Alvin's, "Christmas is very Scandinavian in our house. We decorate the *julebock* and the straw decorations and the star and my wife does *köttbullar*" (Alvin SLS 1999:93), were commonplace. The ethnic background constitutes a resource for marking important events, or "a very special way to enjoy life" (Clyde SLS 2001:44) as one descendant put it. The ethnic heritage provides a perceived element of uniqueness and authenticity, and distinguishes the festive from the everyday:

We take all the traditional. We make *lefse* and all that. At Christmas we have a big smorgasbord and my son-in-law does these fish-cakes. Really does it up. So we have a terrific Scandinavian, what would you say, heritage there, that we all draw on at holidays and that. Pretty much traditional in that. (Alan SLS 2002:50)

Preparing or purchasing ethnic foods is by far the most popular way of maintaining a link to one's ethnic background among Americans of European ancestry (Keller Brown & Mussell 1984). Consuming traditional meals is an uncomplicated way of incorporating a Nordic element into an otherwise American lifestyle (cf. Gans 1996). A shared taste in ethnic food, then, can be a way of underlining an atmosphere of familiarity and similarity of background (cf. Walmsley 2005:43). For example, when Edith wanted to explain her compatibility with her Swedish-American husband she spontaneously referred to their shared culinary preferences, "The food I liked was the food he liked. So it was easy" (Edith SLS 2001:45), she concluded. Food carries strong cultural associations. For Carolyn, among many others, Swedish food was an important way of maintaining her Finland-Swedish heritage:

I started [the Christmas smorgasbord] custom myself when I was a junior at college, about 19 years old, even though I lived quite a way from my family, I would invite friends and I would have a Christmas smorgasbord. I still do that to this day and look for all the Swedish food. I feel very closely connected to that. (Carolyn ÅEI 34)

Food and food preparation is not only experienced through taste, but also through sight, smell, touch (texture), and, to some extent, sound (boiling, popping, crunching). A simple meal, therefore, can include many important elements for creating ethnic space (cf. Petridou 2001). Especially if the same dishes are regularly consumed on the same occasions, as for example happens at Christmas, sensory memory helps to reinforce the ethnic associations of the event.

References to the Nordic countries are also used to establish a permanent Nordic sphere in one's own home. As described by Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad, values and identities are created and objectified through home decorations. The home is a statement that should express the personalities of its inhabitants (Gullestad 1992:79). Among Finland-Swedes, Nordic objects commonly generated positive associations and represented security and familiarity.¹⁰ To a greater or lesser extent, many of the informants held articles connected with the Nordic countries in high regard:

Everybody says, 'Wait until you see Edith's Swedish house'. I like it. I like blue, I like green. Ikea is here now and it is very easy (...) I have a *rya*-rug and all these things. You like to keep in touch with your background. At least I do. My daughter likes Swedish things, likes the *kaffe*-pots and that stuff. To me it is just that I see that stuff in my house it makes me feel comfortable. I feel comfortable amidst it. (Edith SLS 2001:45)

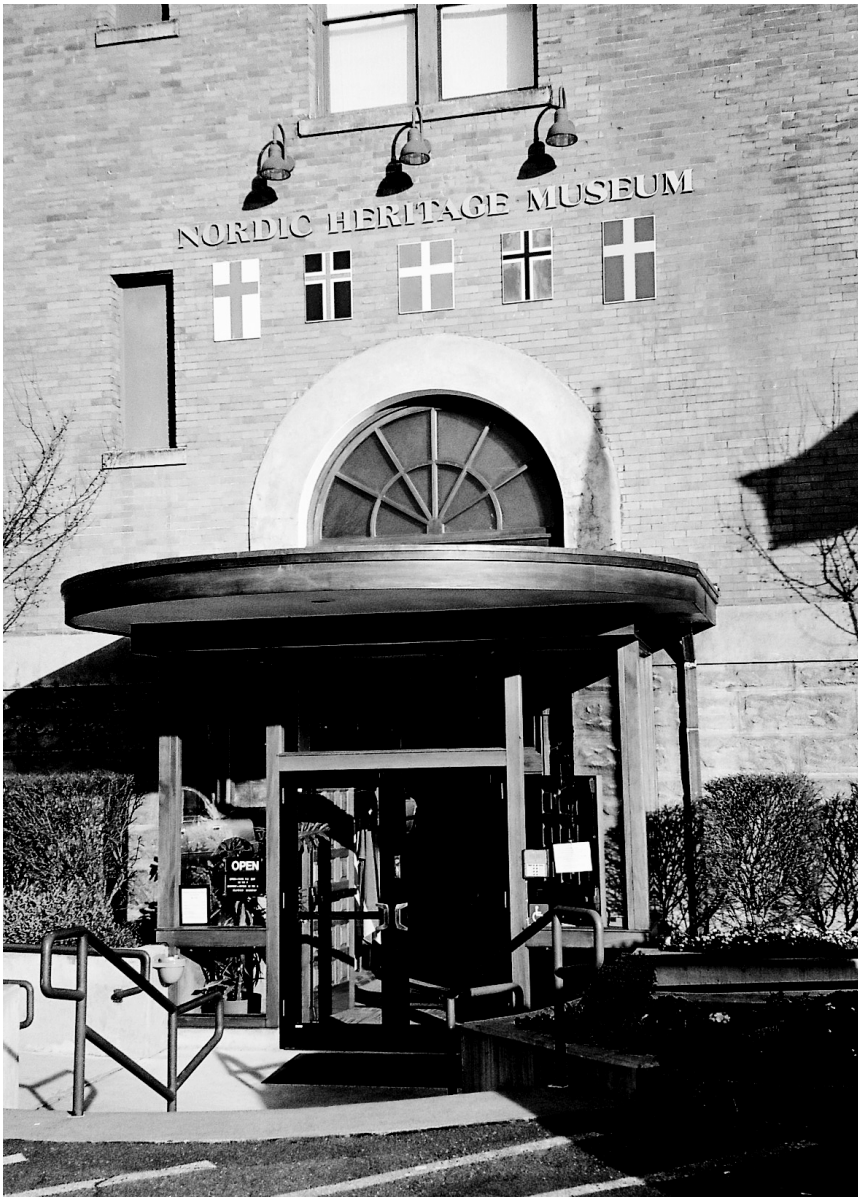
Anything with Finland, you know, like we have Finnish teacups, we have Finnish glass, we have Finnish vases, you know. I favour Finland, obviously. And not only that, we like it, it is great stuff. (John SLS 2002:37).

In the private household, the individual decides how dominant or visible the Nordic element should be. For most, the home was only temporarily converted into a Nordic space to mark special occasions such as seasonal festivities, while for others it was important to include Nordic references in everyday life.

A Space of One's Own

While the Finland-Swedish group was too small to establish heritage institutions of their own, they have often joined larger pan-Nordic projects. Examples of such joint efforts in creating Nordic space in North America are the Nordic Heritage Museum (NHM) in Seattle, WA, and the Scandinavian Community Centre (SCC) in Burnaby, BC.¹¹

Both the NHM and the SCC are important cultural centres for the local Scandinavian communities. Through language classes, courses in handi-



The Nordic Heritage Museum – a Scandinavian cultural centre in Seattle, WA. (Photo: S. Ö-P)

crafts, folk dances, concerts, and different seasonal celebrations, people interested in the Nordic countries can learn about and experience Nordic culture. Both Seattle and Vancouver have had a large influx of immigrants from Swedish-speaking Finland, and many of them have been involved in the activities of the aforementioned institutes. However, in some cases Fin-

land-Swedes have felt marginalized by the concept of having separate national “houses” (in SCC) or presentations (in NHM) for Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Consequently, Finland-Swedes as a group have become relatively invisible. Marianne Forssblad, the founder and director (until 2007) of NHM, commented on the in-between position of the Finland-Swedes: “Yes, they fall between the bars so to speak. They are present in the Finnish Gallery, but not sufficiently. It is one of my goals to make them more visible, the Finland-Swedes” (author’s translation, Forssblad, 13.02.2002).

The question of in-betweenness seemed to concern many of the Finland-Swedes in the Vancouver-area. “We are right in the middle” one active voluntary worker of the SCC reflected laconically, “We have one foot on the Swedish side, and one on the Finnish. Like it always has been for us Finland-Swedes. You’re a bit on the outside in both camps” (George SLS 2002: 46). Another member of the Centre described all Nordic groups, Finland-Swedes included, as “tight” and preferably sticking to their own. After pointing out that Finland-Swedes would mingle more than anyone else, she commented, “the Swedish Finns are sitting there in the middle. We don’t really have a place. That bothers me. There’s a Finnish House, a Swedish House, but there is no Swedish Finnish House. There should be.” (Greta SLS 2002:47). Although pan-Nordic projects in principle comprise all Nordic identities, some of the informants did not find this to correspond sufficiently to their Finland-Swedish identity. Nevertheless, apart from a few exceptions when Finland-Swedes have established their own institutions,¹² their descendants will usually have to resort to a wider sense of ethnic identification when relating to different Nordic spaces in North America. Most of the time, this is not perceived as a problem since many of the Finland-Swedish descendants have ancestors from other Nordic countries as well.

As noted above, space-making also takes place on a more abstract level, or in a combination of the corporeal and incorporeal. In 1991, the *Swedish Finn Historical Society* (SFHS) was founded in Seattle, WA, in response to growing concerns about the decreasing activity within the local Finland-Swedish community. Rather than organizing social events, SFHS’s main goal is to collect and distribute information pertaining to Finland-Swedes and in this manner create a “permanent” Finland-Swedish space in North America.¹³ Whereas the SFHS has an office with an archive and library, there are no regular meetings for members. Instead, the society’s journal and Internet pages connect a world-wide membership to the society. The SFHS homepage also hosts the on-line Finlander Discussion Forum, which serves primarily as a channel for discussing genealogical research and sharing information about Finland. In this way, the SFHS have created a *virtual space* for people to meet and learn more about their background (Österlund-

Pötzsch 2003:59—65). This concept suits many descendants as SFHS provides something which is of personal interest but does not require a high level of commitment, unless one chooses otherwise.

Another form of virtual Nordic space in North America is of a more personal nature, and could perhaps be referred to as an *imagined space* or a space in memory. In the interviews, it crystallized that many of the descendants kept alive images of places in Swedish-speaking Finland through pictures, photographs and family stories (cf. Klein 2002:12f.). This type of images pertaining to actual places typically surfaced in descriptions of visits to “the Old Country”. One informant, who had always listened to stories from his father’s home village in Ostrobothnia with great interest as a child, recognized many of these places upon his first visit to Finland. “They were in my head already, you know, once I heard and saw them they came back. This is what they talked about” (Don SLS 1999:88). Several informants testified that finally visiting the places they had cherished as mental images since childhood was a very moving experience:

When we went the first time, see my mother never went back, and I wish that she could have, when we went the first time, when the ferry comes, you know, and we went on Silja Line that time, the long trip, it takes longer when you go from Stockholm. And when I could see the islands I just cried. And my mother’s [house] — We grew up with pictures of that little house, not my father’s house, but that little house. And of the church. So it was very emotional. (Sylvia ÅEI 26)

It was overwhelming for me to go there the first night (...) It’s funny, I thought for sure that as soon as I got there I would start crying, you know, having seen it in real life, but I didn’t, I came close, but I didn’t. When I walked into the old summerhouse, that’s about as close as I came because that was so vivid in my mind. (Robert SLS 2001:50)

Encounters with Nordic space are not always deliberately created or sought out. A different kind of space-making takes place on those occasions when certain elements fleetingly and haphazardly come together to create a Nordic “event”. Essential to this process is that core elements which accentuate one’s ethnic identity are brought to the fore. These distinctly personal experiences often deal with intangibles, and the Nordic space that emerges is consequently of an *ephemeral* nature. A typical experience of this kind was when informants unexpectedly met someone of similar background (cf. Tuan 1977:141). Especially for the large number of informants who did not live in Scandinavian dense areas such occasions were welcomed and often engendered feelings of a shared bond, albeit if only for the moment:

Well, when I hear someone’s name I say oh, you must be German or you must be Danish or Norwegian (...) And yes, I do feel, if I meet someone who is Swede Finn, I feel more comfortable speaking with them. (Charles SLS 2001:49)

(...) if you see a surname that looks obviously Swedish I’ll try to make that connection (...) I think that is just because you think it is in common. And also, you feel

somewhat like a minority, in this area there's not a lot of, although there is probably a lot more Swedes in this area than a lot of others, but you know, it is a bond you love to make. (Robert SLS 2001:50)

Ephemeral Nordic spaces are frequently awash with nostalgia and are closely linked with bodily embedded memory. The physical senses act as the key to a chain of associations and reminiscences. In the same manner as an ethnic sphere can be deliberately evoked through culinary signals, the unplanned or unexpected might transfer a person to a Nordic space. Prompted by a chance encounter or sensory experience, Proustian doors to memory suddenly open and reveal images from a past steeped in Nordic culture. Katarine, a third generation Finland-Swede, was one of several who described how music carried strong memories:

I got a CD (...) for Christmas, a Swedish one (...) I listened to these things and I said that it makes me sad. And [my husband] said, well don't listen to it if it makes you sad. And I said, no, I just really like it. Like "*När ljusen skall tändas där hemma*". They are all sad. All these things, they are close to me. They touch me in some way where my son or daughter won't think, they don't pay attention to it. All that music, I remember all the music. (Katarine ÅEI 17)

Ephemeral Nordic spaces often seem to evoke experiences with deep emotional undercurrents that accentuate the ethnic associations:

[It wasn't always important for me to keep a connection to Finland-Swedish culture], it was my parents who made sure I had it, but I was quite willing to grow up as a Canadian and become Canadian, go to Canadian schools and speak English and teach in the schools of Canada. There was always a glimmer in the thoughts of those days and those cultures after my mother and my father died. You go down a street and hear a familiar Swedish song and it will stop you cold. Or smell something in a bakery that you recognize as Scandinavian. And it really startled. It was really important. (Greta SLS 2002:47)

Through our senses we experience the surrounding world. Whereas we are usually well aware of the importance of sight and sound, we do not always realize our reliance on the corporeal sensations of smell, taste and touch in interpreting space. The "now and here"-senses of smell and taste are connected with the part of our brain where memory and emotion are located (cf. Tuan 1974:10). Our relative defenselessness in controlling the chain of associations thereby awoken make these senses powerful components in our ongoing process of constructing the self. Greta's observation quoted above, "And it really startled. It was really important", is telling. A strong intuitive reaction from within seems say something about "who we really are". What we experience as "genuine feelings" is therefore often valued in the same way that a heritage phenomenon perceived as authentic is granted value and importance (cf. Bendix 2000).

Conclusion

In this article, I have taken a broad view of the concept of Nordic space and interpreted it as something not exclusive to geographical locations or established institutions. This perspective allowed me to look at the various ways in which descendants of Finland-Swedish immigrants relate to Nordic space. The liminal ethnic position of the Finland-Swedes proved helpful in illustrating the multifaceted relationship between ethnic identity and ethnic spaces. It appeared that the informants came into contact with and were instrumental in creating Nordic space on many different levels. Effectively, three main levels which often seemed to overlap or exist simultaneously could be discerned. Interestingly, although the categories originally emerged from the material, they seem to correspond well to Lefebvre's (1991) tripartite vision of the production of space. Firstly, and most obviously, the informants related to a concrete level of visitable physical places with a recognized link to Nordic culture. Typical examples of such places were "heritage towns" and ethnic institutions such as museums and cultural centres. The second level of Nordic space was connected with particular sets of circumstances and a matter of temporal/situational space-making, characteristically in the form of public festivals and celebrations. Popular ethnic institutions as societies and churches often incorporate a combination of the constant and the temporal. This "multilevel" condition seemed typical of space-making in the family. In the private home, ethnic space is frequently oscillating between permanent and temporal, corporeal and incorporeal. Somewhat paradoxically, the "incorporeal" third level of Nordic space involves bodily experiences and personal input above all. A sense of community and affinity to Nordic space need not be dependent on physical presence, but can also be of a virtual or "imagined" kind. The ephemeral Nordic spaces born e.g. out of unexpected encounters, deal with intangibles, with emotions and with memories. Although difficult to grasp, this level of Nordic space seemed to have a profound potential for influencing and interacting with a person's sense of ethnic identity.

