

BOOK REVIEWS

MAARIT GRAHN AND MAUNU HÄYRYNEN (eds). *Kulttuurituotanto: Kehykset, käytäntö ja prosessit*. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2009. Pp. 362. ISBN: 978-952-222-173-5.

We know when the Renaissance arrived in Finland. It was brought on Christmas Eve 1562, by Polish Princess Catherine Jagellon, sent to Turku to marry a future Swedish king. At least this is the story told by tourist guides in Turku Castle, in turn recounted in a Finnish-language anthology on culture industries and pedagogy. The title of the book (in English ‘cultural production: frames, practices and processes’) reflects its concern with improving professional standards and expanding cultural debate to encompass issues of sustainability, landscapes, heritage and digital sharing.

Curiously, the performing arts, a sector that has a long and significant history in Finland, is mentioned only in passing. It is culture in a broader sense, the appreciation of local history and distinctiveness in everyday life, that is emphasised. This reflects the fact that this anthology comes out of the pedagogical milieu of Turku University’s Degree Programme in Cultural Production and Landscape Studies taught in Pori. The volume is firmly rooted in its geographical surroundings with empirical examples mostly from Satakunta making Pori Jazz Festival just about the only performing arts event discussed. English-language summaries are not included, though they would offer suggestive comparative material.

Maunu Häyrynen’s introduction grounds the book in the innovation and regional policies of the past decade. Häyrynen goes on to wonder whether cultural production professionals have the capacity to *protect* cultural production as well as to offer it up to the homogenising and risk-averse world of contemporary commercialism. So, although the book for the most part does not go much beyond the empirical material and only two of the fifteen examples are from outside Finland, it tackles an issue with planetary reach. The pressures under which lower-order actors operate appear to originate in UNESCO and even the OECD with its Culture and Local Development programme.

The chapters cover issues such as publishing in Finland, marketing tourist destinations and the challenges of engaging people in local cultural pursuits. They all reflect the sense of being caught up in a world where culture is a newly significant but potentially uncomfortable preoccupation. This much is implicit or at least can be read into it. On an explicit level the book as a whole presents its discussions in a somewhat didactic fashion with clear guidelines on method and analytical approach supported by key theorists—Pierre Bourdieu in particular.

Mauno Häyrynen’s introduction is followed (slightly confusingly) by Simo Häyrynen’s piece which discusses historical shifts in cultural politics in Finland, where older policies aimed at public education have given way to ones designed to generate income or enhance well-being. His pithy essay muses on whether currently cultural politics acts more as a cultural difference-engine or its opposite, a kind of weaving-engine, a ‘cultural Spinning Jenny’ (to echo his choice of words). The remaining chapters in the first of the book’s three sections dwell on the effects of global standards and imagined expectations of place-based cultural production, and on the ways these are supported as part of national and regional policies.

The playfully critical tone of the first few chapters gives way to more descriptive and didactic chapters. We learn of the virtues of family ownership in Noormakku's old (by Finnish standards) industrial landscapes, and of the ways in which cultural heritage, UNESCO and Coimbra University in Portugal are entwined in local lives. The following chapter also draws on an overseas example. It takes a look at the cultural services rendered by the descendants of the landed aristocracy that fled Germany's eastern parts after the Second World War, offering an ambivalent account of the virtues of the new, tourism-supported, aristocratic lifestyle.

The volume's third section focuses on locations, landscapes and experience of place. In these chapters professionals will find a wealth of examples of how to engage local populations in the work of local and regional image making and collective activity. The examples are often uplifting in their creativity and frequently indicate great passion, yet the overriding impression the chapters give is of a need to justify the commercial or at least auditable aspect of local cultural endeavours.

Given that this is a text book or a guide to professionals, this seems appropriate. On the other hand, since today's culture industries are so significant in shaping lives as well as space, the lack of sustained critical analytical commentary is a shortcoming. And frustratingly, where a critical tone has been adopted, it often reproduces stereotypes: the anarchic artist (p. 48) or the 'naturally' homogenous Finnish audience (p. 35). This may not encourage the critical interpretation or the debate that the book claims to be seeking.

