

ETHNOLOGIA EUROPAEA REVISITED: LAUNCHING FUTURE ETHNOLOGIES

An Introduction

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Arrival

Ethnographic accounts often include an arrival story, which is intended to set the scene and launch some of the main points of the analysis to come. Most importantly, it situates the researcher and builds the reader's trust in the recorded observations. As the newly-assigned editor of *Ethnologia Europaea*, I allow myself to use this age-old device, and tell the story of how I entered this lively journal of the European ethnological scholarly field. In doing so, I intend to signal the core themes and issues raised within this volume.

One of my first undertakings as soon-to-be editor was to set up an interview with the now late Professor Emeritus and editor of *Ethnologia Europaea* in 1984–2004, Bjarne Stoklund. The interview was held on a December afternoon in my office at the University of Copenhagen and, as it happens, only few months before Stoklund passed away in May 2013.

I was keen on knowing more about Stoklund's thoughts on the European dimension of the journal, and how he had experienced his twenty years as the journal editor. And, of course, I wanted to learn some tips and tricks of the trade. Our conversation addressed these themes and many more, and was accompanied by the tea and pastries I had brought to our meeting. I heard many interesting stories that afternoon and I paid particular attention to the fact that the word "persuasion" was used both in the case of Stoklund's stepping in as editor after Günther Wiegmann in 1984, and later, when referring to

Orvar Löfgren taking over the editorship in 2004.¹ I pondered whether the role of journal editor was ever accepted voluntarily.

Together we looked at one of the first calls for papers Stoklund had launched as the editor, a flyer from 1984, which included the following passage: "The new editor [i.e. Stoklund] (...) shall direct his efforts towards the creation of a journal of interest not only to European ethnologists but also to anthropologists, social historians and others studying the social and cultural forms of everyday life in recent and historical European societies." On the back of the flyer, Stoklund had listed the core research themes to be covered by the journal, on which he commented: "They [the research themes] are of course totally outdated by now and have long since been revised" (Interview 2012, translated from Danish by the author). The list was as follows: "[T]owards a history of everyday life: trends, methods and sources; aspects of 'the civilizing process'; social structures and cultural diversity; material culture; migrants and minorities; ethnicities and identities." Whereas my immediate response was to ask whether this list of themes really was all that outdated, Stoklund continued: "It's funny to see, when you get so old, how phenomena turn into something completely different when they reappear. That's how it goes" (ibid.).

That's how it goes. This last part of our conversation was the inspiration for the theme of this special issue of *Ethnologia Europaea*, in which the authors revisit concepts and approaches, which have long

since been discarded or deemed completely outdated by our scholarly discipline. The question is: How *does* it go? Ethnologists tend to claim that the past is in the present, but how does this play out in our own research practices? Which patterns of continuity appear, and where can we identify instances of rupture?

The act of “revisiting” is the *leitmotif* of this volume, and this alludes to several different actions: to visit again, return, reexamine, revise, recycle, or even retire. To be sure, such visits can take many shapes and forms: they may counter-balance recent aspirations or provide inspiration; they may be a learning experience; or they may highlight or even discard previously-used approaches and concepts. A revisit can be a courtesy call from which one wishes to depart again as soon as possible. And past concepts can strike back and even haunt us, like “zombie-concepts” that refuse to remain buried.² At least two different yet related strategies seem feasible when undertaking this kind of endeavour: we can deliberately go backwards in time and pay past concepts and approaches a visit in order to examine how they may be reread and reappear again in new guises and types of dialogues, or the investigation can be prompted by challenges in our present work and research endeavours, which require us – whether we like it or not – to dive into the pool of knowledge and experience of our ethnological forebears.

This special issue is the result of a workshop series held at Lund University and the University of Copenhagen in 2013–2014. Swedish and Danish scholars of ethnology were invited to reflect upon and present innovative ways of rethinking past concepts, approaches, contributions or discussions within the scholarly field. The context for this special issue is therefore Scandinavian ethnology with particular emphasis on the Swedish and Danish ethnology developed within the Lund and Copenhagen milieus respectively. Furthermore, a range of commentators were invited to read about the revisits and contribute their own rethinking of them to this issue. We set out to explore different modes of revisiting European ethnology, as both reflected in the journal of *Ethnologia Europaea* and in the broader sense of the

previous knowledge claims and research practices of our field.

Four Themes

Depicting the history and the current state of Swedish ethnology, Orvar Löfgren has suggested four lineages between the folklife researchers around the turn of the twentieth century and present-day ethnologists: a keen interest in the mundane activities of everyday life; doing fieldwork; the combination of historical and contemporary analysis; and the use of mobile research methods (Löfgren 2008). Whereas the first line of continuity relates to the ardent interest of folklife researchers and ethnologists alike in illuminating the importance of the otherwise overlooked and seemingly insignificant trivialities of our mundane activities and routines, the second points to the ever-present “fieldwork mentality” of ethnology and related disciplines. The third line of continuity stresses historical comparison and contrasting as ways to show that the present could have been organised differently. With the fourth lineage, Löfgren highlights the virtue of flexibility with regards to the researcher’s choice of approach – when ethnologists use the “mobile search light method”, they are not only mobile when it comes to conducting the fieldwork but also in terms of choosing analytical concepts and perspectives for further scrutiny.

