

Tricky Tales

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Foreword

This essay is a reflection on various layers which inform my artistic practice, and particularly expands on the background and research for my short film, *The Spirit, The Lamp & The Permanent Inhabitant*. When moving back to Sweden, after living most of my adult life abroad and arriving in Stockholm, I was strongly reminded of having a regional identity. This essay is an attempt to describe how certain parts of my Gotlandic background influence and inspire my artistic practice, and also to show how reading, writing and critical reflection are important parts of my process.

After my father passed, my sister wrote a memorial about his life for the local newspaper. She mentioned how he had made the forests, the fields and meadows around our farm become magical to us children through his stories about bysen. This essay pays tribute to an oral storytelling tradition that can be found on the island Gotland, but is also an examination into how tourism has affected human relationships, and speculatively, the relationship between humans and ancient spirits.

Chapter 1

Bygglov av di sma

När man skulle bygga nytt hus, antingen det var en stor lagård, ett boningshus eller en liten vedbod måste man först be di sma undar jårði om lov.

En gång var det en bonde som hade bestämt sig för att bygga en ny smedja på storgården. Han hade sett ut en bra plats, på ett ställe där hällen nästan gick i dagen och långt från boningshuset. Han visste att man måste sitta på den tilltänkta platsen tre torsdagsnätter i följd och den första torsdagsnatten skulle månen stå i nedan.

De två första torsdagsnätterna gick bra, men när folket kom ut på morgonen efter den sista natten fick de se att bonden var helt förändrad. På en enda natt hade håret blivit helt vitt på honom, ögonen hade hoppat ur sina hål, han yrade osammanhängande och tålde inte längre mänsklig mat. Han dog efter tre dagar. Han hade fått avslag på sin ansökan om bygglov av di sma undar jårði.¹

English translation:

Building permit from di sma

When someone wanted to build a new building, whether it was a big barn, a dwelling house or a little woodshed, they first had to ask di sma undar jårði² for permission.

Once upon a time there was a farmer who had decided to build a new smithy on his estate. He had found a good site, in a place where bedrock lay nearly bare on the surface and far from the dwelling house. He knew that he was obliged to sit at the site three Thursday nights in succession, with the moon on the wane on the first Thursday.

The first two Thursdays went well, but when the people on the farm came out in the morning after the last night, they could see that the farmer had been completely transformed. Overnight his hair had turned completely white, his eyes had fallen out of their sockets, and he ranted and talked gibberish and could no longer eat human food. After three days he was dead. He had been denied a building permit by di sma undar jårði.

The little spirits living under the ground

In my work I have said that I want to make anti-romantic imagery of rural life. What that entails I'm not quite sure, but when reading this story, I see a brutal fate. A farmer dropped dead, after following the 'building permit rules' by sitting on the place where he intended to build three Thursday nights in a row. He got his application for a building permit rejected by di sma undar jårði.

¹ P.21, Gamla och nya Gutasagor

² Di sma undar jårði is the Gotlandish word (often shortened to di sma) for small invisible spirits/beings believed to live in families underground close to farms and human beings. They would be comparable to what is known on the Swedish mainland as Vättar or Vittror. They are believed to be ugly, very short, dressed like humans and have supernatural powers.

This story has been written down but was originally an oral story told among people on Gotland, an island in the middle of the Baltic Sea, where I was born and raised. The northern part of the island is the place of origin for my father's line of the family, a family of farmers.

Gotland is for most people known as a major tourist destination, that in the summers attract over 500,000 visitors in the peak month of July alone and over one million a year³. The island has been depicted in romantic postcards, sleek car commercials, dark detective series and countless drone shots in commercials shown on the ferry to/from the island. The number of inhabitants that are registered on the island just reached over 60,000 this past year and today 40 % of the housing on Gotland is owned as holiday homes⁴. Getting a building permit today could take several years, compared to the three-week process in the story, though hopefully you won't end up dead.

Site-specific narration

In my artistic practice I wonder what role local folklore plays today? What would the relation look like between the local spirits and temporary inhabitants? In this essay I want to intertwine ideas about Gotlandic folklore and tourism, with examples from my own artistic practice, in order to juxtapose past with present and local specifics with global trends.

