

upplevelser av förhistorier

analyser av svenska arkeologiska museiutställningar

with an English summary

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Abstract

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This thesis studies the narratives conveyed in 36 Swedish archaeological exhibitions. The aim is to investigate using an intersectional perspective what kind of narratives, identities and meanings are created in the exhibitions. The analysis focuses on the visual, the material, the spatial and the corporeal experiences involved in creating meaning in narratives where the museum visitor's physical presence and movements in the room are a vital part of the semiotic work. The study develops an analytical method that can be used as a tool to examine four-dimensional narrative worlds. The method is comprised of a combination of tools taken from three different theoretical fields: narrative theory, social semiotics and architectural analysis theory. The objective of the study's method is to uncover different layers of parallel, intersecting, contradicting or concurrent meanings and narratives in texts, images, sound, material, light and space.

The analyses show that there are many different layers of narratives in the exhibitions studied. A visitor can experience meanings with all senses and there is much information in the room that is not mentioned in the exhibition texts. The study's results can to a great extent be accounted for as norms created by dualism. Some norms are produced in relation to that which is not the norm, while still others are created by the exclusion of alternatives.

In the narratives, there is an absence of complexity and alternatives in terms of the big picture in the historical passage of events. The exhibition narratives naturalize notions of stereotypical identities, social groups, borders and hierarchies. The decisive categorization for a subject position in the narratives is gender which, on the one hand, results in two well-defined opposites man/woman. On the other hand, variations on the scale between the opposites are excluded and, thereby, made invisible. Other norms that are created are adult, fair-haired, fair-eyed, fair-skinned, heterosexual, healthy, undamaged and Christian. Another duality created in the narratives presents the Stone Age as nature and the Iron Age as culture, which is also intertwined with the woman as Stone Age and the man as Iron Age.

Keywords: archaeological museum exhibitions, intersectional perspective, narrative theory, social semiotics, multimodal analysis, architectural analysis, full-body experiences