Löfgren’s list forms the perfect backdrop for the four main, interconnected themes in this special issue, which I designate: *reworking everyday life*, *fieldwork as craftsmanship*, *mapping connections* and *conversing with the past*. Our act of revisiting exposes solid patterns of continuity. However, readers of this volume might also find themselves straying from the customary path. Along with in-depth interrogations of the four themes, the contributions touch upon experiments and engagements with the past such as:

- a reintroduction of the diffusionist concept of “cultural elements” (Munk & Elgaard Jensen)
- a reawakening of long forgotten archives and how they can be reread by paying attention to the material-technological aspects of knowledge production (Gustavsson)

- a reinvention of fieldwork as conversation, and an answer to why ethnologists should start counting more (Hastrup)
- a relaunching of Braudel's *longue durée* as a marker of the inertness of everyday life cultures (Dams-holt & Jespersen)
- a rereasoning for the importance of ecotypes (Mellegaard)
- a rethinking of borders through the notion of speed (Nilsson).

Revisiting European Ethnology does not aim to create a representative history of the discipline. Rather, it offers selective approaches to rearticulating the ethnological scholarly field. The volume presents a handful of innovative contributions that twist and turn through well-known terrain by engaging with the past and with a thrust towards the future. In this sense, all the papers take part in creating a "history of the present", which takes a critical look at current strands and approaches and thereby suggests future contours for ethnological endeavours.

Importantly, this special issue aims to open up the "bonnet of the car", explicating dimensions of research that often remain tacit knowledge: how are inspirational sources activated, how do we work as ethnologists, and, not least, how do we learn from others before us? In other words, this volume presents the everyday life of research. The front cover encapsulates one such moment: it depicts a young man joyfully jumping out of the window of a peasant house. The man is an (unknown) student of folklife researcher Sigurd Erixon (1888–1968), who was collecting information on the vanishing peasant culture in the Swedish countryside in the early twentieth century (see Gustavsson's contribution). This is a "backstage" picture, which was probably shot at the end of a hard day's fieldwork – taking notes, photo documentation and drawing up sketches, all while carrying heavy photo gear. However, as Gustavsson shows in her paper, the laughter, jokes and feeling of being a part of a collective project are just as important dimensions of the research process as the actual research result in itself. Thus, we invite you to join the revisiting of European ethnology,

and to engage with discussions and reflections which might not usually be in the foreground, but which are nonetheless intrinsic aspects of ethnological research practices.

This introduction is a tour around the four main themes and a contextualisation of the papers' chosen strategies for revisiting European ethnology.

Reworking Everyday Life

In the essay "On the Concept of Everyday Life" (1978), Norbert Elias stresses the salient elusiveness of this very concept.³ Critically, Elias ponders why it appears to be so difficult for researchers of everyday life – especially etnomethodologists and phenomenologically inspired sociologists – to define this "anything but homogeneous concept" ([1978]1998: 167). The problem arises when it comes to defining the oppositional concept of "the everyday life" in terms of what it comprises, rather than what it is *not*. Elias points to the "almost complete absence of attempts to discern the unity underlying the multiplicity of shades of meaning in the contemporary use of the concept of the everyday" (*ibid.*: 170). In order to clarify this lack of consistency, Elias provides a selected overview of the concept's various meanings in which he includes the implied antitheses: everyday versus holiday, routine versus the extraordinary, the life of the masses versus the life of the privileged and powerful, to name a few. Despite his efforts, it remained unclear to Elias whether the everyday life is a particular sphere or region of human societies which is easy to distinguish from the "non-everyday".

Everyday life can rightly be characterised as an a priori object for European ethnologists. However, ethnologists may also find themselves estranged from Elias' definition exercise. Rather than attempting to establish a more precise concept of everyday life (what it is/what it is not), ethnologists tend to be interested in finding out what it *does*; how is everyday life practised in different yet related ways, and how can one study it? Everyday life is a highly dynamic term, which is continuously reconstructed and co-constituted, also by ethnological engagements in everyday worlds. It is in this engagement that a reworking of the concept of everyday life can take place.