According to Lefebvre, space is an ongoing production of spatial relations. That Lefebvre's conceptual triad seems to be reflected in the material points to the socially produced nature and significance of ethnic spaces. Moreover, this perspective corresponds well to *American Plus*-ethnicity, which by definition is relational and dialogical. The *American Plus*-attitude to ethnic identity that can be discerned among Finland-Swedish descendants can also be said to characterize their relationship to Nordic spaces and space-making. For example, a Finland-Swedish descendant may identify with Finnish space, Swedish space or pan-Nordic space depending on the context. Moreover, the importance of having a "space of one's own", that is a uniquely Finland-Swedish space, was evident in some of the informants' comments. Although the formation of Nordic space in North America is in-

fluenced by social structures and heritage politics on a global as well as local level, Finland-Swedish descendants demonstrate great creativity and flexibility in turning Nordic space-making into a personal project. The *American Plus*-identity of Finland-Swedish descendants, then, results in flexible ethnic spaces, in the sense that, paraphrasing Tuan (1977:12), space can be perceived as defined by a network of value-charged places.

Space is a constituent element of identity. Invertedly, it can also be claimed that identity is a constituent element of spaces. The relationship between Nordic space and Finland-Swedish-American identity is one of inter-connection, interaction and interdependence.

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¹ In this article I have used the term "Finland-Swedes" in line with the Swedish term "Finlandssvenskar". However, it should be noted that Finland-Swedish immigrants and their descendants in North America often self-identify as "Swedish Finns" or "Swede Finns".

² The interview material was collected between the years of 1999-2004 in the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Minnesota, and Washington in the USA, and in the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario in Canada. I found the informants through the membership rosters of ethnic societies, through recommendations from their relatives and friends in Finland, and, during the actual fieldwork, through the snowball-effect, e.g. tips from people I had interviewed, and through actively participating in Nordic events and thereby meeting new informants.

³ Ethnic expressions found among Finland-Swedish descendants are largely similar to those of other ethnic groups of European background. These types of seemingly superficial and nostalgic expressions of allegiance to the culture of immigrant generations have been aptly framed by sociologist Herbert Gans' term "symbolic ethnicity" (see Gans 1996). However, with the term "American Plus" I want to underline that the descendant may also have a strongly felt *emotional* bond to his/her ethnic background. Many of my informants perceived their Nordic identity as an active part of their personality and, moreover, an important part of their American identity (Österlund-Pötzsch 2003:108).

⁴ See e.g. Klein, Barbro 1997: *Svenskare än Sverige? Folkarvstraditioner och kulturarvspolitik i tre svensk-amerikanska bygder. Aktuell traditionsforskning*. Ed. John Hackman. Åbo; 2002: *Gamla kartor och nya världar: om migration och platsskapande. Tidsskrift för Kulturforskning* 1 (3/4):5-20; Gradén, Lizette 2003: *On Parade: Making Heritage in Lindsborg, Kansas*. Stockholm (Studia Multiethnica 15); Larsen, Hanne Pico 2006: *Solvang, the "Danish Capital of America": A Little Bit of Denmark, Disney, or Something Else?* (PhD Dissertation) Berkeley.

⁵ In comparison with the flow of emigrants from many other European regions, the number of Finland-Swedish transatlantic migrants was insignificant. However, seen in relation to the population size, Finland-Swedish emigration was substantial. In relative numbers there were more Swedish-speaking than Finnish-speaking Finns who left the country. According to some calculations, every fifth Finnish emigrant was Swedish-speaking at a time when the Finland-Swedes constituted less than 11 per cent of the population (Sandlund 1981:217).

⁶ By the time emigration from Finland reached more significant proportions, the quest for farmland in the Midwest had ceased. Instead, Finland-Swedes tended to congregate in the large cities on the coasts and in the mining communities in the Rocky Mountain states. Four main areas of Finland-Swedish settlement can be distinguished: 1) the North East Coast, especially New York and Massachusetts, 2) The Great Lakes area, such as Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, 3) The Rocky Mountain states, specially Colorado, Utah, and Montana, and, 4) the West Coast, especially Washington, Oregon and the province of British Columbia in Canada (Myhrman 1971:33)

⁷ The largest and most widespread Finland-Swedish association was the *Order of Runeberg*, established in 1921. The organization's chosen name, after Finland's (Swedish-speaking) national poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg, reflects the patriotic spirit of the time among Finland-Swedes.

⁸ "Ålänningar" (eng. Ålanders), inhabitants from the Åland Islands off the south west coast of Finland.

⁹ One informant who had recently moved into a neighbourhood with many Scandinavians was happy with how quickly he had felt at home in the area and commented on the importance of the environment: *It was easy to relate to it, you know, because there were so many other Scandinavian people here. Just to be able to talk about common roots sometimes or just to kid about Swedish culture and ? So, yes, it is more comfortable being here.* (Isac ÅEI 20)

¹⁰ On creating a constant Swedish sphere in one's own home, see Gradén 2002. On creating an ethnically related atmosphere of familiarity and cosiness, see Larsen 2006. See also Hecht 2001.

¹¹ Other examples of major pan-Nordic venues are Scandinavia House (operated by The American-Scandinavian Foundation) and The American-Scandinavian Society, both in New York.

¹² Finland-Swedes in North America have a number of "ethnic spaces" of their own in the form of societies and networks, such as a few "surviving" Runeberg lodges, *The Society Åland of New York* (founded 1915), and *Finland Svenska Klubben* in BC, Canada (founded 1958), the latter belonging to the Finland House in the Scandinavian Community Centre, Burnaby, BC. More recently founded Finland-Swedish societies are *The Swedish Finn Historical Society* (founded 1991), with the focus on immigrant descendants, and *New Yorks Finlandssvenskar* (founded 2002), which is an informal network for Finland-Swedish ex-patriates living in the New York area.

¹³ One of the carrying ideas behind SFHS is to create a permanent and uniquely Finland-Swedish space in North America by collecting material and documents pertaining to Finland-Swedishness. Syrene Forsman, SFHS's president for many years, expanded on this ambition in an interview from 2002:

The real goal of SFHS is that when our Swedish Finnishness has disappeared totally and you couldn't find a single person who was completely Swedish Finnish, that there will somewhere be an archive that maintains this now extinct culture. At least a small evidence of that, here in America, where there have been so many. (Forsman 11.02.2002)

Book Reviews

Pre-modern Attitudes

Marie Lindstedt Cronberg & Catharina Stenqvist (eds.): *Förmoderna livshållningar. Dygder, värden och kunskapsvägar från antiken till upplysningen*. Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2008. 329 pp. Ill.

The hallmark of every advanced culture is a perception of certain historical events that have been significant for that particular culture. This may be a matter of idealizing certain times and phenomena, but it may also lead to the devaluation, or even demonization, of other things in the past. All this is done so that the present and its cultural expressions will seem excellent and praiseworthy for ordinary people. It has often been said that modern culture – not least the school system – neglects to provide a proper historical background to things in our time. A lack of history, with devastating consequences for judgements and actions in the present can therefore be the result.

It is one matter to retell history so that certain events – often military ones – are fixed in time and allow us to state a date when something happened. This is important, giving the kind of things that can be used in local histories and in tourist contexts. It is much more difficult to try to capture the lifestyle and patterns of action of bygone generations. Yet this is what is so important if we are to understand why people in the past acted as they did, and also to understand modern phenomena and why there can be such inertia in their implementation in our times. I am thinking of

issues such as equality for women, the development of morals, and general matters to do with the world of religion. In discussions and in letters to the newspapers today we often hear people wondering why questions of morality and religion cannot be organized in a more rational and consistent manner. What is often forgotten is the inertia that ideas and myths have in our culture and the fact that new attitudes do not develop very quickly. Also, our time is characterized by a conglomerate of philosophies, beliefs, and moral judgements that struggle with each other for supremacy and dominance.

This book, with a title meaning “Pre-modern Attitudes to Life: Virtues, Values, and Paths to Knowledge from Antiquity to the Enlightenment”, sets itself the task of acquainting us with the concept of “pre-modern”. This is actually a task that is far too big for a single book. The solution is to look at different periods in history through articles dealing with matters of knowledge, values, and religion. The book is a result of a network known as *Life Attitudes: Ideas, Virtues, and Values in Pre-modern and Early-modern Times*, led by Marie Lindstedt Cronberg and Catharina Stenqvist, mainly funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation.

The book contains fourteen articles by different authors with an introductory description by the editors where the project is presented and the different contributions are summarized. The articles cover a long time span, from classical antiquity via the Renaissance to the

Enlightenment. It goes without saying that it would not be possible in a single long article to outline the whole development that took place over such a long time, and therefore it was sensible to include articles that deepen our knowledge in particular fields. We learn about what friendship and love meant in the past, what patience and honour have meant, how political wisdom and acts of war have been interpreted, about the transition from philosophy with its roots in antiquity to the ethical and moral views of Christianity, all in contrast to folk traditions, especially concerning marriage and the outlook on women in society. It is thus a broad spectrum of extremely interesting issues that are highlighted here, making it impossible to review each article separately. I shall content myself with saying that the authors present highly valuable knowledge, which ought to be a part of general public awareness and school education, although that is probably hoping too much.

In reading this book I have above all been struck by the pervasive part played by Christian beliefs in the interpretation of so-called scientific data, and by how the moral values of the church have been interpreted in relation to folk customs with a long tradition, and by how symbols such as heaven and hell have been able to make such a big impact on folk beliefs. The book is in fact a rich source for an understanding of how previous generations have argued and acted in various situations. We find parallels to this in many parts of the world today, where the modern way of thinking has not yet caught on – to say nothing of the late-modern mentality. And one is struck by how close the pre-modern attitude to life really is to us in historical terms. One may wonder whether all the things in our late-modern society can be regarded as positive. The reading of this valuable book should at least help us to better understand cultures in our world that resemble the pre-modern attitudes described here. In an intercultural dia-

logue, for example, with some of our immigrant cultures, the knowledge conveyed by this book is essential.

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Voices from the Archive

Outi Fingerroos & Tuulikki Kurki (eds.): Ääniä arkistosta. Haastattelut ja tulkinta. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 1194. Helsinki 2008. 297 pp. Ill.

The collection of articles, “Voices from the Archive – Interviews and Interpretation”, examines the creation of ethnographic interview material and studies questions connected to the use and interpretation of field material. The articles reflect the multiplicity of voices connected with the field of culture and the study of tradition: the concrete voices in the field, the voices in recordings and transcribed texts in the archives and, finally, the researcher’s own voice interpreting the material. Another perspective is the voice in a metaphorical sense, the unheard or only partly perceived voice that affects the audibility of other voices in the research, and even that of the researcher.

The book has four sections. In the first part the interview and the voice are studied mainly within the context of fieldwork and the research field; in the second as part of the creation and interpretation of material; in the third as a unit in the research process; and in the fourth as archival material.

The classification of significant and insignificant voices has varied through time. Sometimes what the original fieldworkers in their time dismissed as “noise” can later obtain the status of what seems to be the most interesting part of traditional material.

In the older traditional material, a rural population’s collective voice is heard. Individual narrators appear with

new field ideologies in the 1960s. Only then do urban narrators representing different social groups become objects of interest. In the 1970s discussion about ethnographic field methods intensified. Varying technical equipment naturally influenced the structure of the material. Today, digitizing the archival materials has raised an intensified discussion about copyright law and personal data secrecy.

The first part of the book, "The interview and the voices in the field", begins with Helena Saarikoski's article, which focuses on the interview method and the danger of voices disappearing during the research process. She has previously noted the importance of the voice and sounds both in her study of the noisy school feast culture and in her interviews with Spice Girls fans.

Saarikoski discusses what is lost when a recorded interview is transcribed. As a field researcher one is familiar with the dilemma: a successful interview can lose all its radiance when transformed into written text. The written language never reflects speech automatically and transcribing must be considered a research method unto itself, one that should by no means be dismissed as an unproblematic task.

Karina Lukin examines the conceptions of successful and unsuccessful interviews, telling about her own field experiences among the Nenets people in Northern Russia. She describes how her own inexperience, linguistic problems and ignorance in considering codes of cultural communication contributed to creating an interview result that did not correspond to the real situation in the field. The so-called "good informant" that minimizes the cultural differences between himself or herself and the interviewer can in reality be doing the researcher a disservice. Lukin concludes that both successful and unsuccessful interviews and the informant's metacommunication all combine to function as important keys of interpretation for the researcher.

Airi Markkanen examines her own voice as a long-time researcher of the Romany culture. She stresses the importance of ethnographic description and notes the importance of establishing contact by also introducing the interviewer's own life experience into the field situation.

The other part of the book, "To reach the voices", begins with Kaisu Kortelainen's article about using photographs as inspiration when raising memories in an interview situation. By looking at the pictures she found that her informants were transferred from present to past. But the picture collection, compiled by the researcher, could also be provoking when some picture that one of the informants had preserved in their heads seemed to be missing from the photo collection.

Kortelainen also stresses that a recording featuring significant pauses and silences important to the researcher can be difficult to preserve as archival material. The researcher's comments about the interview are crucial for future understanding and interpretation of the material.

Johanna Uotinen describes analysing a large tradition material with the data program Atlas/ti compared to traditional ethnographic analysis. She writes in detail about difficulties coding the material and about the consequences of incorrect choices during the work process.

In Uotinen's experience, the data program's mechanical treatment of the material smoothed out nuances and differences in the material. The data program made the systematic survey more effective, but in this process the individual voices were dissolved, thus making a deeper analysis difficult.

The third section, "Voices in the process", begins with Elina Makkonen's description of the project for writing the oral history of Joensuu University to mark the university's 30th anniversary.

Oral history is fragmentary and kaleidoscopic. Makkonen describes her task

like this: in order to create a commonly approved history you have to negotiate the interpretations and try to create a picture of the past that is both diversified, but at the same time at some level mutual (p. 153).

Sari Tuuva-Hongisto studies how a key-informant can change the direction of a research project. In her study, the same woman was repeatedly interviewed in a project studying the information society, a topic otherwise often described in rhetorical or statistical terms. The stories told by the informant Oili reflected experience and an ability to interpret things. But a long-standing relater also learns the role of being an informant and adjusts her statements to her role as a representative for the project that is being researched.

In the section "Voices in the archive", Päivi Rantala studies material about a local character called "the preacher of Kalkkima", collected by two different researchers. Rantala raises the question of who finally decides what stories will be the ones that make up history. Every researcher creates her or his historical picture based on her or his own material. Rantala describes the interviewers and narrators as gatekeepers to the past.

Kati Heinonen has studied recorded laments. She finds that a researcher when listening to recordings is confronted with a sound landscape where the reactions and emotions of both singer and interviewer are registered. The most accurate interpretation of the interview is made when the person is present at the session and the transcribed version only transmits a shallow picture of the performance.

Lauri Harvilahti concludes the book with an article looking at the sound and voice material in the archives in a historic perspective. He describes how changing technical innovations and varying field strategies have resulted in today's archive material, defined by functional analysis, traditional ecology and concentration on the context.

Harvilahti relates discussions in the 1980s about worthless archive material that lacked any context, and mentions many new studies in which the researcher has been able to give the old material a context by using new methodological tools.

Finally, Harvilahti mentions a crucial problem today's archives have to face: the challenge of preserving the recorded traditional material in a world of constantly changing technology. The threatening picture of loosing it all continuously requires new solutions and strategies in the field of long-term preservation.

"Voices from the Archive" is fascinating reading. The writers are experienced field workers, basing their articles on numerous materials collected in challenging circumstances. The book gives many personal and detailed insights into how strategies in the field affect shaping the voices that will eventually form "the archived truth". It strikes you what a complex arena creating ethnographic-folkloristic source material is. There are no shortcuts to be taken on this meandering path!

For an archivist like myself the anthology provided many insights and it will certainly serve as a helpful and inspiring textbook for students attempting to use the "voices from the archive" as research material – or indeed create new archive material themselves.

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Analysis of a Childfree Life

Tove Ingebjørg Fjell: Å si nei til meningen med livet? En kulturvitenskapelig analyse av barnfrihet. Tapir Akademisk Forlag, Trondheim 2008. 110 pp. Ill.

In the foreword to the book "To say no to the meaning of life? A culture analysis of childfree life" Tove Ingebjørg

Fjell is pointing out why she got interested in studying women that had decided not to become mothers. In her previous work she had been studying reproduction and interviewing women that were unwillingly childfree. Many of them pointed out to her that they did not understand why other women could choose not having children of their own. This got Fjell interested in those women that had decided not to have children. In her new book she has now focused on the childfree life in general and more specific Norwegian women's experience of choosing a childfree life. This very interesting topic can say something about contemporary views on both heteronormativity and the cultural meaning of having children.

