



# “THE BOOK” (2001)

The First Knudepunkt book ever

The Claus Raasted edition





## Welcome (back) to THE BOOK

In 2001, the fifth Knudepunkt/Solmukohta/yadayadaya took place. The event had started in Norway and after journeying to Sweden, Denmark and Finland, it had now come full circle. For this reason and probably a ton of others, the Norwegians decided to do... a book!

The book was a rambling collection of practical instructions, manifestos, weird artsy layout and strange texts on local larp scenes. But it was a start, and a great one. The idea wasn't copied in 2002, but in 2003 the Danes (woohoo, that's us!) produced "As Larp Grows Up", which is often counted as the first real KP-book. It wasn't. This book was. But the 2003 book took it to the next level, and since then we've had a book each year (and 3 in 2011).

The year is now 2012 and there are no less than 13 KP books on my shelf. I love that. And even though I didn't get the first one in 2001, but many years later, I'm still immensely glad I have it.

Oh, and for those of you wondering why I'm the one writing this introduction, that's a good question. I wasn't an editor of the 2001 book. I didn't write anything for it. I didn't even get one until 2008 or so. Hell, I wasn't even *at* Knutepunkt 2001 in Norway (it's the only one I've missed since my first in '99). So why me?

Because I couldn't let Erlend's comment on facebook stand. Two hours of dedicated scanning and another hour of picture hunting down nostalgia lane and some InDesign cut/paste later, here's the result. It's not particularly pretty, as I went for the gritty feel of the original (you're even getting the stains and hand-written ownership claim here). But it's there. And to the documenter go the spoils. At least, until someone does it better.

I hope you'll enjoy it as much as I did.

Claus Raasted  
June 28, 2012,  
timestamp: 21:04



**Petter Karlsson** Yeah... When will we see The Book as pdf??

for for 10 timer siden siden via mobil · Synes godt om · 2



**Jaakko Stenros** Someone with a scanner should just scan it and release it into the wild. Preferably an editor, though...

for 9 timer siden · Synes godt om · 2



**Erlend Eidsem Hansen** Well. The editor among others being me. Have had far too much to do the last 10 years to do that. But I guess now might be a good time. As technology has greatly improved..

for for 9 timer siden siden via mobil · Synes godt om · 1

facebook june 28, 2012  
timestamp: 20:16

THE BOOK





THE BOOK  
KNUTEPUNKT 2001

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Knutepunkt 2001, Oslo - Norway  
Articles, manifests, presentations, drawings:  
The contributors

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# CONTENTS



Ladies and gentlemen, We are now presenting KP01!

THE BOOK - KNUTEPUNKT 2001	
Editorial.....	04
Welcome.....	05
KP Online.....	06
GiHa-DraMaK.....	07
THE ARTICLES	11
Knutepunkt; A retrospective vizualisation.....	12
Developing a Character.....	16
Pre-LARP Communication.....	18
Cultural Studies and Role-Playing.....	21
The LRP-phenomenon.....	23
Norwegian Vampire LARP.....	26
Factors of LARP.....	28
Historical Worlds.....	30
Before Full Time.....	33
LARP on the Net.....	35
Experience History.....	36
Politically Consciousness-Expanding Roleplaying.....	40
Why LARP Changed the Society Before 2010.....	43
Emotions and Authority.....	47
LARP = Sex?.....	49
Hidden Plays in Public Places.....	51
Building Dramatics.....	54
Two-Faced Dogme-Auteur Truth.....	58
About the Feminist Movement.....	61
Warning - Selfdistraction has Started.....	62
THE MANIFESTS	65
Introduction	66
Rules of the Post Bjorneborgian School.....	67
The Manifest Sunday.....	68
Brosme 9,9 kg.....	69
Dogma '99.....	70
THE COUNTRIES	73
Larping in Sweden.....	74
Larping in Denmark.....	76
Rovaniemi.....	77
Larping in Norway.....	78
In the Nordic Castle of Murmansk.....	80
Larps and Stripes.....	82
THE REGULATIONS.....	85
THE PEOPLE.....	89



## EDITORIAL

So what is the right way of larping?

We never tried to give you any answers because there aren't any. Not one single one anyway. In this book you have seen many different meanings. You have been given both answers and questions. Neither you or we have to agree to any of those, but we feel that it is important to show as many "sides to the story" as possible. We believe that indifference creates debate, and we also believe that these debates develop us. We think the openness towards each other, and the new impulses from our fellow "larpers" cross the borders, will take us further.

What did we want to accomplish with "The Book"?  
"Knutepunkt" ends its first circle this year, so we thought a little summery was in order.

- What's going on in the other countries?
- Have we learned anything from each other since we started?

We wanted to show the diversity, and give you an insight of the different thoughts about the dream, the tool, the game, the media and the vision that LARP is.

We hope we have succeeded and that you now have a broader perspective than before you opened this book.

We have only been collectors. None of these articles have been censored and the writers themselves are responsible for its content.

Thanks to all of the contributors! Thanks for giving us your thoughts...

Propaganda wishes you all a rich, interesting, funny and great "Knutepunkt" 2001!!!

Best wishes from

Anethe Alfsvåg – General  
Erlend Eidsem Hansen – Vice General  
Ingrid Storrø – Baronesse  
Tommy Finsen – Baron Ball

Bjørn Rugstad – Consulent  
Helge H. Jensen – Consulent



## WELCOME

Ladies and gentlemen: We are now presenting KP01!

On behalf of the committee I wish you all welcome.

We are glad to see that you chose too participate at the Nordic larpcongress. Because that is what we hope you will do, participate. When we first started planning KP01, we had a tough decision to make. What is KP01 going to contain, how do we inspire and entertain these larpers? Then, as a lightning stroke from clear skies, it struck us:

Larpers want to make new contacts:

-let us make an arena for connections.

Larpers attending KP01 want to be inspired:

-let us make a place where ideas flow, and experience is shared.

Larpers want to have fun:

-and we know they will make it fun.

And so here we are. We have made the arena, everything is ready: We can offer workshops, debates, discussions and more, but the crucial part is your involvement.

I did not do this all alone. A hard working committee has been in action for days and nights. Numbers of people helped in every way that we needed. Many also work hard during this convention. So now I need to say:

THANK YOU.

Benedikte.





# KP-ONLINE

Tommy Finsen  
tommyball@laiv.org

The Knutepunkt saga has now gone "full circle". Time to experiment. To try out something "new". I myself was somewhat opposed to the idea of people spending time in front of a computer at Knutepunkt; I felt that they should be mingling with the other KP-participants instead. But popular demand, and some creative convincing, got me committed to the project. Ironically even the potential failure of KP-Online, will for me be considered a success :)

So, what IS this KP-Online thing?

A WEBSITE WHERE PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WILL BE FOLLOWING KP AS IT UNFOLDS

- News, interviews and articles by the people who attend the festival, posted continuously.
- Pictures, videos, and maybe (unconfirmed at the time og writing) web-cams. Areas with web-cams will be marked by "warning"-signs.
- Web-based discussion-board.
- Real time chat channel (IRC)

A WEBSITE WHERE KP-PARTICIPANTS CAN FIND

- To-the-minute updated program with all the details.
- Announcements.
- All kinds of practical information.
- Info-terminals for use by the participants, placed throughout the "compound", and connected to the

Internet and (of course) KP-Online.

- A live and sizzling team of writers, cameramen (still and video), graphics artists, editors, freaks and geeks, from the participating nations.

THE GOALS OF THIS PROJECT ARE

- To let all those who, for some reason or other could not be there, participate.
- Show them what a great time everyone is having. They will be there next year. :)
- Document the entire extravaganza. Future KP-organizers may use it in their PR. The egomaniacs can point and say: "I was there. That's me in the centre, with the dancing pixies."
- Expose the Nordic ways of LARPing to the world.

Most of this will be done through a web-based publishing system specially made for the event. Anyone with the ability to manoeuvre the web, and use a keyboard ;), can join the KP-Online team.

The truth of what happened at KP'01 will be in our hands \*grin\*

Join the KP-Online team!

Send mail to: [tommyball@laiv.org](mailto:tommyball@laiv.org)



Erlend Eidsen Hansen

# GIHA-DRAMAK

## Larp-writing Seminar 2001

The first thing about larp-writing is to know that it is not about writing. It is about noting and planning. It is about creating lies for others to believe. And it is not essential that you are able to transform it into text.

WHAT TO BRING:

Old Newspapers, Magazines, Cartoons, Poems, Photos, Books with Paintings, Music, Instruments, Costumes, Pen, Pencil, Drawings, Photo-Shop

WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

GiHa-DraMaK 0: Who am I as an organiser and what kind of Larp would I like to plan

Related texts

Folktale: "Gilgamesh", Bram Stoker: "Dracula", Shakespeare: "Hamlet", "Matrix, the script", "Utskikk 1. Knappenålshovudet"

Related articles:

Morten Gade: "Factors of Larp", "Brosme 9.9 kg", "Dogme 99", "The post-Bjørneborg School"

Task:

Define yourself in max. 20 words, write or print it on a piece of paper and put it into the GiHa-DraMaK Box - next to the Information Desk

Prepare:

A 30 second introduction of yourself as we start the seminar.

If you arrive early:

Some copies of the above mention works will be available by the Info-Desk. Find a group. Help Erlend to Photo-copy material.

GILGAMESH - HAMLET - DRACULA - THE MATRIX - KNAPPENÅLSHOVUDET - In short: the GiHa-DraMaK

We have chosen to name this years organiser seminar after 5 seducing works of storytelling. This seminar is about different ways of working together in a creative process.

To get this straight we will have to have a creative process. This is a group-oriented seminar. People may work alone, but might not get as much out of it while not attending in-between meetings in a group of other seminar participants..

Something is supposed to be produced to every session. I call it "the Task". In between sessions people are expected to work in groups of 5-7. A group-meeting should not need to be more than 1 hour, although people who have time and enjoy this may easily use 2. (If you use more than this, you do something wrong.) Every group is expected to produce some improvisational product in a medium that communicates to the group (text, sound, drawings, video?) the result of their group-work. Every time we gather for a GiHa-DraMaK session. 2 of the groups is in advance told to present their task. Relevant problems are given a short discussion before we move on to the next theme.

How much time will this Seminar require? - First of all you should attend all 3 sessions. Secondly every task will require 1 hour of group-meeting, and 30 minutes of practical work. Every session is 1 hour; 10 minutes presentation of group-task + 20 minutes of discussion. 20 minutes introduction + 10 minutes for defining the next task to be solved. A total of 8 hours. (Of course if you make some kind of mini-larp or happening out of it, you will waste a lot more time - that is not the idea.

FRIDAY NIGHT : 18:00

GiHa-DraMaK 1:

The concept and the first contact with players

Related articles :

Cathrine Movold; "Pre-Larp communication"

Practical Host: Erlend Eidsem Hansen

Introduction: Martin Brodén : "Brainstorming"

Creative Process:

Making the first information about a larp, Brainstorming a concept

Group-Dynamics:

Constituting the organising group, deciding on practical goals and style

Task:

Write or organise a 10-min. performance presenting your new larp

SATURDAY MORNING : 12:00

GiHa-DraMaK 2:

Developing the Goal of the organisers and The writing of characters

Related articles:

Ragnhild Hutchinson : "Emotions and Authority", Holger Jacobsson: "Developing a character"

Practical Host: Morten Gunnerud

Introduction: Susanne Gräslund

Creative Process:

Composing of characters, relationships, and dialog with the players

Group-Dynamics:

Solving differences, Leadership, Defining areas of work, Communicating

SATURDAY AFTERNOON: 17:00

GiHa-DraMaK 3:

Making battle-plans and triggering players into characters. The realization, Preparing the Scene, The final stage, Start, The story-line of larp, Cutting play..

Related articles:

Erlend Eidsem Hansen: "Larp = Sex ?", Hilde Bryhn, Cathrine Movold & Margrete Raaum: "Experiencing History", Ingrid Fahlgren: "Before full time"

Practical Hostesses: Margrete Raaum, Hilde Bryhn

Introduction: Joc Koljonen : "Finally getting there"

Task:

Task1: Preparing for taking part in the official "Kill the organisers"- debate, recruiting players

Task 2: Designing a set of roles, their relation to each other and function in the concept

SUNDAY MORNING: 11:00-12:00

NB: We gather in the breakfast area

GiHa-DraMaK FINAL:

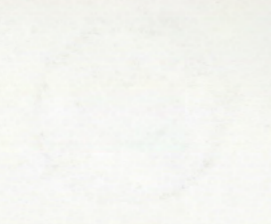
De-brief and Voting for this years GiHa-DraMaK-concept

Task:

Organising a mini-larp. Making an interview with a few players or Presenting players and their opinions on the work - Summary of the Seminar - Nordic Co-operation

Answering the question-form, before saying goodbye - listening to what the others have experienced in the confrontation with you.





FRIDAY NIGHT, 1900  
 One Director  
 The background and the first act played

Special address:  
 Culture Ministry, 1900, 1900, 1900

Director: Fritz Schumacher



FRIDAY NIGHT, 1900  
 One Director  
 The background and the first act played

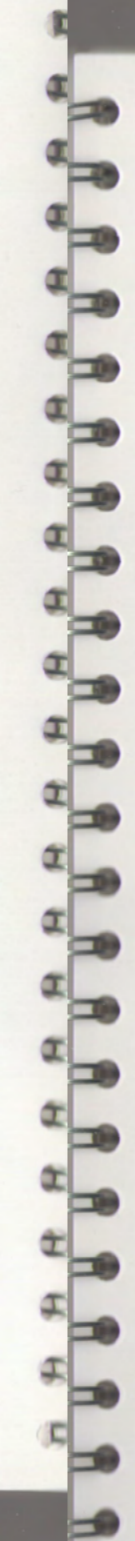
Special address:  
 Culture Ministry, 1900, 1900, 1900

Director: Fritz Schumacher

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, 1900

One Director  
 Making the plans and preparing the first directions.  
 The rehearsal, preparing the scene, the first stage, then  
 the story line of the first act, the first scene.

Special address:



KNUTEPUNKT  
 A retrospective visualization



THE ARTICLES





# KNUTEPUNKT

A retrospective vizualisation

Lars Munck





# KNUTEPUNKT

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE



# BEVEIDOPNING-A-CHARACTER





# DEVELOPING A CHARACTER

## Advice to LARP organisers/writers

Holger Jacobsson  
holgerjacobsson@hotmail.com

It's hard to give general advice about developing characters, since conditions vary. I will use this limited spot to describe some of the methods and procedures I've used in my earlier work.

In *Knappnålshuvudet* (one of the most elaborate Swedish larpventures ever), set in present time at an institution/retreat, treating the mentally insane as well as giving courses for selfdevelopment, my responsibility, among others, was developing the characters of the patients at the closed ward. Several months before the production, I initiated an e-mailcorrespondence with the participants, where we discussed my ideas of examining the essence of being Swedish and its diseases. We also initiated a discussion about human meetings with god. To make the characters come alive and becoming human, I started with asking the participants what feelings they wanted to explore and how they wanted to express them. Other things like the education and the professions of the characters became a later question, since a person's professional status rarely says anything about what she is really like.

I believe many LARPer would benefit from choosing their character on grounds of basic personal qualities rather than their profession. In stead of producing a mass of text I gave the participants questions about their character while I tried to gently push them along to where they fitted in to my main story. I was very much inspired by this dialogue. The tale that we all created, though under my guidance, became better than it would have been had I laid down the dramatic curve and all the relationships between the characters from the beginning. To put my participants in the right mood I tried giving them abstract input, like poems, illustrations and simple objects. It was also important to



find connections between the character and it's player.

Many of my participants chose to build characters around personal experiences and behavioural patterns. To guide your participants this way can be a veritable tightrope, since our mode of expression can be rather powerful, though handled with care, it may open a path to a better knowledge of ones self. The disadvantage of this mode of work is that it really requires committed players. This also makes it hard to replace any dropouts, since the parts are built on personal conditions and wishes.

I have earlier worked with a campaign, set in the Swedish 1920's. Several players used the months between productions to enter deeply into our tale. The productionteam became the moderators in a "playbymail" game that gave life to our world and the parts. The obvious drawback was that it was extremely time-consuming. Right after our last production we (the producers) felt that we had been a little too generous with the background information. Many of our participants had been handed over 30 pages of text

and a mass of handouts to study, apart from the compendia that all the participants received. I think this amount of information may dampen the LARPeXperience, since you cannot keep it all in your head at all times, like your part would have been able to. This disposition also encourages a competitive puzzlesolving that is today looked upon with contempt by many experienced LARPer.

My last project was *Hamlet Inifrån*, a co-operation between a LARPsociety, Interaktiva Uppsättningar, and Riksteatern, one of the more established cultural institutions in Sweden. Here the writing of the parts was a question of massproduction under a tight deadline, but that is a subject too extensive to be fitted in here.

There's a good chance that we'll soon be able to read about writing LARPparts and building the drama of a LARPproduction in a book, under production as we speak, collecting know-how and experience of some accomplished LARPproducers.

You'll hear from me again.





Cathrine Movold  
Translation:  
Margrete Raaum

# PRE-LARP COMMUNICATION

## Some views on why and how

The participant's intense expectations, waiting for the writer's word, and the writers' picture of what the LARP is going to be like, shows that a great deal of the total LARP experience starts long before the actual LARP. A LARP could be described as a medium seeking the impossible: Create realistic experiences in a fictionist reality. To achieve this, the LARP experience depends upon a mutual pre-LARP understanding between participants and writers. The aim of this article is to discuss the importance of pre-LARP communication that transfers the LARP visions from the writers to the participants. Vital issues and questions will be exploring the existing and alternative types of information-transfer, and trying to identify criteria for this kind of communication. The thoughts presented is partly from the laiv.org thread "Publishing of information before play-start" (note\*1)

### LARP AND COMMUNICATION

LARP can be looked upon as a setting constructed by the writers, to which the participants are expected to create their role-play. Although the participants are free to improvise during the LARP; their behaviour is still very much a product of the information they receive in advance. This is not a complete definition of LARP, but in my opinion mostLARPs can be analysed within this framework.

Sending out pre-LARP material therefore has a mission. Conveying visions, framework and content, so that all the participants can meet in the same context, with the same understanding of the framework. Different interpretations of the message can lead to very different understandings of what the theme is, and thereby creating totally differently based roles. In turn this often leads to difficulties in interaction. When the visions and the theme gets through

to the participants in advance, you lay grounds for powerful LARP-relationships and -experiences.

Like this, a Larp can be looked upon as a product of how the initial intentions are understood and later expressed in-game by the participants. Communication between these groups is vital because the information given and absorbed in advance, lays the grounds for the LARP.

### INFORMATION TO THE PEOPLE

Preparations before a LARP include meetings between the participant and the writer, and some writers like prologues and/or drama-training. In this brief article I would like to focus on the information sent out to the participant. This is not to say that this is a better way of doing things, simply that this is a way of giving information that doesn't take as much time and energy (travelling, coordination), both for the writer and the participant. Also, most writers use this way of informing the participants, so it can be looked upon as one of the cornerstones of LARP today and therefore probably influences our "everyday LARPing" a great deal. I will discuss the different types of "handout"-information, printed or in digital form. The text; written information on history, culture and the personal characteristics, is important in both categories.

### PRINTED MATERIAL: TEXT AND PICTURES

The traditional way of information transferring in Norway is to send out a common background (a compendium), and a personal role-description. There are advantages and drawbacks. The most important advantage are the limited demand both on the sender and receiver as far as resources. There are however some misconceptions as far as considering text "easy to use".

*"Most of the people writing compendia want in some way or another to consider themselves an author. A will to write doesn't necessarily mean you have talent. A common thing is to make long, quite boring compendia with a lot of text and not many pictures."* (Petter Bockman 181200)

Petter points out two major problems: Long texts, that neither conveys the facts of the setting, nor manages to convey the visions and thoughts of the writer - and the lack of pictures. This moves us back to the nature of the information. LARP is a complex way of expression, and it requires different, and sometimes complex ways of displaying to the participant the thoughts that grounds the LARP. Something in plain text can be difficult to imagine properly. LARP is "moving pictures", and the use of visual communication, both using pictures and thinking of the layout, can indeed help the actors understand the writer's message.

The use of text only can still be used successfully if you carefully consider how to trigger the process of association. An example would be texts from the LARP "A winter fairy-tale" (1997), a LARP with a setting similar to the Nordic fairy tales. A role-background would start out: "Once upon a time..." The rest of the text was written in a similar fashion, clearly similar to the traditional way of telling fairy-tales. Using text in such a manner would of course require that the actor is familiar with genre. The setting must be so well known that it gives everyone the same associations.

Used like this, text can create pictures of situations. Still I believe the use of pictures in compendia is important. These pictures will take the place of some of the images the participants create themselves, but these pictures will be the same for all participants, which can aid the struggle for a common ground.

### DIGITAL MEDIA: NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The use of web or CD-room can be looked upon as an extension of the printed media. In it's simplest form the process of development is the same, even though there are more possible ways of expression. Conclusions about

the printed media are therefore also valid in this context. As previously stated, LARP is a complex expression form, and the digital media may be a way to easily combine creative ways of presenting the visions and ideas.

*"One can get information and knowledge from different sources, like film and sound"* (Kaisa M. Lindahl 150101)

*"Using the internet to publish background material allows you to integrate speech, pictures, music and all kinds of other animated stuff"* (Karita Kristiansen 160101)

Kaisa and Karita are closing in on some of the really big advantages of the digital media: the use of "moving creators of anticipation", like sound and film. LARP is a total experience and challenge all the senses simultaneously. A presentation of the same complexity can maybe facilitate explaining the creative ground on which the writers stand. Film has qualities that easily can be transferred to LARP. Information about culture, history, the background and framework is much easier given through film, this especially true when dealing with newcomers. It is very difficult understand what LARP really is about from a text only.

*"The film to Kybergensis was one of the main reasons I decided not to participate. For once I was able to think thoroughly through a LARP on beforehand, I knew what the LARP was all about"* (Ingrid Storø 150101)

Digital media makes film a good tool for information - you can even send it to peoples on a CD-room. Ingrid's experiences show us what kind of picture the film can create, and how you can create the right kind of expectations. It also shows us that the main thing about information is not about recruiting, but to help the potential participants consider whether to join or not. This can result in a LARP where the actors are much better prepared mentally.

