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reviews, reflections, fragments

Car-borne legendsPosted on 2020/02/14 by [jazzamour1970](#)

There is a *Folklore Casebook Series* in the USA started by Alan Dundes, where articles written over time on one and the same theme - such as Cinderella, Evil Eye, Oedipus, Proverbs - are collected, with a newly written introduction. After Dundee's death, new editors for the series have taken over. The latest edition has been put together by Lynne S McNeil and Elizabeth Tucker, and is called *Legend tripping: A contemporary legend casebook* (2018). It is also the first edition in a "legend casebook series" that the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research has supported.

Legend tripping means going to a place, such as a house, a cemetery or the place of an accident, where it is said that ghosts or other unexplained events happen to visitors. It is both a way in which legends circulate and are kept alive but also part of the narrative tradition; people not only retell legends but also visit the places that are designated, and then tell about their experiences during the journey there and the visit - which can also be something that is incorporated into the collective storytelling tradition. The concept of motive attraction could have suited well here for how places attract more and more details.

In the introduction and an overview chapter by Tucker, the emergence of research is summarized. Linda Dégh, who came to Bloomington from Hungary in 1964, was the one who drew attention to the genre and gave it a place in teaching, and gave space to several essays in the first issue of Indiana folklore that began in 1969. Early on, some views had been established: is at the center - description of the visit to the site - evaluation. An important setting here is the American small-town environment and *cruising* as part of a high school culture where the driving license age is 16, which has given the custom the character of initiation rites, where fear, courage, and the rules of society are processed.

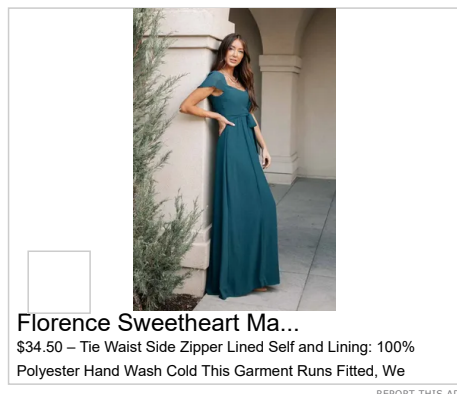
Bill Ellis took a bigger grip and analyzed about 300 depictions from Ohio - with one exception from white middle / upper middle class. He clarifies *cruising age* as 16-18 years, between driving license age and age to buy beer, and claimed the element of "ritual of rebellion". Patricia M Meley's study from 1989 is based on longer fieldwork in the form of spending time with a network of teenagers and highlights how storytelling and staging of excursions were permeated by gender-related patterns of action, where, for example, inducing fear could make girls seek refuge in a male embrace.

During the 1980s, a moral panic arose in the United States over Satanism, which led to rumors circulating about how legendary tripping involved bloody rituals. The concept of ostension, to stage what is claimed in rumors - a performative instead of narrative conveyance of the legends - was launched by Dégh; Bill Ellis drew attention to how a game was conducted with local police and the mass media through pseudo-ostension, to construct "traces" of rituals that then created unrest in society.

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from 2005 describes what has more the character of pilgrimages, with a greater age spread. At a railroad crossing outside San Antonio, it is claimed that if a car stops across the tracks, which are on completely level ground, it will soon roll away like a push and put motorists to safety. Lindahl especially follows how a tradition among Spanish speakers tells that it is children who have previously been killed in a bus accident who push on, and that traces of small hands can be seen on the rear window. For Anglo-Saxon Protestant visitors, that tradition is lacking; instead, it is a matter of gravity as a physical phenomenon.

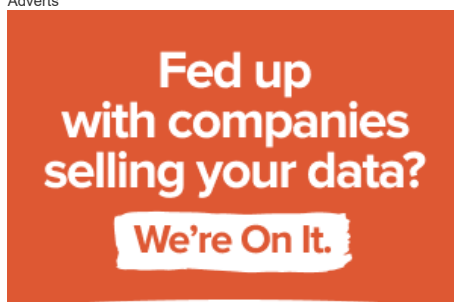


Lynne S McNeil's contribution is about contemporary ghost hunters who upload movies or broadcast their surveys live via YouTube, and how they work to create credibility - both in the use of AV technology and in the linguistic framework. Elizabeth Tucker talks about "hypermodern ostension" (after Jeannie Banks Thomas' *hypermodern folklore*, folklore in digital media) and follows four young people on a ghost hunt in a basement, where they use the Phantom Radar app which with colored dots indicates "presence".

In a short afterword, McNeil calls in a few key words: it's about border areas, it's between doing and telling, and all the time the *possibility* that there is something different is a driving force.

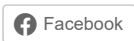
A problem with legend research in Sweden is that it is not an area to specialize in - Bengt af Klintberg's position is a special case where the position of educator has meant as much as the academic framework. (On the other hand, the value of entertainment and tourism has generated a number of publications, many of them credible presentations but without ambitions to contribute to the scientific conversation.) scientific comments, but a continuous monitoring and discussion that can build a collective competence is lacking - I think of questions such as when the concept of saying is useful, what it pays attention to and what it neglects, what phenomena correspond to (but perhaps not at all similar to) what attracted attention in the United States,

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