Journal of Northern Studies

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The *Journal of Northern Studies* is a peer-reviewed academic publication issued twice a year. The journal has a specific focus on human activities in northern spaces, and articles concentrate on people as cultural beings, people in society and the interaction between people and the northern environment. In many cases, the contributions represent exciting interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. Apart from scholarly articles, the journal contains a review section, and a section with reports and information on issues relevant for Northern Studies.

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KEN COATES & CARIN HOLROYD

Northern Sweden and Economic Development

ABSTRACT Governments around the Circumpolar world are attempting to ensure the long-term viability of northern economies, generally by supporting the natural resource economy and seeking opportunities to promote "new economy" commercial development. The challenge is formidable, in large measure because few Arctic or sub-Arctic regions have the research capability, highly skilled personnel, venture capital, accessible markets and entrepreneurial drive necessary to compete in the global science and technology-based economy. Communities in Norrbotten County in Sweden have made significant efforts to develop contemporary economic opportunities. This essay considers efforts made by a series of northern centres—Arjeplog, Kiruna, Luleå, Skellefteå and Haparanda—to build jobs and businesses beyond traditional northern economic activities, demonstrating that creative and determined northern regions can compete successfully in the age of rapid technological transformation.

KEYWORDS Norrbotten, innovation, regional economic development, winter economies, resource development, IKEA, Sami, Circumpolar, tourism

In January 2017, Ingvar Kamprad, the Swedish founder of mega-store IKEA, passed away. He left a large estate, estimated at 362 billion Swedish kronor (US$46 billion), divided equally between his four children and a remarkable allocation of some US$23 billion for business development in Norrland (northern Sweden) ("Half of Ikea ..." 2018). While the details and uses of the bequest remain undetermined, the donation of such a large sum of personal money to regional economic development is unprecedented. The confidence expressed in the far north by one of the world's greatest entrepreneurs is a testament to the region's ability to sell its future prospects to outsiders and suggests that the magnetic properties of the North remain intact.

Kamprad's money will be extremely helpful. The Circumpolar North faces increasing demands for change in the early twenty-first century. For generations, the economies of the northern reaches of Canada, Alaska, Scandinavia and Russia rested on the development of natural resources, a slowly expanding tourism industry, and large government

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expenditures in the development of the social welfare state. More recently, the foundations of northern life have been altered by rapid technological changes, the digital revolution, transitions in the natural resource economy, the emergence of city-states as the drivers of the modern economy, and the re-empowerment of Indigenous rights (Coates & Holroyd [eds.] 2020*a*).

Among the northern regions, the Swedish north has been among the most stable and prosperous, vying with northern Norway for Circumpolar leadership in sustained economic prosperity. The tech-driven city of Luleå is among the most successful and innovative communities in the Far North, vying with Tromsø, Norway, and Oulu, Finland, for tech-driven business development (Nilsen 2016; Regional Development ..., n.d.). Kiruna, the famed mining city, is reformatting itself as a twenty-first century science centre. Skellefteå, a medium-sized town seeking to redefine itself, is poised to become the most prominent manufacturing centre in the North. At the same time, the Indigenous cultural tourism centre of Jokkmokk celebrates and commercializes Sami resilience. Northern Sweden's economic well-being rests, importantly, on continuing national investments in infrastructure, education and economic promotion, combined with supports for investment and free markets (Sanandaji 2015).

This paper examines the approaches taken by various northern Sweden communities and their efforts to adapt to changing economic opportunities in the Circumpolar world. There has been a broad scholarly and policy effort to understand both the realities of regional economic development and, more specifically, adaptations to the imperatives of the tech-driven realities of the twenty-first century (Doloreux 2004; Asheim & Coenen 2005; Asheim & Gertler 2005; Larsen & Fondahl 2015). Governments and communities in the Circumpolar world have devoted a substantial amount of effort and money to expand economic activity in the region. The results across the Far North have been uneven, at best, with little stability and prosperity expanding outside of Scandinavia (Coates & Holroyd 2020*b*; Larsen & Petrov 2020; Larsen & Fondahl 2015). *The Arctic Human Development Report* of 2015 provided an apt description of the two main economic elements in the Circumpolar World:

> The Arctic economy, like all regional economies, serves two different markets. A wide range of resource products including diamonds, iron, gold, zinc, oil and natural gas, fish, and timber is produced for an international market. A local market likewise exists to provide goods and services to the residents of local regions throughout the North. This local economy includes a significant public sector that provides income, jobs, and services to local residents. In some parts of the North, the local economy includes a traditional sector that provides for local consumption through fishing, hunting, herding, and gathering. The strength of the connections between these two parts of the local economy varies across the North.
>
> The local and international economies often behave like two separate economies, occupying the same space, but with little in common. This difference exists, for example, in the structure of production. While the international economy supports modern large scale, capital-intensive production, local production often takes place in small groups, which mix modern and traditional methods of production. The two economies also have contrasting economic geographies. The international economy is concentrated while historic settlements in the local economy are small and scattered. These contrasts are less likely for those industries that have historical local roots in a region or those which may serve both local and international markets, like fishing and herding. (Huskey, Mäenpää & Pelyasov 2015: 154–155)

Huskey *et al.* described the Circumpolar economy as having three elements: the formal economy based on large-scale resource development, the informal economy founded on traditional and small-scale economic activity and government transfers. The 2015 *Arctic Human Development Report* paid little attention to the emergence of an Arctic innovation-centred economy, which has become increasingly important in recent years (Hall 2020). This divided economic reality, compounded by the striking economic differences between the various Arctic nations, makes the examination of Sweden's experience with the development of new economic foundations in the North particularly important. First, however, it is worthwhile to remember the history of economic development in the north.

The History of Economic Development in the Circumpolar World

Northern regions hold an unusual place in the economic transformation of their nations. They have, for the most part, been managed as "internal colonies" of the nation state, a source of natural resources and economic opportunity, dominated by southern capitals and politicians but not an integral part of the country (Coates 1985; Coates & Morrison 1992; Haycox 2020; Wood 2011; Forsyth 1994). All the Circumpolar regions long sustained Indigenous harvesting economies, based on hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering and, in Scandinavia and Russia, reindeer herding. There was oil, gas and mineral wealth in North America spotlighted by the Klondike Gold Rush in Yukon, echo gold mining booms in Alaska, the discovery of oil at Point Barrow on Alaska's northern tip, the wealthy Red Dog mine in western Alaska, oil and gas and diamonds in the Northwest Territories, iron ore and other minerals in Nunavut, oil potential off Greenland, uranium in northern Saskatchewan, the massive oil sands and shale gas deposits of northern Alberta, rare earth minerals in northern Ontario, nickel in northern Labrador, and exceptional hydroelectric capacity in northern Manitoba and northern Quebec.

Northern Europe is, in general, more prosperous than the North American North; the region does not have the extreme poverty of many of the Indigenous communities in northern Canada and Alaska, the major infrastructure problems facing remote, fly-in settlements, and the inequalities between northern residents and the fly-in workers brought in to operate the mines and most construction projects. This is, outside of Russia, substantially due to the strong and consistent presence of big government, major commitments to regional infrastructure (including the Internet), and strong social welfare benefits for all citizens. In northern Scandinavia, the massive hydro-carbon resources off Norway's coast propelled it to a future of endowed prosperity. Northern Sweden and Northern Finland have Canadian style resource economies, based on closely connected small-scale agriculture with forestry, mining and hydroelectric development. Russia, with the massive natural resource potential of Siberia available, has rediscovered its northern mission, tied largely to President Putin's reassertion of its military prowess and the desire to dominate resource markets, especially in China and East Asia (Rotnem 2018; Josephson 2016; Conley & Rohloff 2015). The result has been the rapid development of Siberia, including mobile nuclear plants, the growth in northern population and infrastructure, and a major expansion of resource development. The effort is foundering now on the heels of the collapse of global oil and gas prices, but Russia's aggressive investments in the Arctic stands in stark contrast to the go-slow strategies in much of the rest of the Circumpolar world.

Northern economic development has been, at least notionally, a national government priority across the Circumpolar world. These efforts over the decades have had a variety of imperatives: solidifying national sovereignty in the Far North, gaining access to valuable resources, raising the standard of living for regional residents, particularly Indigenous peoples, and expanding the reach of the country into the northern regions. In Alaska, the Government of the United States expanded the Alaska Railway in the 1920s, but it was the arrival of the US armed forces in larger numbers during and after the Second World War that sparked a major expansion of the territorial economy. Indeed, the military has played a foundational role in northern economic well-being across much of the Circumpolar world, particularly during the massive investments during the Cold War. The Canadian government made few efforts in the North until the Roads to Resources program of the Progressive Conservative government of John G. Diefenbaker (Isard 2010). This Canadian effort focused on infrastructure development but fell far short of expectations. In northern Scandinavia, efforts to integrate northern regions into the national economy included road and rail construction, electrification, the construction of new universities and colleges in the 1960s and 1970s and the rapid modernization of towns and cities. Much of this growth and government investment rested on the rapid expansion in northern resource development after the Second World War, an era of explosive international expansion in mining, the forest industry, oil and gas development and the exploitation of hydroelectric capacity (Coates & Powell 1989).

The combination of the post-war resource boom and the expansion of government commitments established the foundation for the modern North. Since that time, all of the northern regions and their national governments have made concerted efforts to build economic opportunity in Circumpolar areas. The program details vary, from infrastructure plans (like the proposed railway through northern Finland), investments in innovation strategies (focused on Tromsø, Luleå, Umeå and Oulu), coordinated tourism promotion (focusing largely on winter and wilderness tourism), the promotion of entrepreneurship (with limited to mixed results), and Indigenous economic empowerment (with the strongest results coming in the Canadian North and Alaska).

Perhaps the greatest challenge rests with the fact that the global economy shifted faster than the economic adaptation in northern regions. Beginning in earnest in the 1990s, the foundations of the global order changed. The advent of the technology-based economy, driven by the evolution of the Internet and the emergence of digital systems, have transformed the "old" industries and resource development generally, reducing employment while sustaining productivity (Mitra 2019). This, in turn, re-enforced the dominance of major universities, research institutes and larger urban centres. The rapid growth of northern regions in the 1950s and 1970s slowed (save for a few locations, like Tromsø, Norway) as automation and technological innovation improved production processes and reduced employment. Most northern regions stagnated, except for exceptional developments like Rovaniemi's conversion of Santa Claus into a major tourism industry, even as government efforts escalated (Pretes 1995; Rusko, Merenheimo & Haanpää 2013: 37).

