

idéer om frihet och jämlikhet, anammar framstegstanken i en konkret form, fokuserar på individernas särdrag, personlighet och inre liv. Författaren exemplifierar med att jämföra fest- och måltidsmönster hos Skellefteåborgarna och bönderna i omgivningen. Som väntat kommer Sjöström fram till att böndernas fester länge betonade det kollektiva (gården och släkten) och följde den cykliska tidsuppfattningen med årsfester, medan de borgerliga festerna var individuellt inriktade enligt en lineär tidsuppfattning. Födelsedagar och jubileer betonades. En framträdande gränsmarkör är Ostviks-kriget, oroligheter som uppstod under missväxt- och hungeråren på 1860-talet mellan borgarna i Skellefteå och traktens bönder. De ledde bl.a. till att en del borgare i Skellefteå evakuerade sina familjer.

I det sista empiriska avsnittet, Festmåltidernas modernisering i Västerbotten, har festmat och måltider valts till indikatorer för moderniseringen under en tidsperiod på nästan 100 år från 1940 och bakåt. Kapitlet behandlar bröllop och gravöl. Bröllopfestens olika element och funktionärer beskrivs och analyseras ingående, medan gravölen ägnas endast några sidor i slutet av kapitlet. Den kulturmiljö som beskrivs är huvudsakligen rural, men den borgerliga livsstilen används som jämförelse-material. Det omfattande kapitlet på 65 sidor är baserat på ett rikligt regionalt och lokalt arkivmaterial.

En intressant iakttagelse författaren gör, är att kalaset skulle vara "hedersamt", dvs. öka familjens anseende eller befästa det. Det "hedersamma" kan uppfattas som en motivering till att man tog med nymodigheter på kalasmenyn. Sjöström anknyter till Bourdieus tankar om symboliskt kapital och konstaterar att vissa inslag i måltiden haft stort symbolvärde, t.ex. kalaskringlor och drycker. I borgerlig miljö kommuniceras de sociala och mentala gränserna tydligare. Författaren anknyter också till den finske socialantropologen Matti Sarmelas uppfattning om fester som skådespel för att manifestera social kultur. Festritualerna med skålar och tal, importerade matvaror och rätternas franska benämningar förstärkte den rådande rangskalan och pressade värdfamiljens position aningen uppåt. När de överdådiga kalasen blev omoderna på 1930-talet minskades förplägnaden först i borgerliga kretsar. Den basala och variabla moderniteten fungerar både som gränsutplånare och gränsskapare i den sociala kulturen.

Som läsoplevelse är boken lättläst och rik på information om de lokalsamhällen som beskrivs. Teoretiskt sett är den djupt förankrad i den svenska etnologin. Denna typ av kunskapsgenerering stärker identiteten

hos befolkningen i det område som behandlas och lyfter fram speciella drag som både bekräftar och kompletterar den lokala traditionen. Författaren är själv ett levande exempel på att man trots yrkesarbete och olika förändringar i livet *kan* bibehålla sin lokala identitet. Fastän han arbetar i Stockholm är familjen fortfarande bosatt i det nordliga område som han beskriver med värme och stor inlevelse.

Solveig Sjöberg-Pietarinen, Åbo

Helena Pettersson: *Boundaries, Believers and Bodies: A Cultural Analysis of a Multidisciplinary Research Community*. Institutonen för kultur och media. Umeå Universitet, 2007. 209 s. ISBN 978-91-726-4297-3.

This dissertation analyzes Tools for Creativity, a publicly-sponsored Swedish enterprise intended to leverage new Information Technology-related products out of multidisciplinary collaboration between artists and IT specialists. The analysis is developed out of long term *in situ* fieldwork in the enterprise, the analytic tools deployed being derived from the field of Ethnology in Sweden.

