

Comments to the Turku School

The tone, the elitism, the tone. Mike Pohjola probably won some people over with his provocative tone and viewpoints. But he probably lost many more along the way. Where Dogma brought the larp theory out of the closet, the Turku manifesto shouted its message to the entire world. And the world responded. On its way Turku gained a lot of followers, but it annoyed a lot more people. E.g. in Denmark where 'Turku' has almost been a curse, and to be called a Turku-organiser or -player isn't a good thing...

This rumour can probably be blamed on two things. One is the terrible normative tone, in the Turku manifesto. The other is the general way people get an impression from only reading half a text, and hence lines as this: "I do not try to play, but to mold myself after the game master's

wishes« has made a bad impression. And that's a pity.

Because Turku is a lot more than just the hailing of one kind of larping and a few fancy Finnish words.

Contrary to Dogme, Turku gives the impression of being a complete larp theory - or at least being more than an ad hoc framework. However, many of the good ideas, thoughts and concepts are drowned in retorics. As you can read from the foreword to this edition of the Turku manifesto, Mike Pohjola has come to this conclusion too. And that's probably a good thing, because the best part of Turku isn't the famous attitude. It's the theoretical framework. And that is worth building on. So my advice to you, the reader, is to read the Turku manifesto again. But this time, ignore the tone and ignore the elitism. And discover some true insights.

The Author

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He has been larping since 1996, and has organised five larps in different genres since 1998. Also, he is the editor of the Danish LARP portal www.liveforum.dk. This year he is an organiser of Knudepunkt.

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It is so refreshing to read something where someone actually has the nerve to claim that they are right (and that everyone else is wrong naturally). The language in the turko-manifest reminds me of the unconventional theorist within my academic field, whom people either love because they pinpoint the hypochondria in “common practise” or hates for the very same reasons. And oh my god, the turku-school is not ashamed of claiming everyone else wrong. The main aspect is the abandonment of the dramatist and gamist style (see the “trevejsmodellenn« in same chapter) of playing and organizing larp in favour of the simulationists and the eläytyjists way. The creators tell us, that larp is not a storytelling medium, and honestly; I BELIVE. The Turku-manifest is not a proposal; it is a demand for total revolution of the common way of thinking.

I have hear many that distances themselves from the manifest because they either don't understand or because the feel that the tone is to elitist and hard. The main trend in larp has always been that »there is room for everybody«. This is not within the Turku thought. Either you see the light or you stay away.

The Turku-school has sins it came out been the target of some ridicule. Often I have hard a Turku-larp being one where all the players are in their separated closets and they do not speak or have contact the whole larp, but that they are very much immersed

in their role! When reading the »The Larper's Vow of Chastity” I see where this comes from. The 10th rule is: “As a player I shall strive not to gain fame or glory, but to act out the character as well as possible according to the guidance given to me by the game master. Even if this means I have to spend the entire game alone in a closet without anyone ever finding out”. I'm not so sure I like to be in a closet the whole game, but then again this is not what this rule is about. The Turku-manifest has often been the target of many misunderstandings and I suspect this is the outcome of people that cannot see thought the very elaborate and provocative language. Reading the Turku-manifest with some form of distance it contains many very well thought out points and ideas, that even non-followers can have much use of. But now there is only one thing left to say: “Let the gamist and dramatist classes shiver before the Turkuist revolution. The simulationists and the eläytyjists have nothing to lose but their chains. But they have the whole world to win«. Let the revolution come!!

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