The new economic reality, with little to do with the specific circumstances in the North, prioritized knowledge work, technological innovation, and digital media. The new formulation pushed expectations about the role of the North to the side, save in occasional and cyclical interest in major resource developments. Being informally marginalized did not sit well with northerners, particularly those in the larger centres. In the main cities, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Whitehorse, Tromsø, Bodø, Luleå, and

Rovaniemi, local authorities adopted a "new economy" focus, building on local post-secondary institutions, national grants, and extensive government-business engagements. Government agencies, at the national, regional and local levels, demonstrated considerable belief in the technology-based economy, hoping that new companies would be launched, capitalizing on the imperatives of globalization and the "work anywhere" dream of the digital age. The returns came slowly and inconsistently, largely because the imperatives of access to venture capital, large numbers of highly qualified personnel, excellent research facilities, and local production capabilities left the advantages clearly with the larger metropolitan centres. Individual entrepreneurs and businesses are flourishing but the long-desired emergence of an Arctic innovation eco-system has not materialized.

In the "new" North, governments and community organizations seek to improve opportunities for Indigenous peoples, create more stable economies, adjust for declines in employment and activity in the natural resource sector, and search for an ongoing role for northern districts in the technology-driven order. Economic stability remains elusive, reflected in 2020 fluctuations in global commodity demand and prices that have harmed oil and gas developments, supported the mining industry and traumatized Arctic and sub-Arctic tourism. Building a commercial presence for Indigenous people and communities has been aided by a global surge in Indigenous-led entrepreneurship, although progress remains mixed. To date, technology has been more disruptive than beneficial, reducing employment in resource development, eliminating many jobs in the service sector and promising further disruptions in the near future.

The last quarter century has not seen the emergence of a new model for Circumpolar economic development, other than the long-standing dependence of periodic resource developments (vulnerable to global market demand and prices) and more regular infusions of government funding. As a result, most Circumpolar districts (although not northern Sweden) remain economically stagnant, if not declining, with continued outmigration of young people, growing retail competition from e-commerce providers that is undermining small town businesses, challenges attracting and retaining professional and scientific staff, difficulties securing risk capital, and limited ability to ramp up promising companies to medium-sized and large-sized firms. As one northern economic developer, Robert Granström, observed:

> The transition to 21st century economic realities was possible in Sweden thanks to the national economic system supporting urban growth. Still today, the net export figures in Sweden indicate that Sweden's wealth is coming from minerals, forestry and hydropower. We have been spending the net income on infrastructure and fancy buildings in the city. (Granström & Lestander 2019)

The Circumpolar world, particularly in Russia, northern Canada and Alaska, has not yet made a strong or consistent transition to current economic realities. To the degree that the knowledge economy—what some authors call the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" (Schwab 2017)—is fundamental to contemporary prosperity and continuing competitiveness, the North is not well-prepared for long-term success. The North's efforts continue, in the face of uneven results, bolstered by the faith and commitment of community leaders and the desire to set northern districts on a more positive and promising trajectory. But, to be clear, the challenge is formidable, the results uncertain, and the costs of failure highly significant. It is in this context that our research, which previously has included many studies across the Circumpolar world, was drawn to northern Sweden.

Northern Sweden

Norrbotten County, the northern quarter of Sweden, straddles the Arctic Circle. Despite its size, under three percent of Sweden's 10.2 million people live in the county. Of the 275,000 people in the region, almost one-third, 77,000, live in the city of Luleå. The rest are scattered in smaller communities throughout the 150,000 square kilometres. In the past, the natural resources of northern Sweden (hydroelectricity, timber and minerals) contributed significantly to Sweden's nation-wide industrialization and maintained a high level of regional prosperity throughout the twentieth century. Over the past forty years and most specifically the last two decades, many Norrbotten communities have tried to build on their natural resource base and attract or develop new sectors of their economies.

In the fall of 2019, the authors made an extended research trip through northern Sweden, meeting community economic development officers and business leaders, and visiting commercial establishments. We focused on selected communities and sectors, exploring the diversity of regional adaptations to twenty-first century economic conditions. In each sub-region, leaders spoke of the economic transitions underway in the region, tied to the large decline of employment in the forest industry (largely due to the advanced mechanization of sawmills, pulp mills and paper mills), uncertainty and renewal in the mining sector, and growing national and international interest in northern tourism. They described, too, the movement of regional young people to major centres in the South, the difficulty of holding the attention of national governments, the uneven impact of technological change, and the cycles of economic opportunity in the region, conditions echoed by advocates for regional development throughout the Circumpolar world. Through these case studies, this paper explores a variety of economic strategies—manufacturing, retail, the marketing of winter, space research—in Norrbotten and describes the broad, loosely connected development in the region.

Arjeplog—Winter Car Testing

The Arjeplog region, a scenic area in northern Sweden just south of the Arctic Circle, consists of a main town of the same name with approximately one thousand citizens along with six Sami villages and numerous tiny communities, collectively home to another 1,800 people spread out over many square kilometres of mountains and lakes. "There are more snowmobiles than women in Arjeplog," stated one city official. The regional economy was, for years, built around a sawmill and the Boliden silver mine, both now closed. The Boliden operation had a major impact on the region, opening numerous small mines around Västerbotten County (the county south of Norrbotten) and transforming the small farm economy in the process. Soon after the mine closed in 1996, the Argentis Business Council (three-quarters owned by local companies and the rest by the municipality) was formed to devise economic development strategies for the region. Today, Argentis' five staff help local businesses, including everyone from Sami reindeer herders to store or restaurant owners, build economic opportunities.

Tourism has been a major employer in the region for decades. As Sami reindeer herding can run into conflicts with tourism, snowmobilers in particular, and the forest industry, the city of Arjeplog has regular meetings with Sami representatives to work out issues. Two national government agencies, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth and the Swedish National Road Administration, have offices in Arjeplog (Sölvell 2016). Nonetheless, Arjeplog has long been determined to create economic and

employment opportunities in the region and thereby encourage its young people to return once they have completed their education.

In 1972, three engineers from Teldix, a German aircraft electronics company, which had recently developed an automotive anti-skid braking system, came to Arjeplog looking for a place to winter test cars and car components. They met with two local entrepreneurs, David Sundström and Per-Axel Andersson, who maintained an airline landing strip on a local lake. The two parties reached an agreement that the Germans could use the runway for car testing. After a few years, Sundström and Andersson began to focus on the car testing sector and started a company they eventually called the Icemakers.

Arjeplog is well suited for car testing in winter conditions. The region has more than 8,000 lakes; winters are cold and snowy. The Icemakers bought snow clearing machines, built storage facilities and learned how to create excellent ice testing conditions. Demand for car testing services in Arjeplog continued to grow. In the 1980s other companies, Colmis and Cartest, entered the sector. Additional service companies set up in nearby communities. Porsche, Mercedes, and BMW along with a range of component companies arrived to run tests in the area. They were soon followed by other European and Asian companies. One of the early—and remaining challenges—was providing accommodations for the influx of drivers and engineers. As there were nowhere near enough hotel rooms for the number of people who were coming to town, local folks rented out rooms in their houses, earning them additional income.

By 2020, Arjeplog was the winter car testing capital of the world. The northern Sweden test region (Arjeplog, Arvidsjaur, Jokkmokk, Älvsbyn, Kiruna and Piteå) is home to one-third of the global market for vehicle and component (brakes, drive train, tire) testing (Granström & Lestander 2019). The second largest market share is held by Finland, which has one-sixth of the market. Other places where winter car testing occurs include northern Ontario, Canada; Hokkaido, Japan; near the Mongolian border in China; in New Zealand (mainly tires as it is expensive to transport cars so far away) and in Greenland. There are now thirty different testing facilities in the Swedish winter test region. The area has so many bodies of water that each company conduct its confidential tests on its own lake. European, Asian, and North American auto companies, subcontractors and component producers now test in Arjeplog. Four to five thousand cars are tested annually, worth approximately US$100 million. Almost all of the car testing service companies are family run and make approximately US$1 to 2 million in annual profit. The larger companies produce value in excess of US$2 million; the largest company produces a financial return of US$27 million.

Cars and components are tested for functionality in cold climates. Service companies provide a wide range of services that include tracks on ice and land, cold chambers, garages, administrative buildings, gas stations and work rooms (Sölvell 2016). Car testing service companies hire personnel ranging from cleaners to engineers. Employment usually runs only for the test season, November to April, which is about six months of the year. In 2002, the Swedish Proving Ground Association (SPGA) was formed as a not-for-profit association of Swedish automotive testing service providers. The SPGA and its member companies develop industry guidelines and practices. In recent years, there has been a strong focus on security, safety and infrastructure issues and a coordinated effort to expand the sector.

Starting in the 2010s, tourism spin-offs connected to vehicle testing were launched. Former rally car drivers and drivers who wanted to test or improve their driving skills can pay to use the ice driving tracks. Event companies offer passenger rides, driver experienc-

es, and ice driving training for professional rally and racing car drivers. This has proved to be very popular and lucrative. One company, Arctic Falls, has two indoor year-round winter testing facilities with a variety of different track layouts on snow, asphalt and ice. Companies have also begun to promote summer ground testing. In 2018, four of the vehicle test companies and the Luleå University of Technology launched the Snow Academy project. The Snow Academy's focus is to build on extensive knowledge of snow amassed by the car and tire testing companies and develop methods for measuring snow quality (Evans 2018). The SPGA, the test service companies, and the Argentis Business Council are continually thinking about future testing possibilities, and the role they can play in supporting a sustainable society.

Car testing has inverted the Arjeplog economy. Where previously activity spiked in the summer forest and tourist season, the winter months now dominate the economy. Hundreds of outside professionals fill the hotels through the season (several of the larger facilities close through the non-winter season) and there are more foreign visitors than locals in Arjeplog during the winter. Tourism is the largest summer economy, although the testing industry continues its efforts to expand their activities through this time.

Kiruna—From World Class Mining to the Commercialization of Space

Developments 400 hundred kilometers to the north of Arjeplog illustrate the region's effort to continue to capitalize on natural resources while planning for a different economic future. Kiruna, a city of 23,000 people north of the Arctic Circle, is the site of the world's largest and highest quality iron ore mine. Mining began at the Kiruna mine site in 1898; over one billion tonnes of ore have been mined since then. The iron extracted to date, however, represents only about one-third of the 4.0 kilometre long, 1.5 kilometre deep ore body ("Kiruna Iron Ore Mine, Sweden," n.d.). While a great deal of ore remains, the miners have dug so far underground near to the city that a widening crack in the earth is threatening the city's safety and, in the longer-term, its existence.

Faced with the combination of a gathering crisis and a still-rich ore body, in 2004, the company that owns the mine (Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara AB or LKAB) decided to move the city about four kilometres away to allow mining to continue. The city relocation is an enormous undertaking and could cost about US$1 billion. The town centre should be re-established by 2022 while the rest of the relocation could take until 2040 (Michael 2018; Anzilotti 2018). LKAB is investing in the future in other ways. In conjunction with SSAB (a highly specialized steel producer) and Vattenfall (a large European energy producer), LKAB has invested in research on the carbon-free production of steel. A new technology called HYBRIT would allow for the production of steel using hydrogen and fossil-free electricity, expanding demand for locally produced iron ore ("SSAB in brief," n.d.).