Of course, my response to the analysis is colored by my own experience of and familiarity with participant observation methodology, ethnological analytic tools, and field sites like Tools for Creativity. I am an American trained in Americanist cultural anthropology during the 1960s and '70s at Stanford, the University of Chicago, and the American University of Washington, DC. I have carried out long-term field studies in Sheffield, England (twice), Upstate New York, Oslo, Stockholm, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; I hope to be working shortly in China and Italy. I have also done fieldwork in cyberspace. I am an information ethnographer in the sense that, since the early 1980s, my ethnography has focused on the relationship between automated information and communication technologies and social change. The groups with which I have done fieldwork include systems developers, advocates of AICTed (automated information and communication technology) knowledge networking, and users of AICTs in various private, public, and not for profit organizations.

Over the years, I took a number of steps to bring the attention of ethnologists and anthropologists to the socio-cultural correlates of AICTs, including founding the Committee of Anthropologists of Science, Techno-

logy, and Computing of the American Anthropological Association. I taught anthropology of technology for 26 years at the Institute of Technology of the State University of New York. In 2004, I joined the social informatics group of the School of Informatics, a professional school at Indiana University. In sum, I am in a reasonably good position to evaluate this dissertation in several relevant analytic and methodological contexts and thus to treat it as serious scholarly work.

The Dissertation Presented

Helena Pettersson says "The present thesis is a cultural analysis of people's experiences working in a multi-disciplinary research community producing ICT research and prototypes." The author sets out to answer several important questions, including:

- Can creativity be promoted by mixing artists and AICTers?
- How does research change when made multi-disciplinary?
- How does research change when state, academy, and industry are mixed?; and
- What is the "Knowledge Society"?

The chosen field site in Umeå, Tools for Creativity, was one of several brought into being through funding from the Swedish Interactive Institute. It was selected because social dynamics relevant to all these questions were present and accessible to her to study. Her chosen methodology was long term participating observation, including open-ended interviews. This enabled her to see how this unique situation was experienced by those in it.

Helena Pettersson's analytic approach in the dissertation begins with the identification of two cultural constructs that provide the pivots around which site dynamics revolve, technology and research. She proceeds to use them to "map" the coherences and contradictions manifest in the various practices she observes and participates in. In classic ethnographic mode, she uses several other notions from her field experiences in drawing her maps. These include, with regard to technology,

- "Us vs. them," which she analyzes in "boundary object" terms borrowed properly from Susan Leigh Star;
- "Being with" IT;
- Techno-romanticism, an attitude toward technology which takes it as unproblematic and likely to have

substantial social impacts while itself being largely independent of the social;

- A progressivist ideology, both in general and specifically in regard to technology; and
- A presumption that technology is innovative by nature.

The author is alive to the contradictions manifest in these technology-related practices: e.g., while all informants shared the notion of "being with" technology in the abstract, what this meant (as in terms of status) was differently experienced depending on field of academic training and gender. Similarly, convictions about the inherent speed and novelty of AICTs meant a need to always be on the "cutting edge," which interfered greatly with opportunities for the kinds of reflective practices especially associated with the arts.

She is also sensitive to possible technology discourses which were not present in the field discourse, such as AICTs as electronic prostheses or users as cyborg. Given their prevalence elsewhere, I would have appreciated an exploration of the reasons for these silences.

With regard to research, she explores:

- Similar "us as one sort vs. us as another sort" boundary object, and
- A very broad, innovative, "outside the box" concept of research.

She is similarly alive to contradictions in the research arena:

- On the one hand, an ideology that all the members of the organization do it vs. a natural science-oriented prestige hierarchy borrowed from academia;
- A conflict over policy vs. individually-determined research program;
- The ideal vs. actual; and
- Again, gender.

Like many Swedes who read this work, I was aware that Tools for Creativity no longer exists in this form. Given Pettersson's analysis, it is not difficult to come up with several reasons why this might be the case, many of which come down to basic contradictions in conception, let alone execution. One "cheap" summary of the dissertation would be that Tools for Creativity did not have a well-worked out organizational strategy.

Of course, as ethnology, the dissertation delivers

much more than this. I see several implications that can be drawn from its analysis. One intellectual lesson concerns the deep complexity of engineering IT creativity. While Pettersson's research illuminates several steps that might be taken were one to attempt this again, it in no way suggests that this would now be an easy task. At a more general level, like all good ethnography of technology, Pettersson demonstrates again the deep relevance of the cultural to the technical, as well as the pitfalls of acting in ignorance of this relevance.