Hyper-linking can be used to create variations in the material. The possibility of breaking down the information into small modules and creating non-linear navigation between



these makes you able to present the text in a very dynamic and creative fashion. The interaction between the material presented and the actor can make the information seem more interesting, and make the actor read the material more thoroughly. However, the quality is important. Kaisa expresses this:

*"Knowledge about the technology is a prerequisite! A lot of information takes you no-where as long as it is unmanageable. Cool homepage-layout doesn't compensate for the lack of substance. You need more than one person to maintain the information, or else that person gets a heart-attack or the job isn't done properly."* (Kaisa M. Lindahl 150101)

You need a certain level of competence to use the technology correctly. Behind a seemingly loose internet-structure, there must be a modular, well thought through solution if the navigation is to function as planned. However, the fear of technology should not inhibit LARP-makers, denying them the use of this medium if this is something that could enhance their LARP.

#### CONCLUSIONS: SIMPLICITY AND COMPLEXITY

I have in this article tried to throw a light upon some of the methods that can be used to display to the actors the intent and visions of the writers. The actors' perception of the writer's vision, and their expression of this in the game is the fundamentals of LARP. By giving the participants a common ground and framework, you can create understanding, integration and excellent interaction.

As I mentioned in the beginning, LARP is in many ways aiming for the impossible: to construct a complete, alternative reality. LARP, as life itself, is complex. It is put together of all the phenomena which build what we feel is reality. It integrates all the participants into a whole. Because the product, which is to be created through information, is so complex, the ways of presenting the information need to be so, too. At the same time you need to consider simplicity and precision. Simplicity and complexity are not necessarily opposites; a simple, concise, sub-

stance may be presented in a complex manner, to better give an understanding of the LARP.

In my opinion it is important to keep the substance, what you really want to say, simple and to the point, and that the information to the actors is concise, limited and structured, especially as part of the word you are trying to create. There is such a thing as too much information. The complexity should be created through the media through which the writer chooses to express his/her visions. A "total experience" like LARP, is hard to express through text or pictures alone, and will benefit from the use of media which forces the actor to use several senses, like LARP itself does. Visions absorbed in alternative fashions will take the place of the actor's own anticipations, often that way avoiding misconceptions about the LARP. The digitalization of information presents a new, exciting possibility to create a new generation background material forLARPs.

The most intense moments from a LARP are unbelievable and inexplicable. The best LARP experiences rises above fiction, and enter your innermost emotions. The most intense moments will always occur while playing. Still; pre-LARP communication is the base on which these moments are built on.

#### NOTES

Note \*1:  
<http://www.laiv.org/ubb/Forum3/HTML/000055.html>



Frans Mäyrä  
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## CULTURAL STUDIES AND ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing has been a continuous presence in the Western cultural map for some thirty years now. Yet, this field has not received substantive amount of research or academic attention. This brief paper is an attempt to understand why the situation is such, and also outlines some starting points for further studies.

The first and perhaps main reason for the scarcity of investigation is the mutability of the subject matter. Role-playing is a very diverse phenomenon, and it could easily be claimed that it has no single object or activity at its core. Instead, we are speaking about a whole subcultural field of related phenomena. In addition, each of these can be approached from various angles. Such plurality poses several challenges: the scholar must be well versed both in many dimensions of popular culture, and also capable of relating these to relevant theories and methods, culled from the interdisciplinary jungle of (post)modern scholarship. There is no such discipline as role-playing studies; for time being cultural studies as a general meeting-place or bazaar of academic life is the best candidate for drawing together findings at this field.

The material settings and some actions need not be "themselves" in the game. Rather, they are interpreted as stand-ins for imagined features of another world, one that player characters (but not players themselves) are inhabiting. The experience of role-playing is one of mixed layers of reality, "real" and "imaginary" or simulated intertwining into a complex whole.

The plurality of role-playing field is related to its nature and origins. In spite of all the rule books that advertise themselves to be "role-playing games," you cannot get a RPG or LARP from a shop. Such source materials are

only starting points for players, who realize and explore their idea of role-playing as they go along. In theoretical terms, role-playing is not a phenomenon of material world as much as it is one of imagination and ideas. It is also temporal and ephemeral process, typically crystallising in a period of improvised activity of a group of role-players and game masters. A video recording of such a session, for example, does not necessarily convey the essentials as experienced by the participants.

"Game" is a central but also contested concept in this area. All role-players would not necessarily subscribe to the view that what they are doing is playing a game, this is only one particular interpretation. Yet, the historical roots of role-playing have close ties to the history of gaming. The make-believe aspect of playing and the rule-bound gaming behaviour are neighbours in the cultural map. The basis of role-playing is derived from at least three sources:

- 1) the strategic war games (miniature tabletop games),
- 2) fantasy literature and engrossment into its worlds, and
- 3) "murder mysteries" and other interactive parlour games.

Others could emphasise the ancient tradition of communal storytelling, commedia-dell-arte style of improvisational folk theatre, or the hobby of historical re-creation, depending on the particular form of role-playing one has in mind. The first commercial product, and the one that established "Role-Playing Game" (RPG) in the cultural vocabulary, was *Dungeons & Dragons* by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson (1974). The basic idea of Live Action Role-Playing (LARP) was in the air in the 1980's and it was "invented" independently in several parts of the world, in slightly different forms.



Game proved to be a powerful metaphor for the new cultural form that had been in demand since the 1960's. Ideas of co-operation and decentralisation were part of the countercultural and democratic ethos of those times and games have partly spread among students because of their free spirit. The form and content of role-playing is created at the "street-level" and it is not bound by the acceptance of any authority or establishment (as is often the case with traditional art and entertainment).

At the current moment, culture is being transformed by "interactivity" at an escalating rate. Internet and other forms of digital media offer viewers new ways of becoming participants in media culture that used to be based on one-directional broadcasts. The experiments and experiences of various role-playing subcultures are valuable subjects of study, as they both exemplify the grassroots activity of late modern, "tribal" society, and as they offer insights of the ongoing cultural transformation in general.



# THE LRP-PHENOMENON

## Reflexivity and Post-Modern Escapism



Lars Ivar  
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SUMMARY AND PRESENTATION OF WORK IN PROGRESS  
This article in progress (projected publication: Spring 2001) will explore various possible anthropological approaches to the LRP-phenomenon, which has received surprisingly little academic attention. Few, if any theoretical studies explore the phenomenon at any depth although a limited number of mainly North American psychologists and sociologists have focused on other related forms of role playing, also FRP. Such studies, however, tend to focus on potential therapeutic effects or role-playing and personality development.

Although firmly rooted in international trends and forms, Norwegian LRP has developed a number of unique local traditions, which are clearly deviant from the Anglo-American traditions and deserve attention as cultural phenomena in their own right. The same goes for other Nordic LRP-cultures. It would therefore be misleading to attempt to discuss the Nordic traditions in light of the Anglo-American traditions. Still, in a Norwegian context, hardly anything of substance has appeared that specifically treats the local varieties of LRP although a few dissertations on the subject are projected and one might expect more to follow.

The forthcoming article emphasizes that systematically conducted quantitative analysis is sorely needed as further interpretation of the phenomenon will need some basic facts about the background and composition of the LRP-subculture. Reliable statistics or quantitative data on the LRP-scene are completely lacking and it is at present impossible to make generalisations. The main focus are therefore my own personal reflections around reflexivity, post modern escapism and live role playing that I made while I was participating in the organisation of a number of small LRP-events in the years small indigenous community in

Central Mexico. My work initiated a deep interest in ritual theory in general and almost inevitably, I started to reflect on the possibility of applying anthropological theory to the LRP-phenomenon.

During the last three decades, anthropological ritual theory has often been applied to performance theory in general with a varying degree of success. A large number of studies have appeared that actively draw on anthropological concepts and discussions. Especially the works of the late Victor Turner have received a great amount of attention within these as in other fields. Especially his theories about the processes of separation, liminality and reintegration and social dramas based on van Gennep's old scheme have had an enormous impact on approaches to ritual and performance. The meaning and significance of a performance of any kind depends, however, on the existence of an audience. In anthropological studies of ritual and performance the active or passive participation of the audience is often a central part of the analysis. Such approaches cannot be applied to the study of LRP, of course. The absence of an audience highlights the difference between traditional and typical studies of ritual and performance and the study of the LRP phenomenon.

LRP displays indeed a large number of the characteristics that Turner attributed to liminal phenomena. The liminoid phase is perhaps even more pronounced and deeply felt by a participant in an LRP than by a participant in any theatrical or ritual performance. A participant in an LRP-event is given a unique opportunity to participate in "anti-structure" and might indulge in behaviours and values that under other circumstances would be condemned.

The closed nature of the phenomenon makes it difficult to access LRP through conventional anthropological or sociological methods. Only intense and deeply committed observing participation will allow the field worker to make sense of an LRP and in the end achieve the faintest idea of what this is all about. A LRP is not a public play or ritual. Actually, a general consensus seems to exist among the

participants themselves that any presence of spectators at an LRP is undesirable and would completely change the nature of the event. The study of LARP is therefore not, the study of historical re-enactments or reconstructions of the past, although this often is a major feature of many simulations and many participants invest an impressive amount of money and time in preparing and collecting authentic looking tools, costumes and equipments. Nor can LRP be accessed simply as a performance or a ritual, although there are certain tangents indeed. The study of this phenomenon inevitably becomes the study of human experience and subjectivity, which is one of the most challenging, but also rewarding fields of study.

The LRP-event is not merely a transcription enactment or even re-enactment of "actual" events. The LRP becomes a sequence of real events in their own right, which gives the phenomenon a character fundamentally distinct from any other variety of fictional drama or ritual performance. Statements or gestures made during a LRP by a player interacting with other players are not theatrical expressions. They are not a representation of discourse or in any case fictive. They are real, taking place in a real setting of communication. An individual's behaviour during an LRP has more in common with everyday human interaction than any forms of ceremonial or ritual behaviour.

The analysis therefore might emphasize the double dimension of LRP: the subjective experiences of the participating individuals and the actual occurrences taking place during the LRP in a fictive and constructed surrounding, which nevertheless is extremely real. It is impossible to dismiss an experience-experience as non-existing. This is a sharp contrast to the experiences of an actor in a performance, as the actor never will perceive the experiences of his character as real. A theatrical character does not have experiences. Only an actor has experiences as an actor, but these experiences are strictly separated from the character's experiences, regardless of the actor's ability to identify with his character on stage. The LRP-subcultures further include a number of integrative features, such as a common language, common symbols and common

experiences. The LRP-events allow a certain sense of community based on the involvement in the creation of a separate reality. The main argument will be that collective fantasies are negotiated fantasies that develop through interaction. The collective enterprise of creating a fictional world, however, is not equally shared by all participants and the article discusses various forms of participation and commitment as well as "deep" and "shallow" play in various settings.

The concluding part of the article will discuss the existence of the LRP-phenomenon as one extreme product of the cultural transformations that have occurred in Western Europe after the Industrial Revolution that released the individual from the bonds and constraints of tradition, social

hierarchies and nature itself. One could argue that the individual as it is understood in contemporary Western discourse as such is a product of these processes. The LRP-subcultures might be characterised as one category of contemporary counter-cultures in search for community and meaning. LRP might be, at least to a large number of participants, one post-modern form of escapism.

To some participants an element of nostalgia for a past with fixed identities, social stability and even ecological balance might be one reason for their attraction to the LRP-phenomenon, which traditionally often have used reinvented and romanticised settings from historical periods, although visual authenticity is given priority over attempts of recreating past mentalities and inner worlds.





Torggrim Husvik

# NORWEGIAN VAMPIRE LARP

## An odd bag of nuts in the World of Darkness?

In the world of Live Action Role-Playing, one genre sticks out as being somewhat different from the others in at least one aspect. Whereas Sword-and-Sorcery style fantasy LARPs differ a good bit in popularity and content from country to country and continent to continent, one trend remains in many ways very similar, no matter where you go: The tendency to dress up as undead bloodsuckers prowling the urban night. A major reason for this is without doubt the efforts of the resourceful souls of White Wolf Gaming Studios, who did not stop at the classic tabletop format when they built up their highly popular Vampire: The Masquerade line, but put a good amount of work into a system meant to enable Live Action vampire play.

Over the years, this Mind's Eye Theatre has become the vessel of choice for many groups of people eager to dress up as the Draculas and Lestats of their choice, remarkable in the fact that there exists an international overbuilding for such play. The Camarilla, an organization that sponsors sanctioned chapters all over the US and, from what this writer has heard, many other countries, has grown to have a lot of members. If one takes the time to browse through hundreds of web-pages dedicated to this activity, it appears that the general consensus among these people is to follow the Mind's Eye Theatre system as published, making it fully possible for a player in a San Diego LARP to go to Miami, Montreal, Madrid or Hamburg and find an ongoing chronicle of players following the same rules and general ideas. This might be a good thing. However, there is at least one place where many who want to use the setting and story ideas developed by White Wolf Gaming Studios have little love for the LARP system provided. And that is Norway.

As of this moment, I don't know how many of the groups that run Vampire LARPs in Scandinavia actually use the

Mind's Eye Theatre system. What I do know is that of the seven or more organizing groups I know of that currently do organize or did in the past organize LARP set in the World of Darkness as described by White Wolf material have worked with other systems. And a natural question would be "Why?" There is not to my knowledge any Camarilla-sanctioned groups in Norway. I don't know of any in Scandinavia, though they might very well exist. I believe this is related in several ways to other trends in the overall history of Norwegian, and maybe Scandinavian, LARP. When I speak my mind on these topics, I do so based on my experiences as a player in other Vampire LARP chronicles of past and present, and as one of the organizers of Trondheim-based Vampire group Dingo Frappe. Also as a long-time player and storyteller of White Wolf Gaming Studios' various tabletop roleplaying games, among them most of the World of Darkness line, and as a participant in various sort of LARPs since 1995, most of them not Vampire-related.

For starters, the Mind's Eye Theatre system does, to my knowledge, revolve around some central concepts. One of them is No Contact. Players are not supposed to touch each other. Conflicts of all sorts, be it combat, use of supernatural powers and otherwise, is handled through the use of Paper-Scissors-Rock, or Jun-Ken-Po. Replicas of weapons and tools are not used. Thus, the "action" element of Live Action is perhaps not what some of us in Norway associate with LARP.

This is something that makes perfect sense when one considers the fact that the phenomenon Mind's Eye Theatre originated in the US. To the casual outside observer, USA remains a distant place over the horizon where people sue, and get sued, for everything.

It is obvious that in a land where those grieving over a relative lost in a car-accident can be besieged by lawyers offering to sue any survivors, the manufacturer of the car and maybe even the local government for insufficient road signs (or simply having something as dangerous as a road), nobody wants to be responsible for putting out a game that might lead people to do something that might theoretically cause someone to hit each other (no matter how soft, no matter how padded a weapon, no matter how planned and careful), for the simple reason that while 99.99 % of all thinking people CAN touch each other without causing injury, that 0.01 % who does take a mighty swing with a heavy item or is unlucky enough to push someone at the EXACTLY wrong time, causing a fall, can easily result in a lawsuit that could break even a big company.

But we're not in the US. People don't sue each other at the drop of a hat. And Norwegian LARP is founded on principles of taking the playing of roles up from the table, out into motion. Dashing through the woods. Moving through the crowd. Talking to the masses. Huddling around the fire. Singing and drinking in the taverns. Comforting each other in the face of oppression and terror. LIVING the fantasy. Thus, resolving conflicts with comparing handsigns crashes horribly.

In Dingo Frappe, we use our own system, developed by taking concepts from the Vampire: The Masquerade RPG and mixing them with some tested and true LARP solutions, and some experimenting. We use in-game statistics based on a full character sheet as used in tabletop gaming, modified for LARP use. If combat ensues, tested and padded weapons or open-handed strikes are used. Safety rules are known and followed. We have had no injuries. For physical objects like weapons, we use adequate and safe physical representations, like the classical latex-based LARP sword. We even operate with physical representations for Blood Points, but these are not liquid, just slips of paper. Our system is developed with cooperation and inspiration

from other Norwegian LARP groups, like Oslo/Akershus based Carpe Nocturnem and Sanguis Noctis. Those groups use their own systems, parts of which are pretty similar to ours, parts of which are pretty different.

As an example of how we work, we use systems of coloured diode lights to simulate the Discipline of Presence, and dark hoods and ski masks with coloured bands to clearly show who uses the Discipline of Obfuscate, in both cases leaving arms and hands free for use, something which is integral to the original Disciplines as used in the tabletop game. To us, that makes sense.

We purposefully follow a policy of steady plot development. While we do not organize play as often as some other groups, we do not take in a big lot of new players each time either. Thus, we stay fully in touch with how many players are involved, and have the time to make sure they are all aware of what they need to know In Character, about their characters, what their statistics are, how they relate to others in the chronicle, and Out Of Character, with regard to safety rules, limitations, and guidelines for allowed areas. Like most other Norwegian LARP groups, we use the "Cut" rule, ensuring that any player who feels that a situation is too threatening, too emotionally or physically stressful or potentially difficult to handle can end the situation, taking herself out of the action.

Evidently, there is some difference between our way of playing the undead and the one endorsed by White Wolf Gaming Studios. Do we propose that our way is in any way better? Not necessarily. We swear to it, but others might have good experiences with Mind's Eye Theatre, or any other system. There are also LARPs out there revolving around vampires that do not use the World of Darkness setting. To each his own. That is the essence of Norwegian LARP to my mind. When our tastes differ, we set out to make what we want, rather than conform to any established strictures or official view. And for that, I am fond of LARPing here in Norway.





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## FACTORS OF LARP

This article describes the seven factors of LARP, as I know it. These factors are based on my experience of Danish LARP through five years, and my very little experience of Nordic LARP from Knudepunkt (1999) in Copenhagen and Solmukohta (2000) in Helsinki. The factors should explain what the players want from a LARP, and what potential LARP has.

But why would you want to use these factors at all? I see a number of reasons for this, but mainly it can help us to understand the nature of LARP and what potential it has. Also, it can help an organizer understand what factors his or her LARP must include in order to be a success with its players. Finally, it can give players an understanding of the organizers vision. However, there is a danger associate to using these factors to literal – it would take the creative element out of creating a LARP.

### THE FACTORS

I have been told to write this as brief as possible, so I will go straight to my subcategories.

#### *Adrenaline:*

LARP can help give players an adrenaline-shot, which entertains them, and also has the side effect that it helps players perceive the new world they are a part of, while participating in the game. You see the adrenaline-element playing a very big part in "boffer-LARPs", that is fantasy LARPs focusing on action on combat. This may be the reason that this kind of LARP is popular amongst many (Danish?) players. However, it is a factor that should not be underestimated, and should be a part of every LARP.

#### *Fun:*

Here defined as "comic relief". This is a more controversial factor, that most LARPs I have participated in uses. Fun should be used extremely carefully in a LARP as it can destroy much of the game, but when used right, it can be an accelerator of the game. Most players are not capable of staying in character for an entire scenario, and Fun gives them a chance to relate to the LARP and put it in a context. However, Fun can also pull players out of character.

#### *Intrigues:*

Here defined as LARP where the characters have objects, that they try to fulfill, through negotiations, etc. This works as a kind of "occupational therapy" for players, and usually gives them a good experience of the LARP. However the danger of this factor is that it inspires players to try to "win" the LARP, i.e. trying more to fulfill their goals than to play their role.

#### *Personality:*

When getting to know your character, and understanding the actions and reactions of this "person" is an objective of the LARP, it is an expression of the personality factor. A group of players and organizers find that this is a very important part of LARP, and I believe that this is in fact role-play in the strict sense. Use of the personality factor requires committed players, and lack of "action" may be a consequence of excessive use of the personality factor.

#### *Education:*

A lot of LARPs have it as a key factor that players should learn about history or other disciplines. This can be in the sense of reconstruction of a historical event – which harms the freedom of the players. More common, however, is it to use historical events as a "frame" for the LARP.

#### *Media:*

This is a factor that is very common in LARPs set in the future, but there is no demand about this. LARPs with the media factor usually have a superior message or vision. This can – for example – be a sociological, political or economic message. This factor utilizes the potential of LARP as a media, but have a tendency to focus less on the personality factor.

#### *Art:*

This might as well be called the X factor. It is hard to say when a LARP has art factors, and it is hard to say what to do, in order to make your LARP art. Never the less, my dictionary defines art as: "What is created by artists in moments of inspiration." What is more fitting on this definition than a truly innovative LARP? I guess you could say that the art factor in LARPs is all that which has not been tried before, the innovative and creative use of LARP.

#### LARP GENERATIONS?

In Denmark, different factors have been dominant over the last decade. When LARP started – and for quite some time – LARPs focused on adrenaline were common. Two or three years ago, however, Intrigues became the hot talk. But in the last couple of years, other factors have slowly started to emerge. Both Media-, Education- and Personality-dominated LARPs are common.

#### EXPLANATION OF WORDS

LARP is here used both as a single event and as the phenomena.

Organizer: or artist ☺

Player: Participant.

Do you have any comments or questions? Send me an email, I will be happy to explain or discuss my views.





Henrik Summanen

# HISTORICAL WORLDS

## New project establishes larping

The Swedish National Museum of Antiquities has for a long time encountered the problem that the regular visitor is an upper class woman with gray hair, and more interest for the café and temporary art exhibitions than for the artefacts. Now the museum explores new ways to find other groups with an interest for history.

The fact that the museum has almost no visitors in the ages 15-25, and especially not young men, made them turn their eyes on Sverok, the organization for larpers, roleplayers and some other forms of playing. Here they found people not only in the right age, but also with a natural interest in history and ancient artefacts. During the winter 1999-2000 they had their first meeting with a reference group of larpers and role-players, and during the spring they had received no less than 900 000 Sek for the project. Since november 2000 the project has been running, and it will terminate in september 2001. The aim is to create a homepage where you can find all the information you are interested in which the museum can provide, mostly directed towards roleplayers and larpers.

