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Paperland: Ethnographic Fiction at a Suburban Doorstep

The presentation consists of stories of the writing of an ethnographic novel-in-progress, a book once named as *Paperland*. *Paperland* has lived a life of its own through stages of ethnographic fieldwork, conference presentations and countries. It is a constellation of ethnographic scenes or episodes dealing with the literacy education of recently arrived migrants in Northern Europe. Or parachute jumps from oral cultures to cultures of high tech literacy.

In particular, *Paperland* tries to address questions of power between recently arrived migrants, professionals and common people of the ethnic majority. It studies notions of citizenship, parenthood and responsible adulthood. It looks at the processes of “Othering”, in which some people are denied the status of adult, parent or citizen due to their ethnic, national, cultural, religious or educational histories.

In the light of some successful fictional representations of migration and literacy, I try to articulate the current social and political need for such narratives. Is there a need for artists and researchers to work together on migration matters, or adult literacy? Do we need a division of labour? What is the value of ethnographic experience in the process of writing fiction?