One such conceptual reworking of everyday life practices unfolds in the contribution by Tine Damsholt and Astrid Pernille Jespersen (this volume). As a possible answer to Elias' question of whether everyday life has the quality of being a delimited sphere distinguishable from "non-everyday life", Damsholt and Jespersen assert that everyday life as an ethnological object of study has always been shaped within governmental practices; from the pastoral power of the late eighteenth century to the current versions of biopolitics of the twenty-first century. Following a Foucauldian genealogy, the authors are not in search of the "Ursprung" (origin) but rather the "Herkunft" (descent) of a careful selection of classic figures, which have been formative for their ethnological understanding of everyday life practices such as the ideology of "the good life" and the idea of *la longue durée* as an intrinsic element of cultural change.

When Elias published his essay in the 1970s, sociologists, European ethnologists, folklorists and scholars of history, cultural studies and cultural anthropology all over Europe were beginning to make everyday life cultures their pivotal object of study (Tschofen 2013). The same can be said of Scandinavian ethnology. During the late 1960s and throughout the 70s, everyday societies gained prominence as a research object, rather than folk culture. Ethnologists became "experts on everyday life" (Löfgren 2008: 125). Daily life, routines, habits and traditions came into focus, due to influences from British social anthropology and American qualitative sociology (Löfgren 1997). There was also an increased interest in everyday life as an arena for resistance. In Sweden, this mode of research was particularly prevalent within the study of everyday consumption in the 1980s, which stressed the creativity and counterstrategies of the "little" (wo)man in a world of mass consumption and globalisation (ibid.). Only a stone's throw away from each other, the ethnology departments in Lund and Copenhagen each developed rather different kinds of approaches to theory and analytical work. Whereas researchers at the former carried out cultural analyses in an analytical bricolage taking inspiration from theoretical strands

such as phenomenology and micro-sociology, the Copenhagen milieu, in particular the structural life-mode analysis, was based on structural linguistics (such as Louis Hjelmslev) and conceptual logics, and was engaged in cumulative theory building (Højrup 1983, 1989, 2006).

Versions of Everyday Life: The Good, the Bad... and the Ugly

Within broader everyday life scholarship, some characteristic distinctions can be made: On the one hand, there is phenomenological inspiration from various micro-sociological strands such as Husserl, Simmel, Goffman, Schütz and others. On the other hand, there are the more critically-oriented Marxist inspired studies of everyday life culture, in which Lefebvre and to some extent also Habermas played a role. Reading through these traditions, Mike Michael (2006) differs between *the good* and *the bad* versions of everyday life: the approaches that underline the promise of everyday life as a site for resistance, critique and ultimately change, and those that warn that everyday life might stagnate in false ideology as a site of repetition, discipline or alienation.

Michael's versions of the everyday contribute to a timely discussion on the study of everyday practices. In recent years, we have witnessed an increasing demand for ethnographic depictions of mundane activities and routines, requested by private businesses, organisations and industry (Jespersen et al. 2012). If not handled with care, this recent popularity could easily turn into what could be called *the ugly* version of everyday life conceptualisations: the uncritical, consumer-oriented version, which uncovers users' needs under the auspices of neoliberal "soft capitalism" (Thrift 1997). Within soft capitalism logics, everyday life – including its most intimate private spheres – becomes the number one zone for improvement through which populations may be encouraged into healthy aging and lifestyles, better parenthood or further education, or even to reduce climate change. At the same time, everyday life is posited as site for innovative thinking where mundane solutions and the practical uses of things and technologies become the key to new and creative

solutions, which are then exported into user-driven design schemes (Petersen & Munk 2013; Elgaard Jensen 2012).

Indeed, it is soft capitalism's growing demand for user-driven innovation insights into our mundane activities that prompts Damsholt and Jespersen to question and examine how we conceptualise notions of everyday life. Damsholt and Jespersen's revisit is of a triggered kind, prompted by the challenging and provocative claims they encountered in a collaborative project involving user-driven innovation and everyday life, in which the other participants highlighted everyday life as a problem and a barrier to change. The authors were continuously expected to think "out of the box" and sketch future "mega trend scenarios" based on a notion of instant change. However, in this contribution, Damsholt and Jespersen choose to do quite the opposite. Emphasising performative approaches to everyday life, they illustrate how cultural change often takes place imperceptibly, through the repetitive tinkering and mending of everyday routines (cf. Ehn & Löfgren 2010). The genealogy they present of how ethnologists have conceptualised the everyday as a realm of inertness certainly destabilises the figuration of the innovative, flexible user that tends to be inherently inscribed into user-driven innovation projects.

Damsholt and Jespersen's study also contributes to an exploration of both differences and similarities in the ways in which the Lund and Copenhagen milieu study everyday life cultures: Both sides of the Sound have worked with everyday life in its "good" as well as its "bad" versions, but it is perhaps indicative of yet another "inert structure" that both milieus have retained a keen interest in the structuring of everyday life and its possible conditions of existence, including its material implications, despite the differences in their theoretical-analytical *modus operandi*.