So, what are we interested in? The knowledge of larping and roleplaying at the museum was, by natural reasons, rather limited. A great part of the personnel has been employed since the 1970's, and for them anything connected to roleplaying has had a reputation of unseriousness and non-academic approach to historical periods. But for me, and a lot of my friends in the academic world, the virtues of larping as a pedagogic form is rather obvious. Possibly has it to do with how old you are. The museum chose me to take responsibility for the contents of the webpage. A good choice, I hope, because I'm both academically an archaeologist, and well informed of

Sveroks organization and the culture of larpers. Supported by a group authorised by Sverok, who will see to that the contents really are suitable for Sveroks members, I started in november 2000 to develop a sketch for the contents, and the following is what we have come down with so far. The webpage will also be possible to change and develop further in the future, so I'd gladly get some feedback from you on this article and the contents of the webpage.

### HISTORICAL WORLDS

The first idea, present in this project before I started to work with it and which all the financial support is given for, was to create a reconstructed past in a 3D-animated worlds (yes, that's why the project is called "historical worlds"). The period limits for the project are the Viking and medieval ages (the two periods we are supposed to be most interested in), but there is nothing that stops us from creating bronze age worlds or others later on. The concept is that the visitor will be able to "enter" the past, look at the artefacts in their own context, and to get further information about it from the databases just by clicking it. This is a way for the museum to give us a new way of looking at the artefacts, but also a pedagogical tool to make children and others more interested in the past.

The worlds will be created as the inside milieus of houses; i.e. a medieval cottage, a Viking hall, a medieval church, and an audience room in a castle. The number of rooms is not yet decided, neither is the technical way of "moving around" in the animated worlds. This part of the page is connected to another where two dictionaries, the medieval ABC and the Viking ABC, are found in electronic form. Here the visitor will be able to search different terms to see what it meant in the specific period. It will also be hyperlinked to other parts of the existing databases that the museum

have; the fotografic archive, the namesearch, and maybe the artefacts search.

An example of how the page works is that you enter the medieval church, you look around a bit and find the candleholder beside the altar rather nice, you click on it to get a clearer animated picture and get at the same time the links to the other archives and references. By further clicking you will be able to get a good photograph of the item, information of what it is and where it comes from, and a link to forging crafts, i.e. how it was made.

### CLOTHES AND SOURCEBOOKS

When the reference group entered the project, it became clear that most larpers requested patterns and descriptions of medieval clothes. We noted that most of this information was already available on the internet, but mostly in layouts and text which that are rather boring. The information was also in many cases very hard to find, and with lacking or bad reference resources. We decided that a page that was esthetic and easy to find, with good and up-to-date information, would be the cure for this obvious problem. The solution (at the time of writing this) is that we'll make nine complete reconstructions of Viking and medieval persons, all dressed up in hand sewn clothes. We will make them as close to the historic reality it is possible to get (within our economic boundaries, of course; it would be such a waste to use hand woven textiles in photographs when no one would be able to tell the difference).

From the total reconstruction picture you will be able to click on each garment in order to get some closer pictures, references for that specific item, patterns, and links to a handicraft site. This will be a lot of work for myself and the specialists at the museum, but I think it will be worth it.

In another part of the website you will be able to find historic maps, maybe animated to show the differences and developments over time. This is something often asked for by roleplayers and, of course, others interested in historical periods. The idea is to produce as many maps as possible, with different topics like demography, cities, geography, castles, water routes, and the process of converting from Paganism to Christianity.

The last part, also mostly relevant for roleplayers, is to write a sourcebook on the National Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm. This would be of perfect use for Call of Cthulhu-gamemasters or Kult-players. From the text it will also be possible to be inspired or get the background for larp scenarios, maybe in 1920's setting or later. Others will find it suitable for historic larps like bronze age scenarios. We will see what the authors will produce. Some have discussed the need for a "historical Scandinavia sourcebook", if we have the time this may also be included in the project.

The website will open in september, but a smaller teaser of how it will look will probably be available in May 2001. At present no domain-name is clear, but I'm sure you will find it from the museum's main site:  
<http://www.historiska.se>

### COOPERATION WITH ROLEPLAYERS: AN ANALYSIS

Something is happening in the world of museums. In the current difficult economic climate, the challenge of getting visitors to come to the exhibitions has made the methods used more and more sophisticated. This new direction at the National Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm has at least three explanations, all rooted in new philosophy and marketing.

The first can be called learning by experience: it is generally more easy to find understanding for a historical period by experiencing, by doing what they did, or seeing what they saw. This is of course a very good occasion to work with larpers or other groups interested in recreating historical periods; the visitors are generally very entertained by the chance to try on a medieval (reconstructed) helmet, or hold medieval pottery (also reconstructed of course). An important aspect of this is that for the normal visitor there is not really much difference between historical artefacts and reconstructed ones. For them it is all new and educating. In many cases it is even more interesting with the reconstructed items because they look like they did when medieval people used them. (Here another project at the museum can be mentioned. It's named "Between one time and another" and will exhibit reconstructed swords, made today by a smith, beside the old rusty things we are used



to seeing in a museum. The main topic is to focus on the great differences between how a museum employee looks on the finds in the collections, and how they really did look like in their own time of usage.)

The second reason for this new opening is what we can call "finding visitors by aiming at a single target group"-model. It is hard to make anything that suits everyone. As mentioned above, the museum has a problem with finding visitors in the age group where most roleplayers are active. The project is part of the remedy for this, and during three years roleplaying youth is a prioritized target group for the museum.

The third reason has to do not so much with the museum, as with the society as a whole. A while ago, someone said that we are not in the information age anymore; we have entered the fictional age. By this she meant that people in general are learning and experiencing through fiction rather than through academic results. A recent example is the new novel series from author Jan Guillou, based on a fictional character who becomes a Templar Knight in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Nothing is new in this, except that this time several museums took advantage of the great interest and organized special exhibitions on the subject. The same may happen when the film "Lord of the Rings - Part One"

will be released in the autumn of 2001, and the National Museum of Antiquities rises to the occasion with a planned exhibition of historical rings.

For this project, no group fits better than larpers and roleplayers. They already have a natural relation to "experiencing" and "trying", not to say "living" history. Their knowledge of this is of great use for the museum when such pedagogical methods are to be introduced. They also very often have a personal interest in history, and no target group is easier to invite than the one that would come anyway. When it comes to virtual worlds and fictional experience, we probably cannot find any other group more experienced in the matter. Now it is up to the roleplayers and larpers for decide for themselves what may come out of this. If you have any ideas, please let me hear of it - the most important museum for ancient times in Sweden is interested.

And you are always welcome for a visit!

Statens Historiska Museum  
Narvavägen 13-17, Stockholm  
Subway: Östermalmstorg or Karlaplan



Ingrid Fahlgren

## BEFORE FULL TIME

I have twice attended larps that have been broken off before full time. Both times there were good reasons for doing so, both times I felt very disappointed and frustrated.

The first time was Röd Måne (Red Moon), a larp inspired by Star Wars. There were three groups: the Rebels, who wanted to settle on the red moon, the Imperialist forces, who in pursuing the Rebels had had an accident and been forced to land, and the Magors, the non-human inhabitants of the moon. I was a Magor. The organizers' idea, as far as I had understood, was to give us the conditions and then let life go on, i.e. let the larp develop along its own lines. For us Magors, that was perfectly satisfying. We had full time work organizing our lives, what with survival, rituals, spying on the unwanted strangers and caring for our "maginido", the only baby in the clan, which was at that time in its chrysalis stage. But some of the others thought a more "epic" development was needed.

What I tell of next is hearsay, I wasn't there. But as far as I understand (again) a letter was sent from Imperialist headquarters to Rebel HQ, suggesting that the Imperialists should attack and conquer the Rebel camp on Saturday, and that the Rebels, with the help of the Magors, should take it back on Sunday at noon, thus creating a fitting end to the larp. I don't know how many people were informed, not many anyhow, but I have heard that the organizers were informed.

The first part took place according to plan. The Imperialists took the Rebel camp, threw out the Rebels (and some of their equipment) and the refugees turned up at the Magor village (or camp, we were nomads). There the trouble started. Magors are extremely xenophobic, so we just did not dare to let them in, we were afraid of being contami-

nated by their presence. We had a very real refugee problem, for of course we felt sorry for them, but there was nothing for it, at least not until we had had a clan meeting about it. And that was impossible, for as Magor organization is very hierarchic, we could not have a meeting without our leaders, and they were hiding in the forest in order to escape attacks. The long and the short of it is that we did not start receiving the refugees until the middle of the night. They had to wait outside the village the whole day, poorly equipped, poorly fed. And this was not summer, it was May, and an unusually cold May at that. In the end we gave them a cot-house and let them move in, but by then it was too dark to do a good job of it.

The counter-attack had been planned till about noon, so the Imperialists took it easy and celebrated their victory. (Hearsay again, of course.) But the Rebels did not get very much sleep, and besides attacks at dawn are more efficient, aren't they, so they started off early in the morning, and not in the best of moods for good role-playing. The Imperialists were sleeping, the Rebels were frozen and angry. The attack turned into a massacre, with very real physical hurts. Nobody remembered to shout "cut". When the organizers were woken up, they immediately stopped the whole situation, and also the whole larp.

There is no doubt that there were good reasons for stopping the situation. And for the people present it certainly seemed as if the larp was naturally over - what more was there to act out? If this had been a Star Wars film it would certainly have ended there. But this was not a film. In the Magor village we were sleeping, not knowing what had happened. Our life was to go on as before, and if the invading humans left, it was only a bonus. And we had a lot to settle in palaver, because of what had happened the



day before. As it was, these questions (why didn't the leaders come home and lead) were taken up in the de-briefing session instead, which was not the best occasion.

The second time a larp was stopped before full time, was De tusen rosornas väg (The Road of a Thousand Roses), a fantasy version of the Second World War. Rikon, more or less modelled on Nazi Germany, strove to spread its faith all over the world, but at this point they were driven back by the Empire of Darien and its allies. A group of Rikon soldiers were under siege in a fort. The idea of the organizers, very clearly stated, was to present war as the horror it is, not as a funny game.

In the second night (out of three) a feigned attack was planned. The outside forces were to attack and try to take the fort, but they were meant to retreat before the weapons of the defenders. Unfortunately the defenders were not very alert, maybe because too many of the officers knew that the attack was only meant to be a fake. After all there was one more day and night to go. So the attackers never got a good reason to retreat, and playing their roles to the full they jumped the walls, broke the door and started slaughtering. I was killed right at the beginning, and spent the fight lying still in the rain, with my leg at a funny angle and a mosquito on my upper lip, listening to what was going on around me, considering the fact that I would have to spend the next half of the larp in the off camp, and thoroughly enjoying the feeling of reality. And then comes the order to stop it all! Frustration!

This time there were no physical injuries to account for the break. The reason was that one side were practically wiped out, so again, what was there left to play? For the conquerors, yes, but not for the defeated=dead. Everybody was not as content as I to miss the second half of the larp for the sake of reality.

What was to be done? Nobody was very satisfied with leaving things as they were and start debriefing. The decision

the organizers settled for, was to regard the whole thing as a nightmare/wishful dream (depending on which side you belonged to) and start again next morning as if the battle had never happened. Some people left, not willing to start all over again. I would have been one of them, not believing it possible to "recharge", but my husband (IRL) persuaded me to stay. Which was good. For us inside the fort, with lots of internal plots, the feeling came back very quickly. But the attacks were not as convincing as before. It could have been because nothing could match that frantic night, but it could also be due to the frustration of the attackers. They had spent so much of their energy already, the wishful dream was probably more difficult to believe in than the nightmare, and they did not have a fort to keep them together. Nearly all complaints afterwards have come from that side, and I don't blame them.

I am not writing this to find fault with the organizers of either of the two above-mentioned larps. I am sure they did what they thought best, and it is quite possible that what they did was really the best thing to do in the circumstances. I want to point out the difficulties so that future organizers might be prepared for the worst. There is very little I can actually suggest to prevent a similar situation, except for two things:

**To organizers**

Always remember that you have more than one group of players to consider.

**To players**

Don't come forward with the suggestion to stop the larp. That is entirely up to the organizers alone.

What I really hope for is of course that other people start thinking about this and come out with ideas, both how to prevent this situation to happen, and what to do when it happens all the same.

# LARP ON THE NET



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Once upon the time there was role playing. People's imagination was the key to this game. After a few years someone made a brave turn and brought this mindgame out into the real world, in the form of Live Action Role Playing. Now the game has returned into the minds of the players again, through internet and online playing - but only to make the time between the "real" live games shorter, and to test new characters.

That was the general overview. In particular, I am talking about Syskonskapet Taire Dubhra, the website where I am webmaster. It's a relatively old site; we opened autumn 1996. As a web designer I had the technical contacts to start up a chat room where the visitors could meet and discuss everything about the real larping. That was my idea, anyhow. Suddenly I discovered that the visitors didn't talk about how to fix their latex weapons or where they should larp the next time. They were acting out fantasy characters, in a nonexistent world. This was a quite amusing discovery for me; I thought it was something that would disappear by itself, but the gaming just continued without having any background information regarding the world or rules. Ok, so I played along and named the room "Waerdshuset" - The Inn. I couldn't see the point of this game, and I still can't. But I have realised it means a lot to the visitors, nowadays there are about 50 players at the same time every evening in eight different chat rooms. It has been

explained to me that it is a great way of getting to know your real larp character, and there are many of the visitors that use the chat to get to know others in real life.

There has been three real-life gatherings where visitors from the chat rooms have larped in the same world as the one they frequent on the internet. This has been completely without our help as site owners. We haven't even been part of the larps. This is a great example of how the internet works; it is a creature with a life on it's own if you only put up the right platform and technical possibilities.

This small example of net use amongst larpers is fun enough in itself, but it also points at something bigger and more important: the potential for Internet use to influence our hobby. An increasing amount of organizers use the net to distribute information, but it certainly does not stop there. As in the above example, players are using the new tools available to them to give the hobby a new edge - interactive character creation and other larp preparation on the net makes it less important where the players are physically situated, and opens up for a future where larp is open to more people in more places.

Who knows where we can go from here?



Hilde Bryhn  
Cathrine Movold  
Margrete Raaum

# EXPERIENCING HISTORY

## Using LARP as education; experiences and visions.

*"At first I didn't think I was gonna survive without my cell-phone, you know. But then I just totally forgot all about it, and you can't imagine how terrified I was. When I saw the Germans coming down the road I knew I had to hide right away. I thought I was gonna die. It was for real. I wasn't Veronica any more...I was Berit."*

June 2000 Hilde Bryhn, Bjørn Kleven, Cathrine Movold and Margrete Raaum took on the task of arranging a LARP for 30 9th-graders from Runni middle-school in the county of Hedmark. The project was initiated by Kjersti Røe, a young history-teacher. She herself had attended severalLARPs and saw LARP as a way to revolutionize the education, hopefully adding an understanding books cannot provide.

The Runni LARP lasted 10 hours. Our focal point was WWII, using elements from "1944", two LARPs in which Bjørn and Margrete were two of the writers. During WWII, Norwegian youth were sent to "labour-duty", which often took place in camps. One of these camps was situated close to where Runni school is today, and this proved an ideal foundation on which to base our story. Runni is also situated near the Swedish border, and the fugitives were numerous in this area during the war. Most of the students played older youth, 18-23 yrs. Amongst these were roles as people from the resistance, nazis, some who had volunteered for the German army, guerrilla and local farmers. Volunteer LARPers from Oslo participated to prevent the game from stalling, they played the roles of Germans, guerrilla, photographers and cooks.

The time used to design the story for the class was time well spent. After some initial fumbling due to insecurity and inexperience the players started acting, though not always as independently as one could wish. The students had a

good time, they conquered their fears and disbeliefs, and found this highly rewarding. Based on our experience from doing this pilot, armed with new visions and strategies, we are now aiming at doing this on a regular basis, offering this method of learning to schools in Norway.

Working on the Runni project taught us that a LARP for students, as a part of the regular curriculum, needs a different structure than the regular LARPs. This kind of LARP differs not only in that there is a context, namely the curriculum/project in school, but also in the participant's mentality. There are mainly three involved parties: the students, the teachers and the parents, all needing thorough information about the event. The students have not chosen this as a pastime, it is more of a compulsory event. This, in turn, challenges the background material: working with the role and group backgrounds become homework, and are tempting to skip. In addition all the participants are novices, inexperienced in creating interesting situations, and repressed by the classical school mentality with a strong hierarchy, often making the students passive. In making such a LARP lies a challenge - creating a story, and making situations happen, giving the students a better understanding of history. The LARP should also encourage the young to debate, and relate the local situations to history.

### LARP AND SCHOOL - THE PERFECT MATCH?

There are many reasons why LARP can and should be used for educational purposes. LARP is an adventure from which you can learn - a chance to understand another era. While preparing for a LARP, most subjects can be integrated, everything from home economics to geography and maths. This way we can help students see the practical uses of these subjects. LARP can also help the students to make

up their own minds concerning moral and political issues.

The students can benefit from participating, not only when it comes to the subjects but also emotionally. Playing out another personality helps people learn more about themselves and their limits. Students in middle-school (ages 13-16) are very afraid of sticking out and being different. They find themselves in the middle of an identity crisis, they are often insecure and they act as a flock. Taking on a different identity can be both challenging and rewarding for the kids. LARP is also a brilliant way of teaching them teamwork - both in the preparations and during the event. You can design teamwork through the plot, putting them in different groups without the friends they are used to hang out with. This can teach them that it is fully possible to cooperate with other than the normal gang. Last, but not least, LARP is fun. If the students feel secure, are helped along when they are stuck, and are involved in exciting adventures, learning can be fun for most students.

### PREPARATIONS; CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

*"Come on! God! Don't tease!" Not all the boys are thrilled about having to wear their hair 40's style. "Just you wait! You're next" -they all laugh. Petra smiles encouragingly and raises her camera. "Sit still". The tough guys obey. Petra is young and attractive, and they are young and full of hormones. After having their picture taken they come over to the interview. "Are you afraid of anything". Stupid question. As if they are about to tell us they still sleep with a night light, that blood makes them woozy or that spiders is worse than written tests. It turns out one of their main concerns is their own (lack of) ability to act. We tell them to relax, there are no golden bears or Oscars to win. When asked if they have considered what kind of role they would like they hesitate. "Naaaa, well yeah. Can I be part of the reluctance?" I laugh; "The resistance, r-e-s-i-s-t-a-n-c-e."*

We visited Runni middle school to meet the students and take pictures for their IDs. We had asked for a meeting with all the students, but instead of an assembly, as we were expecting, the students turned up separately, some time between 18.00 and 20.00. It ended up being small quiet conversations, and we, the writers split up to talk to

the students and the parents simultaneously. We arranged with the teacher Kjersti to have the individual roles distributed at least a week in advance, she was to read all the roles and try to pick up on kids feeling uncomfortable with the situation. We also had made a short movie to explain what LARP is and how to prepare for a LARP, physically and emotionally. She was to show the movie to all the students.

Communication between the writers and the involved parties, students, teachers and parents is vital. They each have separate expectations and worries concerning the LARP, and it is the writers' responsibility to ensure they have a fair idea of what to expect, and that they are confident this is the right thing to do. The parents would seem to be the group least related to the LARP, but are no less important. Parents are used to volunteering for the kids' pastime activities, sometimes they even have to pay for compulsory activities. Negative vibes from this group will have a great impact, so naturally it is very important to inform them thoroughly. If they are positive to the event they represent potentially important contacts and good public relations. The teachers can participate in the LARP, they represent good partners and are a tremendous resource. It is important to make sure they know what LARP is, and how things work, as they will be both the students' and the parents' primary contact. A teacher can be a resource during the LARP. If placed in a role where they can "supervise" the students, they can pick up on problems much quicker than anyone else. Since they already know the students they can help deal with the more complicated situations that may arise. Still, the students are naturally the most important group. They are the real participants, they are to learn from an adventure. It is the student who have to overcome the problems in advance, not only are there a lot of preparations but also they have to overcome their fear of failure and of making fools of themselves. Many of the problems escalates because the students haven't quite understood what LARP is.

The traditional background material showed difficult to understand. Even with roles that were short and to the point, they had a hard time to grasp how the feelings and reac-

tions of the role were to be expressed. Even though instructions were given, it took quite a while before the LARP went smoothly, without our intervention, directly or indirectly. What was *comme il faut* during WWII, like the attitude towards the Germans were not acted upon until the students were able to watch the volunteers. One of our greatest challenges in the future will be to improve the background material. We feel that it is important to dwell by the dynamics of LARP, using a range of media. Hopefully, this will also make the info more interesting to the students.

**PLAYING; CREATING UNDERSTANDING AND INITIATIVE**  
*"30 15-year olds are gathered in a classroom. They are all wearing costumes, traditional rural clothes they would wear in the 40's. We hand out money and IDs, checking that they remember their new names. One last check: "any questions before we start?" There is a nervousness in the air. A girl finally says: "What is it exactly we are supposed to do?" The question lingers. Everyone is looking at the writers. "Anyone else who doesn't know what to do?" More nodding than not. What, indeed...here goes nothing "Ok, you've all read the background material..." Some of the students look down. Quite revealing, body language. "All right. Outside there is a bus waiting. The LARP will start on the bus." Everything is explained once more, and to calm them down they are once again explained how easy it is to get in touch with either us or one of their teachers. We enter the bus. Giggling teenage girls talking to their friends. All of a sudden the good atmosphere is torn apart. "SILENCE!" Jon has entered the bus, wearing a German uniform. He doesn't talk. He shouts. He is authority. Ha is terrifying. He makes the students line up alphabetically. Girls on the right, boys on the left. The students are quiet. One girl whispers to another: "uh-oh! This labour-camp is going to be nasty!"*

Not only communicating in advance is crucial for the success, but also the structure of the story/plot is important to consider for the flow and for believability. An important goal is for the students to recognize situations, this should be aimed at already in the making of the backgrounds, trying to create situations they can recognize will help them

through the first barriers, it also helps the students reflect upon the matters after the LARP. If roles include elements like infatuation, school, friendship, conflicts with parents etc they can more easily relate to the character, which in turn helps them spot the turning points in the character's life. Our next version will therefore be set in a school, letting the student's and the character's' ages be the same. Age is important. It makes it easier for the students to experience the historical differences, differences must be present of course. Recognition should not come in the way of the adventure and the new experiences.