The region is not content to live off the profitability of one of the world's most successful mines, which has produced a high wage, stable and strong community. Kiruna and the surrounding area of Swedish Lapland have also built up a tourism sector. There are direct flights in the winter from London, Tokyo and Shanghai. Visitors primarily come to see the northern lights in the winter. North of Kiruna is the small town of Abisko and, nearby, Abisko National Park. The area is famous for the King's Trail (Kungsleden), Sweden's most famous hiking trail. Aurora Sky Station, which opened in 2007, offers visitors a unique northern lights viewing experience, complete with a chair lift

ride and a gourmet dinner. The Aurora Sky Station has turned Abisko into a year-round tourist destination. Prior to its opening, Abisko's visitor services businesses closed down between November and February.

Over the past decade, many visitors come for the opportunity to stay at the Icehotel in Jukkasjärvi, not far from Kiruna. The main part of the hotel is newly built each fall out of blocks of ice harvested from the nearby Torne River the previous March. Construction of the 35 rooms takes two months, with work completed by mid-December. Artists from around the world submit designs for the room decorations. Selected artists spend two weeks carving their designs for the rooms. Next-door is the Icehotel 365 which has twenty ice rooms inside a wooden external structure. The rooms are kept at -5 degrees and are open year-round. Icehotel 365 also hosts the Icebar; all glasses and goblets are made of ice. Warm rooms are also available. Most guests like to spend just one night in a cold room but stay longer to partake in the various activities on offer: dog sledding, ice sculpting, snowmobiling in winter and fishing, river rafting and hiking in the summer. The Kiruna Ice Hotel has a highly regarded restaurant, which focuses on Sami and Swedish culture and specialities. The hotel has 50-year-round employees, increasing to 180 employees in the winter (Kiruna Ice Hotel 2019). The hotel is fully booked for most of the year, providing a substantial and sustained boost to the regional economy.

More significantly, Kiruna is also the site of a significant and growing space industry, which started in 1957 when the Institute of Space Physics began its world leading research into the aurora borealis (Bergström-Roos 2019). Seven years later the Esrange Space Center, a scientific research station and rocket range, was built by the European Space Research Organization, later the European Space Agency. The first sounding rocket was launched from Esrange in 1966 and over 150 rockets supporting atmospheric and ionospheric research were launched between 1966 and 1972 when the Swedish Space Corporation took over Esrange. Esrange's activities have since expanded to include larger rockets reaching higher altitudes, high altitude balloons and satellite tracking. A few kilometres from Esrange is a European Space Agency's satellite station. Also in Kiruna is the EISCAT (European Incoherent Scatter) Scientific Association's radar antenna site, which opened in 1981. The site enables research on the upper atmosphere and the ionosphere and different phenomena such as space weather, space debris and the aurora. And at the Kiruna airport is Arena Arctica, an aircraft hangar and atmospheric research facility.

Students have been carrying out doctoral work in space physics at the Swedish Institute of Space Physics (IRF) in Kiruna for decades. Over the past twenty years, the Swedish government has tried to build on the space research cluster that exists in Kiruna and expand the educational programs in space and related areas. In 2001, the Graduate School of Space Technology was launched by the IRF and the Luleå University of Technology. The Kiruna Space and Environment Campus (KRM) opened in 2003. It was initially managed by a consortium of the IRF, the Luleå University of Technology (LTU) and Umeå University. Today it is managed by LTU, now considered Sweden's space university, which offers summer and undergraduate courses as well as master's and PhD programmes to domestic and international students. A Space High School opened in Kiruna in 2000. It recruits its 30 highly talented and motivated students from all over Sweden (Sandahl & Norberg 2003; Sandahl & Wikström 2005: 35–40).

In 2014, LTU, established in 1971 and now with more than 19,000 students, began building on its already strong position in space technology research and education to take a lead in encouraging business and research opportunities within the space sector.

With the support of two consecutive European Union funded projects and several partners, LTU launched a space program for innovation and growth that encouraged university, industry and regional collaboration. Since 2014, Kiruna has strengthened its plan for the space industry and improved collaborations among the various actors. The EU funding was designed to promote regional growth and support small and medium sized enterprises (Bergström-Roos *et al*. 2019). The first EU project, RIT first phase 2015–2018 (both projects are referred to as RIT, which is a Swedish abbreviation for "space for innovation and growth"), had three main components: the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for space technology in Kiruna, the implementation of joint research and development space projects, and the initiation of an innovation ecosystem for the space business.

The Centre of Excellence in Space Technology, managed by LTU, was established at the Space Campus in 2018. Designed as a space for collaboration and ideas, the Centre regularly conducts pilot projects, networking with external partners, interdisciplinary research, knowledge gathering about the needs of the space industry and the competencies of regional small and medium sized enterprises. For the second work project of joint industry-academia research projects, eight PhD students supervised by LTU faculty with industry co-supervisors were enrolled and should complete their research projects, which are all related to space industry needs, in 2020. Products and services with the potential for commercialization have been identified (Luleå University of Technology, n.d.). Lastly, the development of an Innovation Ecosystem for the Space Business began by identifying the various businesses in the region connected to the space industry and then creating opportunities for them to cooperate and develop commercialisable products and services (Bergström-Roos *et al.* 2019). The second EU project, RIT phase two (2019–2021), builds on the projects in phase one with the aim of creating an innovation system that would help the space industry grow by focussing on collaboration, research and cluster development. There were two additional work projects in this phase: the establishment of a commercial testbed for space and the development of an aerospace cluster.

Kiruna's space commercial cluster remain a work in progress, undertaken at a time of continuing prosperity based on the local mine and northern tourism. The space industry capitalizes on the unique characteristics of Kiruna—northern location and clear skies—and is allowing the exploration of a business sector that may become very successful in the years ahead. Kiruna has, over the past quarter century, understood the importance of building for the next economy while being sustained by the prosperity of its iron mine. It has, likewise, supported a strong, unionized, working-class community noted for its adaptability to emerging technologies while exploring effective means of building an additional professional and science-based economy focused on the economic potential of space.

Skellefteå—From the Forest Industry and Mining to Gaming and Batteries

While manufacturing has not been prominent in northern economic development outside of Russia, one of the most dramatic investments in recent decades is currently underway in northern Sweden. Northvolt, a new Swedish battery developer and manufacturer committed to developing the world's greenest battery, announced in October 2017 that its gigafactory Northvolt Ett would be built in Skellefteå.

Skellefteå, just a few kilometres south of Norrbotten County, was once the largest city in northern Sweden. When universities opened in Umeå and Luleå in 1965 and 1971

respectively, people shifted to those cities. Skellefteå has a long history of mining, particularly of gold, earning it the nickname "Gold Town." The mining company Boliden AB currently mines lead, gold, copper, silver and zinc and is the largest local employer with 3,000 staff members. The company's numerous mining operations had a sizeable impact on the local economy, sparking the development of the industrial elevator manufacturer Alimak Hek, for example, which currently has close to 300 employees in the community. In this region, Boliden had numerous small mines in contrast to its two very large mines, which dominated the economic landscape, in Norrbotten County.

The community's professional development benefited, as well, from the presence of Rönnskärsverken, a base metal smelter opened in 1928 to serve Boliden, in nearby Skelleftehamn (the company has expanded in recent years to recycle electronic waste). Over the past decade, Skellefteå made concerted efforts to diversify its economy and to lessen its reliance on resource development. By promoting Skellefteå's important advantages (including its location close to the Baltic Sea, a skilled and loyal workforce, less expensive housing than major cities and therefore lower salaries for workers) Skellefteå tried to attract big data companies, and call centres (Palm 2019). The community developed advanced skills at bringing new firms into the region.

The city established the Arctic Game Lab, building on the fact that the LTU's campus in Skellefteå offers gaming and graphic design programs. Graduates, however have had to relocate to find work. The city put together a strategy to encourage graduates to stay. It ran gaming events and encouraged companies to establish in Skellefteå. The city created an incubator to help start-ups and gave scholarships to recent graduates to fund work on their own games. The effort has been successful; in 2020, there were 40 gaming start-ups with 170 employees in Skellefteå.

The city has additional advantages over other small northern communities, particularly the fact that it owns the local port, airport and Skellefteå Kraft, the regional diversified energy company (hydro, nuclear and wind). The availability of power, land and lithium and the high level of business and community engagement with the city were among the reasons that Northvolt selected Skellefteå for its new battery factory. In 2017, after an international competition that attracted 40 serious community applicants, Northvolt confirmed that it is building a massive 3.8 billion Euro electric battery factory on 200 hectares of land near Skellefteå. The first phase of the plant should open in 2023 and will be producing lithium ion batteries for electric cars and for other industrial uses. The company's slogan is "Let's Recharge the World."

The scale of the city's victory in the Northvolt competition was truly impressive. The community's economic development unit spent years on the multi-stage competition, mobilizing the local business community and citizenry in a comprehensive campaign to secure one of the most significant manufacturing competitions in a generation. The announcement that the plant would be coming to Skellefteå touched off a massive celebration in the city. The plant, despite being built in a small city, will be the fifth largest manufacturing operation in Sweden. It will be the largest lithium ion battery factory in Europe, producing on an economy of scale that will halve the current cost of batteries (Engström 2020). Five production lines for different size batteries are planned. Northvolt already has contracts for production to 2028, including producing materials to be assembled at the Volkswagen factory in Germany. Northvolt investors include Scania (a Swedish owned manufacturer of commercial vehicles), BMW, Volkswagen and IKEA.

The plant will have 3,000 employees, including the recycling plant ReVolt, which will be built on site. Suppliers will employ another 1,000 people. Skellefteå is expecting

the creation of 10,000–12,000 new jobs with dozens of subsidiary businesses and services. This will mean that about 25,000 people could be moving to Skellefteå (Hedqvist 2018). Local unemployment is currently low so the factory and suppliers will need to attract hundreds of additional managers, researchers and line staff. The city will help the companies attract workers both from other parts of Sweden and from abroad, primarily Asia. The community will also build the needed housing and infrastructure. Skellefteå Kraft Energy will provide the energy, which the factory will need in the construction and subsequent operations.

The economic impact will be dramatic. Over 10 billion Swedish kronor (SEK) will be invested in renewable power (SwedishCleanTech, n.d.). Piteå, a small city north of Skellefteå in Norrbotten, could eventually have the largest land-based wind farm in Europe if the project starts operations in 2022 (Renewables Now 2020). An additional 10 billion SEK will be invested in regional housing. Private sector investment of approximately 35 billion SEK is anticipated along with additional infrastructure investments, including 5 billion SEK in the development of a railway connecting Umeå, Sweden, and the Finnish border. More than anything, the fact that a comparatively isolated small town could attract one of the most important and largest new factory installations in the western world, speaks volumes about the resilience of the sub-Arctic and Arctic people and businesses.