On a practical level, Pettersson's analysis directs our attention to the centrality of carrying through structurally on any challenge to change the nature of "research." Minimally, for example, this would mean making the reward structure not only visible but also reflective of notions like each staff member's research is of equal value, at least potentially. It also suggests the limits to conceiving of research in only multidisciplinary rather than transdisciplinary terms. To do the latter means not only broadening the range of skills that "count" as producing research; it also demands good answers to questions like, "Newness" for what?

In addition, several other important issues are flagged by Pettersson's work. One is why these practices, especially in the arts and in Sweden, remain so substantially gendered. Another is the complex, reflexive role of the ethnographer in the study of techno-sciences; in this case, as equally both "artist (humanist)" and researcher (scientist). C.P. Snow's "two cultures" split is alive and well in this contemporary Swedish organization, and when one does ethnography of techno-science, one is likely to embody the contradictions manifest in workspace like these.

Praise and Areas for Possible Improvement

There are several reasons for complimenting Helena Pettersson's work. One is on her selection of an important site for her research. Tools for Creativity might even serve as an equivalent for technology of the site for "laboratory life" chosen by Latour and Woolgar. She is also to be praised for her sensitive, well-worked out entry to the site. The dissertation manifests good, well-articulated familiarity with a broad range of usefully applied and relevant literatures. It is also marked by effective analysis and a rich analytic frame.

At the same time, more could have been made of the opportunities the research provided. I feel the conclusions were too brief. Perhaps they should have included and amplified the reflections on the ethnographer's

role presented in the introduction. (Here, they could not be easily grounded in the research experience, with which the reader was not yet familiar.) Additionally, the analysis could maybe have been more dynamic. One way this might have been done, even a bit dramatically, would have been to relate the analysis to the fate of this organization. The analysis is very suggestive of why it failed to thrive, and conclusions might have been framed in part in terms of hints at how future efforts to foster creativity, or to overcome two culture divides, might be pursued. Where possible, I think we need to show the practical relevance of well-done academic research. When we don't do this enough, when we can, we put our access to field sites at risk.

Finally, I think the payoff of certain analytic elements could have been more explicit and drawn out in greater detail. That this worksite was gendered is clear, but not what we learn about gendering or technology in general from this case. Another writing suggestion is to use more description, especially in the beginning. This is a way to introduce an author's own understanding of what is going on and make them a greater presence in the analysis to come. This helps avoid an over-reliance on the quoted language of other, perhaps more well-known analysts, which often obscures rather than sharpening analytic claims. Finally, I draw on "opponent privilege" to ride a personal hobby-horse and object to the analytic use of the concept, "social capital" as a gloss on the perfectly fine notion of "resource." At least one of Tools for Creativity's problems was the contradictions in its relations to the reproduction of "real" capital. I understand that, while it was supposed to make an eventual contribution to the Swedish market economy, it was prevented from developing and marketing commodities in the short run. Getting straight just what can reasonably be expected from such enterprises in relation to the reproduction of capital is an important issue in understanding the role of research in the reproduction of contemporary social formations. Fuzzy talk encouraged by imprecise notions like social capital may even have been another problem with which Tools for Creativity was not able to deal.

Final Questions

I concluded my opponent presentation with the following questions for Helena Pettersson: So, why didn't Tools for Creativity succeed? How relevant were the contradictions in cultural constructions identified in the dissertation to its demise?

What insights can be gleaned from this research into how to create transdisciplinary collaboration between those trained in natural science and in the humanities? Specifically with regard to Swedish Ethnology, what, if anything, is Swedish about the experiences recounted? On reflection, are there problems (e.g., of “auto-ethnography”) that arise from having this research on research in Sweden being done by a Swede with academic training in Sweden?

David Hakken, Indiana University

Jesper Falkheimer: *Att gestalta en region. Källornas strategier och mediernas föreställningar om Öresund*. Makadam förlag, Göteborg och Stockholm 2004. 244 s., ill. English summary. ISBN 91-7061-008-8.