Ethnographic Craftsmanship

In the *Ethnologia Europaea* special issue *Irregular Ethnographies*, Tom O'Dell and Robert Willim (2011) ponder why they cannot clearly recall attending classes on fieldwork methods as part of their own

education. Rather than being a mystery, this previous lack of visible methods training illustrates that in our educational programmes, we see a shift from apprenticeship to more explicit teaching of methods. In recent years, ethnology has witnessed increased market demands; not only for everyday life accounts but also for ethnographic skills. Fieldwork methods have become a commodity in their own right. At the same time, methodology classes and ethnographic workshops are generously sprinkled throughout all sorts of educational programmes with the prefix culture-, anthro-, or ethno- in their titles, whereas previously, the teaching of methods was "learning by doing" without any explicitly stated "learning outcomes".

Karin Gustavsson examines material that documents peasant life and material culture in the Swedish countryside in the 1920s, collected through an initiative by *Nordiska museet* (the Nordic Museum) and maintained for several decades in their folk archives. By revisiting the everyday lives of the student fieldworkers and researchers, Gustavsson vividly shows the meticulous practices and routines of the people involved in Sigurd Erixon's great atlas collective. This is a profound example of an ethnographic apprenticeship in its early days.

Gustavsson's piece is akin to Bruno Latour's study of the researchers in the *Boa Vista* forest, in which he closely follows the researchers' practices, from the sampling of data to detailed examinations in the laboratory (Latour 1999). Gustavsson traces how the collection practices of the students were converted into scientific knowledge claims while their voluminous cameras were carefully strapped to the back of their bicycles – and while they were still wearing their students' caps! Gustavsson's revisit takes us into the everyday practices of research and shows us how these practices are part of a material set-up, as they also were for our colleagues in the past.

Frida Hastrup extends the notion of fieldwork from collecting data, which then will be represented in novel ways, to a generative conversational endeavour closely aligned with analysis and theory work. In this sense, reading our classics is also a part of ethnological fieldwork practices. Thus, Hastrup of-

fers an alternative to methodology as a commodity that is easy to pick and choose. Proposing the notion of “analogue analysis”, Hastrup enters into dialogue with the early writings of the Norwegian folklife researcher Eilert Sundt (1817–1875). What Hastrup finds particularly appealing about Sundt’s work is his invitation for readers, interlocutors and other laymen to contribute to a collective knowledge production about peasant house building customs and house crafts.

Hastrup combines Sundt’s writings into a montage with her own fieldwork insights from south India, which were generated through several years of engagement with people living in Tharangambadi in the coastal region of the Tamil Nadu state. Here, we are introduced to the counting practices of a Tamil woman, Renuga, who works part time to implement a governmental nutrition programme for school children. Renuga has to make precise calculations, not only at work while calculating nutrition per pupil but also in order to secure her own daughters’ marital and educational futures: how much it will cost in gold to pay for their unfair but expected dowry, and how well they can succeed in creating alternative biographical paths via educational scholarships.

Transcending the insights gained in different places and across time, this montage is held together by a shared concern with world-making; Renuga strives for a better future for her daughters, and Sundt aims to improve housing conditions for Norwegians. Thus, according to Hastrup’s analogue analysis, ethnological craftsmanship is not intended only for a limited number of individuals within a given scholarly field; rather, it encompasses the endeavour of generating common worlds. Ethnographic work is about trying out different ways of thinking and writing about the world – for both the fieldworker and the interlocutor. In this contribution, the counting practices are not only the object for Hastrup’s field research, but also becomes part of her own analytical strategy and understanding of Renuga’s world and beyond.

Hastrup’s revisit shows that ethnographic apprenticeship is neither the exclusive domain of folklife

students around the turn of the twentieth century, nor is it confined to the educational programmes of our more recent past. Rather, crafting ethnographic accounts is part of a shared endeavour within a field of interrelation.

Mapping Connections

Since the spatial turn of the 1990s, a tsunami of approaches to space, place and locality has hit scholarly disciplines ranging from human geography and sociology to anthropology and ethnology (for an overview see Massey 2005). The spatial turn embraces the idea that various places and locations only gain meaning via the way they are inhabited and generated through practices. In these practice-oriented approaches to space, there is a keen interest in cartography and mapping. For scholars of folklore and ethnology, this should ring a bell. Around one hundred years ago, in the decades after the turn of the twentieth century, the historic-geographic method, also known as diffusionism or “the cartographic method”, was the order of the day among folklife researchers. The objective was to map the diffusion of cultural elements and to illustrate the regional distribution of material culture. As one of the most prominent examples of a transnational, pan-European research project, this endeavour must be admired. Stoklund (2003) has characterised the diffusionist era as the only point in the history of our discipline that could come close to being classified as a normal scientific paradigm (see Mellemegaard; Munk & Elgaard Jensen, this issue). However, rather than creating synthesis, the historic-geographic project is infamous for resulting in detailed data piling and heavily loaded archives (Löfgren 1997; Højrup 2002).

