
ANN-CHARLOTTE PALMGREN

BUDKAVLEN 2005

special issue

This special issue of *Budkavlen* in English consists of articles that have been published in Swedish earlier in this journal. The articles fall into three themes, very different but of current interest in the fields of ethnology and folkloristics at Åbo Akademi University. The themes are *urbanity*, *narration* and *masculinity*. The issue begins with eight interesting articles on these subjects, and finishes with two thorough presentations of folkloristics and ethnology at Åbo Akademi.

The theme of urbanity starts with an article written by Beate Binder. Binder writes about the re-structuring of the city's landscape using the German capital Berlin as an example. In her discussion about the re-structuring of the city's landscape, Binder takes two public events as starting points in order to explore the symbolic re-structuring of the city over recent years. The events cited are the day of German unification and the opening of the Mex-Artes Festival. In order to understand the cultural logic underlying this symbolic re-structuring of the city and its landscape, Binder proposes to concentrate not only on discourses concerned with old and new architectures and the (re-) naming of streets and places, monuments and commemoration sites, but to take into account the special quality of cultural performances and their "contribution" to the symbolic structure of a city's landscape as well.

Binder's article is followed by one from Anna-Maria Åström. In her article Åström analyses the structures and identity of the Finnish capital Helsingfors, writing about the capital as symbol and meaning, and as a constructed and lived space. The article maintains the notion that the city of Helsingfors does not possess a negative identity, does not belong to either east or west, but rather is a point of integration where certain bridge-building functions and national elements combine to create the basis for a positive identity. One basis for a positive identity can be found in the residents' own accounts of their city, in which the city's different elements, buildings and suburbs, as well as symbols for social situations, nature, climate and daily life are used for the appropriation of space. The identity of the urban residents is based upon their own experiences of the city.

The third article connected to urbanity is Nils Storå's article about fish fairs in Finland. This article discusses the history of fish fairs in Finland, and especially in the city of Åbo as an urban environment. In his article Storå asks the following questions: What attracts people to the fairs? Who are the visitors? What is the significance of the fish fairs today? In order to illuminate these questions a review of the concept of the fair is needed, and Storå gives a presentation of the fish fair from the 19th century to 1997 – a year in which a

total of 47 fish fairs were organised in Finland. Storå points out that during the long history of fairs, their nature has varied. Fish fairs are held both in towns and in the countryside, mostly on the coast, but also inland. The fairs mostly take place on market squares and in harbours, or along the banks of a river, where goods can be sold directly from boats. Storå stresses that the fair concept can be explored in terms of its financial, social and commercial, as well as carnival elements.

The theme of narration is the subject of two of the articles included in this volume. In her article, Lena Marander-Eklund discusses why it is important to be able to tell stories, and what significance narratives have for each individual. Marander-Eklund attempts to answer these questions using the three principal functions which Albrecht Lehmann (1978) distinguishes in personal experience narratives. She has taken her examples from her research on stories of childbirth (Marander-Eklund, 2000). Marander-Eklund further asks: Why are narratives an important form of communication – so important that they are used in drama-inspired pedagogy in some of today's schools? This is done with the help of the fable beast Baltus, which is a visual characterization of the basic structure of a story. It is used to teach the components which comprise a narrative – how one recounts a message in the form of a story.

The other article on narration is written by Nicklas Hägen. This article analyzes the report of soccer articles about the team FF Jaro in the Finno-Swedish regional newspaper, Jakobstads Tidning. The basis used for the analysis is William Labov's theory about a complete narrative comprising six elements (abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result or resolution and coda), but focussing on the perspective of the reports. The objective is to obtain an understanding of what makes soccer newsworthy by looking

at how it is reported, and at the same time, even if more indirectly, by looking at how the reporting role of the mass media is dealt with. In reporting on soccer, the articles assume a certain position of expertise and, paradoxically enough, both "objectivity" and solidarity with the team. Soccer is spoken of in terms of its own time, space and actors: expectations, solidarity, conflicts, ideas about fairness and feelings of joy or disappointment are expressed.

A third theme, that of masculinity, is represented in three articles. Ann-Charlotte Palmgren's study is primarily focused on the male ideals in the new men's magazines *Slitz* and *MG* that began to be published in Finland in the middle of the 1990s. Palmgren looks at what male ideals the readers were being encouraged to aspire to and she wonders if these men's magazines are entering into a search for the new man. She therefore analyzed the men's magazines and interviewed readers and non-readers. Even if the intended group of readers differ between the two magazines, the ideal man is relatively stereotypical. He is fixated on gadgets and the body, sporty and at the same time distinguished and domestic when it comes to delicious recipes. Palmgren comes to the conclusion that it is the culture as a whole that has changed, and not only ideas about masculinity.

Ann-Helen Sund attempts, in her article, to describe Formula 1 as a modern/post-modern phenomenon: in part as a phenomenon in and of itself, and in part in terms of how the average TV audience experiences and describes it. The concept of manliness is also studied: what sort of manliness is manifest in this sport, and what is meant when Formula 1 is referred to as a "manly" sport? This article is based on interviews with students who are interested in Formula 1 and watch Formula 1 races on television. A small portion of the informants was not interested in Formula

1. The study shows that the concept of prestige is central in Formula 1, and attempts to determine what this prestige encompasses. The significance of nationality in Formula 1 is also discussed, and how different nationalities are organized in the spectator's consciousness to build a whole entity. The article also briefly addresses the Formula 1 computer game and the experience of witnessing a Formula race in person.

The third article on this theme is written by Sven-Erik Klinkmann. In his study of coolness as the central significant sign for youth in the American 50's, the semiotician Marcel Danesi demonstrates that the concept of "cool" has its roots in the jazz

scene of the 1930's. Accordingly, one also has good reason to argue that coolness, as a quality in youth, is related to an entirely unique range of cultural formations which, at the beginning of the 1800's in Europe and America, had a very specific and strong effect on the formation of popular culture. In this article, Sven-Erik Klinkmann discusses the history of the concept of "cool" as a complicated process of conversions, manifest in discourse, from signifying a complex black masculinity, a black bearing, with many meanings, to symbolizing Elvis Presley's rather playful and outer coolness and masculinity, expressed in his public 50's persona, the carnival-like King of Rock 'n' Roll.