The game progresses, and the participants work in the kitchen or in the field. They have some free time. The hours pass. Without a single complaint they eat their potato-patties, and participate in discussions about the meat-shortage. They listen to the hidden (forbidden) radio. The King's speech makes a lasting impression. The first few hours pass by slowly. All of a sudden it's takeoff. The students start plotting like crazy, mainly in groups of 3-4. Jewels are sold, they make phone-calls to their characters' acquaintances. The "volunteer nazi-police" prepare themselves to make some arrests, they are beginning to understand who are in the resistance. The Germans yell at some young boys - they are wearing illegal protest-badges.

*As the night falls, more and more student make up their minds of what to do. A loud bang is heard. The communists have blown the local German headquarter to kingdom come. The Germans gather all the students in the living room. One communist is taken into the kitchen. A shot is heard. This is terror. Everyone not considered pro-nazi is ordered to go outside and line up. Everyone is nervous. What is going to happen?*

Participants consisting of newcomers only, deserve and need help to get started. No matter how much information you give out before the LARP, doing it for real is tricky. It is vital to find ways of helping the kids get started, establish an environment and lay the grounds upon which they will base their acting. Instructed volunteers placed in all different groups is one way of doing it, they can help simply by being there as an example of a participant. They can help

bring out information you suspect the student have not absorbed. It is important, though, that the students participate more and more and do not become passive. A good thing can be to gradually pull the volunteers out of the LARP, leaving the story for the student to tell.

#### CONCLUSION; A LASTING MEMORY

When the LARP is over it is important to run the story by the students, relating them to a bigger picture. By listening to experiences, and observe the big picture, the students are lead to think thoroughly through the days' happenings. Together with the teacher they can on this ground (in the WWII-setting) discuss politics, ethics, propaganda, individualism and nationalism.

*The German soldiers march up and down in front of the students: "Anyone else wants to play tough? Anyone heard of Telavåg? I assure you. We have the power, and the punishment for disobedience is strict." All of a sudden the German soldier talking changes. He starts smiling and says: "THE LARP IS OVER! Thank you all so much!" The students are baffled. He has to repeat himself before the students move a finger. One of the girls is bursting with pride: "did you guys see the explosion? I did that! Boom, it went!"*





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# POLITICALLY CONSCIOUSNESS- EXPANDING LARPING

## ACTIONIST LARP: MACHINERY OF PROPAGATION AND FIELD OF EXPERIMENTATION

From the legendary Orwell-like LARP *Kybergenesis*, there is told an anecdote about a young man changing his mind. Before experiencing this totalitarian structure, he had been advocating a republican system dominated by the president and a strong central power. – Not a very democratic attitude, seen from our anarchistic standpoint. But after the game he had learned to appreciate the value of democratic principles. In this case, the whole event was conducted by larpwrights wanting to tell a story with a certain morality. Thus, this LARP worked as a centrally commanded apparatus of anarchist propaganda. In other less centralizedLARPs, there may be room enough for people and groups to unfold a variety of different stories. Personally, I have participated in stories that gave me some hints of the terrifying power of the building of informal interpersonal networks, an anarchist mode of domination.

How do these consciousness-expanding mechanisms of LARP work? It may be useful to develop a practically applicable political-aesthetical theory on this subject. Live-action roleplaying is not literature. It is not theatre. It is imaginary, but working in the way of ordinary social interaction (Dogme 99). When done artistically, LARP is interactive performance-art. The impact by the game on the actor may be considerable. The actor is actually taking an active part in the story. As Owesen-Lein Borge will show in a forthcoming article, it is difficult to keep the outside, objectivist, observant, distanced, not-personally-engaged attitude towards the character, as both actor and audience do in ordinary theatre. The participants in LARP experience active involvement in the situation, bodily identification with

the character, and thus a deep engagement in the story being told.

Our ways of thinking are socially and practically learned. They do not exist only in the individual mind. If we, dear reader, did not have some patterns of understanding in common, my writing would have no meaning to you. But ways of thinking are not the same everywhere and all the time. They are different in different surroundings: There are cultures of the nation-states, cultures of the social classes, international mass-culture, local subcultures, trans-urban subcultures. Our ways of thinking are culturally given patterns of behaviour, but at the same time, these intersubjective patterns are in a constant flux. Sometimes the traditional way of learning and doing will be kept for a long time, for example in the Norwegian valley *Setesdal*, where impulses from outside were very few until the turn of last century (1900). But at other times and places "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned." (Marx & Engels). This is the post-modernist mode of the artistic avant-garde and the true political left.

In structuralist philosophy and social science the spoken word, the written word and the play of the game is called parole, while the grammatical rules, the ways of thinking and the rules of the game are called langue. The dynamic interplay of impro-based arts like Jazz-jam and LARP, makes us realize, in body and mind, that the rules of a game may be changed through the play of the game.

## PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION: THE BATTLE ABOUT REALITY

### *Realize the Potentials*

"Realize" is a world playing on a two-fold meaning. One edge is psychological: Discover the potentials! The other edge is practical: Make the dream come true! "Reality" doesn't come ready-made! Reality is the continuous realization of potentials! "Realist" is not the person following the Rules of a taken-for-granted World Order. The realist is playing a game of realizing potentials. She is participating a little bit in the continuous re-casting of the World Order. This is what Marie-Curie did. This is what Mao did. This is what Dali did. This is what Nora did, when slamming the door as she left her dull doll-house. All these people were central actors in games that re-cast the World Order, by realizing unknown potentials. "Reality is what you think it is." "Our thought is a product of the dominating mode of production."

On one edge, a magic formula, on the other edge, a materialist slogan. They do not agree, but both of them are true! Reality is two-folded, as two aspects folded into each other. Our ways of thinking are not a kind of superstructure build upon an objective, unquestionable material reality. Our ways of thinking are a question of how to perceive reality. A mode of thinking is itself a Means of Production, and thus it is a fundamental part of a Mode of Production. Therefore it should be elevated to its legitimate place in the Basic Structures. Inside these structures we find the dominant, the hegemonic, the orthodox, the unjust and suppressing World Order, but we also find the means of production, the weapons, for the continuous re-casting of the World Order, the battle about reality, the realizing of potentials.

## HISTORICAL FOUNDATION: AVANT-GARDE AND REVOLUTION.

Modernism is the principle of change: Art is always seeking an avant-garde, Capitalism is always seeking growth of profit. Technology is always seeking innovation. The political left is always seeking liberation. But at the same time: Communism is in pursuit of the Millenium. Nazism

persecuted as a final solution. As World War I was the war to end all war (sic), both communism and nazism claim to represent the final stage in the dynamics of modernism. This was also the dream of Gerhardsen, the founder of Norwegian Social Democracy, and his Party Secretary Haakon Lie. This is the spirit of totalitarianism and social realism, e.g. the apparant fulfillment of a just World Order, the apparant entropy of potentials, a virtual "reality" without surrealism!

Modernity in a constant flux, always fucking itself, giving birth to new modernities (e.g. endless dialectics), this is the "post-modern" aspect of modernity. This is the tradition of the continuous revolution, always creating multiplicity, always realizing potentials. In the continuous revolution, the artistic avant-garde and the true political left have a common cause, and should therefore make an alliance! The search of the political left for liberation, is good material for the work of the artistic avant-garde. The search of the avant-garde, for expanding and altering our ways of thinking, is a useful weapon in the political battle.

Our ways of thinking are the means of producing reality. Realizing potentials is not only to alter the institutionalized practices and materialized structures. It is also to alter the ways of thinking, it is to alter the means of production, and the politics of the true left is the production of liberty. At the ideological level, this is a battle about reality.

Present Social Democratic Regimes of the Scandinavian states, are machineries specialized in the production of capital growth. The states produce optimal conditions for the production of technological innovations, which are the means of production of profit. The dynamic of capital growth is intense, at the exence of spiritual growth! The social democratic machines are specializing and disciplinating spiritual growth, making it a servant of capitalism: creativity of advertizing, creativity of engineering, and always the demand of cost-efficientness and profits in the culture-industries. This may have been a problem only for art, if social democracy had not left their former socialist and liberal pro-



gram. The social democratic machine has simply been re-programmed into a machine of profit. Therefore, it is also a political problem.

The real political left needs to declare a propaganda war, to spread the data-virus of liberation in the minds of labourers at all levels, all corners, in the machineries of society. The continuous revolution of the artistic avant-garde and the political left, need to make a post-modern, surrealistic collaboration against the totalizing Capitalist Machine that produce Profit at the cost of Just and Heterogeneity, the machine named, in the terms of its own new-speak, "Social Democracy".



#### CREDITS

Weltschmerz, Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, Ragnhild Hutchison, Supersilent, Lars Ivar Owesen-Lein Borge, Pierre Bourdieu, NihilistAssaultGroup, Dorothy Smith, Morten Gunnerud, Bergen Museum for Samtidskunst, Dogme 99, Rødfrent, Einstürzende Neubauten.

At the cutting edge of actionist LARP: After participating at Amerika, the author of this article made a micro-research project on experiences of the happening. The paper "Aksjonsforskning møter Aksjonskunst" is available upon request.

## WHY LARP CHANGED THE SOCIETY BEFORE 2010



Morten Gunnerud

#### SCENARIO NORWAY 2010

##### PREFACE

LARP evolved into a myriad of different flavours during the first 10 years of the 21. century. In addition to becoming THE hot topic of hip activity, it also participated in bringing down the sitting government in 2010, causing a change in the definition of democracy. After a quiet start in the 80'ies, the LARP society expanded in the 90'ies into different paths. The evolution into larger diversity of LARP forms came naturally, as more and more people got interested in the LARPphenomena.

##### MAINSTREAM LARP Mediaeval/Viking LARPs

This is where LARP originated. And also what most people connect to the word LARP. In addition to gothic/vampire LARPs, this is the original LARP form. It is a known and beloved style that always will pull a crowd of participants. These LARPs have laid the road for development into the following directions.

##### Save the world and find the treasure LARP.

LARP based on folk-tales and real history, where great effort is put into the authenticity of costumes, background, scenery and equipment, as well as weapons and fighting techniques.

"Fog over Blackwater" in 2000 was in reality a quite ordinary mediaeval LARP. It was not really badly planned, neither was it carelessness. The organisers cannot foresee everything. But something went terribly wrong. If it was the organisers that should have selected the participants better, or if the participants maybe should have had better preparation in advance, or maybe just an unfortunate

*mix of players, nobody knows. Anyway, it ended in a catastrophe. For the first time, a player died. Something in the security failed, and this led to fatal consequences for a participant. And also for the organisers. They were accused of negligence. The courts found them guilty, and they were sentenced to 6 months of prison.*

##### Live-steel fighters.

It was only natural, that after great focus had been set upon the authenticity of clothing and equipment used on a LARP, it could not be acceptable in a real authentic setting to use latex weapons. If real steel weapons were to be used, one also had to address the issue of learning how to use them. Live steel fighting was developed into a system of combat in which old authentic techniques was used in co-operation with acting so that no one got really hurt.

##### Re-enactments

In addition to the commonly used re-enactments of historic battles (as seen in England, USA etc.) the whole series of LARP s committed to telling the history of WW2 became so popular in Norway, that it was actually included as compulsory at college levels of education.

##### The never ending LARP

*It started with a wish to carry through a LARP where everyone lived authentic as in the mediaeval age. The first of these LARPs was held in 2002. The concept was further developed after this, and the year after a follow up was arranged over a period of 2 month up in the mountain area where hunting animals for food also was allowed. The owner of this large property was a rather eccentric multi-millionaire, and she fell completely for the concept. She financed the building of several viking longhouses and mediaeval*



style houses at different places on the property. The LARPer were hired as permanent foresters/gamekeepers

#### AVANT-GARDE LARP *Dogma99*

Was a counter movement to the accepted mainstream LARP s that flourished in the late 90'ies. The main reason for creating dogme-99, was to address the pitfalls that most LARP s up until then normally fell into. The Dogma 99 was a set of rules to be used when making a LARP. Not very successful as a stand alone system, but a very contributing factor to the general development of LARP into new areas and flavours. A provocation is sometimes the best method for enforcing inventive thoughts.

#### *Faith play*

Introduced in the 90'ies and refined into perfection within the series of LARP s (including some of the early Amaranth LARP s ), it was developed into a great LARP form that bordered into improvised stage acting.

#### *Experiments within performing arts.*

Developed over a period of 10 years mainly in a series of LARP s called Amaranth. In this LARP series, which followed the history of a family called Amaranth through several 1000 years, the form and content of LARP as an artistic medium was undergoing continuous updated revisions. It brought forward some of the greatest LARP s ever to be held in Norway. In the end this got commercialised. After 6 or 7 years the popularity caused heavy casting of players into the different roles, and in the end an American TV company bought the whole concept (for several million dollars, according to the rumours) which later made it into a major interactive television entertainment.

#### *Hard core LARP*

The main exponent for this kind of LARP s was the organisation "Weltschmerz". They organised a series of LARP s from 2000 to 2005, after which the whole concept was taken over by Real Life Company. Real Life Company took care of tourists that wanted to experience the real life as

they thought it really was, without makeup and artificial behaviour. The tourists were placed into their dreams, that without their knowledge was built up of LARP'ers, playing out a well directed world. Thus, Real Life Company brought the tourists on a trip to the society of their dreams.

#### LARP ORGANISER AS A PROFESSION (TOURISM, EDUCATIONAL, ETC.)

##### *Pay to be entertained*

Most people do not want to be involved in their own entertainment. They want to be entertained with no obligations on their side. A lot of people in the tourist industry when first introduced to LARP tried to fold the LARP ideas into their own concepts without much success. What emerged was probably profitable, but had very little to do with LARP.

##### *Educational purposes.*

Apart from re-enactments, some teachers tried with various successes to introduce LARP as an educational method in the schools. As an educational method it is unsurpassed, but because of restricted funds and lack of resources, arranging LARP s was not viable for the existing educational system.

##### *Multi-show 2005.*

*This became the great gig in 2005, where LARP was integrated with other art forms, to be presented as a big multimedia multi-expression total sensory overflow show. The stage was set actually on a scene, where all the participants (who had been thoroughly prepared in advance) were led onto the stage before start. Curtain up, and the artistic actors (musicians, actors, dancers, SIS's etc.) sit out in the audience. From here everything took off into music, dancing, LARPing performances etc. all melts together with the "audience" that become participant in the show. Total success. Especially as this was organised by a political party youth organisation to explain their political message to their own members. Covered by the press with big headlines, LARP became fashionable over-night. Suddenly the "whole world" wanted these kind of things.*

#### »BACK TO BASICS» LARP

After a while the ever growing list of different LARP directions, and especially the escalating costs involved in participating at the ever more "professional" LARPs, brought forward a need for "back to basic" LARPs. A simple out in the woods with what you got for costume and equipment LARP. They did not have a big budget or costly production, but where focus was laid onto the roleplay itself. As more and more of the commercial LARPs were targeted at people with higher holiday budgets, the normal student no longer had the economical means to participate in this. And soon the "back to basic" LARPs was the norm amongst the younger generation.

#### UNDERGROUND LARP (THE DARK SIDE)

Gothic/vampire was employed in some town districts as neighbourhood watch committee. Official statement from a district spokesman in 2005, "We have had no problems with burglary or vandalism since we got our own vampire in the back yard", made the headlines for a while.

##### *The dark side.*

Some of the LARP activities were not deemed appropriate. The participants who could not accept this, was quickly pushed out of the mainstream LARP community. But they were drawn towards each other. And some "underground" LARP groups came into existence, each with some peculiarities on the border of macabre. But these again did attract a certain kind of people who enjoyed experimenting with taboos.

*In May 2008, a corpse was found in the woods north of Oslo. She was still clutching the dagger she had used to cut up her own belly in traditional seppuku style. Her entrails had obviously fallen out of her open belly, and it could look like some carnivorous animal(s) had eaten some of it, and dragged it around. At least that was what the police concluded. The only strange thing they did not understand was that nearly no blood was present. Neither in her body nor outside it. The horrendous truth of what happened that night, was revealed nearly a year after, in some papers left by a drug addict that died of an overdose:*

*In one of the LARP groups of central Oslo, some of the groups members had started to experiment with different kind of designer drugs to enhance the experience at certain LARP s. After a while, as the word got out, most people shunned these LARPs, except for some who felt an inclination towards artificial stimuli. The group lost contact with the rest of the LARP society, but hanged on and managed to produce quite a lot of LARP s. In addition to using drugs during the LARP s, they also experimented with different mass suggestive rituals. They did a lot of experimenting with rituals (in combination with drugs) to try to discover a really mind blowing combination. Obviously, something had worked, because at one stage several people central in this group suddenly became extremely religious and moved to different religious societies at the same time. None of these ever talked about what had happened, but they were obviously frightened. It was during one of the rituals in a LARP this group had arranged that the deceased girl had participated as a sacrificial victim. She had undergone some kind of preparation with stimulants that should enhance her perception of reality. The ritual she had undergone had actually made her commit her own suicide. But her blood had been collected by some of the other participants, for later use. What this was supposed to be was never revealed. The case is still under investigation 2009, "DREAM SOCIETY" AND THE BIG CHANGE*  
As the society in large at the middle of the 1990'ies moved into the "Dream society", and left the "Information society" in the wake, LARP was somehow destined to become very fashionable. It was just a question of time and place, and who to get there first. What characterises the "Dream society", is that people communities and business will thrive because of their stories, and not just from data and information. A product is sold on the basis of the story told about the product, its customers or manufacturers, not the facts and figures of the product.

One of the faults with the new society was that as time got by, and people got better education and higher levels of knowledge, they were no longer satisfied doing normal paid work. The thought was: "why shall I use my time and po-

wer for an artificial generated society within a big company instead of my own family/friends etc. The Dream Society was not to blame for this, but rather a combination of big companies that wanted to take over the role as local society/tribe and that people in general no longer felt a part of the larger communion called Norway etc.

Anyway, we do not need to work more than 1-2 hours each day to cover our personal needs. Everything else we do is to cover the needs of the society/employer etc. The problem started when somebody saw through the social-democratic dogma of "work creates freedom". And also that people in general no longer thought they got their fair share of welfare in return from all the money paid in taxes and duties to the state.

The politicians of the day only got what they deserved. The total lack of coherence between their speech and action, was probably the cause of the contempt people felt towards politicians. This led again to undereducated politicians, which of course lost their support and interest from the population at large. The result was catastrophically low participation in the election of 2005. This made an opening for populist parties that got into majority and a relatively small party with a fundamentalist attitude cooped the government as a result. The situation got no better when the sitting government obviously was not able to remedy the bad state of all public services as hospitals, roads, public transport and schools. This resulted in accidents and an expert flee from public employment mainly because of low wages and uninspiring working conditions. Which again resulted in institutionalised incompetence. Decisions were taken on wrong or failing foundation, which again resulted in fatal consequences with respect on cost and safety.

At the same time we got a massive increase of a privileged class without ideology, only with binding to money. Maybe this was the class struggle of the working classes? The governmental system reacted with self-protectiveness, and an extreme growth of Kafka'esque bureaucracy.

A small group in Oslo started their own system of justice outside the Norwegian law system. This was based on earlier time's code of law. The development of this spread underground without the knowledge of the society at large. When they do discover what has happened, it was too late. The alternative legal system in Oslo has taken root.

Some LARP groups in Oslo that was interested in social experiments and social criticism listened to this, and used it as an idea for the big «Revolution LARP» in 2009 covered by National television. The underground community proclaimed publicly their cause as justified. This created a public debate and since LARP had become an accepted art form, their cause was supported by some well-known cultural personalities. A rather constructive debate emerged and became well-covered in television, newspapers and net. The Parliament naturally felt threatened by all this, where the voice of the people actually was heard in a new way and literally neglected the legislative assembly.

The high court and parliament woke up after all this publicity and succumb to the usual methods of suppressing the citizens. The day the government declared a state of emergency («The people must be protected against themselves»), the people actually used the methods evolved in the LARP to counter the situation. The citizens was in general tired of the dilution of the democracy and bad governing. At the same time the majority was in fact interested in, and sought for constructive solutions to the problems. This tipped the scale in a positive direction. Instead of confrontation, the government realised its situation, and dissolved the parliament. A new election was declared, and after a wide and good debate, in which most of the problems that caused the crisis were covered, nearly 90% of the population voted in the election.

The same year, LARP got legitimacy to governmental funding, and 10% of all income from officially controlled gaming are earmarked to LARP arrangement.

# EMOTIONS AND AUTHORITY

## Female Larp-organisers



Ragnhild Hutchison

This essay concerns the role of female Larp-organisers. It focuses on their contribution to Larp in the form of emotional depth and increased human capital, with respect to authority. Gender issues in Larp are both important and interesting to discuss because what we do today will influence the future.

The essay is based on observations of and discussions in the Larp community in Oslo, Norway (Primarily Ravn) over the last approximately 8 years. When Larp started up in Oslo, boys dominated the community. Over the years the proportion of girls increased and reached between 30% to 40% in 1995, and has since stayed relatively stable. The number of female organisers has increased steadily, a rough proxy would be between 1/3 and 1/4 (\*1). This is slightly less than their proportion of the total number of Larpers would imply, but not significantly so. Their proportional representation indicates that girls contribute actively to the shaping of Larp.

Female organisers of Larps contribute by increasing the emotional depth of the story, but like many male organisers also do, they use Larp as tool to voice issues they find important - these are often a focus on emotions and/or gender issues. In economics one uses the term Human Capital to measure (however difficult) the value of the social factors that make up a person, such as the knowledge, experiences and perceptions that a person brings with him or her to a job, including the socialisation process. Human Capital is thus a useful term when discussing the values which female organisers contribute to Larp

### RELATIONSHIPS.

There has been a gradual increase in Larps focusing on the emotional relationships between people as well as less violence, rather than the saving of the world, high politics and monsters that dominated the Larp scene in the early years. Interestingly these "emotional" and less violent Larps have often had a majority or high proportion of female organisers (\*2). Many of these Larps are remembered with fondness, especially because of their emotional focus. The emotional focus can be ascribed to the human capital women possess. However, the shift from "monster" Larps to "emotional" Larps must also be seen from a different angle. The boys have matured and organisers as well as players have all expanded their human capital in various ways, leading to new interests and possibilities within Larp. One of these has been the acting opportunities that the emotional focus makes possible. Female organisers should therefore not receive all the honours for the increase in emotional depth that has happened in Larp in the recent years, but they have played an important role in expanding it through focusing on it.