In recent years, the use of the cartographic methods has received new attention in ethnology. Novel methods involving digitisation and user-friendly software might make it easier to process data and develop maps, which may well be relevant in handling big sets of data (see Tangherlini 2010). This volume introduces another revamping of the ethno-cartographic method. Anders Kristian Munk and Torben Elgaard Jensen take the current turn to cartography

within science and technology studies (STS) as their point of departure, specifically a Latourian project concerned with public knowledge controversies, also known as controversy mapping. This is an approach that basically studies techno-scientific disputes by charting traces left by actors online. The authors compare controversy mapping with the atlas works of the early and mid-twentieth century in order to explore the kinds of realities enacted and to discuss the implications of the different mapping techniques, both in terms of the restrictions and the demands that are implied when the cartographic method is employed, and in terms of prospective results.

The European Atlases

Although a normal scientific paradigm may appear to be an unquestionable rule or structure in the eyes of its adherents, it is shaped by a considerable amount of actors, means and materialities. Therefore, in the following, I present a glimpse of the diverse set of contributors, conferences, journals and collaborations which all took part in the historic-cartographic project, and which extended far beyond the Scandinavian borders. From 1928 onwards, the organisation Commission Internationale des Arts et Traditions Populaires (CIAP) was a global network of national commissions for conducting research of folk culture under the auspices of the League of Nations. In 1964, and due to a long process of changes in its relationship with the League of Nations, CIAP was transformed into SIEF (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore), which is the present international organisation for European ethnologists. This transformation took place at a conference in Athens, which became notorious not least because Sigurd Erixon chose to leave the SIEF organisation, presumably because he felt it was becoming too folklore oriented (Rogan 2008).

After Erixon's exit, a cartography commission was placed outside of any formal European associations and several conferences and series of ethnological handbooks were initiated.⁴ In 1967, Erixon and the three European colleagues Branimir Bratanić (Zagreb), Jorge Dias (Lisbon) and Géza de Rohan-Cser-

mak (Paris) launched the first issue of the scientific journal with the Latin name *Ethnologia Europaea*⁵, with Rohan-Csermak as its first editor and, at that time, with the bi-lingual subtitle: *Revue internationale d'ethnologie européenne/A World Review of European Ethnology*. With *Current Anthropology* as a role model, *Ethnologia Europaea* soon became an important scientific journal within the European community, and also amassed a significant readership among American folklorists and cultural anthropologists/"culturologists" (Bringéus 1983). The historic-geographic method of cartography had also been a widely-applied approach among European folklorists, primarily led by the Finnish School, which had been represented by Antti Aarne and Julius and Kaarle Krohn since the late nineteenth century (Tangherlini 2010). Whereas the "Finnish method" mainly focused on mapping folktales, the historic-cartographic paradigm of ethnology focused on material culture.

This atlas work can be viewed as an exemplary European project, which had the potential to bind together the separate national ethnographies (interview with Stoklund 2012). However, several problems accompanied this potential. As early as 1920, one of the stated goals at the first Nordic meeting for folklife researchers in Stockholm was to establish a Nordic atlas, with Erixon and Åke Campbell (1891–1957) – who later became Professor in Ethnology at Uppsala University – as prime movers. On the Danish side, the director of the Danish Folk Museum (later the National Museum of Denmark), Jørgen Olrik (1875–1941), was a partner (Vasström 2013). The making of a European atlas was also a goal, and there was a strong interest in this from the German partners, who provided abundant financial support. During the 1930s, this Scandinavian-German project became more and more dubious. It became increasingly obvious that the results were intended to generate a scientific basis for an expansion and consolidation of the German "Raum" as a shared cultural-political sphere. During the early 1940s, the Scandinavian partners withdrew from the cooperation, but they did not set aside the ethno-cartographic method entirely (Vasström 2014, in preparation).

As highlighted by Thomas Højrup, one of the often unacknowledged strengths of the atlas work was its pertinent questioning of nation-state borders (Højrup 2002; see also Munk & Elgaard Jensen, this volume). The cultural diffusion of a material cultural element very rarely respected the national borders of say, Denmark and Sweden (Campbell et al. 1957). Instead, focus was on cultural borders or regional differences between eastern and western Denmark, for example, concerning the forms and types of harvesting implements.