The Innovative North

These examples—Arjeplog, Kiruna, and Skellefteå—are not the only illustrations of northern Sweden's creative positioning and repositioning and of northern responsiveness to economic transitions in general. Numerous communities and businesses have understood the economic value of being northern, particularly in terms of outdoor activities, aurora viewing and Sami culture. Southern and international interest in these activities has been growing steadily in recent years, providing a seasonal boost to the regional economy. In other cases, communities are capitalizing on and commercializing long-established activities. Jokkmokk, a long-time centre for Sami culture and commerce, has built on this heritage to create a strong, largely Sweden-focused tourism industry. Each February, Jokkmokk hosts a Sami Winter Market, continuing a 400-year old tradition. The week-long festival of Sami culture and handicrafts attracts some 40,000–50,000 people per year, a massive "invasion" of the small northern community of some 3,000 people. Jokkmokk also has an excellent museum displaying Sami artifacts and information on Sami life and history.

Some of the most innovative, non-technological advances can be seen in a small city on the Sweden-Finland border. Haparanda is a small town located on the very north end of the Swedish coastline adjacent to Tornio, Finland. Over the years, the community's economy focused on cross-border trade with Finland, with the region's businesses creating strong ties across the boundary. This trade evolved over time according to the state of Finland–Sweden relations and the relative strengths of the national economies. The town has seen its population decline since 2012 primarily, the city's statistics show, because women who go away to school do not seem to return (men do) and, probably connected, fewer babies are being born each year. Haparanda's mayor wants to create reasons for people to stay (Tornberg 2019). In 2015, 700 refugees came to Haparanda temporarily; 150 stayed. Haparanda's main economic areas are the forest industry, food production (reindeer, fish, berries) and tourism. Visitors come to explore the Haparanda archipelago

and neighbouring islands. The Polar Explorer Icebreaker offers three-hour cruises in the frozen Bothnian Sea. Guests can walk on the frozen sea or even take a swim in a flotation survival suit. These tours, which take place between December and March, are very popular especially with visitors from Asia. In 2019, there were 20,000 bookings.

In the early 2000s, the then-mayor of Haparanda approached Ingvar Kamprad, the founder of Sweden's iconic furniture store, about building an IKEA in Haparanda. Although the municipality of Haparanda only has 10,000 people, the location put the IKEA within reach of the population of Luleå and other smaller Swedish communities and significantly also of Tornio, Kemi, Oulu and Rovaniemi in Finland and, with a lengthy drive, even of western Russia. Mr Kamprad must have been convinced as the northernmost IKEA store in the world opened in November 2006 in a purpose-built commercial mall on the Haparanda side of the Haparanda-Tornio border. The store has 250 employees (full and part time) and attracts a million visitors a year. The Haparanda IKEA was so popular that it expanded within its first year of operation (in which it attracted two million visitors), the fastest such expansion for IKEA in Sweden. Tourists, conferences and new stores followed the IKEA into Haparanda. While overall the IKEA has had a positive economic impact on Haparanda there have been downsides, including the hollowing out of the city centre. While IKEA itself does not really compete with local shops, many of the stores that followed IKEA have been taking business away from long-established shops.

The largest city in Norrbotten, Luleå (population 78,000) has also emerged as among the most technologically-advanced in the Circumpolar world (competitive with Oulu, Finland, bolstered by the communications company Nokia, and Tromsø, Norway). Luleå decided to use its cold climate as a positive attribute, realizing that its reliable and long winters provided a real opportunity in the management of digital information. Server farms, which host thousands of servers and serve as the backbone of the Internet-based economy, require a great deal of energy and give off a great deal of heat. In a cold climate, fans can pull in outside air and cool the warm servers inexpensively.

Facebook saw the advantages of Luleå, which included substantial tax exemptions on electricity that made Sweden cost-competitive with Norway, and opened its first server farm there in 2013 (Wong 2017). As *Time*'s Lisa Eadicicco described it:

> The site is comprised of two colossal buildings, each about the size of 17 ice hockey rinks, full of gear that makes it possible for billions of people around the world to upload status updates, photos, and videos each day. (Eadicicco 2016)

The company says that its Luleå server farm uses 40 per cent less power than its other facilities (Eadicicco 2016). Facebook has announced plans to open a third enormous (93,000 square metres) server farm in the community in 2021 (Dawn-Hiscox 2018). Along with cold weather, Luleå also has the advantage of abundant and inexpensive hydroelectricity and high quality staff trained at LTU. Some local analysts urge the city not to be complacent, pointing out that other cold places have similar attributes. The server farms have brought hundreds of highly skilled and well-paid professionals into the city; Facebook's data centre had 150 employees (Harding 2018), while also supporting the development of a start-up culture based on data management and data mining. Consider this assessment of Luleå's economic revitalization tied to the Facebook server farms:

> Facebook's Luleå site, the company's first data centre outside of the USA, contributed 9bn SEK ($992m) of full economic impact. It created 4,500 full-time jobs over 10 years (direct, indirect, and induced impacts), including 1,450 direct impact jobs (yet

> it is not clear how many remain employed inside the facility). According to BCG, in 2012 Facebook contributed 1.5% to the region's economy. (Webster 2020)

Luleå has positioned itself as a crucial partner in the European and global Internet economy, supporting the city's transition from a traditional forest industry and industrial based economy to an essential element in the "new economy" of the twenty-first century (Boston Consulting Group 2014).

Conclusion

Governments and economists struggle to quantify what is variously called the "new economy" or the "innovation economy." New technologies have had a powerful influence on the resource sector, sustaining or expanding productivity and output. It is difficult to determine if the resulting economic activity fits into the "new" or the "old" economy category. Advances in technology-enabled retail and online booking for tourist attractions likewise straddle this increasingly artificial divide. Northvolt, the largest new Circumpolar industrial development outside of Russia, is clearly focused on fueling the technology-based economy and is celebrated as a major northern innovation, but it is, at root, a classic manufacturing investment, drawing on the North's ready availability of minerals and hydroelectric power. The focus, clearly, should be on economic transitions rather than ill-defined notions of innovation or the "new economy." Regions and economies adapt. They are doing so in the twenty-first century and they did so previously.

Northern Sweden's economic transition continues, as it has over the long industrial history of the region. The long-standing natural resource economy remains in place and, particularly in Kiruna, continues to make major contributions to regional prosperity. Forest industry activities, mining and hydroelectric power generation remain prominent elements in terms of employment, business activity and general economic success. Major infrastructure investments are still being made in these areas, including a planned railway from Umeå to Haparanda, a rail line through northern Finland to the Arctic Ocean (connected to China's massive and controversial Belt and Road initiative), and upgrades on existing roads, electrical and Internet systems (Huang 2016; Hilmola, Henttu & Panova 2018; Weissmann & Rappe 2017).

It is well understood in Norrbotten, at the community and regional level, that the old resource-based order will not provide a secure foundation for the long-term. A concerted effort is being made to expand the tourism sector, through the inclusion of Indigenous/Sami attractions and the international promotion of winter travel and activities. The winter effort is part of a broader campaign to capitalize on the region's northern location, which includes expanding on earlier investments in space research and commercializing space-based enterprises. The creativity of the northern Sweden tourist industry is matched by the region's commitment to international outreach. Asian and European travellers have supplemented the area's long-standing appeal to southern Swedes. But Norrbotten has also made major commitments to the emerging technological economy. Luleå has emerged as an international testbed for sub-Arctic tech development, just as Kiruna's space industry endeavours to solidify a high-tech sector in the long-standing mining town. If the Skellefteå battery factory and related developments continue along its intended path, the city will compete with Luleå as northern Sweden's high-technology centre.

Economic revitalization in northern Sweden reveals the importance of a series of key elements: understanding and capitalizing on the unique and special characteristics of the sub-Arctic, embracing winter as a crucial part of the seasonal cycle, utilizing the nat-

ural endowments of the region, including hydroelectric power, repurposing and building upon existing infrastructure (most of it initially developed for the natural resource economy), engaging with and including Indigenous peoples as appropriate and possible, being alert to the monetary scale and speed of investment in the modern high technology economy, building cross-border connections (with Finland and Norway in the case of Norrbotten) to facilitate regional cooperation, being audacious and persistent with vision for community and regional transformation, and unleashing the entrepreneurial energies of regional residents, particularly those loyal to the region and determined to create employment opportunities to keep young people in the North.

Norrbotten is not the only revitalizing part of the Circumpolar world. Russia is using the decades-old Moscow-driven large-scale development model to open vast expanses of Siberia. The Government of Yukon has invested significantly, with small gains, in a Whitehorse-based innovation economy; developments in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are embryonic, focused on the activities of a handful of north-focused entrepreneurs and a continuing reliance on mining. Alaska is doubling down on a now-wounded energy-based economy and several major mines but has made improvements to regional infrastructure. The vast and resource-rich provincial North in Canada has not yet made substantial Norrbotten-type transformations and, like Alaska, still counts on the renewal of the resource economy to maintain prosperity and opportunity in the region. Northern Norway retains a high level of well-being, tied to continued income from the Arctic oil and gas sector (Godzimirski 2014; Ihlen 2009; Listhaug 2005) and sustained government investments. Tromsø's economic development relies heavily on the University of Tromsø, the Arctic University of Norway; the most successful achievements rest with "blue innovation" and the enhancement of Norway's ocean-focused economy.

Northern Sweden's economic well-being is not assured, and, with current economic and political uncertainties, it is not possible to provide accurate forecasts on downstream developments. Northern communities have stepped forward in creative and, to date, successful ways that build on existing strengths and exploit new opportunities. The most compelling message, one that is largely obscured to southern observers and politicians, is that the North needed not be confined to the traditional and limited sub-Arctic economy. In northern Sweden, as elsewhere, the key lies in communities and regional leaders who believe strongly in the region and are committed to developing its long-term potential. Should the current approaches to northern Sweden's development hold in the decades ahead, the region has the potential to be the leader of the Circumpolar world's innovation efforts and a model for community-driven adaptations to twenty-first century realities.

Northern Sweden is not alone in making impressive adaptations to an evolving global economy. Oulu and Rovaniemi in Finland, Tromsø, Bodø and Hammerfest in Norway, and Reykjavík, Iceland, have similarly capitalized on the unpredictable mix of changing global demand, technological innovations, entrepreneurship and government stimulus. Alaska, Greenland and the Canadian North, in contrast, are strongly wedded to the traditional northern resource economy (although Whitehorse, Yukon, is making a concerted effort to promote technology-based business). Northern Sweden demonstrates the kind of adaptation, innovation, collaboration and regional commitment necessary to remain competitive in a rapidly changing and unpredictable global economy. The economic approach that evolved in Northern Sweden is more of a guide than a model for other Circumpolar and sub-Arctic regions, demonstrating the vital interplay of local governments and businesses, international investors, and global consumers. There are few, if any, re-

gions in the Circumpolar world that would not be pleased to replicate the economic performance of Luleå, Haparanda, Skellefteå, Kiruna, Arjeplog and other communities in Northern Sweden.