I'm interested in working with different modes of storytelling to see how narratives and histories can be embedded in a physical location. Working within multiple mediums, my practice uses a method of field research, where I start from a specific location to investigate often overlooked positions and perspectives to create narratives from.

During my Master's degree at Konstfack I have returned to the area where I grew up on Gotland, where I've done field research and filmed in the off-season, as well as spending time scriptwriting. When writing the script for my short film titled *The Spirit, the Lamp & the Permanent Inhabitant*, my intention was to bring an invisible character called The Spirit (inspired by di sma undar jårði) into a modern holiday home. I wanted to explore the idea of what folklore could play in a contemporary context and to see it as a kind of knowledge embedded in a specific environment.

The Spirit, the Lamp and the Permanent Inhabitant

Script/treatment

MOOD, SETTING

It's autumn. The summer is over and most of the tourists have left the island. There's an emptiness of people, particularly in the thousands of

³ Statistics 2016, Gotland i siffror, <https://www.gotland.se/64224>

⁴ <https://gotland.se/103340>

holiday homes, where the residents have left their summer idyll. The atmosphere is murky, the contrast between colors and shades less. We hear the wind in the trees and the breaking of waves from the shoreline. Gotland reconnects to its 'original' state of murkiness, as before Tjelvar discovered it and civilized the land. This is the time when the little spirits, living under the surface of the earth, transcend from below the ground.

SUMMERHOUSE, EXTERIOR

At a distance we see a grey wooden/concrete house, in a somewhat murky landscape on northern Gotland. The color of the house matches the dim environment. The house is newly built with a modern feel (clear architectural lines), with big windows facing the roaring sea/view outside. Pine trees, limestone and wild grass surround the building. There's a patio, connecting the house to the surrounding landscape.

The camera moves (with dolly and rails) along the (wooden panel) walls of the house, as if tracking the building. Stopping, when getting a full view into the interior through a big window. Through the window you can see the house is furnished in a minimalistic style. Nobody's at home.

Storytelling and local traditions

It's not difficult to find documentation of oral stories from Gotland. There are several local publishers dedicated to the cultural history of the island, such as Gotlandica, Gotlandsboken, Wessmans Musikförlag and the craft book bindery Malmgrens on Fårö. From 1750-1850, an extensive collecting of oral storytelling was made by the Gotlandic historian Per Arvid Säve⁵. Others continued his work, such as Theodor Erlandsson at the turn of the century, who published his findings in a series of books dramatically titled *En Döende Kultur* (A dying culture). Theodor Erlandsson founded the cultural historical museum Bunge Museum on northern Gotland, where I spent a great deal of my childhood taking part in historical plays and later worked as a guide.

During my guided tours of the museum, I would introduce the visitors to the impact folk belief and storytelling had on people's lives in the 1600–1800s. I would talk about steel and how it was believed to have protective powers against the evil spirits, as well as the importance of keeping the fire in the fireplace burning. It is said that people in the old days believed for example that poor crops and sudden illness were caused by spirits entering into your home.

In my film, The Spirit enters into the newly built house, which lacks steel in its thresholds and has a cold fireplace. I wanted to contrast the sleek new house with the rowdy character of The Spirit, which also can symbolize an ancient local being, singing in old Gotlandish (Gutamål). In the chant I

⁵ P. 7, Gotländska Folksägner

wrote for The Spirit(s), they demand that the rent be paid⁶ before daybreak, but also rant about running in circles and rabbits:

Naj hu, Naj hu, Naj hu / Drat, drat, and double drat
i ring rännar du / running round and round
Naj hu, Naj hu, Naj hu / Drat, drat and double drat
i ring rännar du / running round and round

Raudar ringgar, Rabbis öire / Red rings, Rabbit confuse
- Gi mi din höire / Pay me your dues"

In my tour of the Bunge Museum I would tell the visitors that it was believed that you needed to treat the spirits living under the ground with respect and that you shouldn't take more from nature than necessary. This is something that Ulf Palmenfelt, folklore researcher and professor at Uppsala University, also points out in his chapter on *di sma undar jårði*, in the book *Gamla och nya Gutasagor* (2018). *Di sma* were reported to be invisible, live underground in families and close to humans. According to Palmenfelt, the stories would exemplify people's relationship to their neighbours.