Dr. Faustus

In both the Scandinavian and the European perspective, one of the key players associated with cartography is Sigurd Erixon. Indeed, in his aftermath, he appears more as a figure or phenomenon than an individual researcher.⁶ Erixon was also (in)famous for his ambitious, almost imperialist ideas about how the international ethnological scholarly society should be organised (Rogan 2008). Adopting a repertoire of terms from American cultural anthropology such as culture areas and relic's areas, the dynamics and stagnation of the diffusion of cultural elements, and acculturation processes, Erixon's vision for ethnology encompassed historical and comparative studies of culture in space, time and social strata (Arntsberg 1989). Diffusionism was his theoretical foundation and cartography his methodology. Setting up a strict methodology for the atlas projects was one expression of the desire to turn ethnology into an exact rather than a speculative science (Löfgren 2008, 1997). Löfgren has therefore designated Erixon the "Dr. Faustus of Ethnology"; the "disciplining force (...) who worked hard to structure the discipline, inventing concepts and definitions, drawing up boundaries, organising archives and conferences, and writing handbooks" (Löfgren 2008: 121). In a manner comparable to the Linnean taxonomical systems, Erixon wanted to name and classify the material peasant culture. Instead of theoretical discussions, the emphasis was placed on collecting and organising empirical data.

In the late 1950s and increasingly throughout the student revolts of the 1960s, the atlas projects

stranded like a beached whale. It should perhaps be noted that, in part, this was due to a lack of technological and financial means. The maps were expensive to produce and to publish. However, the perhaps most important reason for this was the confusion regarding whether making cartographies was a means to some other end or a goal in itself. Apart from being illustrative or pedagogical tools, the atlases proved very difficult to use when it came to interpretation and explanation. As described by Arntsberg (1989), when Erixon discussed the further analysis and implications of the maps,⁷ he used other kinds of material such as archival material and memoir resources. The atlas endeavour also had an Achilles' heel: the maps provided static, still pictures and failed to grasp the dynamics of culture (Roojakkens & Meurkens 2000). Only a few years after the publication of the Swedish folk atlas in 1957, Erixon himself claimed – here quoted by Arntsberg from a conference presentation in Denmark 1961 – that the atlases are "actually a pretty unrefined instrument and usually they only provide vague results and a pretty incomplete impression" (Arntsberg 1989: 92, translated from Swedish by the author).

It is truly daring of Munk and Elgaard Jensen to choose to return to the diffusionist paradigm *after* the smoke of the revolution is already long gone. In their search for similarities and grounds for possible dialogues between controversy mapping on the one hand and the atlases of material folk culture on the other hand, the authors find further inspiration along the way and reintroduce the idea of cultural elements, which adds to the experimental character of their endeavour. They base their contribution on a radical empiricism that can be discerned in several science and technology studies (STS) or actor-network theory (ANT) contributions, celebrating ontology over epistemology, observation over speculation, and multiplicity over "perspectivalism". Their relaunching of the idea of cultural elements is thus not to be seen as any functionalist understanding of searching for cohesions of "functional cultural wholes", but in the form of open-ended assemblages. Rather than an expressive notion of culture, the authors suggest culture as ever-changing composi-

tions. “Is there a future for a cartographic ethnology?” Munk and Elgaard Jensen ask. Their bold adventure invites ethnologists to embrace not only controversy mapping but also new-old notions of culture, connections and wholes. So in future ethnologies, we had better mind the map!

The Slowness of Borders

Mapping is intrinsically linked to the drawing of borders and demarcation of territories. Inspired by Paul Virilio, Fredrik Nilsson suggests speed as an analytical approach that can add new dimensions to practice-oriented border studies. Using the liquor smugglers of the 1920s in Sweden as an empirical case, Nilsson draws us into a fantastic universe of smugglers versus customs guards in the Baltic Sea. Due to a lack of technological means and equipment, the customs guards always appeared to be one step behind the border trespassing smugglers, who used motor schooners. The fact that the customs guards’ steam-driven tugboat – especially hired for the purpose – was named “Hurtig” (which means ‘fast’ in Swedish), certainly adds a certain portion of humour and irony to the story (see Nilsson, this volume). Nilsson rightly states that when it comes to borders, “speed produces problems”. In the current EU border regime this point can be taken even further; the so-called “fourth freedom of mobility” implies that the free movement of persons (along with capital, services and goods) across borders must not be hindered in any way. This means that if any EU member state suddenly erects devices and border control barriers that impede the free mobility across EU’s internal borders, the European Commission is allowed to intervene and is likely to do so. This was the case in 2011, for example, when permanent customs checkpoints were (temporarily, as it turned out) established on Denmark’s borders with Germany and Sweden. According to the political parties who backed this arrangement (the government along with the Christian Democrats and the Danish People’s Party), the reason for this was the “... increase in cross border crime in Denmark... not least crimes committed by foreign gangs, smuggling of narcotics, weapons, persons and large amounts of money,

as well as avoidance of Danish tax due to the use of foreign labour” (here quoted from Gammeltoft-Hansen & Christiansen 2011, transl. by the author). The Danish case fed into a general fear of “Schengen anarchy” among EU members and, as a result, the European Commission visited and inspected the border crossing point. They queried the barriers, which were eventually removed. However, while the speed of crossing the EU internal borders must not be slowed down, EU citizens travelling inside the EU will have noticed the inertness of border crossings at airport security controls: the long time spent standing still in the passport control queue has been transformed into an experience of being trapped in a tightly-packed dressing room, including feverish and sweat-provoking disrobing, the removal of wrist watches and belts, and the exposure of intimate body parts as well as the emptying of toiletry bags.