NOTES

[1] We made a preliminary orientation trip through the region in 2011. Ken Coates has visited Luleå, Kiruna and Umeå on numerous occasions over the past 25 years and has worked extensively with faculty members and university administrators from the region. Carin Holroyd has visited Sweden and northern Scandinavia at several times, including a regional orientation trip through much of northern Sweden in 2011.

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AUTHORS

Dr. *Ken Coates* is Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation, Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan, Canada. His research focuses on technological and commercial innovation in the Circumpolar world and on the socio-economic challenges facing Indigenous communities.

ken.coates@usask.ca

Dr. *Carin Holroyd* is Professor of Political Studies, University of Saskatchewan. Her Arctic research has focused on Asian economic interests in the Circumpolar world. Coates and Holroyd are the editors of *The Palgrave Handbook of Circumpolar Policies and Politics* (2020).

carin.holroyd@usask.ca

KATARINA GREGERSDOTTER

North Actually

The Meaning of Place in Åsa Larsson's Crime Novels About Rebecka Martinsson

ABSTRACT The article discusses and examines Larsson's thus far five crime fiction novels to investigate how the formation of identity are connected to the peripheral North—the "real" North of the globally popular crime fiction subgenre Nordic Noir. Certain key concepts will be used to examine the novels: hyperlocalisation, neo-romanticism, anthropomorphism, borders, and history. This article will argue that in Åsa Larsson's novels, place and its nature, borders and history are crucial in identity formation, and the place with its nature, climate and animals is an active agent in all the narratives.

KEYWORDS Nordic Noir, Åsa Larsson, place, hyperlocalisation, neo-romanticism, anthropomorphism, borders, history, nature, animals

Introduction

Åsa Larsson's crime novels about tax attorney and prosecutor Rebecka Martinsson are situated in the peripheral far north of Sweden, in the Arctic, above the polar circle, in and around the mining town Kiruna. The novels have been translated into many languages, and in 2017 one of the novels, *The Blood Spilt*, was translated into Northern Sami, one of the languages spoken in the area where the novels are set. In the first novel, *The Savage Altar*, Rebecka Martinsson leaves the urban, hectic life in Stockholm, to return to the far north of her childhood and teen years and eventually decides to permanently settle there again, despite traumatic memories and equally traumatic recent events. The aim of this article is to analyze Larsson's thus far five novels in order to investigate how the formation of identity are connected to the peripheral North—the "real" North of the globally popular crime fiction subgenre, or rather umbrella term, Nordic Noir. The novels will not be examined separately, instead the discussion is divided into subsections which contain concepts and ideas that are of importance to discuss identity and place: Place, Hyperlocalisation, and Neo-romanticism; Anthropomorphism: Obscuring the Borders; and Place, History and Identity.

That the novels effortlessly lend themselves to a combined discussion, points of course to the seriality of the stories but also to the accentuation of the relevance of the

topics of identity and place. This article will argue that in Åsa Larsson's novels, place and its nature, borders, and history are crucial in identity formation, and the place with its nature, climate and animals is an active agent in all the narratives. The novels are: *The Savage Altar* ([*Solstorm* 2003] 2006); *The Blood Spilt* ([*Det blod som spillts* 2004] 2007); *The Black Path* ([*Den svarta stigen* 2006] 2008); *Until thy Wrath be Past* ([*Till dess din vrede upphört* 2008] 2011); and *The Second Deadly Sin* ([*Till offer åt Molok* 2012] 2014).

Place is for understandable reasons decidedly relevant in crime fiction, and not only because the scene of a crime, or a police station, usually is central. Stewart King claims that crime fiction has an inherent promise to the reader that they will gain knowledge about the place where the novel is set (King 2020: 213). Moreover, David Geherin notes in his *Scene of the Crime. The Importance of Place in Crime and Mystery*: "Crime and mystery novels present an ideal opportunity to examine some of the artistic ways setting is used in fiction" (Geherin 2008: 8). This is so due to the genre's general aim to be realistic, and also "because crime novels are often published sequentially as part of an ongoing series, authors of crime fiction have multiple opportunities to create a distinctive sense of place" (Geherin 2008: 8). What must be added here is of course that with a series, questions of identity can likewise be properly explored. Louise Nilsson asserts that the genre is "deeply rooted in a *local* place" (Nilsson 2018: 342, original emphasis), but the themes are universal. Yet, as David Schmid points out, criticism of the genre has to a large degree focused on narrative structure and temporality rather than place, "mostly because of the teleological bent given to that criticism by its emphasis on the solution of the crime" (Schmid 2012: 7). Although criticism is focused more often on place now than before, it has often been regarded as a "backdrop or scenery" (Schmid 2012: 8) instead of as an active component in the narrative. As will be demonstrated below, place in Larsson's crime novels is highly active and influential, often it is even anthropomorphized.

Place, Hyperlocalisation, and Neo-Romanticism

There are trends in crime fiction, as in most popular fiction genres. The importance of place is accentuated in the homecoming theme. Eva Erdman, quoted in *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, describes contemporary crime fiction as the new *Heimatroman*, or homeland novel (King 2020: 214). This is a predominant subject matter in Swedish crime fiction, more and more places—urban and rural—are used as settings in crime literature and are especially emphasized in those stories using the homecoming theme. It is not only Rebecka Martinsson who returns home, but all over literary Sweden, characters are revisiting home, where they grew up, often to permanently stay there. Neo-romantic tendencies have additionally become more common today, moving towards the British traditional crime novel and thus partly abandoning the American, urban, and more hardboiled setting and style (Bergman 2011: 34). Lastly, a widespread depiction of nostalgia can be seen. Protagonists often look back in time, reminiscing and mourning a Sweden, or an actual place in Sweden, that no longer exists (Gregersdotter 2012). What these thematic elements have in common is place. Stewart King suggests that

> place is that which gives the crime and the investigation meaning, especially those tangible and intangible elements that provide some understanding of the society and the culture that, while not explaining the crime, make it possible. To understand place, then, is to make sense of the world. (King 2020: 212)

In the novels by Åsa Larsson, however, to understand place is to make sense of a human being, to understand her development, psychology and entire being.

Crime fiction from the Nordic countries, Nordic Noir, has certainly been marketed, and often read, as a subgenre (in spite of how diverse it actually is, and in spite of how loose the definition of *noir* has become) which describes and uses—to non-Nordic readers—exceptional, even "exotic" (Nilsson 2016; Nilsson 2018) geographical places. Gudmunsdottir and Meany note that there is a specific "visual aesthetics" that is associated with these crime narratives. Blue, grey, and white are dominant colours used in the descriptions of the landscape (Gudmundsdottir & Meaney 2020: 7). However, considering the two authors who can be said to have largely contributed to the success of Nordic Noir, Stieg Larsson and Henning Mankell, other colours and landscapes dominate: the yellow rapeseed fields of southern Sweden in Mankell's Kurt Wallander series, and Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy is to a large extent situated in Stockholm. Gudmunsdottir and Meany also assert that fiction, art, design and so on often regard the Nordic countries as separate and different from the rest of Europe. This, in turn, leads to that the Nordic countries are seen as similar, or the same; "topographically, politically and culturally" (Gudmunsdottir & Meaney 2020: 9). Yet, as hinted above, there are not only great differences between the Nordic countries; there are also great differences within a specific country. The north and south of Sweden, for example, are seen as north by non-Nordic readers, which is most often not the case for a Swede. As Peter Davidson argues:

> "True north" goes beyond the idea of the prodigious (or malign) north and suggests that, for each individual, there exists somewhere the place that is the absolute of the north, the north in essence, northness in concentration and purity. (Davidson 2005: 11)

For Nordic readers as well as for those Nordic readers living in the north, Larsson's novels indeed visualize a north "in essence."

Characters, both alive and dead, in Åsa Larsson's novel have a very close relation to the place where they live, and in particular, the protagonist. Louise Nilsson remarks that in Nordic Noir,

> natural environments [...] matter, and these descriptions, articulated in different media, have recognized one of the dominant motifs in Swedish crime fiction. Ice, snow, and forests are common ingredients, often determining specifics of the plot and affecting the minds of the characters, even the dead bodies. (Nilsson 2016)

This is something Kerstin Bergman similarly has argued in a discussion about Åsa Larsson; the characters in Larsson's novels "have an almost symbiotic relationship with the landscape of the far north" (Bergman 2014*b*). Finally, Steven Peacock discusses John Sutherland's notion of hyperlocalisation of crime fiction, meaning that crime fiction writers' settings are highly and firmly specified and that Scandinavian crime novels generally are "ripe with 'overdetermined' eccentric locations" (Peacock 2014: 113–114). Sutherland himself discusses crime fiction from the US and UK and notes that crime fiction authors root their narratives

> not just in some metropolitan setting, but in one which is loaded with a "solidity of specification" (as Henry James called it) far in excess of what that narrative strictly requires. (Sutherland 2007)

As Peacock maintains, this is something that also applies to much crime fiction from the Scandinavian countries. The landscape in Larsson's novels is certainly hyperlocalized,

but whether it really is eccentric, must depend on who the reader is, as stated above. In the works by Larsson, this setting often represents home in more than a geographical meaning, it evokes feelings of awe and pure happiness in a close to spiritual manner, and it is clear it evidently helps form the identity of characters, as will be demonstrated below.

In most of Åsa Larsson's novels a map of the geographical region is included, to help readers locate the place, but also to enhance the importance of the place. The closeness to the Norwegian and Finnish borders, and also the Russian border, is visualized through that image. That the area is sparsely populated is also noticeable. Steven Peacock writes that north of Kiruna, "there is only roadless, uninhabited land. To the East, boreal forests stretch for hundreds of miles into Finland and Russia" (Peacock 2014: 125). To Rebecka Martinsson, however, that place is beautiful and peaceful—despite the many violent crimes committed, and despite Rebecca's personal, traumatic past. To an outsider who is not an intentional tourist, exemplified by Rebecca's Stockholm-based boyfriend Måns, it represents "Nowheresville" (Larsson 2011: 209). Rebecka notes that he always becomes restless when he visits her, he complains about everything from the cold winter's darkness and the summer's light to dogs and mosquitoes. What he would find a nuisance had he settled there, Rebecka desires. She says she wants to

> glanc[e] out over the river from time to time. I want to drink coffee on my porch before going to work on summer mornings. I want to dig my car out of the snow in winter. I want frost patterns on my kitchen windows. (Larsson 2011: 22)

These sentences serve as an illustration that the novels communicate, contrary to popular opinion, the darkness and cold of the long winters can be positive to a person, life becomes simpler with less to take in and process, there are fewer colours and smells. The shorter days means that a person can rest her head (Larsson 2006: 301). In *Until Thy Wrath be Past* Rebecka Martinsson welcomes the snow and cold because it is

> good to feel small beneath the sparkling Northern Lights, small beside the mighty river. Nature and the universe are so close to us up here. My troubles and difficulties just shrivel up. I like feeling insignificant. (Larsson 2011: 23)

The perceived smallness is therapeutic for her; with her own insignificance, her problems simultaneously become insignificant.