In the first chapter the issue of the study is presented and discussed. What ideas of childfree life are presented among common people and in the media? What are the motivated reasons behind a choice of having a life that is childfree? How are the childfree women perceived by their surroundings? Does a childfree life challenge the conventional understanding of gender? A childfree life is then taken as an empirical ground for studying questions about gender and the cultural meaning of the nuclear family. The questions of the study are discussed from the situation that the fertility in Norway and Europe is decreasing. Tove Fjell has made interviews with younger women and with women that became adults when free birth control became available in the 60s and 70s. There has also been a list of questions sent out on the theme "willingly infertility" in Norway. As a last material category Fjell have used internet and studied how international organisations for childfree people present themselves and discuss this theme.

In the second chapter the analysis focuses on how the discussion about childfree life also is a discussion about what is the normal family and what is not. Fjell is pointing out that new reproduc-

tion technology creates possibilities for more couples to have children but, in the same time, put more pressure on those couples that have decided to live a childfree life. To have two to four children is something that is seen as something normal and natural; and something that all couples should strive for, with or without reproduction technology. At the same time there are groups that the society accepts choosing a childfree life. In the third chapter the discussion on a childfree life is given a new perspective through media and how books and forums on the internet bring people together that is interested in topics around a childfree life. Fjell is here looking at both a European and an American context. This international perspective is fruitful and it gives the analysis new insights on the childfree life. It also gives a good perspective to the Nordic context.

After the third chapter we meet the older women who were the women that got free birth control in the 60s and 70s and, on their own, could control the reproduction with legal birth control. The preventive opened up a possibility to choose not to have children. The women's different reasons of why they did this choice and decided not to get pregnant are discussed. One reason was the discussion of the overpopulated world that was debated more and more at that time. One woman meant that one should help children in the world instead of getting children of one's own. Another reason was that the woman felt that she had not the capacity of becoming a mother. From the surroundings the women felt some pressure when they were told that they had decided to live a life without children.

In the fifth chapter the focus is on the women that have taken the decision not to have children in the 20th century. Having children today, Tove Fjell points out, is more of a project that the family can constitute itself through. The children have in this way a new status in the family where they are an emotional re-

source and not so much an economic resource. The chapter begins with a discussion of how the women reason why they don't want to have children. The reasons are that the women want to have their individual freedom or that they have not found the right man. In the chapter it is also discussed which comments these women get from other people when they say that they have chosen a childfree life. One of the women has noticed that her male colleagues that also have decided not having children do not get comments of their choice. It is also examined how the women create different techniques to disguise their decision from other people. The chapter ends with a discussion about the difference between the two generations and focusing on that the women of the younger generation experience a bigger pressure from other people. Tove Fjell's conclusion of this is: "It seems that the new reproductive technologies and the child's new status in the past decades have pushed the childfree women further to the margin of the nuclear family ideal, and further out in the periphery of heteronormativity" (p. 84).

In the last empirical chapter the focus changes and Fjell is discussing how the childfree women beat back and respond to the ideal of the nuclear family. The interviewed women discuss pregnancy as something normal and natural but, at the same time, they mean that they have the possibility to let culture overcome nature. In this perspective the women see the childfree life as something positive; they can focus on work and a good relationship to a man. Instead the women talk about the mothers and they mean that these women are worn out and stressed of having both a career and children to take care of. At the same time, Fjell points out, that the childfree women include themselves in normality and identify themselves away from a deviant role. In this way they use the culture of heteronormativity to categorize the childfree life as something positive for the women. In the last synthesising

chapter, this perspective is very precisely expressed: "The childfree women have risked their femininity, but have managed to create new forms of femininity by being aware of a core femininity and also being a part of traditional heterosexual relationships" (p. 101).

"To say no to the meaning of life? A culture analyse of childfree life" is a book that very well succeeds in capturing a contemporary cultural phenomenon. It is also positive that the book is short, well written and quickly comes to the point of the study. The material that Tove Fjell is using gives new and interesting perspectives on heteronormativity. What is heteronormativity in our society today? How do people relate to heteronormativity? And how do they use heteronormativity to define their self as 'normal'? These are important questions that are discussed in a pedagogical way in the book.

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Local Cultural Patterns of Ill Health

Jonas Frykman & Kjell Hansen: I ohälsans tid. Sjukskrivningar och kulturmönster i det samtida Sverige. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2009. 235 pp. Ill.

At the beginning of the second millennium, Sweden had the highest rate of ill health in Europe in the age group 15–65. Thanks to their welfare state, Swedes are entitled to sickness benefit when they are too ill to work, but this national insurance can be very costly when the nation is Number 1 in ill health.

The health insurance is nationwide, but the practice of granting sickness benefit is determined locally by doctors and social secretaries, a fact which seemed to have a certain impact on the number of sick-listed people, since the rates of sickness absence were very different in different parts of Sweden. In order to study local variation and the

meaning attached to the impact of being too ill to work, ethnologists went out into the field. Their aim was to find the *ethos* of the local communities, which – inspired by Gregory Bateson – connotes the *perceived and practised community*. The two authors chose five different localities in Sweden, three of them with a lower percentage of sick persons than the Swedish average, the other two with a very high percentage.

The methodology and interpretations in this study are impressive, inspiring, and creative. The collected material consists of field notes from observations, photographs, interviews, policy statements and local area presentations, tourist brochures, sculptures, architecture and town plans. According to the presentation of the methodology, the people interviewed are what I would term *superinformants*, people in central positions related to the topic, i.e. general practitioners, heads of social security and social services, or local politicians. The ill persons themselves comprise a very large group who have nothing much but their absence from the labour market in common; for this reason the authors find it useless to focus on their perspective in this study. Copious field-work notes, interview extracts and photographs serve as documentation and illustration in the interesting analyses, which also interpret buildings, market-places, church-bell melodies, bodies and their postures in the streets, conversation standards, industrial artefacts on display, and so on. The creativity invested in these analyses gives the texts a poetic touch.

The analyses are informed by theories of governmentality (self-control), social trust and hope, medicalization and everyday life in a phenomenological perspective.

In the three communities with lower disease rates than average, the cultural patterns value inhabitants who want to work and to find paid work, even in tough times of industrial crisis. Another shared feature of these three communi-

ties is a high rate of participation in local communal life in various organizations, whether social, cultural or sports activities. These communities are reported to represent *hope* and *trust*.

Nässjö is presented as an old social democratic base where people are willing to work, ensuring the ideals of the welfare state and its rights and duties. *Gislaved* is presented in positive terms as the authors' favourite place, where the local culture is dynamic and shows a high degree of involvement, besides being a multicultural area with migrants from many countries. The idea of being *different* as a positive experience is mentioned here as a possible explanation for the dynamism. The third locality with the lowest illness frequency of them all, *Mullsjö*, is a fairly standardized community consisting of many commuters. However, *worry* is reported to dominate the local culture in contrast to *trust*, and *care* combined with *control* is an important local phenomenon as well, performed in an effective care-control service for inhabitants with long periods of illness. The impact of the *worrying* is not further explored in the analysis.

In the diagnoses of *Östersund* and *Strömsund*, with high rates of ill health, the ethnological analysis reveals a local ethos with a keen interest in freedom and independence connected to hunting, fishing, agriculture and so on, and a high dependency on economic support both from the state to the community as a peripheral area, and to individuals who often need to supplement their incomes with social security due to either unemployment or illness. The rough life in the countryside seems to provide for a "naturalization" of bodily decay. This local culture leads the ethnologists to draw conclusions about life in the natural environment, which does not sustain itself, leading to medicalization and dependency on support. It is reported to be a paradoxical culture, valuing independence but practising dependence.

In studies like this, ethnologists can

encounter angry responses, as happened to the authors of this book, because people in the northern region felt misrepresented. In this case, some of the problems could derive from the fact that the five communities are intentionally presented as homogeneous entities in order to reveal their *societal ethos*. This might cause a levelling of local varieties and disputes, for example, in the case of Östersund, where the key issue is that the community is divided into two groups, the heritage people and the newcomers, and the latter have higher education and hence occupy the chief positions. Since the reported methodology of the research is to interview primarily superinformants, newcomers probably had a great say in this local study. This could easily have biased the interpretation of the negative influences of the old-fashioned hereditary culture.

From a general point of view, the study finds that ill health seems to be produced under circumstances involving other kinds of problems, such as the difficulty of sustaining a society on the periphery, or the women's role in society as double workers. Hence the illness is not so much a phenomenon in the population as in the cultural and political patterns of the society at large. This is a good point. However, these issues are not elaborated further in the book. The subject involves politically determined strategies for managing health problems in a social context, but outright political comment is absent in the book. In an indirect way, however, the authors present a modernist, liberal stance, praising the local governmentality and standardization of modern living, especially in Gislaved and Mullsjö. The problems of peripheral living in areas where nature is more prevalent than industry, especially in nations valuing modernity and industriousness, is not taken into consideration from a more general perspective.

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Legends and Landscape

Terry Gunnell (ed.): *Legends and Landscape. Articles Based on Plenary Papers Presented at the 5th Celtic-Nordic-Baltic Folklore Symposium, Reykjavík 2005. University of Iceland Press, Reykjavík 2008. 352 pp.*

This book is an outcome of the Fifth Celtic-Nordic-Baltic Folklore Symposium held in Reykjavík in 2005. The articles here are expanded versions of just twelve of the plenary lectures; the other 37 papers presented to the symposium are listed in the Introduction by the editor, Terry Gunnell.

Gunnell opens the volume by quoting the definition by which Wilhelm Grimm contrasted legend (*Sage*) with fairytale (*Märchen*): legend adheres to “a locale or a name that has been secured through history”, and therefore cannot find its home just anywhere. A legend is linked to a specific temporal and geographical environment, and it is this link that is enshrined in the title of the book, *Legends and Landscape*.

In the first paper, “A Ghostly View of England's Past”, the legends are firmly rooted in a local context. Here Jacqueline Simpson presents a small selection of tales about “historical ghosts”; these are locally important persons who haunt historic places such as stately homes, and their souls can find no rest either because they were guilty of some terrible crime or because they died a gruesome death. Historical ghosts have fostered a new source of income for the tourist industry in Britain and elsewhere: the Ghost Walk.

For Anna-Leena Siikala, in “Reproducing Social Worlds: The Practice and Ideology of Oral Legends”, the context of the legends is not so much a landscape as a discourse field. She compares three very different cultures: an island community in Polynesia, a village in rural Finland, and a Finno-Ugrian people, the Komi, living among Russians and other nationalities. The Polynesian legends are transmitted by experts in ge-

nealogy and in the entire history of the Cook Islands from creation to Christianization; the narratives are retold in public performances sometimes accompanied by dance and song. The Finnish legends from Kauhajoki in Ostrobothnia concern events from the past two or three centuries; when related by old men in storytelling sessions, they create a sense of belonging through which the common people can contest the hierarchies of the larger society. Komi legends are performed in family circles and hunters' camps, hidden from outsiders; the legends tell of skilled hunters and sorcerers in a glorious past before Russian missionaries brought a new social order of church and state. Siikala's conclusion is that the values attached to legends are intimately connected to the praxis of narrating and define "both the means and the devices of the strategy for reproduction: that is to say, the genre."

Ulf Palmenfelt looks at metamorphosis legends in "Form and Other Aspects of Legends". His Gotlandic examples concern transformations of various types, finds of things that look valuable or beautiful but turn into horse manure or wood shavings. In the self-sufficient society that produced the legends, material objects were regarded as raw material and potential products; people were inventive in the ways they used and re-used such resources, and the legends take the inventiveness one step further, imagining the familiar objects as precious, elusive articles. Palmenfelt uses his examples to support his hypothesis that form and content should be regarded, not as inherent qualities of an object, but as analytical aspects, to which he would add factors such as function, mood, and aesthetics.

Arne Bugge Amundsen, in "Translating Narratives: The Interpretation of Legends in Recent Norwegian Folklore Studies", considers three perspectives exemplified by folklorists in a recent research project. Anne Eriksen, who has studied narratives about the obscure heroic figure of Alv Erlingsson, argues

that there is no living tradition about this medieval nobleman; academic folklorists have constructed the voices and narratives into a "tradition" which has nothing to do with the primary source material. Amundsen then sums up Bjarne Hodne's contrastive study of the ideology and cultural values of two eminent folklorists, the nationally minded Knut Liestøl and the more internationally oriented Reidar Th. Christiansen. Hodne's aim is to show that academic results are situated in time and space. Amundsen then describes his own examination of political and cultural strategies at work in scholarship a hundred years earlier, when one pioneer of folklore studies, Andreas Faye, was marginalized at the expense of Asbjørnsen and Moe. Summing up, Amundsen finds that all these cases concern how narratives are *translated* in one way or another by scholars.

The next paper, by Séamas Ó Catháin, also takes us back into the history of folklore studies, with an interesting biographical account of "The Formation of a Celtic-Nordic Folklorist: The Case of James Hamilton Delargy/Séamus Ó Duilearga (1899–1980)". During six months spent in Scandinavia in 1928, Delargy acquired crucial ideas about how to collect, catalogue, and publish folklore material in his native Ireland. Major influences included C. W. von Sydow, Åke Campbell, and Reidar Th. Christiansen.

The next essay provides further insight into the history of folklore studies. In "From Philology to Process: The Collection of *Finlands Svenska Folkdiktning* as a Representation of Finland-Swedish Folklore", Ulrika Wolf-Knuts examines six articles from the long career of K. Rob. V. Wikman, under whom the volumes on legends were published in the series. Wikman's editing principles were philological, treating legends primarily as texts, and conflicted in many ways with the more psychological and holistic approach that Gunnar Landman used for the volumes

about folk belief published in the same series. Landtman was interested in individuals and their experiences, whereas Wikman stuck to the old national-romantic view of folklore as a collective product, yet Wolf-Knuts shows how his scholarly development led him to combine old ideals with new ideas.

Ülo Valk's article "Folk and the Others: Constructing Social Reality in Estonian Legends" considers how legends in nineteenth-century Estonia reflect the social world of the community in which they were told. One group of legends underlined existing social and ethnic borders, telling of the Germanized Devil and demonized landlords. Another group tells of a demonic familiar (the *kratt* or *puuk*), an assistant spirit who stole things from neighbours and brought them back to his owner; these legends illustrate the social changes that were leading to increasing stratification within the Estonian village.

The next article, by Timothy R. Tangherlini, is "The Beggar, the Minister, the Farmer, his Wife and the Teacher: Legend and Legislative Reform in Nineteenth-Century Denmark". He begins by asking how stories set in the distant past can be relevant to the immediate context of performance in a much later age with a very different social setting. The legends he examines have a political dimension, and he paints a detailed picture of the social context to show how the stories, far from being uncritically passed on or told for sheer nostalgia, are used to negotiate ideological stances on issues of contemporary significance.

Bengt af Klintberg then considers how a feature well known from the story of Dracula is exemplified in "Legends of the Impaled Dead in Sweden". Swedish tales of how a stake was driven through the heart of potential revenants are especially common in the former Danish provinces of Halland and Skåne, and the distribution of the legends coincides with the area in which the actual custom is well documented. One famous ex-

ample is the Bocksten man, a medieval corpse discovered in 1936.

John Lindow's article is entitled "Changelings, Changing, Re-Exchanges: Thoughts on the Relationship between Folk Belief and Legend". He concludes that the beliefs about changelings were attempts to explain why certain children suffered from malnutrition of one kind or another: either they ate but failed to develop, or they ate too much and became obese. In both cases the result was a person who ate but did not work, in other words, an economic burden. The folk explanation was that the trolls had removed a human baby and substituted one of their own children, and for Lindow the obvious motivation is that the trolls wanted their children to be better fed. A common motif of the legends is that changelings were unable to speak, and a re-exchange could be effected if the child was tricked into speaking, thus becoming a normal member of the community.

John Shaw presents a lengthy study of "'Gaelic/Norse Folklore Contacts' and Oral Traditions from the West of Scotland". After a review of early Gaelic-Norse contacts, place-name evidence from Scotland, historical and linguistic evidence, Shaw considers the evidence for exchanges of stories in both directions. The focal area is the Inner Hebrides, where the bilingual, culturally mixed people known as the *Gall-Gaedil* or Scandinavian Gaels were well placed to distribute Gaelic traditions to Iceland and elsewhere in the Norse world. These traditions include some migratory legends shared by Gaelic Scotland and the Nordic countries but not known in Ireland.