Functions of folklore

When I was a child my father would make up stories about bysen⁷, a spirit that is supposed to live in the Gotlandic forests. I was 5-6 years old and very fascinated by the idea of bysen actually existing and would ask my father when he would appear, which he always answered ambiguously. The stories would often be about a child who would get lost on Legravsberget, the hill/forest above our farm, and in order to break the spell that bysen had cast on the child s/he had to wear their shirt inside out. The conclusion of the story would be to be careful of not getting lost when playing in the woods and to keep track of where you went.⁸

Today I would say that the average adult on Gotland does not *believe* in folklore, even though I'm sure there are more children that are still told about bysen and other spirits living on the island. In the book *Gotländska Folksägner* from 1979, Ulf Palmenfelt writes about what function stories had in people's lives in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

⁶ I wrote this as a comment to the fact that summer house owners don't pay any tax on Gotland, since in most cases they're not registered inhabitants of the island.

⁷ Bysen has been the most common spirit spoken of on Gotland. He is said to be a lonely wanderer in the forests on the island and has different local names depending on in which forests he has been seen.

⁸ When my father was a child, his baby brother, then four years old, wandered off in the same woods and got lost. He was gone for a day and night and found sleeping under a spruce by a member of the Home Guard.

As a way of understanding the storytelling tradition in folklore, he mentions four types of genres: legends, folk tales, testimonies of belief and recollections. The different types of stories had different types of functions, for example the tale or saga to be mainly entertainment or the testimony of belief that could make certain claims for a popular belief. The table shows four categories of storytelling and how they have been received.

SÄGEN / LEGEND	berättelse / story	gör anspråk på att bli trodd / claims to be credible	diktad / made up
SAGA / FOLK TALE	berättelse / story	ej trodd / not credible	diktad / made up
TROSUTSAGA / TESTIMONY OF BELIEF	påstående(n) / statement(s)	trodd / credible	återger kollektiv folktro / expresses a general popular belief
MEMORAT / RECOLLECTION	berättelse / story	trodd / credible	verklig upplevelse / a true experience

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I find it interesting to focus on the function of a story and to ask the question; why is this being told to me? When working at Bunge Museum, sometimes it was a challenge to explain to the visitors that stories weren't always told as entertainment, but rather to enforce a popular belief or to frighten you. The act of showing: look, this is what can happen if you do this, as the story of the farmer in the start of this chapter, tells a person to be careful or even more to be scared of the spirits. In several books with oral storytelling from Gotland, I find stories of women¹⁰ that are punished by the spirits for their 'stupid behaviour', which is often combined with a Christian moral of the time. For example, one story tells of a new mother who is warned by di sma undar jårði after leaving the house. She is not allowed to go outside before the churching of women ceremony (kyrktagningen), by which every woman had to be readmitted to the church after childbirth¹¹. The old stories found in folklore are by no means innocent and could function to reinforce the positions people had in society.

Today you might still find expressions of folklore in local culture. However, Palmenfelt writes that when old tales are retold today, they can lose some of the functions mentioned above, for example to confirm a popular belief. The stories are instead seen as part of the past and the cultural history.

⁹ P. 13, Gotländska Folksägner

¹⁰ Often the hired help, in Swedish 'pigan' was the one who had acted wrongly and would be punished by the spirits.

¹¹ P. 26-27, Gamla och nya Gutasagor

But, Palmenfelt suggests, you can make more up-to-date versions that can be believed¹².

The idea that folk tales could have the possibility of endlessly being changed is something that inspired me in the making of *The Spirit, The Lamp and The Permanent Inhabitant*. As I am concerned about the different positions that the permanent and temporary inhabitants¹³ on Gotland have today, it liberated me when writing my film script that I could use the voice of an angry little creature living under the ground.