Relatedly, wandering about in nature, can affect a person in a similar way, in a Wordsworth-like fashion. When Rebecka is walking towards a bar, she can hear the trees whispering behind her, urging her to turn around. Immediately her mind visualizes what a visit in the woods would feel like:

> You walk and walk. At first the thoughts in your head are like tangled skein of wool. The branches scrape against your face or catch in your hair. One by one the threads are drawn from the skein. Get caught in the trees. Fly away with the wind. In the end your head is empty. And you are transported. Through the forest. Over streaming bogs, heavy with scent, where your feet sink between the still frozen tussocks and your body feels sticky. Up a hill. Fresh breeze. The dwarf birch creeping, glowing on the ground. Your lie down. And then the snow begins to fall. (Larsson 2007: 106–107)

In this example an actual physical experience is not necessary, the place is hyperlocalized in Rebecka's mind: when her head is emptied with help from the tree branches, she is

psychologically "transported," more than anything. The neo-romantic view of nature is unconcealed: the trees lure her, the way a close friend or lover would, whispering a promise of tranquility, as her thoughts are removed, one by one. Yet, to be actually physically close to the place is also of importance, it is an act of (neo-romantic) intimacy that affects Rebecka's mental state.

> Rebecka Martinsson is lying in the snow outside her grandmother's house in Kurravaara. She is wearing her grandmother's old blue quilted nylon jacket, but is not fastened. It is good to feel cold, it makes her feel better inside. The sky is black and studded with stars. The moon above her is sickly yellow. Like a swollen face with pitted skin. (Larsson 2008: 368)

Apart from being physically close to the place, she is also comforted by her family history by wearing her grandmother's jacket, her personal history and ancestry are one with the place.

Tourists from all over the world travel to Kiruna, the mountains, and to Jukkasjärvi where the internationally famous Icehotel is built up every winter, so they might not visit the area necessarily to rest their heads, or become one with the place, but enjoy the, to them, striking outdoors environment (Larsson 2007: 59). The tourists are mentioned already in the first novel of the series. They arrive at the same time as Rebecka, when she is returning to Kiruna after many years in Stockholm.

> The plane to Kiruna was almost full. Hordes of foreign tourists off to drive a dog team and spend the night on reindeer skins in the ice hotel at Jukkasjärvi jostled for space with rumpled businessmen returning home clutching their free fruit and newspapers. (Larsson 2006: 55).

While she is going back home, they are visiting a new, unknown and, for them, exotic place. Later in the series of novels when she has decided to permanently stay, she thinks "I don't want to be a guest and a stranger. Never again" (Larsson 2011: 23). The tourists seek the unfamiliar landscape and beautiful sights in contrast to Rebecca, a homecomer, who desires the familiar, and considers the smallest detail worth looking at. Even "[t]he damned flies buzzing over the fireweed at the side of the road. The places where the asphalt's split because of the frost. Dead things. Squashed on the road" (Larsson 2007: 52). Rebecka's regional aesthetics include what is not considered traditionally awe inspiring, "damned flies" and "dead things" are included.

Compared to other novels where tourism is a topic, the tourists are not seen as intruders or exploiters. In Larsson's novels it is as if the nature is so strong nothing can disturb it, illustrated by the split asphalt mentioned above. If applying a broad definition of an ecocritical perspective on the five novels, we can certainly see an intimate link between human and nature, but not any overt environmental concerns.[1] Rather, as mentioned, the novels can be viewed as partly neo-romantic; nature and natural phenomena are often described as sublime, with a beauty that can make someone "burst" (Larsson 2011: 3*)* and deeply move the person on numerous levels. In her *Swedish Crime Fiction. The Making of Nordic Noir*, Kerstin Bergman claims that "[t]he Swedish countryside has always occupied a special place in Swedish crime fiction" (Bergman 2014*b*: 103), that in turn can be linked back to Swedish literature history *per se*, Selma Lagerlöf being an evident example. However, the neo-romanticism prevalent in Larsson's novels, is in my opinion closely tied to anthropomorphism—discussed below—and thus the experience of nature is more than sublime or sensational. Nature and animals are constantly provided human qualities, making them active participants in the narratives.

Anthropomorphism. Obscuring the Borders

The combination of hyperlocalisation, neo-romanticism, and anthropomorphism contributes to obscuring the borders between nature, human, and animal. Nicholas Epley, Adam Waytz, and John T. Cacioppo explain anthropomorphism as essentially "[i]mbuing the imagined or real behaviour of nonhuman agents with humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, and emotions" (Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo 2007: 864–865). In the first novel in the series, *The Savage Altar*, the narrative is accompanied by the Aurora Borealis. "She" moves over the pages and the heads of the characters, and "[s]tars and planets are compelled to give way to her, this great miracle of shimmering light" (Larsson 2006: 1). The Aurora Borealis exceeds a natural phenomenon, it is a she, who attends both characters and readers. When it starts to snow heavily, she "hurls herself recklessly across the heavens. Writhing like a snake. Opening herself up to the constellations" (Larsson 2006: 225). Kim Toft Hansen writes about a new spirituality found in contemporary Scandinavian crime novels, and indeed Larsson incorporates religious themes in several of the novels. Yet, as Hansen claims, there is an "interest in aspects of human existence transcending empirical and rational realism" (Hansen 2011: 231) and the clear obscuration of perceived borders between human and non-human in Larsson's novels can be seen as placing her works in this category of novels.

The border between human and animal is likewise blurred. Kerstin Bergman writes that the place in Martinsson's novels is one where "people and animals co-exist, dependent on each other for food, shelter and protection. Animals—dogs in particular—also play important parts in Larsson's crime stories" (Bergman 2014*a*: 109). Rebecka Martinsson is constantly accompanied by dogs, for example in *The Black Path*, she celebrates New Year's Eve with one (Larsson 2008: 31). In *The Second Deadly Sin*, she is forced to kill a dog in order to save a child, and this child had in turn pretended to be a dog in order to cope with severe trauma. He was walking on all fours and only communicated through barking. The killing of the dog affects Rebecka nearly as deeply as when she had killed three men in self-defense. To kill a dog is to kill an equal, a close friend. Bergman asserts that both "animals and nature are equipped with a soul" (Bergman [ed.] 2014*c*: 80). In the case of the young and traumatized boy, to act like a dog, serves as both defense and protection. The man Rebecka eventually falls in love with, Christer, is a survivor of a fire with a face severely damaged. He is not unimportantly the police dog handler, and the first time they kiss, the dogs surround them. Christer probably compares himself to Rebecka's urban boyfriend Måns when he sees himself as "her man here in the forest" (Larsson 2014: 27), who takes care of her dogs when she is away and is waiting patiently for her to fall in love with him.

It is in Rebecka's intimate relationship to dogs throughout the series, and in the character of Wilma in *Until Thy Wrath be Past* that the classic conceptual divide between human and animal is erased. Wilma narrates parts of the novel although she is dead. She has been murdered together with her boyfriend Simon when diving in Lake Vittangijärvi, a lake which hides dark secrets dating back to the Second World War. Like the Aurora Borealis in *The Savage Altar*, Wilma accompanies the story, and most of all Rebecka. In John Lingard's words Wilma is "freed from the constraints of time and place" (Lingard 2015: 106). Wilma narrates: "I visit the Prosecutor [Rebecka]. She's the first person to see me since I died. She's wide awake. Sees me clearly when I sit down on her bed" (Larsson 2011: 32). Often in the company of ravens, Wilma travels across time and place, landing in different settings, "meeting" different people, dead and alive. For example, in Rebecka's bedroom, Wilma meets Rebecka's dead grandmother who is watching over her grand-

child. As this raven like being, she also affects how other characters act. Hjalmar Krekula, an aggressive, but sad and lonely man, is partly involved in the crimes committed. He is also someone who can help Rebecka. Wilma visits Hjalmar at his home and can see how he wishes he were somewhere else, in the forest, or in his remotely situated cabin, away from his brother and mother (Larsson 2011: 92). In a crucial moment, Wilma realizes she must act.

> I land in the prosecutor's hair. I'm like a raven on the top of her head. I dig my claws into her dark locks. I turn her head to make her look at Hjalmar. She sees him sitting there in the police car, blinking. She opens the door and talks to him. I peck at her head. She must wake up now. (Larsson 2011: 157)

In the end of the novel, it seems as if Wilma is content, her murder has been solved, the buried secrets have been revealed, and she now can become one with nature, with Lake Piilijärvi. She is rowing on the lake, with her great-grandmother Anni, and two ravens circle in the sky above them.

> The sun is hot. The ravens open their beaks. They are silent now. I feel nothing but happiness. It wells up inside me like the sap in a birch tree [...] I row. I am as strong and untamable as the river, and I row [...] I'm coming, I think happily. I'm coming now. (Larsson 2011: 315).

Here, the ravens are as silent and content as Wilma. She likens herself to the river with newfound strength and mobility and she feels happiness that can only be explained in a natural metaphor.

In addition, and importantly, *The Blood Spilt* alternates between chapters about Rebecka Martinsson and the others, and a wild version of a dog, a wolf named *Yellow Legs*. Yellow Legs wanders across the northern regions of Russia, Finland, and Sweden exemplifying how the north is connected, that borders do not matter to her, she is free to move. The landscape makes past concerns and future worries disappear, and "[e]verything is now" (Larsson 2007: 407). Yellow Legs' feelings reverberate Rebecka's in this way who feels she is "one with it all ... With everything. Everyone" (Larsson 2011: 30). Yellow Legs is part of another theme in the novel as well, the never ending infected national debate about whether or not to kill wolves. As Yellow Legs is anthropomorphized—given agency and human emotions—it is certainly a possible interpretation that the message is to protect wolves. She is sometimes "overwhelmed by her great loneliness" (Larsson 2007: 349). During her long journey she runs into people, and she recognizes their suffocating smell (Larsson 2007: 70), but towards the end of the novel she is met with care and respect by a veterinarian and a researcher in wolf behaviour from the Nature Conservancy Council. They consider the wolf beautiful, "a real princess" (Larsson 2007: 350). They help her, give her vitamin injections and then leave her alone, hoping that she will not be hunted down and killed. The wolf is of no real importance to the actual murder plot in the novel, nor does she meet any of the characters in it. She is still an essential figure, her storyline increases the reader's knowledge of the place and its borders, and stresses that the manmade, conceptual divide between human and animal is smaller than one may think; Yellow Legs is shown to have an emotional life.

