

Förkroppsligad fiktion och fiktionaliserade kroppar

Levande rollspel i Östersjöregionen

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Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i etnologi vid Stockholms universitet som offentligen kommer att försvaras tisdagen den 10 juni 2014 kl. 10.00 i hörsal 4, hus B, Universitetsvägen 10 B.

Abstract

Embodied Fiction and Fictionalised Bodies. Live Action Role-playing in the Baltic Sea Region

This dissertation concerns live action role-playing (larp). Larp may be described as improvised theater without an audience, as participants simultaneously embody both audience and actor in their constant interaction with one another. Hence, larp can be seen as a participatory culture. The study is based on participant observation, interviews and online ethnography in Denmark, Latvia, Sweden and Norway.

The aim of the thesis is to analyze how bodies materialize, take and are given space in larps. At the heart of the study lie questions on how processes of embodiment are enacted before, during and after the game.

Two central concepts - *larp chronotope* and *matrix of interpretation* – shape the analysis. The first denotes the specific timespace in which a larp takes place, e.g a Soviet military camp or a fantasy world. The second concept stands for a general matrix of norms that informs participants on how to enact their characters in the larp chronotope.

The thesis shows that participants strive to act in ways that are intelligible according to the matrix of interpretation that reigns during the game days. In addition, although game and everyday matrixes of interpretations are always inseparable, while attending a larp the participant's ordinary lives are temporarily allowed to fade into the background. Thus, larps are complex combinations of objects, spaces and bodies that are given new relations and new meanings.

Furthermore, the thesis shows that larp embodiment is conditioned by normative ideas of what it means to be an intelligible live action role player. White male bodies are more likely to access the sphere of larp intelligibility than others, which is evident in many of the stories and made up worlds portrayed in the study. Yet, the collaborative narration of game worlds that take place before larps can include all sorts of bodies. Consequently, larps provide an opportunity for alternative forms of embodiment and experiences.

Keywords: *queer phenomenology, live action role-playing, larp, games, roleplay, ludology, materialization, embodiment, the body, gender, heterosexual matrix, participatory culture, performance.*

Stockholm 2014

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-103211>

ISBN 978-91-87235-82-5 (Print)

ISBN 978-91-87235-81-8 (PDF)

ISSN 1653-851X

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