### EMPOWERMENT!

Through focusing on female roles with authority and shaping the players' understanding of history and power, female organisers also contribute to Larp (and society in general) by training girls in authority. Larp in Oslo has an ideal of gender equality, with the exception of historical settings. One finds that female organisers often have a more articulated policy on this issue than their male counterparts. Larp gender equality is implemented through conscious decisions made by the organisers on the gender distribution of the central roles in the Larp.



In the historical settings, organisers also focus on the authority that women had in society, but use more subtle techniques. It has primarily been done in two ways; by highlighting the ways which women influenced society, e.g. informing the players that "Mother's word is listened to" or by including historically correct female roles with authority, such as powerful housewives or priestesses. This gives some focus on the power women had, and helps the players visualise the possibilities that lie in female roles, making them more interesting to play. The degree varies, going from consciously voiced Larps, such as Amaranth and Ravn's WinterLarp 96, to more subtly on Larps such as Et Vintereventyr. The projection and degree of focus on female roles thus becomes a way of communicating women's power in society, and involves itself, often purposely, in the discourse surrounding the role of women in history.

Many of the female organisers focus on girls in central decision-making positions. This is not always a success and is often a challenge, but brings positive results. The difficulties can be traced to the lack of human capital in the area of authority that many girls suffer due to lesser role models and socialisation. There are few women in central decision-making positions from whom girls, placed in authority roles, can draw inspiration. Those that exist, like Margaret Thatcher and Gro Harlem Brundtland, are hard to recreate and act. The socialisation process which all are subject to through their surroundings, is perhaps the strongest influence on how one tackles authority roles on Larps.

The middle class ideal created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century depicts women as quiet and modest, not raising their voice in assemblies nor speaking up against anyone. These are norms still present in society but to a far lesser degree than before. But they still influence how boys and girls, men and women are treated and what is seen as acceptable behaviour. Thus, girls speak up less for their views, especially in large assemblies, from fear of social reper-

cussions. As a consequence girls become less exposed to authority and power, learning less about how to use and manipulate it than boys do.

But Larp has, as its main characteristic, that it is a make-believe game. This offers the opportunity for girls (and boys) to increase their human capital in the area of authority, thus lessening the step into decision-making positions in "real" life or organising of Larp events

#### CONCLUSION.

The strong focus that many female organisers have concerning women's roles and the possibilities lying within them, not only effect how we perceive women's role in society and in history but also empower girls in the present. Larp trains girls (and boys) in authority and the use of power, thus making the barriers to decision-making positions less, leading to increasing the participation of women in Larp organising. The difference in human capital which women bring to Larp has also led to a stronger focus on emotional aspects, often tears. This has resulted in stronger focus on relationships between roles, rather than monster slaying, thus improving the acting. It can thus be claimed that female organisers created both emphasis on emotions and experimenting with authority among Oslo's Larpers.

#### NOTES

note \*1: Numbers based on own estimates from observations and discussions

note \*2: Sunrise High, Freden I Koirna (Ravns Sommerlaiv 97), Amaranth

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## LARP = SEX ?



Erlend Eidsøem Hansen

When telling mature people my definition of good role-playing, I compare it with good sex : instincts surface your mind. Touch and smell are as important as vision and hearing. You are focused on what you do, with a stronger consciousness of your body and its impact on others. You allot a nice pool of time, together with people with which you want to share something special, you know what to do, but not in detail how to get there. You gather in a secluded place and object to outsiders. You don't waste your time joking things away, and one word of bullshit might ruin the whole atmosphere.

In bed, non-actors have a good opportunity to get it touch with their body and the large number of unspoken words always flowing between our bodies. In a good, normal act of sex we suddenly become aware of the more subtle body-signals and instinctively play our tune in the universal life-symphony. Listening with all senses it is possible to sense the music inside the body of your partner: The beating of the heart, the rhythm of the breath, the twinkle in the eye, the sweat of the body, and the intensity of touch, finally sensing the changing attitude of the spirit within. And for me that is practically the basic definition for a work of larp: A tale of instincts, told through physical bodies of people involved, changing the happiness-level of the spirit (the person).

You might get off in your own body, you might get off on something happening in your partners body, or you might get-off because of simultaneous, intensive interaction with the other. A feeling of "ME". A feeling of "YOU", or a feeling of "WE". Personally I deem the "WE"-tension to be the most useful goal of interacting in a larp, as there are usually more than 2 persons involved. By focusing on the physical

space between two bodies it is obvious that there are a lot of things both other players and organisers can do to affect the basic 2-body dialog. The "WE"-model let's other characters not only affect the basic 2-bonding, but they may also join in a complex dialog. The duet turns into a symphony or a real jam-session, and the dynamics of what we call larp get the complexity we want.

You can fake in bed and you can fake at a larp, but for an intense, ecstatic experience you have to be honest and clear about your needs, and find suitable partners to fulfil them. As in bed there are countless obstacles to defeat to get the most out of it. Practically every larp-problem relating to the flow of the game has its sexual counterpart; People taking off without giving others an opening to join the take-off. People doing things in a hurry without sensing the wonder. Failure to stimulate the right spots. Someone afraid of saying stop. Problems of physical co-ordination. Misconceptions. Mismatching intensity levels. Too loud play. Too rough play. Blocking. Jealousy. Prejudice. Ignorance. Insecurity. Bad self-esteem. Sleepiness. Aggressiveness. Selfishness. Impossible matches.

Accepting the physical aspects and problems as fundamental, larp resembles dance more than theatre. The tension is more unspoken and repeating. Both understanding and conflict is gradually gained from repetitiveness. (i.e. after days of intense role-playing another player succeeds to make you realise that it is her character that secretly hates you and spreads bad rumours behind your back, as you suddenly notice the evil glance she has been sending you for days..) If your larp-style relates to dance, why not replace the Impro-courses with a Tango-course?



## DANCE, SEX AND LARP – SAMPLES OF UNSPOKEN WORDS:

hello	goodbye	yes	maybe
no	go away	come closer	protect me
thank you	obey me	fuck you	listen to me
look here	what is this?	why?	wow?
who are you?	wait	stop	more
less	don't stop	take me	wow
please	rule me	that hurts	this is a gift
I like that	I want that	I need you	I like you
I forgive you	I hate you for this	you are special	you are shit

The composition of the story-line on a larp is best described using spiral-patterns to express intensity and wave-patterns to describe change of initiative. The movie-style pattern of a step by step conflict up the stairs to final ecstasy of intensity is often taking the focus away from a lot of other intensive and strong moments of the action. (i.e. the final-battle problem..)

Obviously I regard women as potentially better larpers than men. Women are often more dependent on the unspoken dialog between two bodies and their ecstasy is often expressed in patterns of circles, waves, spirals. Regardless of gender, the typically male-style focus on "final battles" as endings is an obvious problem on most larps.

So what is the larp-equivalent of pregnancy? – An intense larp-experience changing your life forever. A vampire larp resembles a one-night stand. Hack'n-slash resembles rash anal-sex. (One gets satisfaction, while the other just waits for his turn..) A fantasy-larp resembles teen-age dating. (Secrecy and a lot left to pure imagination). Hardcore larpers resemble rapists and flashers. And the organiser? The parent of a teen-ager experiencing the first relationship.

And larp : Everybody talks about it, it is impossible to describe it before experiencing it yourself, it might be confusing and hurt a little the first time, and once you start, you never want to quit.



## HIDDEN PLAYS IN PUBLIC PLACES



Jonas Nelson

From time to time you hear about LARPs held secretly among "innocent bystanders" and "ordinary people". The reasons for doing this are very diverse. Some may just like the opportunity to test ones theatrical skills on people not knowing there's a game going on. Others are attracted by the true realism, not having to play in a "fake" environment. There may even be some who like to use the game as a way to affect the bystanders, without them knowing it. Regardless of the reasons, this kind of LARPing is not something to take lightly. At the very least it raises some serious ethical questions, and as we will see in the following examples it might even be outright dangerous.

I would like to start with some examples of what might go wrong. The first two examples are very real. Not "based on a true story", but *the* true story, as far as I know it.

### THE KONSTFACK INCIDENT

Inspired by the growing LARP hobby, the *Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design* decided to host an event on "modern youth culture" in Stockholm, March 1993. As a part of this, they organised a short detective game which took place partly in public places and on city streets. Two of the organisers took up position in a pizzeria, waiting for the players. The owner of the pizzeria was informed of the game, but this turned out to be far from enough. At least one of the organisers had a replica gun in his pocket, and this gun caught the eye of another customer. This customer silently contacted the police, and the organisers soon felt real guns in their backs. Before they had had any chance to explain, the police searched them and forced them out to the waiting police van – which was full of armed and uniformed policemen. After some time of awkward explanations from the two organisers the police realized that they were not deal-

ing with dangerous criminals after all. Not surprisingly, the organisers got a real scolding from the angry policemen. One of the police officers is reported to have said "*I don't know what you usually do, but I can guarantee that you've never before been so close to being shot*". It was pure luck that the two organisers had noticed the police van when it pulled up in front of the pizzeria, since the policemen who had entered the pizzeria were wearing civilian clothes, and the organisers might have thought that the guns in their backs belonged to other players. This incident could have turned out really bad...

### DANCING WITH A STRANGER

A group of LARPers in Gothenburg were planning a game with the idea of going to a dance-restaurant and playing roles, mixing with the ordinary visitors. Two young women first went there to scout, in the roles of two nurses. What they learned that evening made them, if not scratch the idea all together, then at least seriously re-think it. In an article in *Fëa Livia* #24, one of them said that before this night, she believed that as long as you don't depreciate or hurt others physically or psychologically, LARPing with non-players is OK. After all, we are all playing different roles all the time. That's what she thought. By now, she is a lot wiser.

One of the things she discovered was that people were there to honestly enjoy themselves, while she herself did not share their lifestyle at all. She was there for entirely different reasons, and if this was revealed to the others they would probably feel cheated and scorned, as if she was making fun of their chosen lifestyle. Then she would have broken her own rules, by hurting others. If this wasn't enough for her to think about, the evening took a turn for the worst when some guys took an amorous interest in the

two "nurses". Now what should they do? Turn the guys down, ignore them and go on playing among themselves? That's not what they were there to do, if so they could just as well have stayed home and played with their LARPing friends. Explain that they were just playing a game? That meant hurting the feelings of others. Go on flirting and take the risk that they might meet again another day but as totally different people? In the end of the article, one of the women asks herself if this is the kind of society she would like to live in, where you can't be sure that anyone is who he/she pretends to be. That's a rather scary thought. Would you like your boss, your teacher or your fiancé going around telling you lies all the time?

#### THE IDIOTS

We had this discussion already at Knudepunkt in Copenhagen 1999, after viewing Lars von Triers much appraised dogma film "The Idiots". In the very end of the film (while the credits are rolling) you can see one of the "retards" stuck in a tall tree, and the police and the fire brigade have arrived to get him down. It might seem funny and innocent enough, but if you adopt a less narrow-minded view, the laughter gets stuck in your throat. What the idiots are really doing is to misuse the resources of the society. Now suppose that a childcare-center suddenly catches fire in another part of the town, and that the fire brigade can't get there in time since they were occupied with a "game"? Or that your own sister gets raped because the police were not present? Agreed, this risk is not very high - but is your game worth it?

#### SO WHAT - EVERYBODY DOES IT!

People lie or play roles all the time, so what's the big deal? For instance, you see stag parties roaming the streets now and then, and student's pranks are notorious. But these are usually easy to discern, and so do not force innocent bystanders to participate in any way. Augusto Boal and, more recently, Susanne Osten have experimented with "invisible" street theatre. But their goal is not personal gain, nor is it to mock or make fun of anybody. The goal is to make people think. Of course, all these examples can turn sour as well - but that is no excuse to LARPers.

When we discussed this topic at the *G-punkt* internet forum, Erik Höglund wrote: "When you are playing with unknowing people you must be prepared to take full personal responsibility for all possible damage (physical, psychological or even damage to the LARPers own reputation). Unfortunately, many players are not prepared to do that".

My friend Åke Rosenius has made the following reflection: if you have any experience from mailing lists, discussion groups or internet chats, then you might have come across someone who claims to be against (*insert your personal hobby here*). After some time of heated debate where people get more and more irritated, this person suddenly turns 180 degrees, laughs it all off and says that it was all an experiment, he/she only wanted to see your reactions and/or make you think. The best answer (so far) to such jerks is "We have not come here to be your personal guinea pigs! Such behavior is to take liberties which you have no right to, and if you do that to me I don't feel inclined to think at all, I just want to kick your ass". Personally, I see a lot of parallels to LARPing among unknowing people here, don't you?

#### WHOSE LIMITS?

In the end, it is all about where to draw the limits. The problem is that there are several limits to take into consideration. First we have the obvious "as long as no one is hurt". This is a very individual limit, almost impossible to estimate. The fact is that you don't have to play very extreme at all to actually hurt someone. Some people may feel offended by seeing an alcoholic searching their garbage bins, others by hearing someone making propaganda for drugs, nazism or pornography. Now, we all know that there are indeed alcoholics and neo-nazis out there, so what harm can a few more "fake ones" do? Well, most people have their beliefs and opinions about the world based upon their own experiences. If these experiences are not true, the end results won't be true either. Just to take one example; if I were to see more drunkards in the previously peaceful neighbourhood I might feel uneasy about that. And apart from this unnecessary feeling of insecurity, in the next election I might vote for a party that

wants to ban strong alcohol. Another limit is what's ethical and what's not. This too is very individual. For instance, should you be honest and tell the people that they have just been witnessing a game, or should you go by the old saying "what they don't know, won't harm them"? Some LARPers might even motivate their actions with the explanation that they know better than the "unknowing victims" themselves what's "good" for them, so they just leave them in ignorance.

#### PUT YOURSELF AT THE RECEIVING END

Even though I don't like this kind of LARPing myself, I can't stop anyone else from trying. But after having read this far, hopefully you will think twice before carrying out your ideas. And if you *do* go ahead, I hope that you will do it with due respect for other people. As a LARPer, you should have no problem with putting yourself in the situation of others, so why not pretend for a minute that *you* are the easily scared elderly lady, the small child, the touchy member of Hell's Angels, the drug-influenced fanatic football fan, the religious immigrant from the war-torn country, or whatever your ingenious mind can come up with. Then pretend that this person unknowingly meets the game character you are going to play. How will this innocent person feel and react? Might he/she be hurt in one way or another?

When LARPing in public places, you are - even if you are not actively involving them - playing with people, without them knowing it. Playing with other people's feelings and emotions can be a very powerful tool. You have the potential power to change the world (or at least the neighbourhood), but it comes with an equal amount of responsibility. If you aren't ready to face that responsibility, don't play with the power!

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Susanne Gräslund

## BUILDING DRAMATICS

For me the pure essence of larp is the dramatics – the actual course of events. Throughout my years as a larper, now more than ten, I have been arguing with a lot of people about this and I must start by saying that I fully respect those who consider other aspects, like the atmosphere or the adventure, more important. I like those things too, but for me larping is first of all action, a story that we tell together, and secondly, the environment. Most larpers agree that it is important to have a plot, but all too often the dramatic work is put aside because the organisers don't have the time to make it thoroughly enough. Practical things are of a higher priority, and the result is just another larp with no meaning and no goal, where the participants may have fun anyway or they may not.

I think it is important that all the players are implicated in the course of events. How then, can you build up the dramatics of a larp so that you guarantee or at least make it very probable, that everyone will take active part in the common storytelling? In this article I will mention what others have said before me on this issue and then I will discuss how I think this can be accomplished. Firstly, what I call the dramatic web, the sum of all the characters and the connections between them, has to be created. Secondly, fateplay can introduce a touch of unpredictability and to direct the players a little bit if needed. And finally, you can use a lot of narrative techniques to stimulate the play as it wears on.

### THE TRADITIONAL WAY

The Swedish tradition has been to order the participants in groups, such as the elves or the village peasants. The single player has never been that important, except for a few that were given leading roles. This makes the larp more stable since it is independent of most of its players, but

when you choose not to give your participants responsibility, then they won't feel very important either. And a player who doesn't feel important usually doesn't have very fun or even worse, they try to be important anyway and take over the whole play by some overwhelming action. Many say this is the essence of larp, that anyone can do whatever they want and that it doesn't matter how it all ends. I also like this aspect of freedom, but usually it takes more than it gives and often results in that the main part of the participants are being run over by a few dominant ones.

Another Swedish tradition is that the participants usually write their characters all by themselves. Their material is then sent to the larpwrights who try to put this sum of wishes together. Many players send their ideas too late or not at all and so, for a large bunch of their participants, the larpwrights have no information at all, which makes it hard to make good dramatics. This system gives a lot of freedom to the players, but the drawback is it usually gives a large jumble of characters with few or no connections between each other. For really large larps, with several hundreds of participants, I think it is hard to make good dramatics for everyone, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try anyway. Engaging more people to write and co-ordinate characters could solve this problem.

### ISSUES

In the beginning of larping the intrigues were often about finding an object or a person or winning a battle over another group. Nowadays things have changed a bit and most players that I know of want to experience feelings, but there are still a lot of opportunities never used.

All stories are about people, their problems and their hopes. It can be in shape of an adventure, but it has to be the fate

of a person as well. Knappnålshuvudet, that I was one of the main organisers for, took place in our world in our time and there we used themes such as crushed dreams, drug dependence, religious and moral dilemmas – universal issues that we all are affected by. These could be used in any setting, but you rarely see them in other genres. At Fantasy/medieval larps the issues are often much less complex and I don't know why it has to be so. A contributing thing may be that at contemporary games there has to be an interesting story for the game to be anything more than our usual lives, whereas at Fantasy games a nice environment can make up for bad dramatics. Fantasy as a literature genre is usually about good and bad, and personal problems are just too insignificant compared to saving the world. But are they really? Can we really relate ourselves to the common problem of saving the world? Or would a problem such as your best friend becoming a drug addict be more engaging? I guess this is also a matter of age. Young people tend to like the black/white perspective of the world, whereas older people generally appreciate a grey-scale.

### THREE LEVELS

In "Saga mot verklighet" by Henrik Summanen and Tomas Walch, a three level system of dramatics is described. The first level is the political one and contains the main plot, for example a conflict between two countries as there was at Nyteget, earlier organised by the authors. At the second level you find groups of people and their social conflicts, and at the third level are the single characters and what Swedes call the personal intrigues. Summanen and Walch's idea was that one level only could influence itself and the one closest to it. Level three, the single players, should not be able to influence the main story. The reason for this was that they had had bad experience of dominant larpers taking over the game and destroying a lot of opportunities for other players. With their system, the larp became less vulnerable. As far as I know this worked out quite well, but those on the top running the main plot spent more time carrying out this responsibility than playing their characters. Another outcome was that the players who had little to do with level one or two had a greater need for a personal intrigue.

At Knappnålshuvudet we also used a kind of three level system, but slightly different. The first level consisted not of a main story because we chose to have none. Instead we had a common framework, a place and a neutral course of action that went on independently of what happened. At the second level were a couple of groups, but most characters didn't really belong to a group or at least not only one group. We had what we called quartets or short stories (sv: noveller) that consisted of about four people, one angel and its human wards. The wards had something in common, but not necessarily a very obvious connection. We always thought of the dramatics as a collection of short stories. There wasn't one main thread, but about fifteen in parallel, winding in and out of each other, sometimes crossing and intertwining. On the third level were the single characters that were all stories in themselves. They were usually very closely coupled to the short stories and therefore these could be placed somewhere between the second and the third level. The Knappnålshuvudet concept worked fine, except for the times when the writer and the player had very different visions. Also, we didn't have enough angels, and so many quartets and other groups had too little of the stimulation that the guardian angel should have given them.

Organising the dramatics into levels may seem boring, but it is a good way of visualising it. Making it more theoretical also makes it easier to discuss and I haven't found a better model than this level system yet. And to come further in the development of larp, dramatics it is important for us to get common discussion tools.

### PERSPECTIVE

The two models of the dramatic web mentioned above have much in common, but there exists one big difference – the perspective – if you look at the structure from level one or from level three. Many larpwrights tend to observe their work from level one and create a main plot first. Then they make the connections between the groups, and finally they write intrigues for the single players. Often there is not enough time to make something for everyone, and so a lot of players go without individual driving forces.

Players who take a lot of initiative don't have a problem with this, but others will.

A main plot will always create a couple of main characters and a large bunch of walkers-on. The first group will carry the responsibility of the main course of action on their shoulders, usually a heavy burden, and the second group will always believe that the real game is taking place somewhere else. A common saying is that every larper plays the leading role in her own play, but for most larpers this is not true. More people than you think just walk around, afraid to take initiatives, watch the others and hope to be stimulated in some way. A common pitfall for many is the tendency to create secretiveness. You know all those boys in black coats sitting in the dark corners at the inns trying to look mysterious. I think it is a way of trying to be important and interesting for other players, as I wrote about in the beginning of this article. I am sure many of these larpers are perfectly happy with this, but I would want something else, both as a larpwright and a player.

So far we have looked at the structure of the dramatic web, but now I will try to focus on the single junctions – the players – and the communication between them and the organisers. The Norwegian manifesto Dogma 99 has many aspects and among these a lot of thinking about the relationship between organisers and players, is included.

#### DOGMA 99

This program was originally made to develop larping in new directions by forbidding old conventional solutions. Dogma 99 turned against the competitive way of larping and the hierarchy of characters that develop when you have a main plot that you can be more or less part of. To avoid these two, Dogma 99 declared that there should be no secrets in the game. Everyone has a right to know everything from the start, and when all are aware of the greater context, they can act together towards the goal. The hierarchy is thus avoided and the meetings of characters become the important thing. Kings and queens and try to make vigorous (sv: kärnfullt) improvisation material instead. Connect characters; write texts about things that people can use

during the game, give them driving forces. The old history is nice as a background, but it is only a background and too many details will only restrain the players' improvisation.

The try to focus on the interactions between characters is interesting. Many larpwrights spend a lot of time writing long texts about their world, defining as many details as possible. This textbase, which is the sum of all written material that is distributed to the participants, can give a lot of things to improvise from, but wouldn't it be better to focus on making improvisation material from the start? In my opinion more important for a larpwright. Skip the list of

However, one mustn't forget that one of the greatest tasks for a larpwright is to communicate the vision of the game to the participants so that everyone is striving towards the same goal. The textbase must therefore focus both on delivering the vision and giving improvisation material.