Place and History

When dead, Wilma in *Until thy Wrath be Past* remembers how her boyfriend used to touch her.

> He liked to explore me. Count all my birthmarks. Or tap his fingernail on my teeth as I smiled, ticking off all the peaks of the Kebnekaise massif: "South Peak, North Peak, Dragon's Back, Kebnepakte, Saksasapakte, Kaskasatjåkko, Tuolpagorni." (Larsson 2011: 2)

The connection between the nature of the place and identity is illustrated through a story about two young lovers. This connection is very intimate, the nature is as familiar as the body of the lover. Moreover, in one of Rebecka's many childhood memories she is in the forest with her father. She asks him where she will end up if she would walk in a certain direction.

> And her father's reply. New poetry, depending on which direction the finger was pointing in, and where they were. "Tjålme." "Latteluokta." "Across the river Rauta." Through Vistasvagge and over the Dragon's Back. (Larsson 2011: 107)

The beauty—the "poetry"—lies in the names of the places, unknown places ("new poetry") to her but known and traditional poetry to her father who shares his knowledge and personal history of the place with his daughter. When Rebecka has left Stockholm, and returned to Lappland, she mentions numerous times that she is "home" and "at peace." On several occasions, she physically shows her feeling of home and peacefulness; as mentioned above, she often places her body close to the earth. Åsa Larsson writes:

> Without warning Martinsson is overcome by a feeling of pure, white happiness. It flows through her body and into her hands. She stands absolutely still. Dares not move for fear of frightening the moment away. She is at one with it all. With the snow, with the sky. With the river as it flows along, hidden beneath the ice. [...] With everything. Everyone. I belong here, she thinks. Perhaps I do belong, irrespective of what I want or feel. (Larsson 2011: 30)

Here too, the body and self are one with the place and nature. Additionally, Rebecka lives in her grandmother's house, and she likes to keep it exactly as her grandmother used to keep it. She sleeps well there, compared to Stockholm, and in the third novel, *The Black Path*, she realizes that she never "made a real choice" until she returned to Lappland (Larsson 2008: 69). Living in her childhood home again surrounded by the snow, sky and river transforms her and as she says above, even gives her agency. Even though returning to her childhood home with all its memories is crucial in her development as a person, it is the natural surroundings that are most important to her.

> I'm at peace, she thought. She [...] suddenly turned and walked a few metres into the forest. The fir trees stood in silence, gazing up towards the stars which were just beginning to appear. Their long blue-green velvet coats moved tentatively over the moss. Rebecka lay down on the ground. The pine trees put their heads together and whispered reassuringly. The last mosquitoes and blackflies of the summer sang a deafening chorus, seeking out whatever parts of her they could reach. She could cope with that. (Larsson 2007: 69–70)

Yet again, the trees are whispering, and Rebecka is depicted to engulf the entirety of it, not just the objective beauty and tranquility, but mosquitoes and black flies. The trees have heads, dressed in soft, green coats and above all, they are reassuring, comforting.

In *The Blood Spilt*, Rebecka seeks out places which are linked to her personal trauma, and they transform into offers of comfort, making the places themselves therapeutic, something also Sara Kärrholm discusses in her article about the region of Lappland and Åsa Larsson (Kärrholm 2014). Rebecka thinks about swimming in the river, and it is described as she plans to sink herself into her personal history. She is so familiar with the river that she "knows how it will feel" (Larsson 2007: 276). She will experience

> that inexplicable feeling of being at one with yourself at different ages. She's bathed there, swum there as a six-year-old, ten-year-old, a teenager, right up until she moved from the town. The same big stones, the same shoreline. The same chilly autumn evening air, pouring like a river of air over the river of water. It's like a Russian doll with all the little dolls safely inside, so that you can screw the top part and the bottom part back together, knowing that even the tiniest is safe and sound inside. (Larsson 2007: 276)

There are a multitude of aspects of the link between place, history and identity detectable here. The familiarity of the swim she only envisions, and has not yet experienced, gives her comfort in the well-known sensations. It also notably renders her a history and reacquaintance of her own personal past and development. This goes far beyond the physical feelings. The different ages of Rebecka Martinsson coexist in the water and despite growing older, the safety that comes with the familiarity of the water and the stones, produces a safe place, here likened to a Russian doll. Rebecka's personal history is linked to the history of this specific place.

In most crime fiction, history usually means secrets, it is seldom or never uncomplicated. Two of the novels—*Until thy Wrath be Past* and *The Second Deadly Sin*—are partly set in a historical past. The titles of the novels have religious connotations, to signal the graveness of the crimes committed and of war. They narrate a story about Sweden during the two world wars, but in addition demonstrate how history is part of the present now and continues to affect and form characters. In a way, the history of the world wars also transforms the remote and peripheral Kiruna in the Arctic to a global place, much closer to the (European) center than one might assume.

Alongside the present-day plot, *The Second Deadly Sin* tells the history/story of the "birth of Kiruna." With the expanding mining industry, Kiruna represented the future, and in 1914 it was the newest town in Sweden. The young woman Elina is on her way by train to Kiruna to work as a schoolteacher. She looks forward to starting a new life and feels liberated: "She has just celebrated her twenty-first birthday, and she is on her way to Kiruna. The world's newest town. That is where she belongs. In this new age" (Larsson 2014: 53). During the train ride the Swedish landscape amazes her, and she feels as if she were a pioneer, travelling to a place few people have visited.

> So much snow, and so much forest. It is incredible how big Sweden is, how far north it stretches, she has never been so far north before. And nor has anyone she knows been so far north. (Larsson 2014: 53).

She sees and is overwhelmed by the largeness of Sweden, and despite where Kiruna is situated, in the Arctic, Elina nevertheless sees the town as a global place, and not peripheral: It is the "world's newest town" and to her it is a town epitomized by modernity. On the train, Elina meets and falls in love with Hjalmar Lundbohm (a real historical person), who is managing director of LKAB, the big mining company. Lundbohm has grandiose ideas for the town, which he calls "his," and envisions a town that is permanent: "with

schools and bathhouses and adult education—as, in Pullman City in the U.S.A. and Henry Ford's Fordlandia in South America. Those are models to live up to" (Larsson 2014: 76*)*. He too sees Kiruna as global, and far more than a capitalist venture; this is a place where people will flourish and come to stay. The war that just has erupted in Europe will benefit Kiruna and their production of iron ore. The train ride through Sweden consequently represents progressing into the future for both Elina and Hjalmar, and Kiruna is a glittering promise of transformation, erasing borders between old and new, and periphery and center, and it will deeply affect them and their identity.

Despite its alleged modernity, Kiruna is nevertheless not so different from most other places; the rich—represented by Hjalmar Lundbohm—have the power, and the working class—here the miners, and of course women—are more or less powerless. Lundbohm is described as a man who embraces a more liberal view, he "mixes with the Lapps" (Larsson 2014: 139) for example, and on some level recognizes the plight of the miners: "the injured, the maimed. The widows of dead miners, and the little fatherless children staring poverty in the face" (Larsson 2014: 75). That the violent crimes committed in the present-day part of the novel can be traced back to Lundbohm, the son he never acknowledged, and the murdered schoolteacher Elina, shows however, that old structural injustices and old crimes are difficult to erase. Elina and Hjalmar illustrate two sides of modernity. Elina's views of literature and feminism are opposed by Hjalmar. He prefers more traditional contemporary art and invites the cultural elite to Kiruna: Carl Larsson and Anders Zorn are advised when he builds his country house. Elina is raped and killed, and in the end, Lundbohm loses his fortune and his friends. When Hjalmar Lundbohm is on his deathbed, the border between life and death is again distorted when Elina visits him and asks him to go with her.

> And then there is just snow and sunshine and a laughing schoolteacher with whom he has linked arms, and whom he will never let go. And the glories of spring that are lying underneath all the whiteness, waiting to burst forth in all its majesty. (Larsson 2014: 377)

The place and its beauty remain while people leave, and when dying this is what Hjalmar Lundbohm takes comfort in. Crime fiction author P.D. James, quoted by Stewart King, has stated that place in a crime novel "should be perceived through the mind of one of the characters, not merely described by the authorial voice, so that place and character interact" (King 2020: 212). In Larsson's novels place is hardly ever described by an external narrator, it is experienced and described through the characters.

The mining industry in Kiruna was a source for money for Kiruna and the nation as a whole, during the First World War, which can be seen as a moral issue since Sweden had declared herself neutral. As in *The Second Deadly Sin*, crimes from the past—the Second World War—have repercussions in the present-day narrative of *Until Thy Wrath be Past*.

The train ride as a metaphor discussed above is problematized in *Until thy Wrath be Past.* Sweden did not want to take a stand during the Second World War, although the neighboring countries Denmark and Norway had been occupied by Nazi Germany. Yet between 1940 and 1943 the Nazis were allowed passage through Sweden to reach their northern occupied territories. The train ride still symbolizes erasing of borders, and connecting center and Arctic periphery, but by allowing German troops to travel through Sweden to reach their troops with supplies this erasure also means allowing neighbors to suffer.

In the present-day plot told in *Until Thy Wrath be Past*, crimes dating back to war lead to multiple murders, partly because what went on in the 1940s is today shameful.

> Nobody wants to remember what went on. And before long all those who can will be dead and buried. The girls who used to stand by the railway lines and wave to the German soldiers in the trains on their way up to Narvik, all those who celebrated the arson attack on [the Communist, anti-German newspaper] in 1940—and all those who fraternized with the Germans stationed in the north. (Larsson 2011: 184)

This implies that even if this is a history best forgotten, it still shapes many people, even those who were not yet born during the war. The history is shared, even though, from the outside, it may be an individually experienced event. This is further emphasized when Rebecka Martinsson visits the cemetery. She is there to see her grandparents' grave but takes her time because she

> usually reads the inscriptions on all the gravestones as she passes by them. She loves all the old-fashioned titles, small-holder, certificated forester, parish treasure. And all the old names. Gideon, Eufemia, Lorentz. (Larsson 2014: 231)

She realizes that it is not at the cemetery she can feel her grandmother's presence, it is rather everywhere else, perhaps "without warning in the forest" (Larsson 2014: 231). Once she is depicted to press snow to her face, almost in passing, outside her late grandmother's house (Larsson 2008: 73), as if by pressing the snow to her body not only physically moves her closer—into—the place, but also her grandmother. Seeing how close Rebecka Martinsson is to the place, it is perhaps not surprising that the person she was the closest to, can turn up there, where every new word is like poetry.