The final article is by Bo Almqvist, "Midwife to the Fairies (ML 5070) in Icelandic Tradition". This is a detailed study of a legend in which a human being, usually a woman, assists supernatural beings in matters relating to birth. Almqvist catalogues over a hundred Icelandic variants and shows how the legend was adapted in many ways to suit the Icelandic context. A striking

number of the Icelandic legends report that the people who assisted fairy women in childbirth then went on to pursue a career in midwifery. While it is normal that human actors in such legends elsewhere are named persons, it is perhaps a typically Icelandic characteristic that the men and women named in the legends are known not only by name; their dates of birth are recorded and even photographs are available, and some of them are listed in biographical encyclopaedias of Icelandic physicians.

It will be obvious that the articles in this volume reflect the diversity of papers presented to the symposium, with a broad range of topics, a variety of scholarly approaches at different points on the scale from empirical to theoretical, and in some cases the legends are not related in any explicit way to the other noun in the title, *Legends and Landscape*. Despite this, the volume has a surprisingly uniform feel which is probably due to the high level of quality throughout. There is not a weak article in the book, and the editor has obviously taken pains to achieve a consistent format with virtually no typographical errors. The result is a collection of twelve very interesting articles which will prove to be of lasting value.

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Music and Nationalism

Anne Svånaug Haugan, Niels Kayser Nielsen & Peter Stadius (eds.): *Musikk og nasjonalisme i Norden. HiT skrift nr 3/2008. Høgskolen i Telemark, Porsgrunn 2008. 161 pp.*

This publication on Music and Nationalism in the Nordic countries is the offspring of a Nordic conference at Bø, Norway, in 2007, initiated by the Nordplus network Nordic Experiences – as a follow-up to an earlier conference on

Language and nationalism. However, of the twelve papers given at the conference, only six are published here, alongside with two other articles that have been added. Furthermore, there are also summaries of the two days' programmes and discussions enclosed in the papers. Three papers each are in English, Swedish and Danish respectively, one in Norwegian.

Despite the title and some signs of theoretical reorientation, it is the nationalisms of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland that are addressed. Examples from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the Innuitt and Saami peoples would have been interesting in this context.

The format of the contributions varies; some are full articles in their own right, others are short and seem to be the actual presentations given at the conference. This makes up for a mixed impression where some texts stand out, others merely giving a foretaste. Still, the shorter papers also have some interesting points. Altogether, the book may be viewed as a report from an established but not exhausted research field (rather than the definite statement the title may give an impression of).

The three initial papers actually also deals with German nationalism and symbolism. Linda Maria Koldau presents some German political songs used against the Danish in Schleswig-Holstein in the 1840–60s, and this is coupled with Inge Adriansen's (added) paper on the South Jutish "Blaa Sangbog" (Blue Song Book) and its function under the German rule in the same area 1864–1920. Ursula Geisler in her contribution studies how musical actors (musicians, critics, officials etc.) in Nazi Germany drew upon and re-coded ideas of "Swedish", "German" and "Nordic", and how this discourse was received in Sweden.

Anne Svånaug Haugan makes a historical survey of how folk music was used in the nation-building processes in Norway during the 19th and early 20th centuries. By narrowing down to the region of

Numedal, she shows how a general cultural nationalism in the 1800s changed into a 20th century "regional nationalism" (*bygdenasjonalisme*). A goal of *restitution* of folk music, giving it official recognition on a national level, was followed by a goal of *reconstruction* where folk music interest was to be anchored on a local level. The Gothenburg musicologist Karin Eriksson (now at Växjö University), drawing upon her dissertation *Bland polskor, gänglåtar och valser: Hallands spelmansförbund och den halländska folkmusiken*, points out a similar development in Sweden where the inauguration of regional folk music organizations in the 1930s lead to a narrowing down of folk music genres recorded regionally, according to national discourses on "authentic" folk music.

A short paper by Glenda Dawn Goss discusses Jean Sibelius' music in terms of "hot" and "banal" nationalism, following Michael Billig's concepts. Works like *Finlandia* and *Song of the Athenians* were "hot" in evoking national emotions in public discourse at their first performances, but sooner or later turned "banal" (the former has served in many contexts, like as Biafra's national anthem and as soundtrack to *Die Hard II*). A longer text by Stine Isaksen is methodologically interesting; she compares the contemporary national music criticism on Sibelius with that on Danish 19th century composer Jacob W. Gade, pointing out four distinct themes: the national concert (as distinct from the ordinary symphony concert), the idea of a national music, the composer as personification of the national, and the recognition from other nations. Furthermore, some discordance in Finnish nationalist criticism are also discussed: was Sibelius music to be understood as anti-Russian? Was he to symbolize an ethnic Finnishness, or a combined Finnish/Swedish Finnishness? In her conclusion, Isaksen points out the differing contexts: Finland as a nation-state under construction, Denmark as an established state-nation – thus, music was given

quite a different position as the essence of the national soul in Finland while music in Denmark merely confirmed an existing national identity.

Two interesting theoretical points are made in this book. One is about the importance of studying the connections between popular music and nationalism, instead of assuming it to be an international phenomenon in distinction to folk and art music. Unfortunately, only one out of the four presentations dedicated to popular music is published here. This is Janne Mäkelä's rather short but interesting reflection on the international aspirations of the Finnish popular music business, where a certain envy of Swedish international success (as in the Eurovision Song Contest) has eventually faded with the breakthrough in the 2000's of several heavy metal groups (Lorid, Nightwish and others). Here, the national in music is constructed not in stylistic terms but in success in an international style.

The other point is stated by Niels Kayser Nielsen in his summary of the second conference day, and is a critique of the Marxist stances of Hobsbawm, Gellner and Anderson for conflating nationalism with national identity. Instead, Nielsen sees rising interests in historically situated studies where the specific actors and their driving forces are closely examined. There is no cause to presuppose all nationalistic expressions to have an independent state as their goal; rather, nationalism can be considered as a field with several competing actors in different positions. (This would be an interesting path to continue on, particularly with also taking "ethnicity" in consideration.) And to further alert against musical essentialism, Nielsen brings out Dimitrij Sjostakovitj's music as an example of how music can be heard in different times and societies as carrying different ethnic and national qualities, or as having none at all.

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Faith and Narration

Tuija Hovi: Usko ja kerronta. Arkitodelisuuden rakentuminen uskonliikkeessä. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis. Ser. C 254. Turku, Turun Yliopiston julkaisuja 2007. 260 pp. English summary. Diss.

Narratives of public and private, social and personal, official and unofficial, spiritual and material call for interdisciplinary approach. Tuija Hovi's dissertation, entitled "Faith and Narration. The Narrative Construction of Everyday Reality in the Faith Movement", answers this call. The book provides a straightforward and insightful investigation of how religious conviction is constructed and maintained in the process of personal narrative in a charismatic Christian Faith Movement. Hovi's work is located in the discipline of comparative religion, but it also draws its theoretical and methodological sources from folkloristic and socio-psychological approaches to narrative.

In her research Hovi addresses questions familiar to folklorists: She examines (1) how tradition steers experiencing and telling and (2) how personal narrative constructs the identity of a group member. These questions are discussed from two directions simultaneously. On the one hand, the research utilizes social-psychological explanatory models for religious experience, and presents the role theory of Hjalmar Sundén, Nils G. Holm and Lauri Honko and the attribution theory of Wayne Proudfoot, Phillip Shaver, Bernard Spilka and Lee A. Kirkpatrick as theoretical points of departure. According to role theory, religion as literal and oral tradition provides roles for a believer. Attribution theory sees people interpreting experiences within a frame of a plausible meaning system and thus controlling their environment. On the other hand, Hovi's research offers the constructionist view of the identity-building function of narrative by applying speech act theory (J. L. Austin and Pierre Bourdieu) and narrative psy-

chology (Jerome Bruner, Kenneth Gergen, Charlotte Linde and Derek Edwards). Briefly, speech act theory claims that saying is doing, and narrative psychology sees narrating constructing reality.

Hovi builds her dissertation on empirical research material. She conducted her fieldwork in The Word of Life congregation in Turku in 1991 and in 1998. The Word of Life congregation was established in Turku in 1990. Hovi traces its roots back to the American charismatic revivals of the late nineteenth century and the later Pentecostal healing revival. Closer roots are in Sweden: The Word of Life congregation in Turku is an offspring of the Livets Ord congregation in Uppsala. Hovi employed the method of the open thematic interview and used participant observation to collect contextual information. She shows readers her thoughtful reflexivity and makes clear her role as a researcher, not as a religious seeker or participating believer. Yet, the author recognizes that she is a target of mission witnessing and that there are hopes for her conversion. To the members who agreed to be interviewed, an interview is a chance to witness. Actually, more than a chance, it is an obligation to witness about one's personal faith. Mission, conducted both in Finland and abroad, is considered valuable in the congregation.

Hovi observes that there are two main categories of personal narrative that recur in the interview material: stories about healing and stories about God's guidance. Both these story categories discuss the experiences of supernatural powers in everyday human life. In the Faith Movement, man is seen as a battleground of the powers of God and Satan. When analysing the healing stories, Hovi found out that the definitions of illnesses and accidents, stories of personal healing and another person's healing, physical healing and inner healing are given religious interpretations. In these embodied experiences Satan causes ill-

nesses and accidents, whereas God heals and saves. Besides bodily attacks, Satan can also attack the soul and cause disturbing feelings and thoughts.

Hovi divides the guidance stories into two main categories: life-history stories and single-event stories. Life-history stories construct either a unidirectional view of God's plan in one's life or a view of the previous life seen through the lenses of a later conversion. Single-event stories are either individual and focused on the believer, or collective and discussing outsiders. Stories of God's guidance tell about blessings, answers to prayers and escapes from dangers. Hovi points out that most of the stories about answers to prayers deal with material issues such as finding a job or another way to ease financial difficulties. This shows the reader how narrative intertwines spiritual and material realities, and how economic and social themes are included in religious interpretations. The movement's discussion of material blessings and healing being available for true believers has caused the general public to call the movement "prosperity theology".

The overall narrative of a believer being targeted by the two contradictory supernatural powers is interesting and Hovi narrates it fluently. Story examples illustrate the choices group members make, whether the question is about one's recovery from homosexuality or negotiations between congregational activities and work obligations. These narratives clearly illustrate the co-existence of individualism and collectivity – charged co-existence in some cases – in the Faith Movement. Hovi points out that "In the Faith Movement, the right kind of individualism seems to be the kind that can be carried out collectively" (p. 237).

In addition to the themes in personal narratives, Hovi discusses other narrative strategies that are used in maintaining the religious conviction. These strategies include normative utterances that refer to God's will and the Bible;

confessional utterances that refer to doctrine and community; and legitimate utterances that justify and give reasons. Furthermore, Hovi differentiates between two narrator types: one who focuses on telling personal experience narratives and others who focus on facts. Another interesting point that Hovi makes is that misfortunes, failures and difficulties in faith are left untold or only hinted at.

Altogether, Hovi interviewed thirteen women and seven men for her research and she says that the research material gives a democratic picture of the gender roles in the congregational activities. Hovi notes that the research is conducted among a relatively young congregation where this situation is common. Yet, the social expectations of genders are fixed in the Faith Movement, and the reader is curious to know if this is expressed in the narratives. According to Hovi, the ways both men and women talk about God and faith are alike. Yet, the narrative strategies to construct collectivity may differ. Hovi reminds us that there are other factors that need to be considered here, such as the occupation of the narrator and the fieldwork context. The question of how the socioeconomic status of the narrator affects the narrative construction of conviction is hinted at by a young woman who notes that in the congregation, it seems to be more accepted to be unemployed than committed to work.

Hovi's theoretical and methodological choices are well reasoned; she offers clear arguments and pays a good deal of attention to provide illustrative examples to justify them. The language used in book is clear, and the concepts conveyed are easy to grasp. Hovi articulates her research in an uncomplicated style accessible to scholars in multiple disciplines.

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Swedish Child Health Care 1923–2007

Helena Hörnfeldt: *Prima barn, helt u.a. Normalisering och utvecklingstänkande i svensk barnhälsovård 1923–2007. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2009. 293 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss.*

Who determines (and how) whether a preschool-aged child's development has proceeded and can be expected to continue in a way that is considered normal? Is it possible to establish indisputable cultural, social and historical definitions of normality and deviation in children's development? The ethnologist Helena Hörnfeldt's doctoral dissertation (Summary in English: *Normalisation and developmental thinking in Swedish child health care 1923–2007*) deals with these questions thoroughly by examining how the development of Swedish children is monitored by child health centres. The specific subject of her analysis is the developmental controls of four-year-olds. This has held a special position among age-specific health and developmental controls in the general programme of the Swedish national health centres since the 1960s.

In her study, Hörnfeldt has made a multifaceted analysis of the formation of the idea of monitoring children's development in Sweden and the procedures used to carry it out in the child health centre system. A description of the history of what is considered normal development in children and the pursuit of well-being simultaneously tells us on a micro level how Swedish society changed into the contemporary middle-class welfare state. The research, as Hörnfeldt emphasises, approaches the subject from many viewpoints: it is ethnological research, but at the same time a study of child development and childhood as well as being research on care institutions. The study also sheds light on how normality is conceptualised and how the Swedish child health centres have played their part in building a normative perception of children and child

development. Furthermore, the study is connected to the idea of the Swedish welfare society (*folkhemmet*). By *folkhemmet* Hörnfeldt refers to the era from the late 1920s to the late 1960s, when significant socio-political decisions and measures were instituted in Sweden, which in turn created the model for the Scandinavian welfare state.

The study is based on extensive, mostly historical, materials from 1923 to 2007. The materials analysed are instructions contained in child health care directives, annual reports, materials and articles on child-rearing, official reports, interviews, observation of the assessment of four-year-olds' development and altogether one thousand child health care journals dating from the periods 1935–1975 and 1989–2000. The study is a prime example of how materials that are complex and from different time periods can be collated to produce arguments justifying the interpretations.

The beginning of the research was beset by problems. It took a whole year before the ethical committees that represented the medical authorities gave their approval to undertake the collection of the material constituted by the developmental assessments. This process shows the difference of emphasis on ethical questions in humanist research compared to medical research. The committees rejected the first two applications, giving as their main reasons the vagueness and methodological weakness of the research plan: the lack of a clear definition of the particular target group of the study, the lack of a baseline group and the lack of objective and standardised methods of measurement. Even though the research project included questions on children's physical health and development, the methodological approach was that of ethnological qualitative research. The methods proposed were difficult to evaluate from the viewpoint of medical research, which focuses mainly on experimental design and corroborative evidence.

According to Hörnfeldt, the begin-

ning of the Swedish child health centre system was the early twentieth-century philanthropic institution of "Milk Drops" (*Mjölkdroppen*). The Milk Drops institution was based on French and German ideas and measures. There were attempts to implement the same procedures in Finland as well. The main concern in the early twentieth century was infant mortality. To prevent it, especially needy mothers were encouraged to monitor the weight gain of their infants. Sterilised milk blends were distributed to mothers, and later the importance of breastfeeding and the proper care of infants was emphasised. The next step was the gradual institutionalisation of activities with the establishment of child health centres in the late 1930s. Initially, the aim was to bring all children during their first two years of life and their parents within the sphere of health controls in the child health centres. Later the monitoring of children was extended to all children up to the age of six. In Finland, a similar child health centre system was gradually introduced in the 1940s.

In addition to children's physical well-being, the monitoring gradually came to place more emphasis on what was regarded as correct or normal parenting. According to Hörnfeldt, the 1950s in particular marked a turning point for child health care as nurture, conditions at home and children's mental health were given more attention. Consequently, psychologists joined nurses and doctors in the child health centres. Since the 1960s, this staffing trinity has become the standard in the assessment of four-year-olds' development. In her study, Hörnfeldt emphasises the fact that the norms that defined Swedish culture were regarded to a great extent as universal and unquestionable. Within this interpretive framework, non-native Swedes in particular were considered strange and other.

The assessment of four-year-olds' development is connected to a normatively oriented view of child development.