#### FATEPLAY

Many players tend to get stuck in a certain kind of character and in a common pattern of action. Fateplay is a way for the organiser to direct the players and thus both break their habits and make the game more unpredictable. A cautious player can get a little bit braver and an often too dominant player could be made to act more low-key. Fates are usually orders to do something, but they can be very different. It can be anything from "choose a man to fall in love with and be attentive to him" to "be by the bridge over the stream at midnight". The first fate is not likely to fail because it is dependent only of the player herself, while the other, supposedly made so that the character is going to meet someone, might easily fail if the other person doesn't show up. The meaning of fates is to force the player to develop her character during the game, to do unpredictable things, to connect characters and to encourage players to take initiatives they wouldn't have taken otherwise.

We used fates a lot in Knappnålshuvudet and what we learnt is that you have to be very careful while making them so that they do not easily fail. A missed fate will make the

player very uncomfortable because she doesn't know how important it was. Therefore the larpwright has to give the players information in advance how important the different fates are and what to do if they fail.

#### NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

Now that we have created the dramatic web, the groundwork, it is time to spice it up with dramatic tools to stimulate the game. There is really no limit to what you can use; objects, letters, phone calls, scenography, in-game music etc. Realistic things have been used a lot and few larpers have anything against it, but surrealistic features, such as background music and video clips on the walls, have always been met with a lot of scepticism in the strivings towards a greater realism. However, I think that for non-historical plays in particular, there is much to be gained here. Using sound and music is a very good way to create an atmosphere, and to help the players keep up the illusion. At Knappnålshuvudet we created the womb, the gate between heaven and earth, where the angels could communicate with God via sound and vision. Physically, the womb was situated in a rock shelter and made up of a large tent of white opaque cloth. It was lit up by coloured floodlights from the outside and always filled with sound – electronic music composed especially for this by two people from "Elektronmusikstudion" in Stockholm. The sound and light effects were coupled to the storyline of the womb and there were usually about six people handling everything from the outside when the angels were there, following and responding to their actions.

We also used a lot of dreams when the angels at night-time took some of their wards to the attic, playing surrealistic scenes for and with them. I don't say that these things could be used with success at all larps, but I think that it could be worth trying if you think it would fit into your game. Surrealism is good as long as you can relate it to realism. A dream gives depth to your experience when you wake up again.

#### FINAL WORDS

If you focus on the single characters and make up interesting stories for all of them you will create a solid ground for your play. You will have to take care to make up a character gallery that fits well together, and draw maps of connections to make sure that no one will be an outsider compared to the others. Working like this you will create a dramatic web that will catch all the players, and it is very likely that most of them will be implicated in your game. Of course you have to have a good framework; a good concept for your scenario, but as soon as you have that it is important to focus on the single players, since they are the ones who are going to experience it. As a larpwright, try to imagine what everyone will experience during your game. This doesn't have to come true in the end, but if you have given it thought, then you will discover the weak points of your dramatic web. Everybody wants to have a lot of possibilities, stimulation and driving forces. If you make sure to give the participants this, then they are very likely to be happy.

There are several ways of making good dramatics for larps. What I have discussed here are only a few things that I have experience of myself. I hope that I may have inspired other larpwrights to think a little differently of what they are creating and for whom. Larping is only in its childhood, and there is a lot of experimenting still to be done.

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Joc Koljonen

## TWO-FACED DOGME – AUTEUR TRUTH

I like to nag at my larp theorist friends. I like to say that they're building a theoretical apparatus around their hobby just to feel less like losers. That they're braggers when they should be doers and what's the point of writing programmes if the only audience you care about is that of your playschool-academia peers. On other days I join in with a buring heart and intense beliefs about *shoulds* and *woulds* and *wills* and a great many scary *unlesses*. I end up bickering especially about the selfish elite, that instead of writing dogmas writes games - intricate and touching larps for an audience only of their friends and equals. I am privileged to participate but feel irrationally ashamed about it.

I work with the media but my academic fling was with film studies and that is the theoretical context through which I view the emerging field of larp theory. Especially the writing on auteurs interests me. Who is the creator of a movie or the larp? Which is the role played by the writer? The scenographer? The director? Or the players? In film and theatre studies we always have to think in terms of audience, of the purpose of the piece in relation to at least a hypothetical crowd of on-lookers. But when we talk of larping the absence of an audience is one of the only definitions we seem to agree on. All the labels we use for the gamers - larper, player, participant - place them firmly in action, creating, affecting, at the very least partaking.

The marxists rejected auteurism as a hierarchal and individualistic reading of the film-making process. You can't make a movie without an editor or a sound man, consequently the movie is created by the whole team, together. Although experiments in democratic filmmaking where all decisions were made together didn't prove very

long-lasting the general idea persisted. Everybody involved in making movies make the movies.

Incidentally, auteurism is a very dominant kind of larpmaking among the Finnish elite today and on a personal level I subscribe to that ideology. If I write a larp, it belongs to me. Tammy Wynette had a hit with "Welcome To My World" and I've thought about that a lot lately while planning projects. "Won't you come on in," yeah, but that door isn't open to everybody. People who wish to borrow my fantasy need to prove themselves worthy - especially as I'm not making any money on it. Of course I'd rather invite people I know and have played with. A friend of mine recently wrote "Well, educating the next generation of players isn't my problem. It becomes my problem on the day I run out of good players."

Film history shows that the dominant writer/directors that we call auteurs have a tendency to shine in limited projects, small movies. Every once in a while some control freak with money to burn comes along and creates an *Apocalypse Now* but it takes forever, breaks budgets, drives people insane and ends up with a lot of people playing bloody severed heads passing out from dehydration while a fat diva on bad drugs cools himself in the breeze of the passing military helicopters.

With film once you have a million hours in the can you're pretty damn unlucky if you can't piece together at least a half decent movie for a straight-to-video release. Larps are more difficult. Get it right right away or your money's gone, your players scam and your car burns down. With an organised team you stand a better chance of success but you lose creative control and, hey presto, most of the really good larpmakers lose interest.

Large fantasy games tend to be like this. That's why they often end up being glorified wildlife camps, a chance to roast marshmallows in a pretty dress instead of stupid jeans. I'm not saying big groups can't make good games and of course a big game takes a big crew, especially in cultures where characters are always written by the larpmakers. But I am saying that big teams don't make good games very often, because they structurally need an auteur - a dictator, if you will - to keep going in the same direction, and this form of government works best for limited projects.

Come to think of it, larpmaking is rather a lot like the marxist-socialist-conundrum. Say that you have a fin-de-siècle Europe where knowledge and ideas flow freely and - not between Vienna and Moscow this time but between Oslo and Helsinki - a group of thinkers and theorists who like to think and speak on behalf of a larger group of people, like, say, the oppressed workers. Or the teenage funloving fantasy larpers, too blind to see how much better their larps could be. Granted, this is a stretched analogy, because there are no direct counterparts to the military or the state unless you count the western cultural hegemony of glorified shallowness as such. I won't, because I personally like shallow.

In this somewhat crooked metaphor then the Finnish elitists are like the western socialists who in the Seventies turned their back on the world and moved into the country-side to live on cooperative farms. Their politics are pure - they want to make and play the good games, not just talk about them - but they do make it pretty hard for anybody else to actually learn from their example.

The Norwegian elitists are like the brash intellectuals on the continent a hundred years earlier, yelling their heads off about denouncing the capitalist society and the crude and format-oriented concepts of High Fantasy or Vampire The Masquerade just because there are ways of doing it that are more real and less like a game. Why be a hero for a day when you can be genuinely miserable instead? It's just possible that this specific revolution isn't what the people wants. And that might be why it's such a hard sell.

I am aware that the Dogme '99 is intended to be a tool to help formatised larpmakers break their molds. I also realise that the Weltschmerz project is both conceptually and ideologically quite different from Dogme. But where these two meet misery abounds, and nobody can deny how that's the talk of the larp intelligentsija this year.

You'll notice nobody's really talking actual Revolution of the Arts anymore, not even in the youthfully enthusiastic way we used to in the nineties. We oldtimers have monopolized theory as something the kids don't need to think about but have generally (at least in Finland and Sweden) failed in actually making projects that could ignite in them an interest for anything grander.

If you want to take a break from reality there are a few options to choose from. Apart from chemically affecting your nervous system to toy with your perception, or going to sleep, the use of storytelling media like theatre, film, literature and larp are great ways of keeping your mind off your own life. You can go in two directions with that - let's call them entertainment and experience. One involves being entertained according to the rules of the least resistance. For some people that's watching Seinfeld, for others Sabrina the Teenage Witch and a lot of very clever people put their money on Buffy The Vampire Slayer. In larp terms that might mean a Monty Python scenario or the umpteenth Goblin Attack!-larp in the forest outside the town you live in. You return to your world at best refreshed but at the very least no worse for the wear.

The other way involves making yourself an receptacle of emotion - not necessarily your own. You watch *La vita è bella*, you cry when the father makes his sacrifice. You dwell on the tragic tale of *Crime and Punishment*. You larp in a game where the characters experience terrible things and which is written and directed for maximum immersion, real

You may argue that what I just described is a players' view and didn't I already dismiss the player as a necessary evil, the brush of the painter that is GM? Uh, I did. But stress the necessary. I need the player to play my game like Coppola needs you to see his movie, for purely utilitarian reasons.





pain and crying-'til-drying. The return to your own world is kathartic.

That doesn't mean I don't want him to have an appropriately great or miserable time, depending on the genre. As a matter of fact it's hardly even contradictory to say that even though the theorists who argue that film exists only in the eye of the beholder are exaggerating, they might be on to something when it comes to larp.

Scandinavian larp theory has long seemed to circle around whether it's better to larp the Vietnam war in Cambodia with actual helicopters or to stage it as a shelter game in a basement in Turku. Whether heavy make-up is required for a Finn to play Vietnamese. But doesn't the diegetic truth of a larp, like in other forms of role play, exist only in the minds of the players? Having played and enjoyed both larps that strive for total illusion and larps that take heavier immersion and more imagination on behalf of the player I think it's difficult to rank one above the other. Recent Swedish experiments with symbolic and even surrealist game elements seem to support my feeling that the same

individual players might be equally open to both kinds of games.

However it seems to me that the latter kind makes the player more actively responsible for the collective fantasy. It takes more effort to live in a house which is not a house and my effort buys me ownership of - or rather partnership in - the collective fantasy. Now Dogme-style larps, where no object represents something it's not, close the participant's eyes to the physical illusion and symbolism which puts the wonder in a wonderful game. Like the theatre stage and the silver screen, the totality of even the most primitive larp can represent a city, a century or a civilisation with the same grace. While the Dogme group pretend to release all power to the player, they bind him quite firmly to a diegetic truth of their making.

Rather than pretending to be all of one breed or to represent anything but our very own groups, we need to examine our beliefs about how we play in the light of both actual fact and the theoretical framework of articles and manifestos. As usual, Knutepunkt will provide ample chance for both.



## ABOUT THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT



Staffan Ericsson

Do not judge, be open-minded. When you have become truly open-minded, read the following:

- The feminist is greedy
- The feminist wants instant change.
- Feminist organizations tend to be closed ..... for the male population.

- The feminist is not able to see the mistreatment ..... of men.

- Feminist or equalist?

- The most disgusting thing you can be is man.

"If you're angry at someone, first put yourself in their shoes, then walk a mile. Then you'll be a mile away from the person and you'll have their shoes."





Thomas Davidsson  
thomas.davidsson@home.se

## WARNING – SELF DESTRUCTION HAS STARTED

The biggest threat to our form of art, hobby or whatever we choose to call it, is when the criticism ends. This destructive way of avoiding criticism threatens the survival of LARP. If we are to stop every attempt to illustrate phenomena, in a positive or negative way, within LARP, it won't be long before we stand before the pit of doom.

Today in Sweden, the people who speak up end alone. Especially when those critics declare one kind of LARP or player as better than others. The alarm goes off as soon as anyone opens their mouth and suggests that there are differences in quality among the LARP participants. Besides the personal harassments critics experience when they challenge the paradigm of the LARP world, they'll meet the "Special Suppression of Opinion Force" and are destroyed by the almighty spell: "think as you wish, as long as you don't disturb anyone else. If you do have any complaints you are free to choose another LARP, or organise one yourself." This mean attack has made the healthy critical voices go from shouting to whispering, and soon they'll vanish.

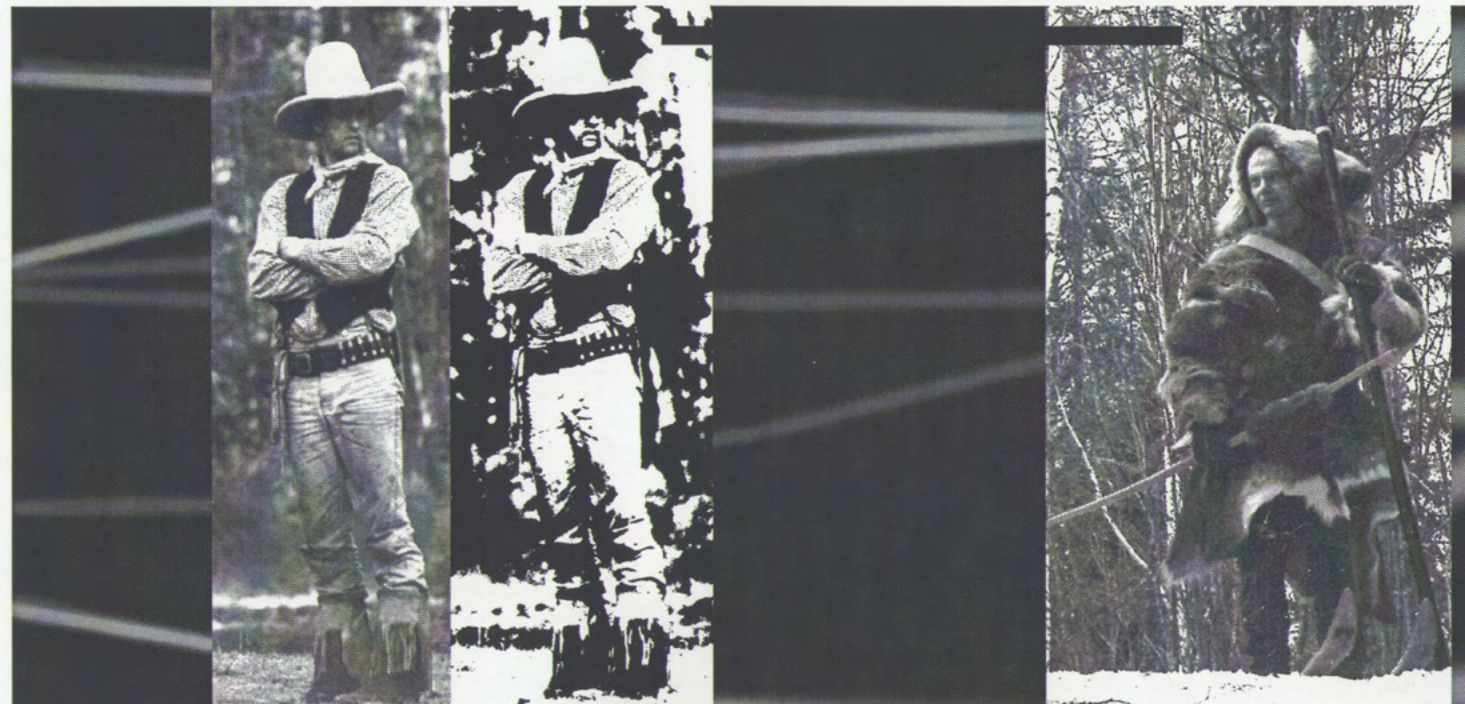
What's the buzz about the death of criticism? No doubt it will be more peaceful and quiet around here. To start with, it's important to establish the fact that there are differences, and the fact that there are better or worse players and events. It should be obvious to each of you that that's the case. Look around you and you'll immediately discover the truth. One car drives faster than the other, the flowers in the park differ in colour, size and beauty, my neighbour has a bigger TV than me and that's how it goes, on and on for eternity. Differences in quality exist, to some extent, wherever you go. Stating something else means that you're

living in complete denial of reality, and it is also an insult to all involved in the LARP movement, the stars as well as the less talented ones. But besides the fact that you deny the truth, there is a very scary consequence to this opposition of differences.

When someone questions, points at something, a process will start, a thesis looking for the antithesis. Presumably that's exactly what happened the day LARP was born. Some fellows played AD&D or something alike when they suddenly questioned their own actions: What would happen if we did it for real? What if...? The process, the flow, started and created a new world. A new idea, a different point of view or a new model of how to do things will discover new horizons and mysteries waiting to be revealed. A stop in the water flow to a lake rapidly leads to devastating damages. The lake sickens and dies.

A movement that doesn't move won't live for very long. The life of the movement will be limited since new things are prevented from being discovered and all that's left will be the old and already used ones. The lake with water that doesn't flow, the company without new customers or an association where no new members sign in will soon die when the old is gone and nothing new has entered the stage. LARP is no exception to this rule. When the heat is turned off, everything gets colder, and will soon enough freeze to death. Life itself arises when the sperm and the egg collide. Why don't we learn from life itself and start to collide with others?

Without a spark there'll be no fire.





# WARNING SELF-DESTRUCTION HAS STARTED



STANDARD 4  
The student will be able to...  
1. Identify the main idea and supporting details of a text.  
2. Analyze the structure and organization of a text.  
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the text.



# LOOCHS NAGROB BORGAN SCHOOL



1. The character's actions are...  
2. The character's feelings are...  
3. The character's thoughts are...  
4. The character's words are...  
5. The character's behavior is...

## THE MANIFESTS

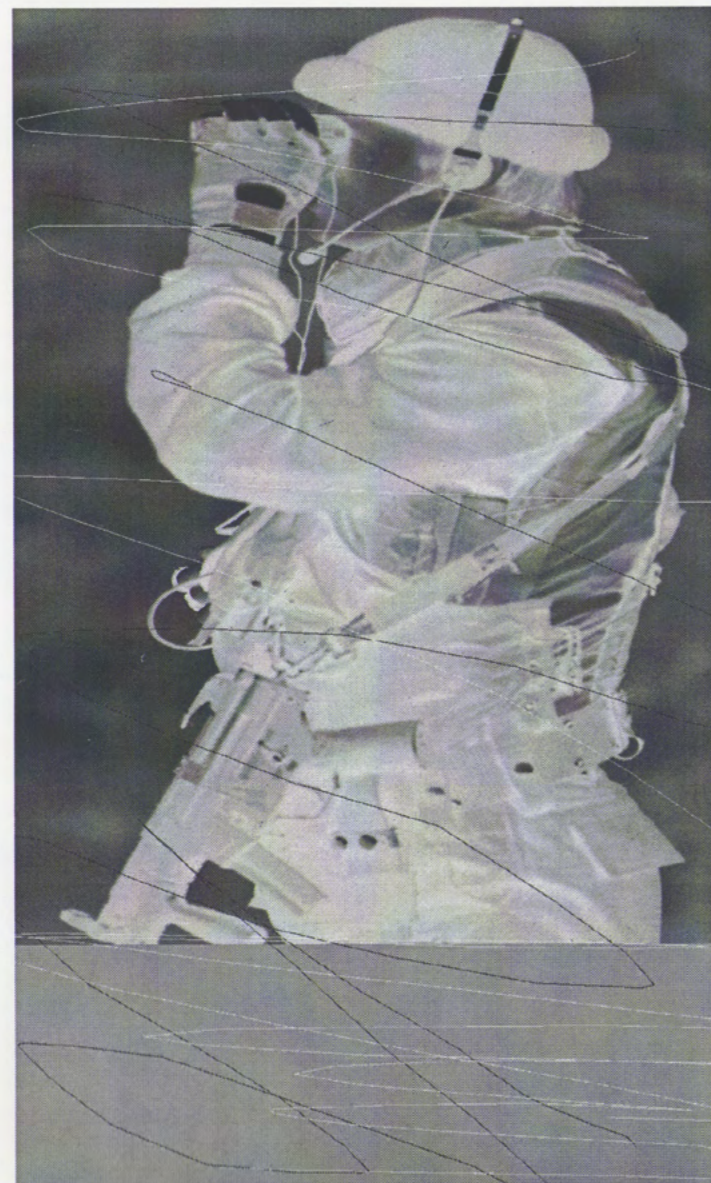
On behalf of...  
The Manifests...



# INTRODUCTION

As LARPing in most countries move into the second decade, many visionaries feel an urge to publicly declare their views and intentions. It is becoming more and more evident to us all that LARP can make an impact on society in ways we never even imagined.

We welcome these visionaries, and present a few manifestos, declarations and experiences that they choose to share with us.



# RULES OF THE POST-BJORNEBORGAN SCHOOL

1. A LARP is primarily an experience. It is neither a competition nor a form of theatrical expression.
2. The crucial component of a good game is a correct selection of players. Everything else is secondary.
3. Players are selected using three criteria: The ability to immerse oneself into a character's personality, physical attractiveness, and the willingness to alter one's behavior to fit the game's needs. Every player must meet at least two of these criteria, and there must be a sufficiently strong reason why the third criterion is not met.
4. At least one famous player is to be left out. This is done in order to emphasize the Elite status of the game. ("It was so exclusive even X wasn't invited.")
5. At least one promising newbie must be invited, in order to both avoid the stigma of an "insiders only" game and to train a new generation of Elite players.
6. A player who has been accepted to the game is a paying customer whose wishes must be taken into account, if it is

at all possible. Paying too much attention to the external elements of the game instead of the characters is equal to directly insulting the players.

7. The characters are to be written in a scale befitting the game. The smaller, the better. Excessive, redundant character information only reduces the gaming experience.

8. A player is selected to each character in a manner suitable to the game. In this, the needs of the game take precedence over the wishes of the players. Characters are tools of the gaming experience, not a form of personal escapism or an experiment at a player's ideal self-image.

9. The player creates the depiction of the character. A character may never be a depiction of the player.

10. The use of simulation is to be minimized. All game mechanics reduce the totality of the gaming experience.

11. At least one demon must be included in every game.

On behalf of  
Post-Bjorneborgan School

J. Thomas Harviainen  
Lihaa Kuvitelmille  
(Flesh For Fantasy Games)



# THE MANIFEST SUNDAY

## THE STORY

The story is central for every work. The story is constituted by a set of not necessarily consecutive events, with one higher purpose embracing the whole work, a message.

