



Editorial

Heritage and Personal Memories

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The theme of this *Ethnologia Fennica* 2022 issue (vol. 49:1) is the shaping and representing of individual lives and memories in the context of heritage and heritagisation. Today, heritage and cultural institutions such as museums and archives are well aware of their social and political role and strive to increase ecological, cultural, and social sustainability (e.g., Gardner & Hamilton eds. 2017; Janes & Sandell 2019). Therefore, they constantly seek more democratic practices with respect to how people and communities are represented and by whom. One way of achieving these objectives is to increase the use of oral history and life writings in public history activities. Public history, especially in the Nordic context, is connected to earlier traditions such as labor history, social history, and “history from below” (e.g., Ashton & Trapeznik eds. 2019).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in personal heritage. In tourism studies, for instance, personal or mundane heritage has become a part of a tourist experience where people visit sites that have personal memory or particular family significance (Prince 2021, 20). In addition to national and transnational heritage, the interest in personal heritage and memories is seen as important and appealing. Besides tourism, this can be seen in different heritage and cultural institutions like museums.

The idea for this theme issue emerged from the project “Paimio Sanatorium: Social, Historical and Cultural Perspectives” at the University of Turku. In the commentary text of this issue Anne Heimo describes the multidimensional situation of the heritagisation of the sanatorium and the possibilities to utilize personal memories in the research, but also in displays and other public activities in the place that can be described as a dark heritage site.

In our themed call “Heritage and Personal Memories” we asked for articles discussing various ways of using oral history and personal memories in public history activities and participatory processes. We were interested in how applied ethnographic work and ethnological research affect these activities.

The first research article of the theme issue by Mateja Habinc brings forward the heritagisation processes by community perspectives in the Pivško region, South-Western region of Slovenia. The Pivško region is nationally known by fictional literary hero Martin Krpan. In the article “Heritagisation and Community Formation in the Pivško region” Habinc is questioning if this nationally important literary heritage correlates with the experiences of the inhabitants and their perceptions of personal, family, local and regional heritage. In the article Habinc addresses the questions of power relations and community building processes that are strongly connected to heritage and heritagisation processes. Natural environment of the Pivško region and personal life histories concretize the diversity of the heritage “landscapes”, where the nationally important figure of Martin Krpan doesn’t play a significant role. Habinc raises up the capacity of heritage as a mechanism of social cohesion. The heritagization processes can create micro-communities and new kinds of solidarities. At the same time heritage can reproduce and strengthen already existing macro-social definitions, hierarchies and positions.

In the second research article of this theme issue Jón Þór Pétursson and Matilda Marshal are digging into food storage spaces in Swedish homes. In the article “Pantry Memories: Storing Food and Feelings in Swedish Homes” Pétursson and Marshal explore the recontextualization and emotionalization of the traditional food storage spaces, e.g. “old-fashioned pantries” and “classic root cellars”, in Swedish society. Longing for past food storage spaces by using reflexive nostalgia is an interesting case of heritage and personal memories and at same time an excellent example of how emotional experiences in the past are reinterpreted in the present.

Covid-19 pandemic affected many different ways to ethnographic research possibilities and realities in the fieldwork. In the review article “Studying Industrial Oral History During the Pandemic - Ethical and Methodological Questions” Pete Pesonen and Kirsti Salmi-Niklander are discussing the practical and ethical challenges they faced in the fieldwork period of their oral history project. The experiences of isolation and frustration were shared by all participants of the project. Fragility of everyday life during the circumstances of the pandemic raised the awareness of ethical issues and increased responsibilities of the researchers. The agency and self-determination of the interviewees rose to an even more important role than before.

In this issue there is also one research article outside the theme. In the article “Worlds Apart: Social Entrepreneurship Discourse in Croatian Media” Anja Iveković Martinis and Duga Mavrinac are exploring the concepts of social enterprise discourse. By analysing the Croatian news, they found contrasts between mainstream commercial media and alternative non-profit media. Dominance of neo-liberal enterprise discourse is challenged by more critical, anticapitalist discourses.

This theme issue has strong connections to heritage and cultural institutions, e.g. museums and archives. We were pleased to receive two book reviews that introduce the most current museological publications for our audience. The other one, “Museum Studies - Bridging Theory and Practice” is published online and therefore accessible for everyone interested in the topic. The other one, “Marginaaleista museoihin” is a serious attempt to approach museum field from the perspectives of intersectionality, inclusivity and decolonialism. The third book review continues the perception of marginals, in this case deepening the phenomenon of migration from the perspectives of migrants and their individual experiences abroad.

We would like to thank all the authors, reviewers, and editors of this issue. “Heritage and Personal Memories” is a theme we hope to see developed even further in the future.

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SOURCES

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Cover photo: The cover picture of a wall mural is taken by Tuomas Hovi in 2019 in Wilmington Delaware. The Kalmar Nyckel mural offers a visual chronology of Delaware, starting with the landing of the Swedes in 1638 with the ship Kalmar Nyckel, meeting with the Lenape people and the construction of Fort Christina. The mural then shows the river's importance to the city, for example showing the river as a key crossing point to freedom along the Underground Railroad and then focusing on the city's later shipyard heritage. At the far right is an image of the replica ship of the Kalmar Nyckel, which was built in 1997. The mural offers an artist's vision of the public history and heritage of Delaware.