This view was advanced especially in the studies of the North American developmental psychologist Arnold Gesell in the 1920s and 1930s. Within the European context, similar ideas were present in the works of Charlotte Bühler. Child development was seen as predictable and approached from the point of view of certain key age phases. However, the assessments of the development of four-year-olds carried out in Sweden were occasionally criticised. One criticism was that the age of four was too low for diagnosing various developmental disorders. In Finland, the assessment of the development of five-year-olds was tried out in the 1970s, and it became an established procedure in the 1980s. This assessment has been more closely associated with the beginning of school than the developmental control of four-year-olds in Sweden. In addition to the systematic monitoring of children's health and development, the evaluation of probable learning difficulties and measures to combat them are emphasised in Finnish developmental controls of five-year-olds (Korkiakangas, M. 1984; Viljamaa, M.-L. 2003).

The ethnographic part of Hörnfeldt's study gives an informative description of the framework and the activities of the development assessment of four-year-olds. The reader gets a picture what kind of a space the waiting room was, what kind of toys and playing opportunities for the children it contained and how adults and children acted in this space. The accounts of the assessment process are especially interesting – the reader can visualise precise ethnographic depictions. On the other hand, one cannot escape the feeling that in the situation the child was looked on from above – through the eyes of an adult. The child was observed and approached as a subject of study, even though the doctors and nurses evidently attempted to place themselves on the level of the child. If the nurse carrying out the assessment evaluated the child's development to be more or less normal, the assessment was

over relatively fast. On the other hand, children whose development was seen as not conforming to the norms had to go through a longer assessment.

The assessment included checking the child's weight, height, eyesight and hearing. The child's motor development was also monitored (in particular her or his ability to keep balance while walking straight and standing on one foot, to draw a person with a head and legs, and to put three beads on a string was tested). The child's communication abilities (understands directions and can act accordingly), play (can play with other children) and cognitive development (recognises colours and can list three objects) were also evaluated. It was not possible to observe everything during the assessment itself; for example information on play came from the parents, by interviewing preschool teachers or by observing the children's behaviour in preschool.

The book gives one description of an eyesight test, the length of the text was two and a half pages (85–88). The case was a tricky one, but the reader's sympathy is with the child; no wonder she finally uttered: "Jag vill inte göra mer" [I don't want to do any more]. Often the children whose development was seen as deviating from the norms of the assessment tasks came from families that differed from the so-called "normal family". According to Hörnfeldt, the parents in these families were, for example, unemployed, had a low education level or were immigrants or refugees. Moreover, the child might have been adopted, single-parented, had a mother who was too young or too old, had been born prematurely or too late, or had some developmental disorder such as ADHD. Hörnfeldt states that like many social institutions, the child health centre, too, was a place where the Swedish middle-class national identity was created and actualised and such cases did not easily fit this model.

The book *Prima barn, helt u.a.* is com-

prehensive in terms of its content, and the approach of the researcher is critical but based on well-founded arguments. The Swedish child health centre system and the assessment of the development of four-year-olds is approached from a variety of perspectives using wide-ranging research and source materials. The study presents a thorough examination of the starting points, history and ideological background of the Swedish child health centre system. It moves between history and the present day so that a chapter on history might follow one dealing with contemporary matters, and vice versa. The reader may experience some problems in following the progression of the study. In spite of this, however, the book offers an interesting and important contribution to the subject. It does not limit itself to an ethnological approach, but also examines views on normality and what is understood as a right way of living in the context of the Swedish welfare state through a micro-level phenomenon crystallised in the expectations and procedures of the assessment the development of four-year-olds.

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Reading Public Sculpture: Contextualizing and Recontextualizing Art in Profane and Sacred Space

Harri Kalha: *Tapaus Havis Amanda. Siveellisyys ja sukupuoli vuoden 1908 suihkulähdekiistassa. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki 2008. Historiallisia tutkimuksia 238. 246 pp. Ill.*

Liisa Lindgren: *Memoria. Hautakuvaveisto ja muistojen kulttuuri. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki 2009. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia 1211, Tiede. 312 pp. Ill.*

During last year, two profoundly different books about public sculpture were published in Finland. In both books, the

research interest was focused on the various meanings of public sculpture in their cultural and social surroundings and in the context of the sculptures' erection period. However, the theoretical and methodological approaches in the books vary greatly from one another and, consequently, the books indicate how the same object – a sculpture in a public space – can, in contemporary research, be analysed from profoundly different viewpoints and theoretical orientations.

In contemporary art research, language is often a research object in itself and is intertwined with the meaning-making processes of visibility. Language plays this kind of fundamental role in Harri Kalha's book *Tapaus Havis Amanda. Siveellisyyden ja sukupuoli vuodelta 1908 suihkulähdekiistassa* (Case Havis Amanda. Chastity and Gender in a Fountain Debate in 1908), which focuses on the various meanings of the famous sculpture, erected in Helsinki in 1908. The Finnish artist Ville Vallgren sculpted the work in Paris using local models and following the Parisian ideals of modern fountain sculptures. The sculpture, called *Havis Amanda*, depicts a nude female figure placed on a high pedestal in the middle of a fountain pool, in which water spurts out from the mouths of fishes and sea lions. The sculpture immediately caused an intensive public discussion in Helsinki-centred newspapers and periodicals, in which it was either defended or objected, depending on the writer's standpoint. Kalha's aim is to analyse the discussion and illustrate the ideological aspects regarding the questions of chastity, morality, virtue and gender, which collided in the debate. The nude female figure, located in the lively public space on Helsinki's Market Square, brought up such then-current topics as womanhood, female body, sexuality, moral codes and related notions. Consequently, the sculpture offered a public forum for the "hot" topics of the day, channelled through the nude body of *Havis Amanda*.

Kalha approaches his topic through discourse analytic reading. He dissects interestingly various kinds of texts – art criticism, opinion writings, letters to editors, articles, causeries, caricatures – in which *Havis Amanda* (or opinions of other writers) were criticised, supported or analysed. In the texts, various ideological approaches criss-cross and collide. Even though the debate at first seems to show a division between male writers defending the aesthetic modernism of the sculpture and female suffragettes objecting to the obscene nudity of the female figure, a deeper analysis uncovers more diverse and heterogeneous approaches to the issues of chastity, sexuality and gender. Some writers stressed nationalistic standpoints, according to which the aim of art was to foster national imageries and communality. The nationalistic ideology of art clashed with the ideology of aesthetic modernism and, in a broader sense, with the rising social and cultural modernity and its new moral codes. In addition, the debate reflected the current discussions of daily politics, such as the aims of the women's movement. However, the views of the female writers taking part in the debate did not form a unified front – female views were also expressed in various discourses. Consequently, the debate provided a forum for several colliding standpoints: Finnishness vs. internationality (or otherness), tradition vs. modernity, social morality vs. aesthetics, private sphere vs. public sphere etc.

The examined texts were first published in several newspapers and periodicals, including newspapers of different political parties, newspapers published in Finnish and Swedish, cultural periodicals, women's movement periodicals as well as humour magazines of the day. Because of this, the texts cover a wide range of genres and the status and role of the writers vary greatly. In addition, the texts were published in forums which had very different publishing policies and aims. However, Kalha does not analyse how the writer's status and role or genre con-

ventions and publishing policies influenced the texts or the rhetoric and meaning-making in them. Discourse theorist Norman Fairclough calls this dimension of discourse a discourse practice. The writer's status and role, the genre conventions and publishing policies set boundaries to how and what kind of views are suitable to be expressed in different literary forums. Furthermore, these factors have an effect on how the texts were supposed to be received.

Kalha explores his data by setting the topics in a broader literary climate of the period. He illustrates the image of Paris, which was discursively produced in literature at the time of *Havis Amanda's* erection. Furthermore, Kalha connects the sculpture to various literary debates and texts on chastity, nudity and sexual morals, which were current at the end of the first decade of the 20th century. In his analysis, Kalha uses some contemporary concepts of gender studies in order to illuminate the problematics of the debate. The choice is rewarding. By presenting what kind of concepts were not possible to use in the discussion, Kalha indicates the focal points of the debate. The writers at the time could not use the concepts of sexism, chauvinism, masculinism, phallus, objectifying, gendering, hegemony or patriarchy to analyse and justify their opinions. Neither could they conceptualise the sculpture, which was objectifying, erotically charged, hierarchical, normative and satiated by heterosexual male gaze. Towards the end of the book, Kalha frees himself from the strict text analysis and ponders more intuitively on the psycho-sexual motives of some female writers. Kalha ends his book with a meta-level discussion on the research process. In particular, the discussion on the documentation of the debate in the Central Art Archives of the Finnish National Gallery is interesting and indicates how the history of documentation has been (and, inevitably, still is) profoundly selective and interlocked with the discursive meaning-making of cultural phenomena.

Kalha's book on *Havis Amanda* is, in a sense, a companion to his previous book, which discussed the Finnish artist Magnus Enckell – both are "cases". This series of case studies focused on gender and sexuality will be continued in his next book.

Havis Amanda and the debate it caused have previously been studied by Marja Jalava and Liisa Lindgren. Lindgren's latest book *Memoria. Hautakuvanveisto ja muistojen kulttuuri* (Memoria. Sepulchral Sculpture and the Culture of Memories) introduces and analyses sculptures in Finnish Lutheran cemeteries from the second half of the 19th century to the first decades of the 20th century. Sepulchral sculpture has not been in the focus of art historical research for decades. Art historians have often been more interested in public memorials and non-commissioned productions by sculptors and, consequently, focusing on this area is very welcome in Finnish art history. Lindgren's book indicates how vast and manifold a phenomenon sepulchral sculpture is: cemetery sculptures do not only express the changes of styles and notions in art, but also changes of practices in communal and collective mourning and memorial. Besides the notions of religion, cemetery sculpture manifests profoundly secular values and hierarchies as well as the cultural and social power relations both among the deceased and the mourners. The visibility of cemetery sculpture manifests family background and prosperity, social group and cultural ties. The form and symbols of the sculptures vary according to profession and the social position of the deceased.

In her book, Lindgren explores how the mourning tradition has changed and how the imageries in the cemetery sculptures have reflected these changes. Besides the visibility of sculpture, Lindgren also discusses books about cemetery sculpture, purchase processes of sculptures as well as memorial

events organised on graves and the social positions of the deceased. In the end of the book, Lindgren discusses more in detail the iconography of the common figures used in cemetery sculpture. She describes interestingly how these figures have their origins in both Christian imageries (various types of angels), in classicist motives (e.g. Thanatos) and in non-religious themes (different types of mourner figures). The sepulchral figures may also refer to a broader understanding of spirituality. For example, the theme of *semper excelsior*, in which a figure is depicted being in communion with higher powers, became popular due to the influence of the Theosophic movement at the end of the 19th century.

The book broadens Lindgren's vast work on Finnish monument sculpture. As in her previous books, the approach is in a historical perspective. The contents of the book are based on extensive archive work and the conclusions are drawn from historical, iconographic and iconological analyses. The illustrations show a great number of well-known but also more rarely seen cemetery sculptures. The research is focused on the period when monument sculpture, including sepulchral sculpture, was closely connected with the heroic nationalistic ethos. The cemetery sculptures portraying the cultic Great Men are analysed in detail. In addition, the author focuses her interest on the sculptures made by the established and well-known sculptors of the Golden Age of Finnish art. The modernist upheavals in the memorial culture and the tradition of monument sculpture, which inevitably had an effect on sepulchral sculpture, are left outside from the focus of the book. The analysis of these changes would form an interesting and natural continuation to the topic of the book.

Because of the different functions of the sculptures explored in these books, the conceptual frames of the studies differ from one another. Sepulchral sculptures are intertwined with con-

texts of grief, mourning, memorial, piety and religion. Unlike sepulchral sculptures, *Havis Amanda* was erected for the purpose of modernising the city and making public spaces more aesthetic. At the turn of the century, the intent of the capital city was to lift the image of Helsinki to the 'European level', and erecting public sculptures was one way of promoting the aim. In spite of the differing functions of the sculptures, both books analyse and explain the change in the meanings of the visibility of sculpture along the passage of time. They illustrate how the interpretation of sculpture is context-based, depending on cultural, social and political dialogue of the community. Both books indicate how visibility is related with identity processing – either on national, communal or individual levels. The books contribute to the research of Finnish public sculpture and provide welcome perspectives on the research of meanings and meaning-making processes of sculptures in public spaces.

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A Cultural Analysis of Couples

Kjær, Sarah Holst: Sådan er det at elske. En kulturanalyse af parforhold. Museum Tusculanums Forlag, Københavns Universitet, 2009. 187 pp. Diss.

On 27 February 2010 the Danish folklorist Sarah Holst Kjær defended this dissertation, which she wrote at the Department of Ethnology at Lund University. It is an interesting dissertation which received quite a lot of justified media attention in Denmark. It tackles some everyday phenomena, turns them over, and lets us see familiar things in a new way. It is written in very precise language, with no padding or chitchat. Kjær constantly states what she wants to investigate, how she wants to do it, and why she wants to do it. And when she has investigated it, she shows

how it has helped to elucidate the problem. In that respect, this is an exemplary dissertation.

Sarah Holst Kjær is clearly enthusiastic about theory and about setting her studies in a scholarly context. Unfortunately, this can affect the readability. Even though the dissertation is written in my native language, I must admit that I often had to read the same sentence twice in order to understand the meaning.

She formulates her problem in the following four questions:

“How can expectations of a close romantic relationship be understood when culturally established fantasies about the Couple and the Couple Relationship are involved?

“What social categories, ideals, and norms are involved when two people – young-adult, heterosexual, urban, and before/without children – become a couple?

“What cultural systems of knowing about male/female relations arise when the immediate life-world is discussed?

“How can one understand the couples’ life together and their emotional situations when everyday life is defined as a double level of fantasy and reality?”

In formulating her problem Kjær leans on the American philosopher Judith Butler. Butler writes that a man/woman relationship in the immediate life-world is characterized by a general and cultural system of knowing, which is expressed as *relationality* in the immediate life-world. Relationality consists of the ways in which people understand and categorize a lived relationship; it is a series of fantasies which Kjær regards as culturally accepted ideas about the Couple, a Couple Relationship, and Man and Woman (her capitalization). How a couple relationship can be regarded as good or not so good is thus based on cultural fantasies produced against the background of general systems of knowing.

In general, then, Kjær seeks to study which cultural expectations and fantasies about Man and Woman and Couple

Relationships are used by a specific social and urban group. To be able to do this, she brings in a diverse range of material. First and foremost there are in-depth interviews with five couples aged 23–50. She has also kept a field diary of participant observations in private homes, public events, and street life. As for printed material, Kjær uses sociological and psychological research on the couple, and she has studied articles on the topic in Danish newspapers. To analyse the actual term “couple relationship” she has used archival material from the Danish Language Committee and cites definitions of the term in the standard dictionary, *Ordbog over det danske Sprog*. Finally, she uses what she calls “a selection of culture-historical material”, which comprises scholarly studies of understandings of gender, couple relationships and forms of interaction between men and women in other times and places. Besides this she draws on educational brochures, self-help literature, marriage handbooks, and medical and anatomical drawings.

All of this source material, Kjær declares, cannot be assessed by the classical criteria of source criticism, where a body of available empirical material determines and limits the possibilities of the analysis and the conclusion. Instead she has taken inspiration from a method that the American philosopher Charles Peirce defines as “abduction”. By moving between a number of different categories of material, areas, times, and places in the same culture circle, Kjær says, abduction means establishing suspicions about the familiar and accepted attitudes of a time or a group. The aim is thus to shed light on familiar things using alternative methods.

The four key analytical concepts that are used are: fantasy, situation, the cultural third, and narrativity. The dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Romantic Time” and deals with the encounter between two people who do not know each other. Kjær analyses here the categories of

identity in which the couples place each other to make the self and the other comprehensible. Using narrative theories she discusses how the couple relationship is arranged to fit the ideal of a course of events that links past, present, and future. She furthermore attempts an interpretation of the couples' visions of the future, and their ideals and anti-ideals about the Child and the Family.

The second chapter, entitled "Fictive Affinities", concerns how the couples are a part of late-Freudian generations. In other words, the couples used psycho-analytical ideas of a causal connection between childhood and adult life. They also understood couple relationships as a re-education of now adult children. At the same time, they employed a family metaphor and confused fantasy and reality by using family figures such as Mother and Father, Brother and Sister to point out experiences of relative imbalance and asymmetry. It is in this chapter that Kjær discusses the influence of psychoanalysis on the understanding of and theories about a modern man-woman relationship. It is particularly the "psychosexual" fantasies about Mother and Father, Man and Woman that are discussed.