## THE CHARACTER

All characters are to be created and interpreted with the intent of serving the story's purpose. The character and the actor are different entities, even during the enactment. Any input must be directed to either the character or the actor.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

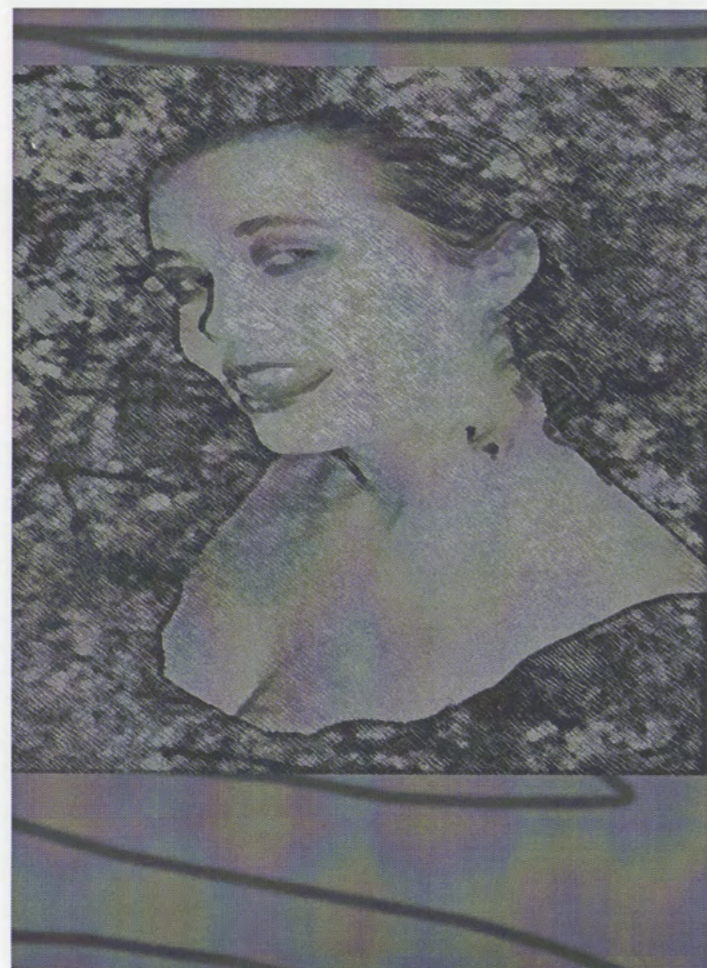
Every individual is responsible for her own actions towards herself and others on the character level as well as the actor level. Furthermore, all participants share an equal responsibility for the progress of the story in accordance with the higher purpose. All participants shall take the work and all activities concerning the work seriously.

Who are we to silently stand by and watch the decline of the scandinavian LARP/RPG scene? In this manifesto is gathered a few points which should prove obvious to an intelligent reader. We are not determined to make a revolution; these points clearly dictates that the story be central for every work and that all other concepts of LARP/RPG be created with the intention of serving the purpose.

So be it.

Kafferepsgruppen  
5th February 2001

Emil B.  
Martin B.  
Gabriel W.  
Tobias W.



# BROSME 9,9 KG

Egilmo3@online.no

Beyond these simple rules I accept the Larp to be a tool of expressing and understanding a deeper view of my self so that I may come to see who and what I really am. On any Larp I promise that as both creator (organiser) and participant always to seek my true self and to become a better human being.

I promise to give praise to all that have contributed to such an experience, and to memorise it so that it for always will remind me of its purpose. "To give pleasant memories and warm feelings (nostalgia) for Larp as a way of expression".

I promise to behave the way I interpret my character, and to make sure that my co-actors understand that its my character I am expressing.

My first and foremost goal is to learn who I truly am.

I promise to be free of all expressions and characterisations that may sink the Larp into an expression of art.

## THE BROSME 9,9 KG WOW.

I pledge to the The Brosme 9,9 kg wow because I wish all Larps to be educational and entertaining. want that every one should have the opportunity to be part of that creation process, and because I am convinced that we by using the source of inspiration in everyday life, it will increase the spread of Larp and make Larp more accessible for a larger group of people.

(signature of person taking the vow)

Egil Moe

1. It is Permitted to Create.
2. It Must be Fun to Larp.
3. All Characters are Essential Characters.
4. The fewer secrets revealed in advance about the Larp and its plan of action, the more interesting and exiting it will be to participate on that particular Larp.
5. The Creators of the Larp Must be active in the Larp and Use the Participant's Creativity to Change the Larp during its course to something better than intended.
6. The Larp Must have action and progress.
7. All inspiration must be taken advantage of to the maximum, and if possible to a paradoxial and humorous manner so that it will be fun to create a Larp.
8. All accessories that can make the Larp better is permitted.
9. The Larp Must follow a storyline and have mechanics to enhance it. (Rape and violence can be educational for both victim and perpetrator when both are in understanding of what is happening, are informed of it happening, having accepted it to happen, and are able to discern it to be an act outside themselves and not within).
10. Every participant of a Larp is responsible for its outcome, not only for their own experience, but for the experience and adventure of all.



# DOGMA '99

I hereby submit to the rules of the Vow of Chastity, as developed by Dogma 99.

1. It is forbidden to create action by writing it into the past history of a character or the event.
2. There shall be no "main plot". (The story of the event must be made for each players character, not the whole).
3. No character shall only be a supporting part.
4. All secrecy is forbidden. (Any participant who so desires shall in advance be shown all documents that pertain to the event).
5. After the event has begun, the playwrights are not allowed to influence it. (Any use of staging and ad hoc organiser roles is forbidden).
6. Superficial action is forbidden. (The playwrights may not in any way plan or encourage the use or threat of violence as part of the event)
7. LARPs inspired by tabletop role-playing games are not accepted.
8. No object shall be used to represent another object. (All things shall be what they appear to be)
9. Game mechanics are forbidden. (Rules to simulate for instance the use of violence or supernatural abilities are not permitted)
10. The playwrights shall be held accountable for the whole of their work.

Furthermore, I swear to regard myself as an artist, and any LARP I write as my "work". I stand open for criticism and wholesale slaughter of my works, and promise to apologise to my players for all that is imperfect in the LARPs I write. My highest goal is to develop the art and medium of live-action role-playing. This, I promise, will be done through all means available, and at the expense of good taste, all conventions and all popularity amongst the so-called LARPerS. Thus, I take the Vow of Chastity

Lars Wingård  
Eirik Fatland  
Erlend Eidsem Hansen  
Margrete Raaum  
Lars Munck  
Pasi Huttunen

Hanne Grasmø  
Atle Steen-Hansen  
Morten B. Gunnerud  
E. Cath. Røsseland  
Hilde Bryhn

Tommy Finsen  
Jon Ree Holmøy  
Kristin Hammerås  
Anita Myhre Andersen  
Kalle Toivonen

To take the Dogma 99 Vow at KP 2001, place your signature here:

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(To be signed by a sober person above the age of 18)





DOGMA '99



INTRODUCTION

THE COUNTRIES

THE COUNTRIES

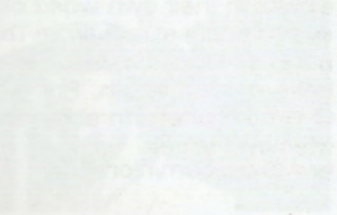


THE COUNTRIES

FABRINGTON SWEDEN

THE COUNTRIES

THE COUNTRIES





# LARPING IN SWEDEN

Research:  
Anna Westerling  
Editing:  
Olle Sahlin

## THE NORTH

The Northern part of Sweden has lagged far behind the rest of the country and Europe when it comes to LARPing, up until a few years ago, that is. Nowadays there are LARP societies in most major cities, and LARPer come from the entire region to participate in events. The LARPs are mostly fantasy, but there have also been Western events in the grand tradition of Sergio Leone. Due to certain individuals, we will probably see a lot of original ideas develop into events, in a natural landscape that is an experience in itself.

[www.lightloop.com/lajv/](http://www.lightloop.com/lajv/)

(Henrik Thurfjell)

## UPPSALA: FNYFF

Fnyff is a small, intimate LARP society based in Uppsala. The society was founded in February 2000. Our first event was the terrorist LARP "Uppland runt", in September of 2000. Today we run drama practices, visit LARPS together, and hug each other regularly and intensely. Fnyff is probably the only Swedish LARP society where hugging your friends is written into the statutes!

[www.larp.com/fnyff/](http://www.larp.com/fnyff/)

(Victoria Wiik, "fnyffling")

## GÄVLE/UPPSALA: GYLLENE HJORTEN

The "Golden Hart" is Sweden's oldest LARP society, as it was formally created in 1985, and actually held its first events in 1983. Gyllene Hjorten has always set their events in their own world of Erborigien, where actions and events occur at real-time. The society was founded in Gävle, north of Uppsala, but today a majority of the members have moved south. For a few years the society ran the Gyllene Hjorten inn at the Medieval camp during the Visby Medieval Week.

[www.larp.com/hjorten/](http://www.larp.com/hjorten/)

(Olle Sahlin)

## STOCKHOLM: ALTERNALIV HB

The authors of "Saga mot verklighet" (From Dream to Reality), and organizers of the LARP "Nyteg" of 1997, have joined up with Martin Ericsson (involved in the making of "Trenne byar" and "Knappnålshuvudet") to create LARPs. This highly experienced group of organizers is trying to do LARPs professionally for companies. In November of 1999 they organized the much appreciated "Carolus Rex", using an old Russian submarine as a proud, but unlucky, Swedish spaceship. They are now planning a sequel, which we are all eagerly awaiting.

[www.alternativ.se/](http://www.alternativ.se/)

(Anna Westerling)

## STOCKHOLM: FËA LIVIA

Fëa is Scandinavia's leading LARP magazine, covering all the important events and schools of thought since 1993. Fëa is a non-profit, Stockholm-based magazine. If you haven't yet bought the latest issue, you owe it to yourself!

[fea.stockholmnet.se/](http://fea.stockholmnet.se/)

(Anna Westerling, editor)

## STOCKHOLM: UNIONEN

Unionen is a quite young society, as it was founded just a couple of years ago. The goals of the society are to grab more money from Sverok and other sources, to open hot spots for gamers, spread information, and share equipment. The society is based in Stockholm, but there are members all over Sweden. About half a dozen LARPs are organized each year. Unionen is much more than just LARP, and is engaged in a number of other gaming activities.

[www.unionen.org](http://www.unionen.org)

(Gabriel Widing, President of Unionen)

## VÄSTERÅS: ENHÖRNINGEN

Enhörningen, or The Unicorn, primarily organizes fantasy or medieval style LARPs. We give priority to safety and practical issues, and we provide a broad spectrum of LARPs, in order to satisfy the varied interests and requirements of our members, including beginner's LARPs with a wide range of choices when creating your character, to rather atmospheric LARPs focusing on character development. Enhörningen has a ten year old gaming world for its members.

[www.larp.com/enhorn](http://www.larp.com/enhorn)

(Niklas Nilsson)

## ÖREBRO: GALADRIM

When LARP became really big in Sweden at the beginning of the 90s, Örebro was at the forefront. Then it became quiet for a while, until a young group of organizers called Galadrim came along and created "Lyktsken" in the summer of 99. Galadrim is also known for their highly frequented Internet forum: G-punkt (the G-spot), where anyone is invited to discuss LARP issues. Debating on the Internet resulted in a convention in Örebro in the fall of 2000, where everyone could meet in real life in order to continue their debates.

[www.larp.com/galadrim](http://www.larp.com/galadrim)

(Anna Westerling and Mikael Enmalm)

## KARLSTAD: WERMLANDSGILLET

Wermlandsgillet is a LARP-producing group in Karlstad. During the summer of 2001 they will produce "Under röda vingar", which is a religious tale set in a detailed fantasy world. Wermlandsgillet wants their participants to feel like they really belong in the fictitious world, to really take part in

the story told under the red wings.

[urv.dimension.nu](http://urv.dimension.nu)

(Andreas Nyström, organizer of Under röda vingar)

## GOTHENBURG: SÄRIMNERS VÄNNER

At the beginning of the 90s Särimners vänner (the Friends of Särimner) started the LARP movement in Gothenburg. They organised a number of fantasy larps and was of the opinion that LARP was for everyone. Out of this a society named Silversagan developed, which was more focused on acting, and not so hot on equipment. This turned into a smaller society, which was also involved in creating the 20s campaign put on by ULF (a society in Ulricehamn, a small town outside of Gothenburg). When these two societies folded, not much has happened since.

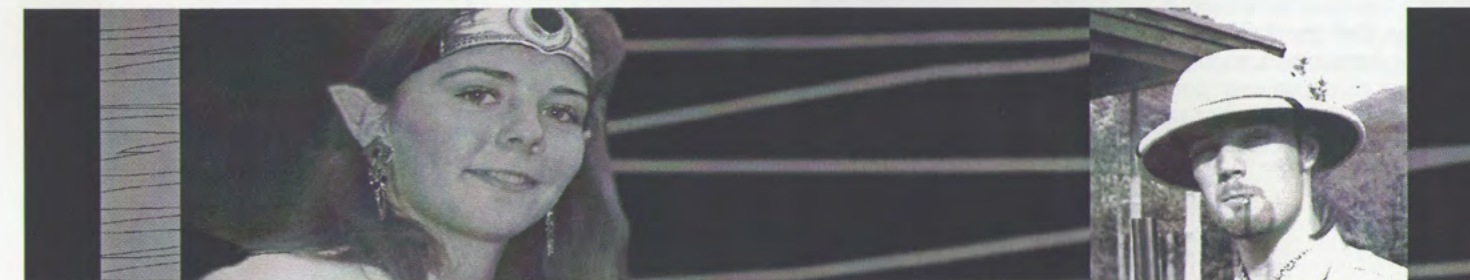
(Magnus Alm)

## THE SOUTH OF SWEDEN

This part of our country is characterised by the joys of being amateurs and putting on games which everyone may participate in, which usually results in fantasy and vampire events. The oldest society in the area is Pegas, which organizes fantasy events. But there are a few who who are trying something else besides fantasy, and one is Mundus Inversus, which has organized a number of gangster LARPs. A favorite point for Mundus Inversus is the respect you should show your character, the importance of remembering that your character actually continues his or her life even after the LARP is over. The society is now two years old and is situated in Lund and Malmö.

[www.larp.com/mundus](http://www.larp.com/mundus) [www.larp.com/pegas](http://www.larp.com/pegas)

(Wilhelm Björkman)







Mikkel Sander

# LARPING IN DENMARK

## THE HISTORY AND THE FACTS

The Danish Larping society is approximately 12-13 years old. The kick-off years were 94-95. It started in the forest round Copenhagen and quickly spread to Aarhus (the second largest city). From 97-99 every major city in Denmark got there own Larping society. There are no official figures, showing how many Larpers there are in Denmark but a good guess is that 7-10.000 has tried it and that there are 2000 active players. The biggest Larps have 4-500 participants and lasts up to 4 days. The average age of the Danish Larper is fairly young, 19-20 years.

Denmark is the land of small organisations, this is also true in the Larping society. In the area of every larger city in Denmark there is a group of Larpers and in the main cities there are more than one. In the latest years there has been many projects arranged in co-operation between different groups and we are seeing more and more people travelling from one part of the country to another, to participate in Larps.

## THE GENRES

The biggest Larps are all fantasy Larps, but in the later years there has been arranged several cyperpunk, sci-fi and other futuristic genres. There is a big coincidence between the traditional role-playing and the Larping society. This gives Denmark many "MiniLarps" (2-8 hours, 10-30 persons), because Larping is strongly represented at the traditional role-playing convents. There has been held almost all kinds of genres ranging from horror, over Mafia, to Polish peasant Larp.

## THE MEDIA

There are two Larp media and one dawning. The webforum [www.liveforum.dk](http://www.liveforum.dk), is a large and very popular website. Liveforum.dk is co-operating with the only printed magazine, Sabbath. Another webforum dawning these months, [www.laiv.dk](http://www.laiv.dk), which will be forum for organisers.

## TODAY'S TRENDS AND ISSUES OF THE DANISH LARP SOCIETY

I will end this short article by summing up the main issues in the Danish Larp society these days (February 2001).

-The discussion of "what is Larp and how can we use it" is off course on going. Entertainment, art, media or...? These discussions lead to many experimental and creative Larps.

-To many projects/to few players? Many projects are being cancelled, because it can not get enough participants.

-Pregenerated rolls. The trend of today is to hand out pregenerated rolls to the players. Every major Larp has pregenerated rolls, something that was only seen in MiniLarps, just a few years ago.

-Generation shift. Larp-Denmark is going trough the first generation-shift these years. Many younger organisers, is taking over and is organising bigger and bigger Larps



Matti Nuortio  
[thaurzie@hotmail.com](mailto:thaurzie@hotmail.com)

# ROVANIEMI

The Rovaniemi larp scene is a curious entity. As far as I understand, it has been born three different times. This is because of certain issues regarding education and other similar things: when people reach a certain, albeit arbitrary, age, chances are they will relocate. This is especially true for the more innovative people, which basically equals to game masters – or whatever they be called: larpwrights, masters of ceremony, all the same.

The history of the larp scene in this city by the Arctic Circle, arguably the northernmost frontier of Finnish larpdom (Ylitornio and Kemijärvi have larpers, but currently not too much activity; there are also rumours about larping in Sodankylä and Ivalo), traces back to 1994 or so. However, as far as I, a member and enkindler of the 'Third Generation', am concerned, this is prehistory: I do not possess any information about this era. One might say this points out the fact that the larpdom in general should be more interested in their roots and history in case we are to be ready to face whatever tomorrow bringeth.

Then there was Second Generation. And they are gone. However, this might be compared to a relay race: when those people started their grand trek out from Rovaniemi, the baton was exchanged. We, the shiny-eyed, eager-hearted youngsters of that time rose to answer the call – to fill the larpic vacuum that was thus formed. For us, the motivating force was initially a mixture of curiosity and urge to socialize on a new level. I guess this is the case in many

other small places as well. I expect yet another generation shift to occur within two years.

There are some other larp scenes within a bearable distance, and naturally there has been cooperation: we are the Ultima Thule, the extreme periferia, the nowhere: not being interested in others would guarantee never being able to fulfil even the most minimalistic ideas of our own. I reckon there have been larps in Kuusamo, about 200 km southeast from here, in which majority of the players were from Rovaniemi, not from Kuusamo! At least we're bigger than some others! Right now we are in the process of forming more and more ties to the other larpers in the Northern Finland region. In this process a major driving force is the ever-growing 'metropolis' of Oulu and the lively larp circles there.

Young people and lack in numbers naturally result in not too much happening. This is obviously a setback, but also a boon in a way. There are yet no signs of a distinguishable 'Rovaniemi style' forming, and I think this is good. More often than not, for styles to be canonized is bad, so it's a relief that we've not experienced that here. In the future, we hope to launch five relatively extensive events per year. But until then, we'll be going elsewhere to play, perhaps cooperating with others near and – less likely – far, or simply not playing at all. If only we weren't that fucking remote from everywhere!



Editing:  
Ingrid Storro

# LARPING IN NORWAY

Is LARP in Norway very much different from LARPs in the other Nordic countries? I don't know, as I don't know much about how LARPs is done elsewhere. I will sum up some of the things we do here in Norway, and you can make up your own minds.

During the last five years, since Knutepunkt was first organised, LARP in Norway has grown. Not just in the number of participants, but also geographically and in diversion. No longer mainly an Oslo-and-Trondheim phenomenon, LARP groups have sprung up in Bergen, Stavanger, Fredrikstad, Tromsø, Vestfold – and there are probably groups most of us have never heard of. They organize events of many forms and genres: ongoing events, weekend LARPs and week-long LARPS. Medieval fantasy, vampire, historic, and realistic settings, and futuristic LARPs. Many of these groups use the Internet to communicate – through the web portal laiv.org, which host many groups' homepages as well as "the" national web discussion board, or through mailing lists and IRC.

LARP as an activity is spreading because a lot of people want to do their own thing, instead of waiting for something to happen. During the last few years, there has been at least one LARP for each decade of the 20th century, as well as futuristic LARPS like "Kybergenesis" and "Nanotech", or the historical Western LARP "Wanted". A few groups of organisers have started to make LARPs aiming to heighten the social awareness of the players: Weltschmerz started out with "Amerika", and "Europa" will be concluded by the time you're reading this. FLH (The Organisation for Living History) produced "1944" i 1998, and "1942 – Someone to trust" in October 2001. Both Weltschmerz and FLH have worked to gain economical support from the state, and

have succeeded to some extent. But governmental sponsoring is not very usual in Norway, and as a result of that, LARPing in Norway tends to be a bit expensive. We are hoping that over the next few years, the authorities will come to view LARP as something to fund. LARPS like "Amerika" and "1942" are excellent for showing that we are not only dressing up and playing in the woods, fun as that may be.

Below, some of the organisations in LARP-Norway present themselves.

## FROST

Before the Autumn of 2000, Tromsø had no organized group for larpers. It all began with a handful of hardworking enthusiasts with one goal; to bring the art of larping to the city of Tromsø. We have come some steps of the way, but a long distance is yet to be laid behind us. Frost held its first event in October, a small larp, Bunker, but the most exciting for us will be to live the days till Easter, when we arrange our first big event, the Noctus Borealia. It is a very exciting time for us in Frost. This because we find ourselves in brand new territory, as we try to create something that Tromsø does not have; an environment for larpers. Not everyone is familiar with the term, and we do a lot of explaining every time we meet someone that wants to know what we do. But we also have a lot of fun, and there's a great freedom in starting from the beginning.

We admire the work that has been done in every other city, in the different groups, couldn't have started without the experience we have gotten from you. And we want to invite you all to our world, in the country of the northern light.