Yet there is ample food for thought here. In a fascinating overview of Finland's publishing history, Risto Turunen notes that the enthusiasm for do-it-yourself and participatory production might be turning culture, and specifically information, into a playground of amateurishness. Turunen's discussion of Finnish literature does some cultural critique of its own, capturing a worrying trend in public culture in Finland. He quotes Harri Veivo, whose observations of Finland's book markets in 2002 included the point that 'debate' in the media may be lively but is dominated by denigrating commentary. Interestingly, Turunen sees this not as a 'cultural' facet of Finnish life or heritage, but as an effect of the revolution in information technologies. Petja Aarnipuu looks at Turku Castle Museum which, since the late nineteenth century, collaborated with schools, universities and museums in an ever-changing process of nation-building.

An illuminating use of historiography is offered in Elisa El Harouny's study of the conservation of wooden buildings, where historical perspective is nicely complemented by an ethnographic sensibility to contemporary life. The uses of technological gadgetry so appropriate to societies more in tune with forgetting than with remembering are described in the chapters by Petri Saarikoski and Pauliina Tuomi, on online community gaming and voting in the Eurovision Song Contest respectively. Along with other chapters, they all bring out increasingly urgent questions about the tensions between the different temporalities that affect all environments—the time-scales of renovating a house, the combinations of real-time computer games and long-term histories, the time pressures on schools that want to offer outdoor education, and so on.

Culture emerges as neither the classic modern high culture of the educated elite nor the all-embracing anthropological concept of culture. Although anthropological references and insight are evident, this is not a book of or in anthropology. Rather, it treats anthropology as a closed expert discourse that can be transferred or made useful

to non-anthropologists. Thus it offers anthropologists little conceptual development. Unfortunately this also means that despite a few disparate passages on culture, the book gives little attention to the parallel lives of cultural production and cultural politics of a more sinister kind. Race-based essentialism is not a marginal concern in today's Finland, and if its links to cultural production are not clear, they should be examined. Yet ultimately, the debate about cultural production and the concept of culture, in all its slipperiness, offers a natural and probably rewarding domain where anthropologists and scholars in cognate fields have much to learn from and to offer one another.

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JOHANNA SUMIALA. *Median rituaalit: Johdatus media-antropologiaan*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 2010. Pp. 174. ISBN 978-951-768-307-4.

Anthropology of the media is a subfield that began to evolve in the 1980s, and has so far remained a largely under-theorized terrain. Johanna Sumiala's book *Median rituaalit* (Rituals of the Media) is a welcome contribution that promises to offer a comprehensive introduction to the area. Although the book has its merits, this promise remains partly unfulfilled. The book is divided into two parts. The first part, titled 'Anthropology of the Media', discusses rituals, communication and community; the latter part, 'Rituals of the Media', offers a detailed analysis of different media.

Sumiala describes media anthropology, not as a clear discipline, but rather as a way of approaching research questions that cross over between media research and anthropology. In this line of scholarship the media and its users are studied by various ethnographic methods. Media is understood as a shared system that constructs the social reality around us: a site of imagined communities. Media rituals, on the other hand, are seen as comprising a repeated and schematic appearance of symbolic communication.

Sumiala connects the development of media anthropology to the 1980–90s trend towards an anthropology of the present, a trend generating a continuously growing number of 'communication theory'-oriented scholars. She does good work in describing the multidisciplinary background of the field. Durkheim gets a lot of attention, as do many scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Erving Goffman, and those belonging to the Chicago School of Pragmatism. She also points out that a division exists between 'media anthropology' and 'anthropology of the media'. Looked at from a historical perspective, anthropological media research has been closely connected with ethnographic cinema. Yet in other parts of the book Sumiala treats the two as synonyms, which is confusing to a reader.

Rituals are at the centre of the book, although more generally they are only one of the main concepts in media anthropology; also significant are the concepts of culture, religion, myth, narrative, performance, representation and symbol. In discussing how media