Chapter three is entitled "The Couple Laboratory", dealing with how the couples get involved in each other as a kind of interpersonal experiment, which neither of them at the moment knows the outcome of. Kjær discusses how the couples' reciprocal feelings were negotiated and balanced on the basis of an ideal of suitable emotional dosage. The relationship between a romantic and individualistic emotional ideal is also discussed, and Kjær argues that these ideals constituted the couples' standard of meaning when the quality of the relationship's emotional content was to be evaluated. Furthermore, Kjær applies a historical perspective in order to examine how the argument of love has acquired its cultural legitimacy and superiority over other types of argumentation, such as reason.

The fourth chapter, with the title

"Home", is about emotions and the potential of materiality as a cultural third. Here Kjær discusses the emotional rules of the home and the concept of the power to define. In an analysis of the cultural history of the sofa she uses its materiality analytically as a cultural third. This is supposed to clarify how cultural ideals for a man-woman relationship have changed over time. A key word in the chapter is "nostalgia", and to this concept the author links gender ideas about Man and Woman, and relational emotions such as absence and presence. She writes that she does this in order to study how nostalgia functions as a culturally recognizable emotional code, which verbalizes the experience of imbalance between outside and home, working life and leisure. Kjær also finds that the codes of nostalgia are suitable for illuminating how the relationship between fantasy and reality is experienced in everyday life. Kjær ends this chapter with a study of the couples' narratives, bringing in the bedroom and the bed as a cultural third in order to study how intimacy is expressed here in a style of confidential and loving realism.

The second-last chapter, number five, is entitled "Habits and routines" and deals with order and disorder in the home. Here Kjær discusses how household tasks and duties have been emotionalized, acquiring emotional meanings for a close relationship. She writes that the representation of the man's and the woman's relationship, as regards housework, often follows a war metaphor, and the home is expected to be the woman's domain. Both scientific studies of couples and the public debate about gender take an interest in and produce asymmetrical and dichotomous gender drama. Kjær believes that this gender drama is linked to the materiality of the home, but that the starting point for the production of drama and gender polarity is nevertheless a cultural ideal of harmony, the complementarity or equality of the couple.

As an example Kjær makes an analyt-

ical contrast between two rooms in the home: the kitchen and the bathroom. She does this to illustrate how actions are an extension of a room's already implicit and explicit cultural meaning, by which modern housekeeping is inspired. It is grand scientific ideals rather than a gendered order that is used to measure whether habits in the home are good or bad. At the end of this chapter Kjær discusses the division of labour and privileges in the home, and she claims that today's individualized ideals of self-realization decide who gets the privileges and chores in the home.

The last chapter, entitled "The Dance Floor", is about that great leisure pursuit of couples: dancing. The dance floor involves a situation that differs from other everyday situations, because the gender fantasies about the gender polarization and erotic asymmetry of Man and Woman are actually an ideal here. In everyday situations, on the other hand, equality is an ideal. Kjær discusses the concept of "gender fantasy" claiming that a specific culture circle offers a number of gender orders linked to situations, and men and women can alternate between them. When a man and woman dance it includes feelings of Masculinity and Femininity which are perceived as positive reinforcements of one's own body. Here Kjær draws a parallel to the sex-education brochures of the 1950s and discusses how the gender fantasies of dancing have their counterpart in a heterosexual metaphor produced in the psychoanalytical theory of "the psychosexual". At the end of the chapter she returns to the concept of nostalgia, which she defines this time as "result-nostalgia". Although couple dancing can be understood as a delimited ritual, it was perceived by the couples as an opportunity to change and balance the modern couple relationship, which they otherwise felt was female-dominated.

Sarah Holst Kjær writes that she has analysed all these topics "through a broad corpus of empirical material", and she has virtually vacuum-cleaned all the

material that has anything to do with couple relationships and love. She has then mixed all this together in a way that can be described by the French word "bricolage". But one may ask what is the point of bringing in dictionary definitions and sex-education brochures and old descriptions of sofas, or whether these diverse kinds of material help each other, and if all the material is of the same importance: has it been arranged in a hierarchy or is it all viewed on an equal footing?

In her presentation of the categories of material, Kjær writes that she has used "a selection of culture-historical material", but as far as I can see, she refers to only one example of each type of material in the actual analyses. She likewise writes that she has studied articles from Danish newspapers, and she mentions a huge number, 7,668, but it is difficult to see what she has used these thousands of articles for. Apart from this already existing material, Kjær herself has produced some source material. As she writes, she has conducted "a number of in-depth interviews" – with five couples, it turns out – and one of the couples is represented only by the woman. It may be debated whether such a small number is sufficient as a foundation for the analysis, but naturally it was not her intention to achieve a representative analysis.

In our days there are many forms of couple relationships, and in her dissertation Sarah Holst Kjær has chosen to concentrate on the group that she defines as "young-adult, heterosexual, urban, without/before children". It is thus exclusively young people from the cities that she has spoken to, but it would have been interesting to hear whether young people in the countryside could tell a different story. The interviewees are likewise rather similar as regards class, or so it seems, but it is conceivable that young people from other social classes would have a completely different attitude to couple relationships.

Also, Kjær has chosen to interview

couples who have not yet had children, and who therefore have time for self-reflection, but she gives no reason for this choice. It would have been interesting to hear whether parents of small children would express themselves in the same way about couple relationships, or if the need to look after children would mean that the sofa and the kitchen and everything else would take on a different function.

Sarah Holst Kjær quotes extracts from her field diary, which is lively and well written, and here she has captured observations from many other worlds than just young, urban couples. She goes to an evening school and visits elderly people who have lived a long life together. These examples from the field diary take us out of the almost claustrophobic world of the young couples, and they help to shed a different light on the theme of couples and man-woman relationships.

It could also have been interesting if Kjær had interviewed young, urban couples consisting of two men or two women to find out whether they had a different attitude to her concepts: the Couple, the Couple Relationship, and Man/Woman. For example, it is interesting that Kjær shows how the interviewed young couples themselves find it inappropriate that it is the woman who dominates the couple relationship, even if that is the reality in their everyday lives. That is also why they are so fond of going dancing, because that allows them to live out the classical gender roles with the man taking the lead and the woman letting herself be led.

This is just *so* traditional. Perhaps it could have been interesting to compare dancing among homosexuals. In 1998 PanDans was founded in Copenhagen, and according to their website they offer tuition in countless forms of dance. The club has held international homo-dance competitions, and in summer 2009 it arranged the world's biggest dance competition for gays and lesbians during the World Outgames in Copenhagen, a kind of Homo Olympic Games.

To put the problem in perspective it would be interesting to ask whether a dance school like this has such a traditional approach to gender as the young interviewed couples have. There is a reflection on this on the PanDans website: "Same-sex couple dance differs from ordinary couple dance in that you are not tied by your gender. In other words, you can both lead and be led in the dance, depending on what you like best. You thus have freedom of choice as regards whether you want to be the 'male' or 'female' partner or perhaps both, for same-sex couple dancing also gives opportunities for changing roles as you dance." With this outlook the terms "male" and "female" are constructions, or roles that one can enter and leave, and the terms are put in quotation marks, whereas Sarah Holst Kjær writes Man and Woman with initial capitals – in purely linguistic terms these are different approaches. PanDans has a more exploratory way of considering gender than the interviewed hetero-dances can manage, and perhaps interviews with homo-couples could have given an extra dimension to the material.

Sarah Holst Kjær has chosen, however, to restrict herself to a particular group of young people, and we learn a great deal about that group from this dissertation.

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Two Centuries of Danish Traditions

Else Marie Kofod: Traditionen tro? Hverdag og fest igennem 200 år. Folke-minde-samlingens kulturstudier 9. University of Southern Denmark Studies in History and Social Sciences vol. 371. Syddansk Universitetsforlag, Odense 2008. 492 pp. Ill.

Else Marie Kofod begins her huge book about Danish traditions, manners and customs by stating that we tend to ignore and

not notice rituals and traditions encapsulated in our own everyday life. The study of rituals can even be considered a useless task. As Kofod claims and proves, analysing human behaviour in its ritual form is by no means meaningless work.

The aim of Else Marie Kofod's book is to study changes in the Danish life cycle rituals during two hundred years, focusing on the time of revitalized rituals during the last few decades. Kofod originally planned to use archive material in her study and also to do new fieldwork. However, the archive material proved to give information only about the old rural society. Material about the bourgeois classes and urban society was scarce. This was a problem, as precisely these social classes are crucial when describing the processes of change in ritual life.

With the help of contacts in the field (priests, personnel at bridal fairs, local museums) Kofod managed to compile interview material that formed a complement to the archive sources in Dansk Folkemindesamling. Her material includes web questionnaires, an opinion poll conducted by telephone covering the whole country, and material collected from the media: newspaper clippings and television programmes dealing with traditions and feasts. Kofod states that all her different types of material are mediators and creators of social experience. All available field methods have been used when putting together a solid base for research.

The analyses of this rich material are systematically presented. Kofod has chosen to arrange each chapter chronologically, dealing first with the rural and the bourgeois societies in the nineteenth century, moving on to different social groups in the period 1870–1970 and finally describing the period 1970–2000. This arrangement seems a bit mechanical, but I can see the need of some sort of structure when describing such a diversity of themes in chronological order.

Kofod starts by defining the neces-

sary terminology, feasts, rituals and traditions versus everyday life. A study of traditions must start by examining the rituals that are the very core of traditions. Rituals are delimited in time and space and create a connection between the individual and the collective. Basic values can be expressed in a ritual; a ritual creates order and can disguise cultural disorder. It can also be regarded as a practice that sets boundaries when announcing social positions or strategies. Social class and living circumstances influence the festivities, and so do other factors such as leisure time, space, distance, communications, the media and working life.

In the first chapter Kofod discusses the manifestations of "prestige and status symbols", for example in meal habits in the old peasant society, how self-control and good taste were the slogans in bourgeois circles in the nineteenth century and how polishing one's manners and renewing entertainments marked the lifestyle in rural circles during the period 1870–1970. The lifestyle milieu of the period 1970–2000 finally threw away many status symbols older generations had painstakingly acquired, and in the late twentieth century the urge to create visibility and uniqueness set the tone.

The chapter dealing with "family and home" examines the importance of family authority and the significance of home. A whole chapter is dedicated to the communication system of giving gifts. Three large chapters of the book deal with wedding traditions, texts containing an enormous amount of information. In most societies the wedding has been considered the most important feast in the life circle.

We learn about the history of the bridal waltz, kissing rituals, and other superstitious practices intended to give the bridal couple luck. Many of these "traditions" are not as old as is generally thought. When speaking of traditions we tend to construct continuity with the old "genuine" customs, a continuity that often has no historic foundation. Kofod

also devotes a chapter to the mass media as a distributor of traditions.

Throughout the book I marvelled at the quantity of information and wondered about its origin. The source material is presented in the last part of the book, under the heading "Appendix". This exciting chapter that describes the laborious work of compiling the source material also gives a background to many of Kofod's editorial decisions. It could well have been placed at the beginning of the book.

An index would have been useful – but I can see that making one would have been a challenging task. Finally, I have to praise the excellent illustrations. The informative and detailed texts gave every picture an added value.

Else Marie Kofod concludes her book by stating that rituals and customs are both meaningful and useful. The same adjectives can be used when describing her solid study of everyday life and festivities through 200 years.

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Norwegian Scots

Michael A. Lange: The Norwegian Scots: An Anthropological Interpretation of Viking-Scottish Identity in the Orkney Islands. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter 2007. 311 pp. Ill. 3 maps, 10 photographs.

The central aim of this enlightening book, based on 11 months fieldwork in Stromness, Orkney, is how "the people of Orkney discursively construct and negotiate their cultural identity as Orcadians" (1) through informal narrative. As Lange underlines at the start, his (healthy) aim is to avoid the common approach whereby scholars work at "establishing their credibility in the field" by "girding themselves with the latest theory and marching off toward some slightly out-of-date theorist whom they

have designated as their patsy", waving "new titles and freshly coined terms at their enemy, dropping big names in the field to act as their reinforcements" (1). Instead he proposes "use various theories and theorists ... to help find my ways toward some understanding of how people in Orkney think of themselves and their island home" (1), concentrating first and foremost on the voices of the people themselves and the ways in which they view – and express – their identity/ies. This is an approach that many others worshipping at the altar of theory would do well to learn from.

Another refreshing feature of Lange's approach is his aim to cross disciplinary borders, and "combine the folkloric and the anthropological, to use folklore as an ethnographic window into interpreting culture" (8), working on bridging "the gap between the disciplines of folklore and anthropology, more broadly between the humanities and the social sciences" (14) and demonstrating "the usefulness of folkloric methodologies and ideas to anthropology and vice versa" (15). We thus find a broad range of approaches being effectively applied here, ranging from those of Richard Bauman (on performance), and Jack Niles (on narrative), to the work of Roger Abrahams (on nature of identity), Anthony P. Cohen (on semiotic anthropology), and Victor Turner (on the idea of *communitas*). This book thus effectively stands alongside some of Lange's models, such as those of Henry Glassie (on Ballymenone, Ireland: 1982 and 2006); Anthony Cohen (on Whalsay, Shetland: 1982 and 1987); Jane Nadel-Klein (on Ferryden, Scotland: 2003), and Sharon Macdonald (on Carnan, Scotland: 1997).

The book is divided into five key chapters. Chapter 1, "Background: Setting the Scene" (21–59), which starts with a description of daily life and "blether" (chat) in Stromness, provides a useful introduction to the area, and the history of Orkney, concentrating particularly on those aspects that are deemed important by those living in it. Emphasis

is naturally placed on the early period of archaeological remains from the Neolithic to Viking Ages (like Skara Brae, the Ring of Brodgar and Maes Howe), but note is also paid to Orkney's changing status as it came under the cultural dominance of Scotland (after 1468), and later under further foreign influence via the Hudson's Bay Company, its key strategic role in the two world wars, and most recently, its connection to North Sea Oil. Attention is also paid to the role played by emigration and immigration, to inner class differences and hierarchies, and the influence wielded by not only ancient place names, and medieval saga literature but also the modern development of tourism and Orkney brand-names.

Chapter 2, "Being Important, Being 'Biggy'" (62–110), on self image and self presentation in Orkney, starts by dealing with a phenomenon well known in other island communities in the North Atlantic (Iceland being a perfect example), in other words, a certain sense of self-pride and self assurance as a community (often based on history and the sometimes exaggerated achievements of local figures), which clashes with an inner feeling of international inferiority. As Lange underlines, this latter feature is particularly strong in Orkney where is complicated by a further sense that personal boasting (being "biggy") within the community is something that is frowned on. The chapter examines these feelings in some detail, noting among other things the effect that the fear of being "biggy" has, not only on getting the ever stoic Orcadians to express feelings and opinions in the media and in committee work, but also on the wary Orcadian view of outsiders who often find it easier to take an active role in such matters.

Chapter 3, "Orcadian Accent and Dialect" (111–151) is particularly valuable for those interested in the connections between language, dialect and regional identity, and the importance this has for a sense of individual identity and difference and a sense of "authentic" be-

longing (especially relevant in Norway, Iceland and the Faroes, as well as in Ireland, Wales and Scotland). With effective application to the ideas of thinkers like Bendix, Coupland and Ricoeur on the ideas of "authenticity" and the complex relationship between language and identity, Lange underlines how such questions are very much a matter of negotiation between speaker and (local) listener. He also underlines the degree to which the fragile survival and persistence of the Orcadian dialect in today's global society is seen by many Orcadians as a feature that connects them not only to their Scandinavian "heritage", but also a golden "Viking" past, and thus a sense historical and international importance. It also helps them differentiate themselves from mainland Scotland.

Chapter 4 on "Heritage" (153–211) is also essential reading for anyone interested in the question of the nature and role of heritage and its relationship to local identity. Drawing on the work of earlier scholars like McCrone, Morris and Kieley, Macdonald, and Hewison (interestingly enough no mention is made of the work of David Lowenthal), Lange examines the way intangible and tangible heritage have become closely intertwined for many Orcadians. Indeed, as he demonstrates, their sense of identity is closely related to the aforementioned idea of a romantic "golden" Nordic past, something objectified by the archaeological remains on the island which have attained particular symbolic value for both the people of Orkney and their visitors. At the same time, as Lange points out, heritage always involves a degree of choice and often construction, and often ignores other less glorious features of a society and its past: as one informant says, heritage is what people "want to keep" (194). As Lange shows, this can be seen as both a strength and a weakness, but nonetheless helps to underline the close connections between the Orkney people and the landscape they live in. It also gives them a sense of worth and responsibility, and once again

allows them to see themselves as being different from the rest of Scotland.