## SLIK (Stavanger Levende Improvisasjons Klubb)

SLIK is a small foundation for larp'ers in Stavanger. We started in 1999, and so far we've been through two larps, two mini-larps and several happenings in cooperation with the city council. We also have a fanzine called Rune-riss and very nice webpages; <http://slik.laiv.org>. Our first larp, 'Stille Gråt', had 26 participants and was held during a weekend in October 1999. Our second larp 'Memento Mori' was played in July 2000. In total, 7 characters have died, some have been resurrected, and many have experienced dreams. We have been helped by an angel, visited by a demon, seen the workings of the spiritworld, been afraid of soldiers, celebrated weddings, shouted our voices hoarse, laughed our asses off and cried till we had no more tears. (Nina S. Lund)

## LARP IN TRONDHE IM

Larping in Trondheim has been going on for quite a while. Since around 1982, in fact... if you're generous, but in a more organized fashion from about 1987/1988. The way we do things have changed, but not much. We've just gotten better at what we do. So what do we do, and how? Well, most larps in Trondheim, or central Norway, as we often go out to places quite far from the city itself, are of the fantasy-variety. The recurring theme seems to be a gathering of people with one central 'event' (congress of nobels, death of a magician/chemist, wedding, ritual gathering), and a number of smaller plots and events affecting some or all of the roles attending. But we do other stuff as well; Vampire-larps has started recently, there have been

'present-day-scary-larps' and sundry other larp-events. Usually a larp organized from Trondheim gathers somewhere in between 30 and 60 players. The larger ones attract more people though; as much as 160. During an average larp from 0 to 15 people 'die', and these are usually recycled into the larp as 'lesser' characters/roles, or they are used by organizers for monsters or other forms of Non-Player Characters. We may be old (in terms of tradition), but we're still up & about! If you want to know more, check out the article 'Larpers of Trondheim' found on the webpages of Knutepunkt '01. (Håkon Mosseby)

## BFIT (Bergen frie improvisasjonsteater)

BFIT was founded in the spring of 1996, after the first LARP in Bergen had been organised. A board was elected, and there were initially about 30 members. Since then we've grown with every event, and can now count somewhere between 40 and 60 members from year to year. We hold a yearly general assembly, where a new board is elected and our rules and statutes are discussed. We also have a drafting committee, which publishes a members' newspaper and newsletter; Rataosk. The board also organises parties and trips, and meets with those who want to organise LARPS under BFIT. For those events, we provide some equipment, and give advice and help. A BFIT membership costs NOK 100 per year, and only 50.- for people who do not live in Hordaland county. This money goes into newspaper production, first-aid and other equipment, and material sent out to members. During our short history, 17 LARPS have been held under the BFIT name.





Hanne Grasmø

# IN THE NORDIC CASTLE OF MURMANSK

Democratic Art: Youth of Murmansk in interactive roleplay with the Nordic Region.

Ravn Interaktive Drama in cooperation with Weltschmerz and Knutepunkt have set up a project with economical support from the Foreign Departement.

The aim is to do networking with Murmansk larpers, and include them in our Nordic electronical and sosial network. Hopefully we will in the future be able to make a big game together. In the end of January Hanne Grasmø and Atle Steen-Hansen (both R.I.D and Weltschmerz) was in Murmansk together with Grete Ruden from Kongshirdden to get to know the people. We were invited by the Youth Committee of Murmansk. Three or four Russians will come to Norway in February/March to join the game Europa, and Knutepunkt. And we will be a group of Norwegians who will travel to their Murmansk game in August.

HANNE GRASMO INTERVIEWS MAXIM ANS STASHYA  
*Who are you?*

Maxim is the leader of the larp-group called "Nordic Castle", and I am his wife and an active roleplayer myself. We both organise games.

*How did it all start in Murmansk?*

We where a group of young people, a youth club, gathered through our common interest in fantasy literature. And of course we did some table top roleplaying as well. Then someone got the idea of making this for "real". At this point, there were groups of live action roleplayers in other cities of Russia as well.

*When?*

Our first organised game was back in 1994. Inspired by the fact that Tolkien books had reached Murmansk, it was a classical Middle Age fantasy game.

*How have your games developed after this?*

Since that, we've understood that the fantasy genre was a run-away from our difficult everyday life, and wanted to do something more useful. Through History-themes we learn about our own and European history and train different skills. We have also started to do steel sword fighting, making historically correct costumes, armour, jewellery and swords, and have dancing workshops. We have a club room which we use twice a week.

*Who are the people of "Nordic Castle"?*

In the beginning it was mostly boys, but now it's nearly as many girls. The average age is about 20, and people are mainly between 16 and 30. One "oldtimer" is 37. Besides we are students, or former students, or students-to-be. Even if we are organised through The Youth Committee of

Murmansk, everyone of us is volunteers and do not get paid for our work.

*What kind of larps have you done?*

We have one big larp every summer, with up to 200 participants. The first one was Tolkien "Lord of the Rings", the rest have had different historical themes, cut right out our the history books. We play real historical persons. For example we have played Vikings vs Britons, French medieval "Rose War", and the arrival of Christianity in Russia. The next play will be about the 100 year war (1500-1600).

*For how long time do you play?*

Usually we play for ten days, but then the first one or two days is about building up the camp and having a tournament.

*Ten days!!! But then you have off game rests in between?*

No. We are in our roles days and night, all the time. Of course the feeling might be "off game" when we eat with plastic spoons from cans, but even then we don't leave our character. It's difficult for us to have correct dining, because we have to carry everything we need for 10 days on our back for 5-7 kilometres.

*How do you make the background for a role?*

It's very much up to the participants themselves. The organisers set the rules for the game, and pick the historical time and characters we want to have in it. Some times we pre-organise some happenings we want to happen in the game. If you are going to play "King Albert" we give you a literature list where you can read about your role, and get the right historical background material.

*Is it all about History?*

Yes, our big games are, but we do also play shorter games or city games. More like Agatha Christie, Vampire or Mafia-games. The Youth Committee has more than once had to defend the "crazy youth running with guns in the city".

*It seems to us that fighting always is an important part of your games, is it so?*

Well... The girls seldom fight. They are busy with making food and do the dishes and so on. We have had one game totally without fighting or weapons. It was a more mystical game, and lasted for a whole month!

*Tell us more about this game!*

It was Stashyas game, and every player was in the game meanwhile they went to school or work. We played two different teams with opposite aims: The one team tried to open the underworld gates, while the other tried to close them. No one knew who was on which side. Stashya made a map over Murmansk, and made a measure from where everyone in the game lived. To find out where to open/close the gates, you had to understand the secret measure. Most people played alone, except for their own personal "following spirit" (fylgje).

*And the last question: Why do you larp?*

To flirt, drink tea and sosialize... No, of course it's more about having great experiences, and learning a lot at the same time. We learn about history, and how they lived, fought, danced, sang and belived before. For us it's also very important to make beautiful costumes, and lifelike weapons.





Mike Pohjola

# LARPS AND STRIPES

## LARP US style

### A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO LARP IN USA

According to many sources, role-playing - live-action as well as table-top - began in the United States. This may well be true, but the current position of LARP in USA is not too great. While in Nordic countries many games enjoy the support of the government or some major companies, in America the gamers still have to deal with constant pressure from the religious right and agitators of political correctness.

Somehow LARP is yet to become a popular hobby in the States. Sure, many college people take part in the occasional Masquerade session, but that's just because all their friends go. They don't consider them LARPs, but more like theme parties. And that's about the only contact the US public has with role-playing. A situation where major companies support the hobby, and games are featured in national news is unimaginable for many American larpers.

### DIFFERENCES IN STYLES

But there are larpers in the USA, and there are LARPs. Perhaps the biggest difference between a typical American LARP and a typical North European one, is that American games are much closer to their table-top ancestors. Players carry with them character sheets where their abilities and skills are listed in numbers. When trying to use those skills, the player rolls dice or rock-paper-scissors to find out the outcome.

The games are mostly player vs. player games where the important point is the interaction between characters. It's not necessary to look right or even use make-up, as the performance itself, and having fun, is most important. Many

gamers find it unfathomable or even offensive to select players to a particular role because of their looks. "You can't ask about appearance in the registration form. That just isn't done", commented one American larper.

That's what's called Theater Style. The other prominent style of playing is Live Combat. Live Combat games are, in some aspects, like the Fennoscandian live-action games. Players use boffers or BB guns, and they actually have to be able to do what their characters do. Again, though, appearance of things is not important: "This is make-believe! People should be allowed to play whatever they want."

Main difference to the freeform style most Nordic games seem to use, is that the Live Combat games are rather strictly player vs. environment. This means, that the characters fight NPC monsters, embark on quests given by NPCs, and gather experience and treasure to become more powerful. In this way, the LC games are more about being active than about being interactive.

### NOT ALL BAD

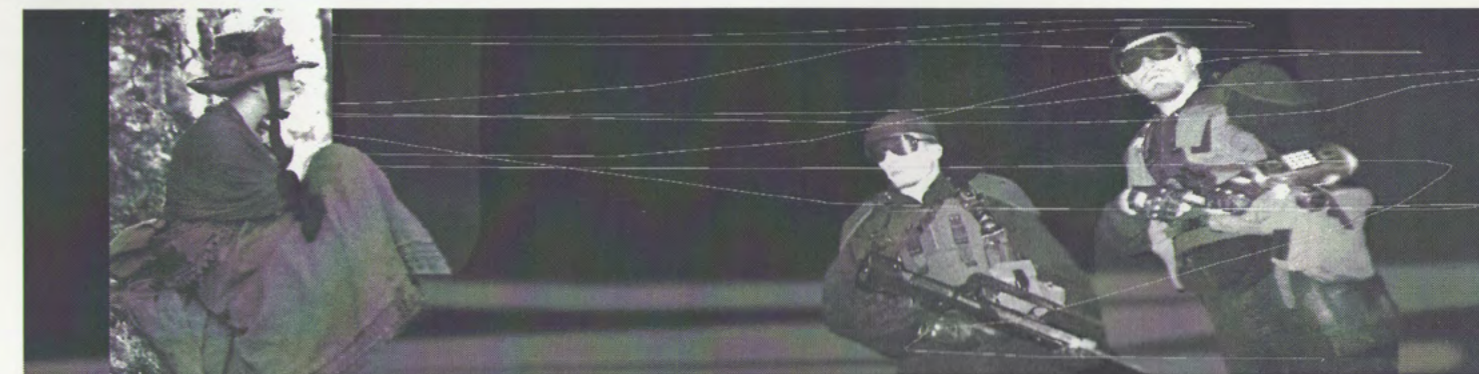
Despite what's said, American way of LARP, at least Theater Style, does have its merits. If the game focuses on internal disputes of the characters, then the environment might be totally unimportant, only the social aspects matter. That way, for example, a game set in a Victorian mansion wouldn't require thousands of Euros worth of set design, propping and costuming (not to mention the time it would take!) but just a comprehensive text about the social conditions of the Victorian Era. This allows for much more diversity in game design, than the more realistic style often used in Nordic games.

Partially to test the Theater Style, I recently ran a four-player two-hour scenario Team Adventure, written by Mike Young. Team Adventure was about a team of modern-day heroes (the style of James Bond, Mulder'n'Scully or The Saint) who constantly saved the world from the evils of Professor Mesmer. In the game they encountered things like battle droids and used super computers and ray guns, something I probably could never have put in a "normal" LARP.

And you know what? It was fun. More like the fun you have in an action-oriented table-top scenario than a LARP, but more like the fun you have in an action-oriented LARP than a table-top. And you couldn't really have done it any other way. In case you're interested, Mike Young's company Interactivities Ink, Ltd. is publishing a TS LARP rules system Rules To Live By, and Team Adventure is the accompanying scenario. The rules book should be out shortly. The book also contains some information about GMing events, writing characters etc.

### LARP AS A PHENOMENON

American larpers have LARPA, their version of Sverok or SuoLi. Unfortunately LARPA currently seems to focus mostly on the east-coast gamers, but they're actively trying to unite all larpers of the country. Until recently, they published a larp magazine called Metagame, and are now talking about reviving it online with a new name, and an entirely international identity.



LARPA also organizes Intercons, which are LARP conventions quite different from the Knutepunkts we know. They're not about talking (who would be interested in that?) but about gaming. Small TS games are ran in hotel rooms, many at the time, all the time. People come to the conventions, sign up for games and play, play, play. When they get too tired, they retire to their own hotel rooms, or to the con suite, which always has snacks, soda and videos for recreation.

We have different cons, different games and different attitudes towards gaming. And a whole lot to learn from each other. I'm not saying I'd definitely ever make a Theater Style LARP, or that I'd want the next Knutepunkt to have lots of mini LARPs in its program. But now I know it's an option. And now you know it, too.

### LINKS

The recently very active mailing list Larpa-gen: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/larpa-gen/>  
Live-Action Role-Players of America (might be offline): <http://www.larpa.org/>  
LARP company Interactivities Ink, Ltd.: <http://www.interactivitiesink.com/>  
To write for the upcoming online LARP zine, e-mail: [vialarp@yahoo.com](mailto:vialarp@yahoo.com)



# REGULATIONS

1. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that the...  
2. These regulations shall apply to all...  
3. The regulations shall be subject to...  
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## THE REGULATIONS

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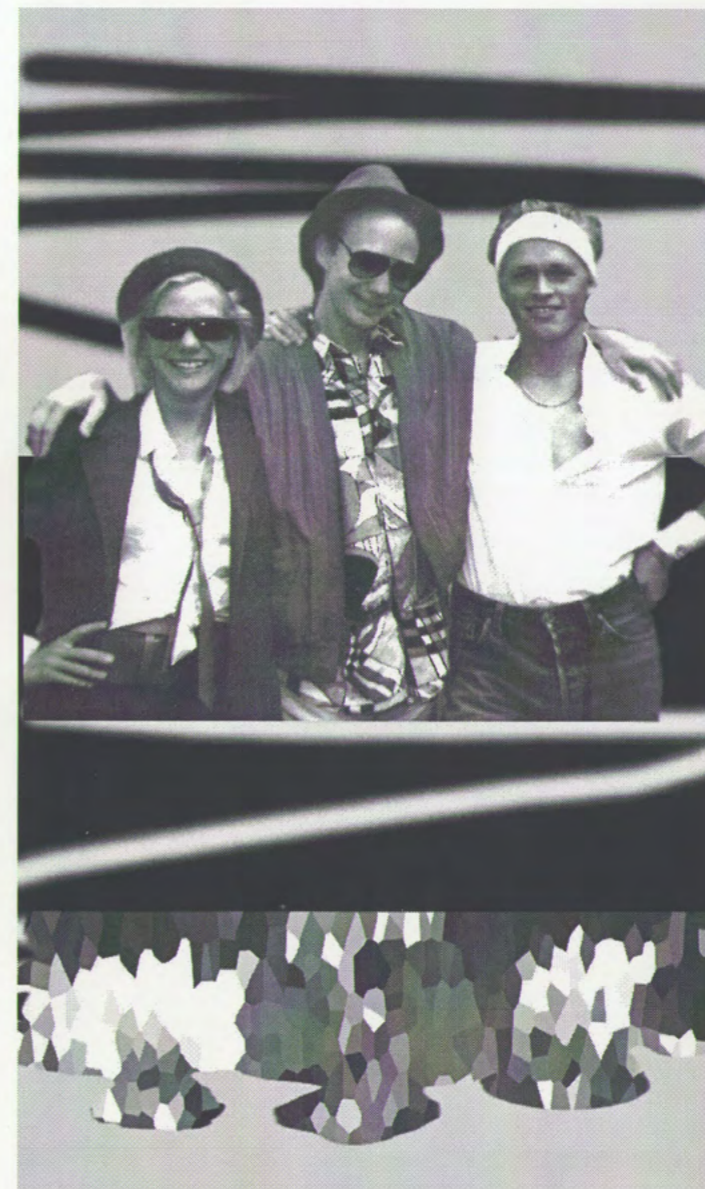
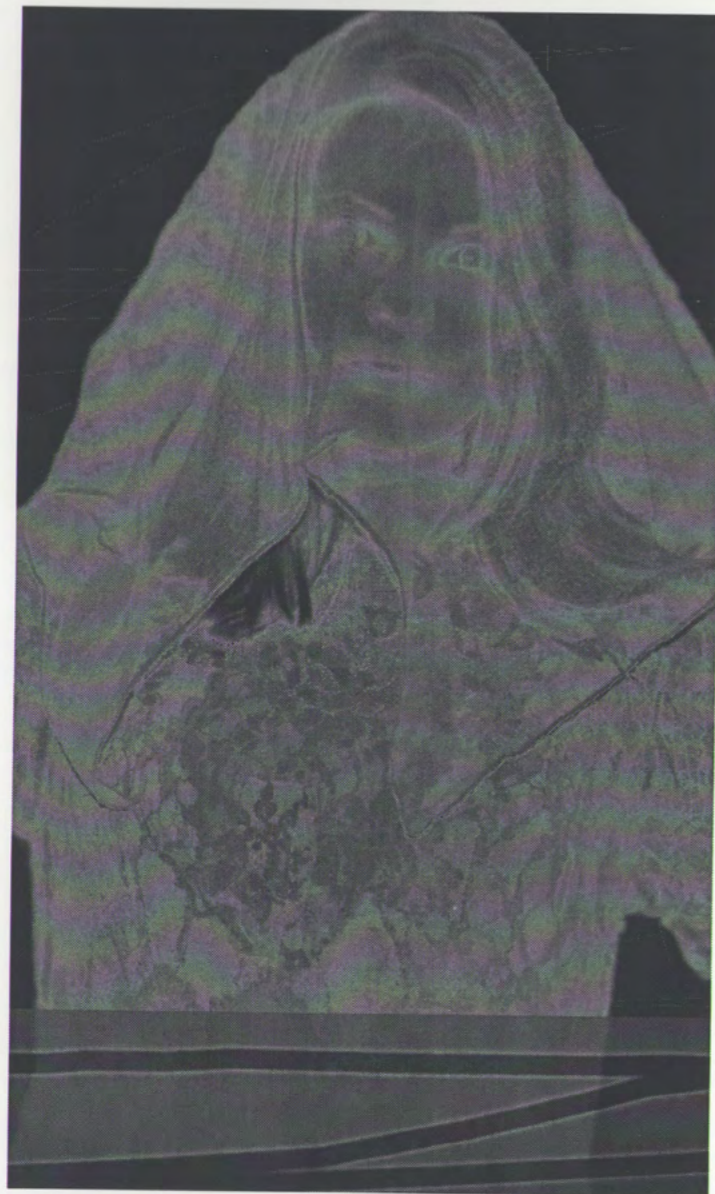




# REGLEMENT

Arrangørene av årets Knutepunkt vil gjerne oppfordre alle deltakere til å bidra til et vellykket arrangement ved å følge ordensreglementet og rette seg etter de beskjeder som blir gitt av arrangørene.

1. Følg Norsk Lov, særlig de delene av den som omhandler begrensninger i ytringsfriheten, vold&trusler, alkohol og nakenhet. Knutepunkt '01 skjer på 'Et Offentlig Sted'. NB! Derfor er det ikke tillatt å drikke alkohol annet enn der det blir servert. (Gjelder inne OG ute) Røyking er forbudt innendørs annet enn på kvelden, i Puben.
2. Følg de beskjeder som blir gitt deg av vakter eller andre personar som tilknyttet arrangementen av årets evenement.
3. Oppfør deg på en slik måte at mennesker i umiddelbar nærhet og/eller innenfor syns- og hørsels-rekkevidde ikke føler seg støtt og/eller plaget, pint, utnyttet, ødelagt eller forstyrret, med mindre dette er meningen i utgangspunktet.
4. Gjør mot andre det du med sikkerhet kan si at de gjerne vil oppleve.
5. Respekter programpostene, og ikke forstyrre forelesere/aktivitetsledere unødig.
6. Personer som over tid og etter flere advarsler oppfører seg på en slik måte at arrangørene anser dem som uskikket til å delta på KP '01, vil bli vist bort fra arrangementet. (Ref. pkt. 1 tom. 4).
7. Bidra til ideen om 'Laiv for Alle!'
8. Les reglementet for Ullevål Skole, hvis dette er stedet du skal sove! Disse er slått opp på skolen og ved informasjonen.



# REGULATIONS



This years Knutepunkt committee wishes to encourage the participants to contribute to a successful event, by following these rules and following messages and directions given by the committee.

1. Obey Norwegian Law. Especially those parts of it concerning limitations to the freedom of speech, threats & violence, alcohol and nudity. Knutepunkt '01 takes place in 'Public Space'. Note: This means that consumption of alcohol, indoors or outdoors, except in the areas designated for it, is forbidden by Norwegian Law. In addition, there is an indoors no-smoking Law, with exception of the Pub in the evenings.
2. Pay attention to messages and directions given you by officials of the KP '01-committee
3. Behave in such a manner that persons in your immediate vicinity and/or in your line-of-sight does not feel hurt and/or pestered, molested, abused, destroyed or bothered, unless this is the original idea.
4. Do unto others what you sincerely think they would appreciate experiencing.
5. Respect the program, and don't disturb lecturers/activity-leaders unnecessarily.
6. Persons that over a period of time and after continuous warnings behave in such a manner that the committee sees them unfit to participate at KP '01, will have to leave. (See numbers 1 through 4).
7. Contribute to the idea of 'LARP for All!'
8. Read the rules for Ullevål School, if you are going to sleep there or visit it during KP '01! These are posted in the lobby and at the school.



# REGISTRATION

The registration information is a summary of the information provided to you by the National Council of Churches of America. It is intended to help you understand the program and to provide you with the information you need to register.

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PEOPLE AT KP 2001  
Names, phones, addresses, etc.

THE PEOPLE



# PEOPLE AT KP 2001

Names, phones, addresses, etc...







PEOPLE AT KP 2001

Names, phones, adresses, etc...







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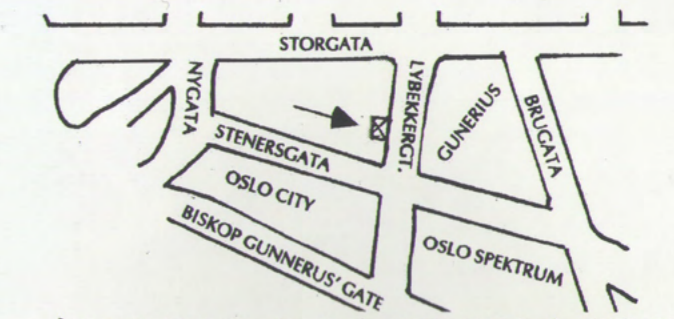
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ÅPNINGSTIDER: Mandag - fredag 10.00 - 18.00, lørdag 10.00 - 16.00

VI FØRER:

chiffon - silke - viscose - polyester - fløyel - lycra  
 sysaker - gardinstoff - sofastoff



KNUTEPUNKT 5001