

Markku Eskelinen

Editorial

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Editorial

By Markku Eskelinen

No. 30 – 2003

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Dichtung-Digital 4/2003!

"There ought to be an introduction, but there isn't."

The plan was simple: contact four competent and young (or youngish) scholars in each of the four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden), eight women and eight men, pray shamelessly on their dissertations and other works-in-progress, and most importantly give them complete freedom to present the highlights of their work that I was already to some degree familiar with or curious about. The cynical point being that it seems to me that the relatively well-funded doctoral students are among the luckiest employees in the seriously mismanaged academic sweatshops or at least among the scholarly and creatively most unpredictable, as they presumably have enough time to focus on what used to be important.

From the very beginning I had a couple of additional rules of carefully calculated non-interference such as "offer your editorship or opinions only if asked to", "don't set up artificial limits to the length of the contributions" and "try to avoid simplifying when proofreading". That was pretty much what I did and here's the result I'm happy to present as an editor-compiler of it: The Scandinavian Special Issue of Dichtung Digital.

I won't even pretend that this collection of three ladies, three gentlemen, and three Finns gives anything more than an educated glimpse of what goes on in digital literature, media and game studies in the Nordic countries. I know I ought to give you an overview, but I won't, as I'm not a great believer in exotic ghetto concepts even if they were designed to circumference the supposed state of art IT-heaven with its globally recognized brands and trademarks like Nokia, Ericson or Linux to name but a few. I'm prepared to give you four unguided tours of Skaldignavigation though.

If you happen to be somewhat literary minded I recommend you begin with Teemu Ikonen's treatment of kinetic textuality, continue by revisiting the golden age of Swedish literary experiments with Jonas Ingvarsson and Jesper Olsson both offering a cybernetic hindsight to the matter, and conclude the session by

wondering with Raine Koskimaa if there's a place for digital literature in the information society. Should you be more game-oriented instead then I suggest you'd read Aki Järvinen, Torill Mortensen and Ragnhild Tronstad's articles on games and simulations, multi-user non-places, and tubmud ludology in any order you see fit. In case you want to get the big concepts like media and convergence right, or right out of the way, Anders Fagerjord's paper is your favorite point of departure, and if you still believe the concept of interactivity is or must be useful, Lisbeth Klastруп's paper may or may not confirm that final fantasy.

On the other hand, and especially if you're a spoiled rotten impatient theory parasite like me, you might want to play first with heuristic models (Fagerjord, Ikonen, Järvinen and Tronstad) and then fine-tune the fun with careful close readings (Ingvarsson, Olsson, Mortensen) in order to be finally able to confront your possible doubts (Klastруп, Koskimaa). But that's already your non-trivial work, dear user.

Helsinki, October 14, 2003

Markku Eskelinen