Chapter 5 on "Belonging: Orkney Identity, Orkney Voices" builds on the above discussion, now focusing on how the Orcadians themselves explain their modern sense of identity in their conversations with Lange and each other. As Lange effectively demonstrates here, identity is as much about underlining boundaries and borderlines as it is about creating a sense of belonging. It has multiple layers (ranging from the international to degrees of "importance" within a classroom or group of friends), and is not only a matter of personal feeling but a sense of how one is received by others. It is thus a matter of negotiation. Through analysis of various kinds of discourse, ranging from informal conversation to literary, tourist and commercial images, and even the influential appearance of an Orcadian on reality television, Lange shows how the Orkney sense of identity is both shared and individual, and connected to different things in different contexts: the landscape, the language, the history, and, as always, difference from Scotland. Like heritage, in each case it involves a degree of construction and choice, but is nonetheless daily legitimised by living facts which range from Old Norse manuscripts to archaeological remains or the family names on the gravestones in the local graveyards.

The book ends with a brief conclusion which returns to the questions raised at the start, underlining the complexity, importance and role of the concept of identity for any group of people.

In general, I have very few criticisms about the material contained within the book itself, apart from its mistaken assertion that the "Vikings" (if that is what they really were) "left Norway in the 10th and 11th centuries" (34), and the fact that in spite of its title, it actually has less to do with connections with the modern Norwegians than the Old Norse world. I would also question whether the Orcadians can be called "the" Nor-

wegian-Scots" (something that seems to ignore the equally Nordic Shetlanders, with whom a little more useful comparison could have been made, to outline yet another level of identity).

More disturbing is the work of the publishers, who could have shown more care and respect with their work. One notes, for example, a strange lack of standardisation with regard to the positioning of footnote markers (before and after punctuation: see 27, 119–120, 141, 154, 169, 201 and 242 cf. 55, 96, 108 and 118); the positioning of footnotes (see 118–119, where the footnote appears on the wrong page); and the division of footnote material across pages (see, for example, 31–32, 119–120, and 169–170, cf. 231). One also notes an odd imbalance between the print setting of facing pages, and worst of all (at least in the example I received), the fact that page 310 of the index was missing. In its place were two (differing) versions of page 311.

In spite of the above, this well-researched and sensibly discussed book, which shows respect for the individual voices of the people of Orkney, makes for a valuable and welcome addition to earlier studies on local identity, heritage, and the intimate connections between personal narrative and landscape. It should gain a central place among other works dealing with the unique culture and character of the Scottish and North Atlantic Islands.

Terry Gunnell
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Cultural Heritage in Use in Åland

Yrsa Lindqvist (ed.): Tradition och turism på Åland. Att använda kulturarven. Meddelanden från Folkkultursarkivet 21. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 711, Helsingfors 2008. 240 pp. Ill.

Some years ago, researchers at the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland

(SLS) decided to organize a project to gather research material concerning the use of cultural heritage in Åland. They carried out the project in 2005. In 2008 they published the book *Tradition och turism på Åland* (Tradition and Tourism in Åland), presenting the material gathered during the project and some of the viewpoints raised by participants in the project.

Åland is an autonomous province consisting of a group of islands in south-western Finland. It lies in the Baltic Sea between the archipelago areas of Sweden outside the capital city of Stockholm, and of Finland outside the town of Turku. It is a monolingual, Swedish-speaking area, which contrasts with other parts of Finland, where both Finnish and Swedish are official languages. Tourism is a major part of the economy of Åland.

The main purpose of the project in Åland was to gather material about a relevant topic of present-day life on these islands, and to archive it for later research in the Archives of Folk Culture at the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS). Researchers at the SLS took into consideration different forms of material culture, cultural heritage sites and monuments, along with the oral traditions connected to them. They decided to leave one part of the material culture, food, out of the project. Mostly the material is based on fieldwork in Åland conducted in the summer of 2005, but it also consists in part of older material, for instance tourist brochures and different published or written material from tourism organizations in Åland from past decades. To make this collection of material known, researchers decided to publish a book with articles on each category of material in the collection. This will help later researchers access the collection, while also providing different kinds of interpretations that lend background and context to the collection.

The book is arranged in part chronologically. Mikael Korhonen begins the book with an article about Åland as a

tourist destination from the nineteenth century to the present. He has as his research material archives from the Tourist Association in Åland as well as newspapers and tourist brochures from past decades. We see clearly how tourism in these islands has grown, and how the organization and marketing of tourism has developed over time.

Carola Ekrem presents a form of religious cultural heritage, partly with the help of older material. This consists of a series of reports published in 1871 in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, a Swedish-language newspaper in Finland. In the reports Emil Nervander, one of the people behind a newly founded association called the Finnish Antiquarian Society, introduced readers of the newspaper to the medieval churches of Åland. It is interesting to compare the meanings and values presented by Nervander in 1871 with those of the present time. In her second article, Ekrem leads readers in a thoughtful reflection on these same churches in 2005. It is obvious that values and meanings have changed. In a third article Ekrem also presents an old oral tradition concerning churches in Åland. These articles form a satisfying whole, and with their help it is possible to understand churches from many different points of view and in different contexts and times.

Shipping is and has been a very important livelihood in Åland. Therefore, the maritime cultural heritage represents a strong field of activities in these islands today. Marika Rosenström writes about maritime cultural heritage in the form in which it is shown to modern-day tourists. She presents in depth the Åland Maritime Museum, the museum ship *Pommern*, replicas of different old ships and associations in maritime history. Readers will become familiar with enthusiasts in these associations, but they will also notice that the younger people are not as interested in maritime history as the older generations.

The article by Meta Sahlström also discusses maritime cultural heritage, in

particular a very important piece of the maritime cultural environment just off the coast at the town of Mariehamn, which is on the main island. It is a lonely pilot station on a small islet that pilots abandoned several decades ago. Because of the importance of this small islet in front of the town, local people have safeguarded it as a cultural heritage site. Maintained very much as it was during the time when the pilot station was in original use, it is visited by local people and tourists alike.

The book's editor, Yrsa Lindqvist, has contributed an article on handicrafts as symbolic products representing local traditions and continuity. She shows that local handicraft organisations had developed products decades ago that used elements from past times in contemporary products. The same principles are also important today in handicraft products in Åland. Craftsman search for elements both from nature and from past everyday culture and use them as visual motifs, forms or functions in their design products.

Monica Ståhls-Hindsberg presents small local museums, which are upheld by local enthusiasts, not by professional museum personnel. In these activities as well, the lack of young people is noticeable. Anne Bergman takes readers on guided tours of Åland, visiting churches, museums and other sites. In the world of museums, Åland is presented as possessing a homogeneous and generalized past with certain important elements, such as culture, shipping and fishing existing in combination with farmhouses.

All of the book's articles analyse the material in its own context. The writers tell us how authorities, entrepreneurs and local enthusiasts and activists present specific parts of Åland's cultural heritage to tourists. They have interviewed those local people who produce different cultural heritage products or services for tourists. Other local people are not present in the book. Also, tourists as such are not part of the book's focus. In further research, it would be

very interesting to analyse side-by-side different aspects of cultural heritage: the view of the producers of cultural heritage as well as the views of tourists, ordinary local people, local activists and cultural heritage enthusiasts, young people, local authorities, etc. The material gathered for the Archive of Folk Culture provides a good opportunity for further research. It should be possible to find missing points of view from other sources. Another strength of the book is the broad time period it offers to the reader.

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Contemporary Folk Art

Eva Londos (ed.): Rondellhundar och schablonspindlar. Folkkonst i tiden. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm i samarbete med Jönköpings läns museum 2009. 192 pp. Ill.

The title arouses one's curiosity, and the picture on the front cover showing a policewoman and a roundabout dog no less so, particularly when it is a report from a scholarly seminar, the eighth seminar on folk art. Folk art is an old ethnological topic, and it is interesting that it is subjected to discussion and problematization here in both contemporary and historical dimensions. The seminar had three main themes: narrative in folk art, illegal creativity in the public space, and established artists drawing inspiration from folk art.

The publication begins with theoretical papers in which the term itself and its present-day use are discussed. Barbro Klein regards "folk art" as a heuristic term, not least in relation to handicraft and art. The discussion is then carried on to illegal folk art in the urban space, and with reference to American graffiti. Here one may wonder that no parallels are drawn to Torkild Hinrichsen's fieldwork and museum exhibition about

graffiti in Hamburg, where the graffiti is more comparable to a Nordic situation than the American graffiti is.

There are countless definitions of folk art, and Bo Lönnqvist makes an interesting systematization and categorization of older ethnological definitions: (1) rural handicraft or peasant art; (2) hierarchically subordinate, for example, an occupational category; (3) undatable and styleless folk art; and (4) folk art defined by cartographic method. Another form of analysis is anthropological, in which the study of "ethno-art" is central, and folk art is interpreted as non-material culture or as a communication process. Bo Lönnqvist shows how different and often contradictory the many definitions have been. In short: the term folk art is anything but unambiguous, and it is used in historical and contemporary studies and in exhibitions.

Sonja Berlin tells us that the term "traditional art" is used in Norway out of a desire to assemble forms of art that are handed down, both music and folk art, in a single concept. "Traditional art" is also preferred because the word *folk* can have negative connotations. It would have been interesting if parallels had been drawn to other countries; in Hungary, for example, music, dance, and material culture are analysed in a similar way. On the other hand, it would be much more difficult to do this in Denmark, where we do not have the same musical traditions.

Nils-Arvid Bringéus analyses southern Swedish wall hangings and hand-coloured woodcuts from a narrative point of view. The pre-industrial pictorial world was made for a population of non-readers, and here biblical stories from the Old and the New Testament were translated into pictorial language.

The next four papers are studies of examples of narrative folk art, dealing with paintings of scenes from folklife, wood carving, the large patchwork rug made by the people of Botkyrka, and newly-made historical costumes.

The next papers deal with modern-day illegal creativity, and a Danish reader feels envious of the Swedish creativity and the folk protest with the home-made dog sculptures placed in Swedish roundabouts, and Lars Vilks's garden shed in Jönköping. Then there is an article about unauthorized graffiti. All three are temporary phenomena that change quickly over time, which is totally in keeping with the *Zeitgeist*. At least as exciting is the artist Peter Johansson, whose work is often based on modern, everyday folk art! If only we had such artists in Denmark!

Johan Knutsson shows that, while traditional folk art disappeared at the end of the nineteenth century, it was a source of inspiration for artists at the time. This was especially true for textile art, and Berit Eldvik tells of four such textile artists.

Johanna Rosenqvist discusses the differences between folk artists and practitioners of handicraft and arrives at the conclusion that folk artists are to a high degree eccentric men, whereas handicraft practitioners are mostly women working with textiles. The same could be said, by and large, about Denmark.

Borghild Håkansson uses the term "other art", but could in my opinion just as well have spoken about folk art. She says that "other art" is especially created in the countryside depending on factors such as a good place, the availability of material, and craft skill – the same applies in Denmark.

Finally, the last two papers show that such different things as gardens and PC cabinets are also places where folk art is practised.

Generally speaking, the most interesting papers are the discussions of the usefulness of the term "folk art" in the present day and those dealing with contemporary phenomena, not least because pre-industrial folk art has been the subject of so many analyses in the past. One may wonder, however, why not one of the authors seems to know of the discussions in Germany about the present-day

use of the term, for instance in the publications of Heinrich Mehl.

All in all, the papers show a very wide spread, with theoretical discussions, ethnological studies of folk art, and descriptions of the work of present-day folk artists. This makes the book uneven, but it also shows that the term is operational for both historical and contemporary material and simultaneously that it is impossible to provide an unambiguous definition of folk art. And it shows that folk art is alive and well!

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Mother's Secret

Karin Lützen: Mors hemmelighed. På sporet af en jødisk indvandrerhistorie. Gyldendal, Copenhagen 2009. 422 pp. Ill.

Dr Karin Lützen, senior lecturer at the University Centre of Roskilde, Denmark, has written a biography of her French mother and herself called "Mother's Secret". In reality, this book is much more than a biography, given that a biography is mostly a description of a person's life without any special scholarly problems to deal with and often without any wider historical perspective than those influencing the individuals concerned.

This book is grounded in the fact that, after her mother's death in 1998, the author found out that in her mother's life there was quite an important circumstance of which nobody in her family knew anything – neither she herself, nor her siblings, and perhaps not even their father, her Danish husband. By chance after the funeral, one of her mother's friends revealed that she was a Jew. Karin's first reaction was not to bother, but after a while and with some other hints from here and there, now that her eyes were opened,

she realized that all her own life her mother had kept secret that she had a Jewish background and, moreover, that she had a large family. When Karin and her siblings were growing up, they only knew about their grandmother and grandfather in France.

Karin Lützen was perhaps influenced by Alex Haley's book *Roots* from 1976 when she decided to publish her findings about her mother's family. Mostly, though, her interest in it stems from sheer curiosity. Who was her own mother? Why had she kept her background so effectively concealed? Why would a mother not be frank with her children and perhaps not even with her husband? Questions like these lead the reader through the book.

Certainly, these are delicate questions. Why should a mother not be allowed to keep her secrets just like any other human being? Consequently, the author deals with ethical matters. Lützen conducts her work both in archives and in society, visiting her newly found relatives. Generally, she does not conceal any names. Often she also mentions the people's profession, and even their domicile. There are only a few exceptions to this principle. She gives her reader insight into both flattering and less flattering facts about her family. It is important to report this, for one of the reasons why her mother kept her background secret might be shame. The author also reflects on her own emotions and her own role as a researcher, intruding into people's sitting rooms with impertinent questions about things long forgotten or hidden. She even tells her reader about circumstances when she was not welcome, when her relatives would have preferred to escape her curiosity. All in all, this book is very much a demonstration of reflective cultural research. In a way it is not her mother but Karin Lützen herself who is the protagonist of this book.

At the end of the nineteenth century the father of Karin Lützen's grandfa-

ther and his family emigrated from Romania to Paris. There he raised his children, including some new ones born in France, through his work as a tailor. In this part of the book we read about the Eastern Jewish way of life in the Balkan countries. We are also given a historical exposé of the emigration from there to France. Mostly it was an individual who decided to move and started some kind of life in the new country, after which he enticed other family members to join him. The process very much resembles the emigration from other countries to the USA or South Africa, or indeed to the Nordic countries today.

Her family stayed in Montmartre together with other Jews with a similar background. Lützen introduces her reader to the concept of *shtetl* and she demonstrates how life in the Eastern European villages was “translated” and adapted to Paris in a Montmartre version. She draws parallels to corresponding phenomena in American cities, such as, above all, New York. In this way her very local and detailed investigation of Jewish life among Balkan people a century ago becomes relevant in other geographies and in other times as well. People with the same occupation tended to stick together as they do today, people from the same *shtetl* settled together along the same streets in Montmartre and people helped each other through all phases of life, even into death. And still today, old Jews from those parts of Paris get together in order to honour their dead relatives.

The time of the Second World War receives a great deal of attention. It turned out that Karin Lützen had a great number of relatives who were deported and killed during the war. This was quite a surprise to her. In her reflective way she also describes what a joy it was for her to learn this, but how sorry she was because of their fate. She mirrors her relatives’ individual and personal histories against the background of European

political history in the 1930s and 1940s. Readers who perhaps have no personal experience of the events of that time may grasp the deep undertone of anxiety, anger and despair that were everyday experiences for so many people in Europe at that time.

“Mother’s Secret” pays homage to genealogy, that very popular occupation. The book shows that genealogical studies are intriguing and exciting, but also filled with serious ethical problems that have to be resolved with delicacy, at least before publishing the outcome. It is also a book about having a solid identity, about losing it, about getting a new identity and about negotiating and adjusting to that new one. Karin Lützen is careful and honest in formulating her own opinion and position in matters of the kind. Any reader with a corresponding case in his or her family will recognize many of the characteristics of having parents from foreign countries.

In every family there is a history, well known to everybody. However, in every family there are also secrets. Many people may know about them, but they keep quiet for various reasons. One day there is nobody left to tell about them. I think that many people who have reached a certain age will have come across stories about their parents or their parents’ parents which they did not know as children, stories that are not only nice. This, I think, is a problem that should be considered by folklorists dealing with personal memories, biographical folklore and archived personal anecdotes. What do we gain by publishing stories about dead people, stories that perhaps are very funny, but in the long run might have offended the living person? Being a folklorist, Karin Lützen points out how important it is to remember that there is no such thing as a single true family history, but a lot of disparate family stories, put together in a new, meaningful combination by each member at the very moment when he or she needs it. Family stories are delicate ma-

terial. Family stories need careful and respectful investigators.