Nilsson revisits both ethnological border literature from the end of the twentieth century and the cultural borders of the diffusionist paradigm in early folklife research. Thus, we are presented with the conceptualisation of border across the centuries, as well as the potentials of a dialogue between past and present ethnological material.

Conversing with the Past

During the late 1960s and 1970s when the cartographic school receded, one of the crucial points of discussion that remained was the role of history in ethnology. Was the discipline supposed to move onto a path of regional social-anthropologically inspired ethnologies of contemporary societies, or should it remain a historically-oriented humanistic discipline? In 1969, Åke Daun published *Upp till kamp in Båtskärsnäs* (Taking up the fight in Båtskärsnäs), a fieldwork-based study of workers’ protests during the shutdown of a saw-mill in northern Sweden, which was solely oriented towards the social dynamics of the present. Daun had been a doctoral student under the guidance of social anthropologist Fredrik Barth at the University of Bergen who, in a Scandinavian perspective, was the key figure to introduce “generative cultural analysis” to the scholarly field. The generative cultural analysis was inspired by British

social anthropology and emphasised the making of cultures through interactionist exchanges among individuals and group actors, mostly focusing on contemporary Western societies. Whereas the work of Erixon and his students paid attention to the present with the goal of understanding the “Ursprung” of still-existing cultural forms, this way of engaging solely with contemporary culture had not previously been seen in ethnology (cf. Arntsberg 1989).

In Denmark, Bjarne Stoklund was a central figure in handling the aftermath of the diffusionist paradigm, as discussed in Signe Mellemegaard’s contribution. Stoklund was trained as a historian, and Mellemegaard shows how following his inauguration in 1971 as Professor of European Ethnology at the University of Copenhagen, Stoklund chose to mediate between the diffusionist or historic-geographic paradigm and the “new ethnology” of the 1970s. In contrast to the process-oriented and contemporary cultural analysis conducted by Lund’s ethnologists, Stoklund’s impact on Danish ethnology highlighted the continuity of the historical dimension of material culture in particular, while still combining it with synchronic studies. As Mellemegaard demonstrates, Stoklund maintained a close dialogue with historical anthropology. Perhaps Stoklund’s historically-oriented profile contributed to making the shift from “old” to “new” ethnology a less dramatic affair in Copenhagen than it was in Lund.

Mellemegaard’s revisit has an interesting duality to it: Throughout his work, Stoklund meticulously revisited his early studies and materials; he re-evaluated them and formed them into new insights. Thus, Mellemegaard revisits Stoklund’s practice of returning to his own ethnological material, parts of which were gathered within a historic-geographical context. First, Mellemegaard shows how Stoklund dealt with the so-called “micro-macro problem” by discussing small details within larger cultural historical developments. Second, Stoklund introduced an ecological perspective, including an elaboration of ecotypes, which contributed important insights into the peasant economy. Mellemegaard argues that the ecotypes facilitated a distancing from the diffusionist explanatory models. Finally, her contribution

discusses how Stoklund departs from the idea of relic areas by using Immanuel Wallerstein’s and Fernand Braudel’s world-system theories.

Making a Leap

What kinds of dialogues with the past are presented in this volume? We encounter novel readings of, and conversations with a range of ethnological predecessors such as: Sigurd Erixon (Gustavsson, Munk & Elgaard Jensen, Nilsson), Eilert Sundt (Hastrup), Bjarne Stoklund (Mellemegaard), and Fernand Braudel (Damsholt & Jespersen). Various types of materials and genres from the past are revisited, such as scholarly archives (Gustavsson), journals (Hastrup), material folk culture atlases (Gustavsson, Munk & Elgaard Jensen), official Swedish customs archives (Nilsson) and the topographies of eighteenth-century rural Denmark (Damsholt & Jespersen). These listings are not intended to be exhaustive since rather than attempting a “full” picture it is the different modes of revisiting that are in focus here.

The collection presents revisits that are sparked into being by provocation as in Damsholt and Jespersen’s piece, which is fashioned as a challenge to their own habitual thinking about classical “ethnological virtues”. Another mode of revisiting is deliberate inquiries into research practices of the past and research methods that were otherwise thought long gone, as in Gustavsson’s contribution.