Naj hu! Naj hu! / Drat and drat!
i ring rännar du / running round and round
Naj hu! Naj hu! / Drat and drat!
i ring rännar du / running round and round

Dagi gryar yvar möiri / Day breaks over fen
Teid för höiri / Rent due then"

¹² P. 26-27, Gotländska Folksägner

¹³ Gotland has the lowest wages per person in Sweden, with an average income of 265,809 SEK per person/year, compared to 330,282 SEK per person/year in Stockholm. After Blekinge and Dalarna, Gotland has the third highest tax rate in Sweden. <https://www.ekonomifakta.se/Fakta/Regional-statistik/Ditt-lan-i-siffror/Nyckeltal-for-regioner/?var=17249,17250>

Chapter 2

LAMP TO BLACK

The camera is directed half figure to the lamp in the windowsill overlooking the murky landscape outside. The voice-over of the summer resident again:

"We love coming here in the summers, going to the beach and late night dinners with our friends who also have houses in the area. Here we are undisturbed and can recharge our batteries."

Cut to an outside view of the lamp, lighting up the window/architecture as a solitary 'lighthouse' lamp.

The lamp is turned off. Black.

A postromantic state

I am curious about how romantic gazes inform ideas about countryside and city and how this is exemplified in landscape imagery. When reading art theorist Boris Groys's text; *The city in the age of touristic reproduction*, I recognize myself both as a local and tourist several times. As being a local who thinks some tourists are idiots as well as a feeling of being pressured to reflect people's (romantic) ideas of my home region¹⁴. In addition, I'm an artist and tourist making journeys around the world.

In the text, Groys goes from describing the romantic tourist in the 19th century to a current postromantic status, and uses an example from Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, where the local inhabitants in the Alps consider "all worshipers of icy peaks to be fools"¹⁵. He writes that today (in 2008) the situation has completely changed as "all manner of people, things, signs, and images drawn from all kinds of local cultures that are now leaving their places of origin and undertaking journeys around the world"¹⁶. He concludes that the distinction between the romantic tourists and local populations is being erased.

"Even though the inhabitants of any particular region might still regard internationally roaming tourists as fools, nonetheless they increasingly sense the need - no doubt for economic reasons - to assimilate the globalized gaze pointed at them and to adjust their own way of life to the aesthetic predilections of their visitors, the travelers and tourists. And besides, mountain dwellers have now also started to travel and are becoming tourists too.

¹⁴ The first thing that struck me when moving to mainland Sweden was that I would often be expected to have a broad Gotlandish accent and be told I didn't speak *enough* dialect.

¹⁵ P.104, Art Power

¹⁶ P.105, Art Power

The times in which we live are thus an era of postromantic, that is, comfortable and total, tourism, marking a new phase in the history of the relations between the urban *ou-topos* and the world's topography."¹⁷

Whether the border has been erased between tourists and local populations, I'm not quite sure about, but I do think Groys brings up an important aspect that the local inhabitants feel a need to assimilate the gaze pointed at them. For economic reasons, the border might *seem* erased since you as a local agree with the gaze pointed at you, in order to sell your crafted goods for example, or to rent out your accommodation. If you don't agree with posting idyllic images of your Airbnb accommodation, you might not get any reservations.

I say this conscious of the fact that my mother has made a label for the jars of honey she sells during the summer, with an image of blooming poppies and her horses grazing in the background. She has told me that the label also functions as marketing for her accommodation/bed & breakfast as it shows the pretty countryside surrounding her farm.

If you look at the situation on Gotland in the off-season, I'd say that the border between the tourists and local inhabitants hasn't been completely erased. During the winter when most of the tourists and temporary inhabitants have left, there is a certain need to process and joke about the expectations the visitors have of locals. On Gotland there usually are New Year's variety shows, with plenty of jokes about tourists and the dynamics between temporary and permanent inhabitants. In the sketches, the positions of the locals and tourists are accentuated, in order to make a point of a difference in perspectives.