Forskningen om Öresundsregionen har varit rätt omfattande under senare år. Med medieforskaren Jesper Falkheimers doktorsavhandling *Att gestalta en region* tillförs denna forskning ytterligare en studie. Gränsområdet mellan Sverige och Danmark har blivit en riktig guldgruva för forskarna vid de sydsvenska och östdanska universiteten och högskolorna. Detta till sådan grad att fenomenet i fråga – den transnationella Öresundsregionen – ofta framträder som själva huvudsaken när forskningens inriktning och mål ska formuleras. Denna utveckling, som innebär att forskningsobjektet styr forskningsfrågorna snarare än tvärtom, återspeglar sig också i Falkheimers sätt att beskriva bakgrunden till och syftet med sitt arbete. Allt ljus riktas omedelbart mot Öresundsregionen. De forskningsfrågor som presenteras, om bl.a. makt och social konstruktion, saknar inte alls egenvärde generellt sett. Men i skuggan av regionen reduceras de till en lista med punkter, vars huvudsakliga uppgift ska vara att problematisera Öresundsregionen som företeelse, men som i själva verket riskerar att bara illustrera densamma. Undersökningens inledande sidor når sålunda en kulmen med konstaterandet att ”Öresundsregionaliseringen genom medierna utgör centrum i denna avhandling” (s. 12) samt ett efterföljande batteri av relevanta Öresundsregionfrågor:

Vilken betydelse och roll hade de professionella källorna [mer om detta uttryck nedan] och massmedierna för Öresundseuforin år 2000? Vilka berättelser och föreställningar fyllde de dominerande danska och

svenska medierna under åren kring brobeslut, byggstart, broöppning och tiden därefter? Med andra ord – hur och av vem har Öresundsregionen konstruerats i medierna under perioden 1991–2001? (s. 12).

Några sidor längre fram skrivs syftet med avhandlingen ut explicit:

... att beskriva, förstå och problematisera hur Öresundsregionen som social föreställning konstruerades och gestaltades i dominerande regionala svenska och danska dagstidningar 1991–2001. Detta innebär att två dimensioner särskilt behandlas – dels de kommunikationsstrategier som tillämpats av ett urval professionella källor utanför medierna, dels de gestaltningar och föreställningar som förmedlats i ett urval dagstidningar (s. 16).

Även Falkheimers analys präglas bitvis av den tendens som all Öresundsregionforskning, också den kritiska och dekonstruktivistiskt orienterade, svårligen kan undvika att bidra till, nämligen till att avgränsa och definiera Öresundsregionen som naturlig och närvarande och därigenom förvandla den till ett ur territoriell synpunkt essentiellt område, om än senmodernt och problematiskt. Denna objektifiering av regionen ser man tydligast i undersökningens femte kapitel, ”Medierna och Öresundsregionen”. Kapitlet är en beskrivning av det regionala medielandskapet – tidningar, radio, tv – men blir samtidigt också en utsaga om Öresundsregionen, som låser författaren i en definition av vad denna region omfattar, en definition som dessutom har överensstämmande drag med hur forskningspersonerna i studien – den mediala eliten – sannolikt uppfattar Öresundsregionen. Förutom att kapitlet drar upp alltför strikta gränser mot angränsande platser och rum, så utesluter det också de mediala röster och uppfattningar om regionen som råkar sakna egen redaktion i området. Båda dessa avgränsningar är betänkliga om man som Falkheimer är intresserad av maktfrågor med koppling till de mediala föreställningarna om regionen.

Forskningens fetisivering av regionen, låt oss kalla det så, är paradoxal eftersom målet med analyserna ofta är att genomskåda och avslöja hur olika grupper i samhället på ett både godtyckligt och motstridigt sätt konstruerar Öresundsregionen. Konsekvensen av att allt ljus faller på Öresundsregionen blir likväl att forskarna själva, ingen nämnd och ingen glömd, ansluter sig till den heterogena gemenskap som skapar Öresundsregio-