This revisiting of European ethnology is not an attempt to induce a recursive ethnology, which repeats itself throughout time. Rather, we wish to open up opportunities wherein the act of revisiting is a means to engage with the urgent themes and challenges of contemporary ethnology. These themes and more are further discussed in the comments by Valdimar Hafstein, Orvar Löfgren, Katharina Eisch-Angus and Regina F. Bendix. To engage in dialogues with our very much alive (and kicking) European colleagues is just as important as having conversations with the past. Indeed, this was also Stoklund’s aim in his flyer, where he stressed that *Ethnologia Europaea* met the need for a *European* journal of interest for ethnologists and others.

Finally, allow me to add one more revisit to this

volume and bring a previous special issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* to the table: *Off the Edge – Experiments in Cultural Analysis* (Löfgren & Wilk, eds. 2005). Emphasising the sensing, ageing, moving and mystifying qualities of ethnological analysis, this is a call for exploring new modes of doing cultural analysis. By digging into “the large and disorganised historical tool chest of social analysis” Löfgren and Wilk (2005, p. 8) inspire us to take a leap without fearing the abyss; a rich repertoire of metaphors can be employed to help us continue experimenting with cultural analysis. For example, we learn that “fossilisation” can be a useful metaphor for understanding the inertia of cultural processes (Shove & Pantzar 2005), and also how the metaphor of “cream effects” can depict various registers of sensory highs (Bendix 2005). To me, this playful way of launching new modes of doing cultural analysis is not only emblematic for the kind of *Ethnologia Europaea* profiled by Löfgren and Bendix since 2007, it is also highly *persuasive*.

Stoklund’s list from 1984 of relevant research themes for *Ethnologia Europaea* is not outdated. Although studying the civilising process might have morphed into various kinds of governmentality studies, and material culture into studies of materialisations, the everyday life, together with cultural diversity, migration and identity processes, are still among the core research areas in the ethnological field. Together with Löfgren’s lines of continuities, these themes, among others, constitute the backbone of our discipline; the field is constantly under reconstruction, but some common denominators remain intact. Keeping this in our pocket, we are ready for take-off into ethnological futures.

Notes

- 1 The former editors of *Ethnologia Europaea* are Géza de Rohan-Csermak 1967–1971, Günther Wiegelmann 1971–1984, Bjarne Stoklund 1984–2004, with Peter Niedermüller 1999–2004, Orvar Löfgren 2004–2012, with Regina F. Bendix 2007–present.
- 2 The “zombie-concept” was coined by Ulrich Beck (see Slater & Ritzer 2011).
- 3 Elias himself did not want to be labelled an “everyday life researcher”, since he regarded everyday life transformations not as “peculiarities”, which are “different

to those of other areas of social life,” but as a change in personality structures, which correlated changes in the social structure, the social code or the standards of emotion management ([1978]1998: 169).

- 4 It is beyond the scope of this introduction to go further into this transformation, in which a self-instantiated reform-committee, the infamous “Gang of four” – Robert Wildhaber (Basel), Roger Pinon (Liège), Karel C. Peeters (Antwerp/Leuven), Roger Lecotté (Paris) – led by German folk narrative researcher and Professor in Kiel and Göttingen, Kurt Ranke, elected a new board and renamed CIAP (*Commission Internationale des Arts et Traditions Populaires*) SIEF (*Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore*). For a detailed analysis of the events, see Rogan 2008.
- 5 The title of the journal *Ethnologia Europaea* is formulated in contemporary Latin and translates into “The European Ethnology” or “European Ethnology”. There seems to be no particular reason for the choice of this Latin name for the journal *Ethnologia Europaea*. However, using the former lingua franca in Europe could, according to Bjarne Stoklund, signal the international approach of the journal. Furthermore, the Latin inspiration in naming journals seemed to be in fashion at the time, cf. *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, *Ethnologia Polona*, *Ethnologia Slavica*, to name a few (interview with Bjarne Stoklund 2012, see also Bringéus 1983). Thanks to Christian Troelsgård, Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, for insightful remarks on the naming of journals in contemporary Latin.
- 6 Throughout his career, Erixon conducted in-depth studies of larger cities, towns and unenclosed villages, as well as peasant house building customs. In his early years, Erixon published the first volume on *Skultuna Bruk* (1918) and later, in the 1940s, he published a volume on life in and around the harbour as part of his Stockholm-studies (for an in-depth discussion on Erixon’s work as a whole, see Arntsberg 1989).
- 7 As discussed in Rooijakkers & Meurkens (2000) one of the Dutch ethnologist J.J. Voskuil’s points of criticism towards the European Atlas Project, in which he himself took part and about which he later wrote the sarcastic roman à clef *Het Bureau*, was that the process’ perspective entailed only a comparison between the pre-industrial period and information collected around 1900, “as if it would entangle a static period with a continuity going back to the early Middle Ages or even the Roman period” (2000: 80).

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Interview

Interview with Bjarne Stoklund, by Marie Sandberg, University of Copenhagen, December 12, 2012.

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