Recently I came across the Youtube channel *Cinema Ciceron*, which is dedicated to old Gotlandish language (Gutamål) and the traditions in the area of southern Gotland. In their most recent Youtube video *Vad händer på Gotland på vintern?*¹⁸ (translation: What goes on in Gotland during the winter?), the sketch shows a reporter asking a local what she does during the winter. The local (responding in old Gotlandish) says that "no, not much is going on", in which the reporter follows up by asking "what happened last weekend for example?" The local answers "the usual" and starts listing all the activities and chores she's done during the weekend, which is quite a busy list. She concludes with that "no, not much is happening we are just waiting for you Stockholmers to come here again". The reporter ends by saying "that indeed not much is happening on Gotland during the winter" and the report is over.

As a last note or behind the scenes, the local appears again and confesses that "this is just what we tell the Stockholmers, otherwise they feel so sad" with a wink. The video is over, showing that the expected answer is not always the truth.

In Groys's text, he begins with the utopian idea of the city, but says that in modern times, the utopian idea of the city has grown weaker and gradually been exchanged with the fascination of tourism. This is an attitude change that romantic tourism in the 19th century laid the groundwork for.

¹⁷ P.105, Art Power

¹⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE-pfHB2AZM&ab_channel=CinemaCiceronGotland

Groys argues that the romantic gaze is not utopian but conservative, and that the gaze is directed to past provenance and not at the future.

“The touristic gaze romanticizes, monumentalizes, and eternalizes everything that comes within its range”¹⁹.

A tourist's gaze

SUMMERHOUSE, INTERIOR

(Woman) *“We’re really happy with how the architecture melts in with the natural surroundings. We wanted a house where you could easily go from inside to outside.”*

(Camera inside) In the empty, but fully furnished house we glimpse into a still life of summer living; straw/summer hat, kimono/bathrobe (other summer clothing/accessories), BBQ, cast iron fireplace, branded speakers and an espresso machine. The camera ‘catalogues’ the interior to create a sense of space and identity of the place. (Montage or sliding movement with dolly) Architectural lines (windows, walls/doorways, corners) are included in the shots of the interior, to place the details in an environmental context.

A voice-over of the summer residents accompanies the shots of the interior:

(Man) *“We decided to use raw materials inspired by the grey limestone and pine trees on this part of the island. The colours are in shades of grey, wood and white.”*

(Woman) *“I always feel calm with white walls around me.”*

From December 2017 to January 2018 I was an artist-in-residence at Nida Art Colony (NAC) in Lithuania, on the eastern side of the Baltic Sea. Like Gotland, Nida is a major tourist destination in the summer and I found myself quite at home in the off-season coastal environment. Being at the residency I became familiar with how the NAC and Vilnius Art Academy (in charge of the residency) have been investigating the idea of critical tourism. Their book *Tourists Like Us: Critical Tourism and Contemporary Art* (2013), published together with Ecole Cantonale d’Art du Valais in Sierre, is a collection of essays on topics considering critical tourism, sightseeing as research and invented nature. In the different texts in the publication I came across the name John Urry in connection to a particular kind of perception described as the ‘tourist gaze’.

¹⁹ P.103, Art Power

John Urry was a British sociologist who was interested in the power in Britain, localism and regionalism, mobility and tourism²⁰. He has written extensively on tourism and uses the term 'tourist gaze' as a keyword in several of his publications.

In the book *The Consumption of Tourism* (1994), he lists different points as important elements of the tourist gaze. Urry also argues that movement is central to the idea of modernity and that the modern subject is a subject on the move²¹. In the modern idea of a divide between work and leisure, tourism plays an important role.

1. Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organised as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies.

4. The places gazed upon are for purposes which are not directly connected with paid work and normally they offer some distinctive contrasts with work (both paid and unpaid).

7. The gaze is directed to features of the landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday and routine experiences. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out-of-the-ordinary.²²

Growing up on a farm, a division between work and leisure wasn't always so clear, as we lived at my parent's workplace. We siblings also helped out in the barn with for example feeding hay to the calves and scraping down the manure from the cow's stables.