Why did Karin Lützen's mother hide her background? I will not reveal the reason here. Read the book, it is as exciting as a detective story and as informative as a scholarly work.

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European Feuds

Jepppe Büchert Netterstrøm & Bjørn Poulsen (eds.): Feud in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Århus University Press, Århus 2007. 206 pp. Ill.

Feuds and feuding are recurrent elements in social interaction in medieval and early modern Europe, as well as in many other cultures worldwide. This book presents recent trends in scholarship on this fascinating subject, featuring many of the leading scholars in the field as contributors. It opens with an introductory essay by Jepppe Büchert Netterstrøm, who gives a very thorough and valuable account of the history of research on feud in various European countries, tracing the evolution of scholarship from its roots in an anti-ethnocentric, mostly Anglo-Saxon anthropology and an antimodernist trend in German legal history to contemporary concern with narrative, discourse and representation. He also attempts to solve the vexed question of how to define feud by analysing previous contributions to this debate.

However, two of the other authors in this volume, Helgi Thorláksson and Jesse L. Byock, discuss the latter issue as well, and sometimes the same arguments are rehearsed twice or even thrice in these three consecutive articles. We feel that – although the insistence with which authors return to this question no doubt attests to a deeply felt need to clarify this issue – the structure of the book would have been

better if Büchert Netterstrøm had restricted his own relation of this problem to a minimum.

Both Thorláksson and Byock work with Icelandic material. Thorláksson raises two interesting points: when exactly did a feud begin and was bloodshed necessarily part and parcel of feuding? According to the author, a feud had begun after three acts of violence consisting of injury-revenge-revenge, and the shedding of human blood was no prerequisite for a feud, at least in the initial stages. Byock highlights the rather neglected role of women in feuds, stressing their function as peacemakers in particular, as the more spectacular cases of women goading their menfolk to bloody vengeance hitherto have received more scholarly attention.

A feud between two prominent families in fourteenth-century Marseilles is the subject of Daniel Lord Smail's well-written article. These families lived in separate areas of the city, along streets named after them. When they and their supporters were brought to trial after a particularly serious clash involving hundreds of people in 1351, these streets proved to be the centre of a mental geography not entirely borne out by fact. The supporters of the respective factions were mentally associated with the neighbourhoods of these families, but an examination of the actual distribution of the residences of supporters demonstrates that both factions were represented in all parts of the city, even in the primary territory of the enemy. This feud was also so dominant in the life of the city that it tended to absorb minor ones, as the adversaries in other conflicts sought the protection of these families.

Trevor Dean discusses the narrative construction of medieval Italian accounts of vendetta. He points to a common strategy of stressing the innocence of the victim and the culpability of the attacker, and the identification of inappropriate targets of revenge attacks,

such as children, in the stories. These often articulated a message based on a shared morality, and could thus be said to function as *exempla*. The narratives also tended to marginalise women's roles in feuds.

The morals of noble feuding in late medieval Germany constitute the topic of Hillay Zmora's interesting contribution. He argues that skill in pursuing a feud, and the very willingness to do so, was the mark of a man of honour among the nobility, and that nobles projected themselves as trustworthy individuals by engaging in feuds. Feuds took their toll in many respects, and a man willing to risk both material and human losses to protect his honour was accordingly perceived as a useful ally, suitable marriage partner and loyal servitor. Conversely, a man failing to exact revenge when he ought to could lose power and influence among his peers.

Christine Reinle discusses an aspect of feuding that was long regarded as non-existent, namely peasants' feuds, in fourteenth to fifteenth-century Bavaria. She sets out to investigate whether this used to be a customary right for all, to be prohibited by law somewhat earlier for commoners than for the nobility, or whether it had always been a crime, pure and simple. Examining the evidence of a number of administrative and legal sources, Reinle offers the tentative conclusion that peasants' feuds were indeed a customary right, as they were waged to defend rights, often garnered the support of the local community, and attracted the attention of mediators, which implies that feuds were an integral part of the social fabric.

Jeppe Büchert Netterstrøm gives an account of the scholarship on feuds in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Denmark, focusing on feuding among nobles and commoners respectively. Noble feuds were usually waged in an effort to seize control of local resources or to shift the power balance between local rivals, yet they were also enmeshed in state politics to some extent.

The use of violence was generally restrained in noble feuds, and feuding did not exclude litigation; appeals to the court seem to have been used concurrently with feuds in the pursuit of justice. Feuds were also socially levelled: noblemen feuded with noblemen and peasants with peasants. However, as the protectors of their peasants, noblemen defended them in their feuds with other peasants, and sometimes peasants gave assistance to their lord in his feud with another nobleman.

In the final essay, Christopher Boehm analyses feuding from an evolutionary point of view. Feuds tend to be rife in patrilocal societies in which the internal bonding of the kin group is strong and interaction with other groups limited. Notwithstanding, the cultural rules for exacting revenge for the killing of a member of the kin group can be quite elaborate, and juggle the demands of emotionally satisfactory vengeance with strategic considerations promoting the social position of the group. Boehm then turns to an examination of traits in human ancestry relevant to feuding, such as the tendency to fight for domination as well as to engage in peacemaking, the quasi-territorial in-group/out-group distinction resulting in distrust toward members of other groups, and the ability to situate oneself in a social context and understand social rules.

Taken as a whole, this book can be said to address three key themes in research on feuds: the definition of feud, the motivations behind feuding, and the functions of feud in social life. However, we miss a final summary and discussion of the results achieved; as it is, the broader conclusions to be drawn from the essays are left unmentioned, and the introductory article does not quite make up for this loss.

Camilla Asplund Ingemark &
Dominic Ingemark
Lund, Sweden

Witchcraft and Love Magic

Ebbe Schön: Häxkonster och kärleksknep. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2008. 333 pp. Ill.

Ebbe Schön has been head of the folklore collection of the Nordiska Museet for over 20 years, and therefore has a broad knowledge of oral tradition, both folk belief and folk poetry. He has published some thirty popular books for children and adults, based on the folklore in the archive. He writes with commitment in an interesting form geared to a large audience.

According to the preface, this book is based on two previous works by the same author, *Häxor och trolldom* (Witches and Magic) and *Älskogens magi* (Love Magic), but now expanded here. The combination of these two topics is not entirely successful. Love magic has some connection to the witch tradition, but there are many other topics in the field of folk belief that could just as well have been included.

The first and largest part of the book deals with witches and witchcraft. It opens with a chapter about witch trials and the background in theology and folk belief. This chapter would have benefited from more detail. As it is, it just paints a rather vague backdrop. The strongest chapters in the book are those dealing with the three central elements in the witch trials: the apostasy (the pact with Satan), the witches' sabbath, and malicious magic. In these chapters Schön retells and cites both court records and material in the folklore archive. This evidence has a wide span, from the start of the trials at the end of the sixteenth century to the records of tradition from the early twentieth century. It comprises transcripts of trials, orally transmitted legends, statements about folk belief, and even folktales. The picture of the witches' sabbath, for instance, is therefore rich in detail, but with so many different sources it becomes hard to see how representative it is. Here he could well have given us a

little more background in the form of context and explanations. When the wealth of detail is so great and the material so diverse, there is a risk that it can give the impression of a cabinet of curiosities.

In popular books it is not normal to provide references, but in a book like this, which has its strength in the amount of source material, I would have appreciated being able to track down the sources.

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Identity Work among Young Sámi

Christina Åhrén: Är jag en riktig same? En etnologisk studie av unga samers identitetsarbete. Umeå, Institutionen för kultur och medievetskap, Umeå Universitet 2008. 199 pp. English summary. Diss.

Christina Åhrén has written an interesting dissertation about young Swedish Sámi and their identity. She asks questions such as: who is a Sámi, what is Sáminess, how do individuals feel as Sámi, and how do they show it? Åhrén herself is part of Sámi culture, she grew up among reindeer-herding Sámi, and is a member of a Sámi village. She was nevertheless surprised that there were such serious antagonisms within the Sámi community. Like many other ethnic minorities, the Sámi live in the tension between the external pressure of the greater society and internal oppositions. Even though Sámi culture may seem outwardly homogeneous, there are large cultural differences with the Sámi community.

The dissertation is fascinating reading: we meet the informants in a period of life when they face a decisive choice. The text flows well, not interrupted by tables or illustrations, which makes it a good reading experience. The dissertation can almost be read like a collection

of short stories, in which the author presents the different informants' stories and living conditions, in terse and restrained style. The story of Anders – the reindeer herder who chose for a period to break with his family and his life with reindeer to follow his homosexual orientation, but finally returned to the family and the herding and got engaged – can almost be read as a North Swedish parallel to E. Annie Proulx's novel *Brokeback Mountain*.

Identity, ethnicity, stigma, and ethnocentrism are central concepts in the dissertation. Åhrén has a constructivist view of identity, culture, and ethnicity, considering the relational and dynamic use of the concepts. Identity is created in interaction with others, and is affected by prevailing cultural norms and stances. Identity is not given once and for all, but must be constructed all the time through an ongoing reflexive process. Åhrén uses the term *identitetsarbete* (identity work); in contrast to identity development, identity work is a conscious choice.

Åhrén has interviewed 26 informants, some of them over a time span of six years. She divides the informants into three groups: reindeer-herding Sámi (who belong to a Sámi village), hunting and fishing Sámi (who live as Sámi but have no formal connection to a Sámi village), and those who have grown up outside the Sámi community but are trying to find their way back to their Sámi identity. Åhrén gives a good account of her Sámi background and the advantages and disadvantages it can entail in a study like this. She also points out that this does not automatically mean that she has an insider's perspective; that would mean ignoring the heterogeneity of the Sámi community in the form of linguistic and other cultural differences. However, she does have problems with group 2, the hunting and fishing Sámi, because of her background as a reindeer-herding Sámi; they perceive her primarily as belonging to that group and not as an ethnologist.

It was only in group 1, the reindeer-herding Sámi, that Åhrén was able to do fieldwork, since it proved to be virtually impossible to follow the informants in their day-to-day life when they lived in a majority setting. Perhaps this division of the analysis is somewhat problematic, in the light of her statement that: "what people do and say when they follow their everyday routine is the actions that make their culture visible" (p. 29). Moreover, she uses a model of her own to analyse the reindeer-herding Sámi, because they sometimes make choices that cannot be understood in terms of a capitalist model. Here she uses the theory and model of life-modes, as developed by Åsa Nordin. The fact that the informants are divided into two groups – those who can be analysed from the life-mode perspective and the others – can contribute to reinforcing the differences between the groups. In view of the problem studied in the dissertation, Åhrén naturally emphasizes choices that are specifically connected to Sámi culture. Personally, I find that this sometimes makes the informants seem slightly one-dimensional, and that their choice is guided and determined at the outset (the choice between being and not being a Sámi).

Åhrén experienced what she describes as a brutal awakening in the very first interview she conducted. The informant and the interviewer differed in their perception of what was important knowledge about the Sámi. The topic that led to the schism was the laws that regulate reindeer grazing and who has the rights to it. This is one of the main points in the dissertation. The law on reindeer herding in Sweden differentiates the Sámi. Just a few people of Sámi descent are members of a so-called Sámi village. According to the law, only they are entitled to land and water associated with reindeer herding. This also led Åhrén to an understanding that today's identity work must be viewed in a historical context. The first law on reindeer grazing from 1887 constructed Sámi vil-

lages which have collective rights to an area. This law made no attempt to define what it means to be a Sámi; that was considered unproblematic. The law did not recognize that there are many different types of Sámi, such as mountain Sámi, forest Sámi, fishing Sámi, settler Sámi, etc. The law chiefly promoted the reindeer herding of the mountain Sámi, and thus also their culture. A Sámi village today is something into which one is born or marries. The results of this law and its later revisions affect the way in which today's young Sámi use their ethnicity. Many find a sense of community in being outside a Sámi village; for instance, there is a separate party for the hunting and fishing Sámi, and the informants in group 2 have this sense of being outsiders as a foundation of their identity.

A Sámi village consists of many households, which in turn are divided into different *sijte* groups. A *sijte* is a collective consisting of several households, each with its own reindeer business, but they perform much of the associated work together. One must be loyal to the *sijte* if the reindeer herding is to function, but one can also switch to a different *sijte* or form new alliances. There is competition, envy, and power struggles between the different *sijte* in a Sámi village. The Sámi village is not an idea that came from the Sámi themselves either, but an organization imposed on them from above. The informants who have had to leave their *sijte* because of disagreements are unwilling to talk about that. They are still loyal to the family, the kin, and the *sijte*. The informants in the reindeer-herding life-mode live a dual existence: reindeer herding in a greater late-modern society. Åhrén sees the identity work most clearly among the informants who break away, for example Anders: freedom of choice is set up against loyalty and tradition.

The informants in group 3, those who want to get back to their Sámi background, have ancestors who tried to be-

come a part of Swedish society and concealed their Sámi background from the family and people around them. Several of their descendants are now searching for their Sámi roots and a Sámi identity. Åhrén views this in the light of ethnic mobilization and a changed ideological climate in universities in the 1970s. One result of this was a recodification of symbols such as *joik* song and Sámi dress, which were given new and positive connotations. The stigma and shame of being a Sámi faded. The informants in this group are also on the way over into something else, moving from the greater society to the Sámi community. In modernity, identity becomes more mobile, reflexive, and innovative. Not only can one choose, one must choose. A reaction to this can be to seek security and stability within an ethnic community. Åhrén regards ethnic identity as consisting of two parts. One part is how one views oneself, the other is how one acts together in a group, in opposition to other groups. The informants in group 3 feel a split between these two parts of their ethnic identity. They can define themselves as Sámi, but they do not have the cultural competence needed to be a part of a greater Sámi community; they feel outside. And from the other side: those who are on the inside often feel bitterness towards families that formerly toned down their Sámi origin. They are given negative nicknames such as "new Sámi" and "pavement Sámi".

According to Åhrén, the central thing in this study is that the young Sámi misunderstand each other. This is due to differences in upbringing and background, and different ideas about identity and various legal rights. Reindeer-herding Sámi have the highest status; the reindeer is everything according to an ethnocentric Sámi scale of value. But the perfect Sámi does not exist; there is a constant struggle about the value and meaning of the cultural symbols. The greatest difference is between the informants in groups 1 and 3. They must be understood in terms of two different theoretic-

cal outlooks: life-mode theories and theories about identity in a late-modern world. It is only in the latter that it is acceptable to test identities.

One reason why ethnocentrism has arisen and is maintained may be that the informants are so different that, when they live out their Sámi identity it can be perceived as a threat to other Sámis' symbolic boundaries. Another reason can be found in Sámi history. The informants in group 3 are "punished" for their ancestors' disloyalty and betrayal, as group 1 carries on the stigma.

Sámi identity today is tricky, so difficult for some people that they cannot cope; the dissertation is dedicated to those who have taken their own lives. Sámi identity work does not just take place on the personal level, but also in the public space – I am thinking especially of Sámi museums. In connection with the political struggle of the Sámi in the 1970s, Åhrén says that the stigma was removed with the aid of idioms, that is, signs charged with or ascribed with ethnic meaning, in order to organize social life. Special idioms are selected and given new meaning. The exhibitions at the Sámi museums played an important role in this work, but these exhibitions have been criticized for using the same objects and methods of presentation as the old ethnographic exhibitions about

the Sámi, and that they thus reproduced old ethnographic stereotypes about themselves. Against this critique it has been argued that the Sámi-controlled museums had completely different motives for displaying these objects in the exhibitions. They were used partly to show what it means to be Sámi, and to strengthen Sámi identity and self-esteem. According to Åhrén, Sámi ethnocentrism is connected to a scale of values which states that whatever is closest to the origin has the greatest prestige. But who decides what is close to the origin? This struggle about the value and content of cultural symbols is a particular challenge for the Sámi museums. One characteristic of museums is that they express prestige. The reindeer-herding culture is also the central aspect at Sámi museums. This means that many Sámi can feel left out. Outwardly the Sámi act like a homogeneous group. But inwardly they know that they are an extremely heterogeneous group. Outwardly they can appear like a rather static culture, but inwardly the Sámi culture is dynamic and flexible. The Sámi museums have a special challenge in presenting a dynamic Sámi identity in the exhibitions.

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