In the summers when our summer friends²³ arrived, they would sometimes help out with bringing in the hay from the fields or with moving the cattle. Judging from my friends' reactions, this was something out of the ordinary, when it was in fact part of my everyday life. You could say that I became aware of a difference of perception, even though we were at the same place.

A romantic gaze

Urry suggests that it is crucial to recognize the visual character of tourism and that there are two different types of the tourist gaze; the romantic and the collective. He quotes J.A. Walter from the journal *Leisure Studies*:

For example, Stourhead Park in Wiltshire²⁴ illustrates the romantic notion that the self is found not in society but in solitudinous contemplation of nature. Stourhead's garden is the perfect romantic landscape, with narrow paths winding among the trees and rhododendrons, grottoes, temples, a gothic cottage, all this around a much

²⁰ <https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/john-urry/>

²¹ P. 141, *Consuming Places*

²² P. 132, *Consuming Places*

²³ Children from (mostly Stockholm) families that own a holiday home and spend their summers on Gotland.

²⁴ National Trust site in the UK

indented lake. The garden is designed to be walked around in wonderment at Nature and the presence of other people immediately begins to impair this.²⁵

I find the idea of a romantic landscape and how it enhances a self that can be found in solitude with nature, very important. These kinds of ideas have shaped not only the tourist industry but also romantic nationalism, known as ‘nationalromantiken’ in Sweden, where you will find paintings from the 19th century depicting a person in solitude with nature.

A romantic type of tourist gaze is emphasized by solitude and holds a semi-spiritual relationship with Nature, and has much in common with what Boris Groys earlier simply described as tourist gaze. Urry argues that “a romantic tourist gaze does not see this as one way of regarding nature. They consider it as ‘authentic’, as real. And they attempt to make everyone else sacralise nature in the same sort of way.”²⁶

The idea that one gaze is authentic (compared to another?), reminds me of experiences I’ve had with people who own a summerhouse and who regard the nature and summers on Gotland as a close to holy tradition. In conversations with summer residents who praise the nature of Gotland, I (as a farm daughter) also point out the hard work that goes into working the land, where the earth on Gotland is in many places poor and difficult to farm. The summer residents *must* then reassure me that nature is in fact very beautiful. The emphasis the summer residents put on having the last word, as well as how the tourism industry reaffirms again and again that nature is something (solely) beautiful, I read as an attempt to make you worship nature rather than acknowledging a complex reality.

Collective gaze & class

Another type of tourist gaze that John Urry writes about is a collective tourist gaze, which depends on other tourists to be present, and is designed in a way to be public places.

The collective gaze thus necessitates the presence of large numbers of other people, as are found for example in English seaside resorts. Other people give atmosphere to a place. They indicate that this is *the* place to be and that one should not be elsewhere. (...) It is the presence of other *tourists*, people just like oneself, that is actually necessary for the success of such places which depend upon the collective tourist gaze.²⁷

Even if Urry uses British examples of touristic sites, I think the collective tourist gaze could be found in the popular Swedish resorts on the Canary Islands or in Greece, where the presence of other tourists indicate that this is the place to be and activities are organized in a collective manner. On Gotland I believe mostly a romantic touristic gaze is at play, as the number of private signs put up around people’s holiday homes (see my video work *Avstyckningen*), indicate a wish for a

²⁵ P. 137, *Consuming Places*

²⁶ P. 138, *Consuming Places*

²⁷ P. 138, *Consuming Places*

holiday in solitude and seclusion. However, the city of Visby and the beach resorts at Tofta and Sudersand, attract crowds of people who either enjoy the mediaeval city or the buzz on the beach.

Urry wants to demonstrate that the consumption of tourist services is complex, particularly when you talk about the visual character of tourism. The ability to engage in a touristic gaze may require other tourists or solitude and can depend on which social class you belong to.

Is it the ability to gaze at particular objects if necessary in the company of many others? Or is it to be able to gaze, without others being present? Or is it to be able to rent accommodation for a short period with a view of the object close at hand? Or finally, is it the ability to own property with a view of the object nearby?²⁸

Professional opinion-formers (brochure writers, teachers, Countryside commission staff, etc.) are largely middle class and it is within the middle class that the romantic desire for positional goods is largely based. Romantic solitude thus has influential sponsors and gets good advertising. By contrast, the largely working class enjoyment of conviviality, sociability and being part of a crowd is often looked down upon (...). This is unfortunate, because it exalts an activity that is available only to the privileged.²⁹

Updating the example of the brochure writer, to a social media marketer, influencer or media profile³⁰, I find it useful that Urry also brings up an economic side of tourism. He highlights the idea that the middle class are influencing the idea of having a holiday in romantic solitude. In Sweden and in the world, the middle/upper class will often have holidays at houses that are owned by themselves or their friends, in comparison to a working class who must rent accommodation, often at collective sites with other tourists.

THE LAMP - TIMER

Panning/cutting to a window above, we see a table lamp (Philips Hue smart lamp) placed in the windowsill. A digital clock shows 17:00. The lamp is turned on in a white shade, without seeing who turned it on.

THE LAMP - HUE SWITCHING

The camera focuses again on the lamp. Filming the light in eye level to a top angle/close up of the light, switching colours from yellow to orange to red to purple.

When talking to a fellow student at Konstfack, whose family owns a holiday home on Gotland, s/he tells me that as house owners, they usually look down upon the tourists renting accommodation or camping at the beach resort. They see themselves as more authentic than the 'normal tourists' and

²⁸ P. 136, Consuming Places

²⁹ P. 139, Consuming Places

³⁰ For example, media profiles Alex & Amanda Schulman, who together have in total 322,000 followers on Instagram, frequently posts about their holiday home, close to where I grew up on northern Gotland.

really don't consider themselves as tourists, but as house owners.

In my film I wanted to direct the focus towards the holiday home or summerhouse, which lacks human presence most time of the year. On Gotland the summerhouse owners are both people with roots on the island who have had the possibility to inherit or buy, a cultural/media elite who have bought up old farmsteads in what have become trendy rural areas, as well as the (newly) rich who wish to manifest their success in a designed holiday villa. The last category is the one I wanted to specifically focus on in *The Spirit, The Lamp & The Permanent Inhabitant*. Architecturally designed villas are popping up all around the Gotlandic countryside and being able to film in a designed villa with big windows towards the coast-line outside, offered me the opportunity to highlight the holiday house as something that demonstrates a high-status position in society.

Endnotes

EPILOGUE - THRESHOLD

In black and white (no sound) we see a wooden doorway with a small piece of steel in it (filmed at a historical building at Bunge Museum). Cut to inside and a fireplace with a wooden log that has a piece of steel attached to the end of it. Alternating (still) shots between *close-up* and more distant view.

The steel is a reminder of how people in the old days would protect themselves from the spirits living under the ground (*di sma undar jårði*).

In *The Spirit, The Lamp & The Permanent Inhabitant*, the camera enters through a fireplace into a designer home on the stony coast of northern Gotland. There is no fire in the fireplace, which signifies giving open access to spirits who want to break into your home. The modern house in the film lacks all of the old measures of securing a home and therefore there is nothing stopping the spirits, like *di sma undar jårði*, from breaking in.

What do little spirits under the ground tell us? Ulf Palmenfelt writes that the idea of the invisible spirit tells us that there are others we also need to share resources with, even if we don't always see them³¹. In *The Spirit, The Lamp & The Permanent Inhabitant*, voices sing "Red rings, Rabbit confuse - Pay me your dues".

My film is an off-season scenario. During the summer months the owners would be living in their holiday homes and *di sma undar jårði* wouldn't feel as free to just break in. Or at least this is how I imagine it.

It happened that a friend and I looked through the windows of the empty holiday homes, and inside it looked like time had frozen. During the fall and winter, the summer houses seemed to become dark shadows in the landscape and could be occasionally lit up by a weekend visitor or a lamp timer that turned on at 4 or 5 in the afternoon. When biking home in the evenings from theatre practice, I tried to overcome my fear of darkness. If the gloomy trees weren't enough, then the dark houses with their strange window reflections certainly made it scarier.

³¹ P. 20, *Gamla och nya Gutasagor*

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