Concluding Remarks

Stewart King argues that in crime fiction, "nothing makes sense without place" (King 2020: 211). In Åsa Larsson's series of crime novels, it is specifically characters that do not make sense without place, at times also those who are deceased. The homecoming Rebecka experiences shows how she is shaped by the place with its natural surroundings, animals, and history. When tourists seek adventure and grandiose scenery, Rebecka can appreciate squashed things on the road, a state of belonging that a visitor cannot reach. Place in Åsa Larsson's five novels is often depicted as fundamental to the development of characters, it is a liminal space where nature, climate, animals and humans are intensely connected. Despite that the places in her novels are certainly hyperlocalised and the concept of borders is highlighted, the borders seem important because they do *not* limit transgression; they can constantly be crossed and blurred. This is emphasized by the descriptions of the animals, nature and climate. Finally, characters' personal history is always present, and so is European history in the form of the two World Wars, to a large extent due to the expanding mining industry in Kiruna, and this is shown to transform the place and its people from the local and peripheral to global and central, and therefore those borders are also distorted.

NOTES

[1] There is some environmental criticism in *The Black Path*. A Swedish corrupt mining company takes advantage of less developed countries, and willfully ignores environmental legislation.

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AUTHOR

Katarina Gregersdotter is Associate Professor of English literature at the Department of Language Studies, Umeå University, Sweden. She has published articles and books on Anglo-American and Nordic crime fiction and horror cinema. She is also member of The Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction.

katarina.gregersdotter@umu.se

BO NILSSON

Rural Resilience and Voluntary Work in the North of Sweden

An Ambiguous Relationship

ABSTRACT Rural areas in the north of Sweden are characterized by depopulation, unemployment and undermined social services. Due to the demands of economic growth and development, major cities in southern Sweden have been prioritized at the expense of the countryside. However, there have been many reactions to the dismantling of the welfare society in rural areas. People are also trying to counter and compensate for the impoverishment of the countryside through voluntary work. The overarching aim of this paper is to explore meanings of voluntary work in Sweden's northern county of Västerbotten. More specifically, the aim is to investigate how different comprehensions of rural voluntary work are related to rural identities and to a resilient rural society. A central argument in the paper is that the relation between rural volunteer work and rural resilience is ambiguous. On one hand, volunteer work can contribute to rural resilience, since volunteering is a necessary course of action for people in the countryside to secure a necessary level of social services. On the other hand, rural volunteer work often has a traditional character, not always representing the capital of knowledge needed to maintain a sustainable rural lifestyle in the long run.

KEYWORDS rural resilience, volunteer work, rural identity, non-profit organizations, rurality

Introduction

Many rural areas in the north of Sweden are characterized by depopulation, aging populations, unemployment and withdrawn welfare services. Rural resources are also increasingly exploited by, for example, mining companies and wind power companies. While such tendencies sometimes make rural populations regard themselves to be victims of unwanted ideals of economic growth (Nilsson & Lundgren 2019), their effects are also explicitly reacted to and protested against, for example, the uprising against the closing of the emergency room in Dorotea (Lundgren & Nilsson 2018; Berglund-Lake 2020),

the protests against the mining establishment in Kallak (Sjöstedt Landén 2017; Cocq 2014), the occupation of the hospital in Sollefteå (Enlund 2018; Enlund 2020; Nordin 2020), the protests against exploitation of land (Sehlin MacNeil 2017), and various other rural protests on social media against cutbacks, environmental damages and urban norms (Lundgren & Johansson 2017). Whereas such protests often have a specific target, they also make significant examples of an ongoing "politics of the rural" (Woods 2006), politicizing the very meaning of the "rural."

But not all criticised situations are met with explicit protests. On the everyday basis, people are also meeting the challenges of rural areas through more or less organized volunteer practices aimed at resisting perceived problems and creating a liveable space. This type of volunteering has sometimes been regarded as more important in rural than in urban areas, and many rural communities have high rates of volunteering (e.g., Davies, Lockstone-Binney & Holmes 2018). Not least, it has been noted that the lack of local services leads rural inhabitants to depend on each other and to develop high levels of trust, personal acquaintance and solidarity (Svendsen & Svendsen 2016). Also within policy, the reliance on volunteer practices is greater in rural areas than in urban ones (Rönnblom 2014); there is an emphasis in public reports on the significance of rural populations' "commitment" and "capacity for cooperation" as the basis for a sustainable development in rural areas (SOU 2017:1; SOU 2016:13).

In this sense, rural volunteering has been described as central to rural survival, or for rural resilience, to use an increasingly used expression (Shrestha & Cihlar 2004; Skerratt 2013); volunteering has been described as crucial for the ability of rural areas to handle challenges represented by, for example, cutbacks, withdrawals of social services and digital divides between urban and rural areas (e.g., Cras 2017; Enlund 2020). In this paper, I explore the meaning-making around volunteering for rural resilience in the northern part of Sweden, and I argue that there is an ambiguous relationship between volunteer work and resilience; at the same time as volunteer work is deemed important if not required for the survival of rural communities, it lays the foundation for a rural identity and rural practices that, at least indirectly, can counteract resilience in the long run.

Based on interviews with persons engaged in volunteering, the overarching aim of the paper is to explore meanings of local volunteering in the Swedish northern county of Västerbotten. More specifically, the aim is to describe and analyse how different comprehensions of rural volunteering are related to rural identities and to a resilient rural society.

Methods

This study is based on qualitative interviews with 25 persons, 13 women and 12 men, aged between 40 and 75, and living in the county of Västerbotten. 17 of the interviewees live in small villages with up to a few hundred inhabitants, 8 live in communities with between 1,500 and 1,800 inhabitants. 15 of the interviewees were approached because they had experiences of engaging locally in volunteer practices, and 10 because they were politically active at the municipal level. The idea behind the sample was to produce knowledge about volunteer work and resilience from a broad perspective, including both first hand experiences of volunteering and the kind of overall perspective that politicians can be expected to have.

By interviewing people who were engaged in local volunteering, ranging from formally organized to more informal volunteering, I was able to produce knowledge about the meaning-making around rural volunteering as part of everyday life. Interviewees in

this category were approached through local non-profit organizations, mostly village associations. Although village associations may not constitute the bulk of the Swedish landscape of volunteer organizations, which is commonly described to consist of sports and leisure organizations, they often have the advantage of functioning as central organizers of many different types of rural volunteer initiatives, sometimes also including sports and leisure activities. By interviewing politicians, I could counter the risk that the volunteer workers' perspective on the importance of volunteering dominated the interviews. Established politicians living in, and representing, small communities usually have a good overview of collective activities in these communities.

In practice, the division between people engaged in volunteer activities and people engaged in politics was difficult to maintain, as many politicians were also engaged in volunteering. The main reason for including both categories was not, however, primarily to map differences between them, but to get a broader overview, which meant that such difficulties were deemed less important.

The interviews were conducted both via computer (Skype), telephone and face-to-face. They were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Two interviews were conducted in pairs, while the rest were individual. There are conflicting experiences of telephone interviewing. Telephone interviews have been criticized on the grounds that information in the form of gestures and body language is lost, that they are often shorter and less rewarding (see Mealer & Jones Rn 2014), and that people are hampered by not seeing who they are talking to (cf. Novick 2008). The opposite has also been emphasized, for example that it can be liberating not having to meet the interviewer face-to-face, that security and anonymity increase for the participants, and that social stress decreases (Mealer & Jones Rn 2014). In my experience, people are generally so accustomed to mobile phones and computers that such devices do not constitute an obstacle in the interview situation. All interviewees seemed to talk freely, and took initiatives during the interviews to give examples from personal experiences.

The interviews were semi-structured and based on a questionnaire with both open and specific questions, but the interviewees were also encouraged to introduce their own subjects and questions. The interviews varied somewhat in scope, and the interviews with politicians were usually a bit shorter than the others. But they nevertheless ended up being quite rich, probably because politicians are used to talking to strangers and declaring as well as defending their opinions (cf. Harvey 2011).

In the initial analysis, I turned to conventional qualitative content analysis. I read all the interview transcripts repeatedly and inductively identified central concepts and ideas. These were then organized in general themes or categories (cf. Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Neuendorf 2002). For example, the concepts of "informal volunteer work" and "formal volunteer work" were deployed as a first principle of categorization (cf. Wilson & Musick 1997). However, it was soon clear that most interviewees were engaged in both formal and informal volunteering and it became difficult, if not impossible, to make clear distinctions between the experiences made in one or the other capacity. In a second step, focus was on the meanings that the interviewees attributed to volunteering, and questions such as "what does volunteer work mean for you?" "what are the driving forces behind your volunteering?" and "what does volunteer work mean for rural communities?" were asked. Here, the concrete meanings of volunteering were of interest, but also how volunteering was being related to notions of rural conditions, to local narratives and to rural identities. Finally, and in line with constructivist realism that acknowledges how constructions are real in their effects and telling of the reality in which people live,

feel, act and identify, I explored the relation between, on the one hand, different forms of rural volunteer work—and the narratives and identities they are related to—and on the other hand, rural resilience. How can rural volunteer work and rural identities be understood in terms of rural resilience? The quotes have been edited for greater readability.

Central Perspectives and Concepts

The paper is influenced by constructivist realism (Cupchik 2001). This means that the stories told within the interviews are viewed as social and cultural constructions, created in specific social and cultural contexts. Apart from the context of the interview and the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Roulston 2010), the interview material is also seen as influenced by, and influencing, discourses that structure how notions about cultural phenomena such as volunteering are comprehended (Schmidt 2010; Wijkström 2012).

This means that interview stories are neither arbitrary nor exist independently of contextual circumstances, such as geographical location or other material circumstances. On the contrary, they are viewed as efforts to comprehend the interviewees' lived experiences and their encounters with a material reality, and are hence of importance for self-images and meaning-making around volunteer experiences. Thus, despite their constructed character, the point of departure is that interview stories tell us something "real" about the meanings of volunteering in a specific place at a specific time. In practice, constructivist realism meant that it became less important for me to check if the stories told within the interviews were "correct" and if they were consistent with other types of data. Of more importance was how significance was ascribed to the volunteer practises, thereby constituting them in ways that would be telling of the interviewees' concrete experiences of state withdrawal and cutbacks in service, which in turn would shed light on the ways in which they comprehended their volunteer practices as connected to broader contexts. The analysis also comprised efforts to scrutinize whether and how the interview stories were affected by the interview as such.

Central to the paper is the concept of "volunteering." It refers to activities that are voluntary, mainly unpaid, and performed with the aim of producing something meaningful for others (cf. Agarwal & Buzzanell 2015; von Essen 2008). The studied volunteer practices represent important local initiatives based on the "recognition of oneself as part of the social fabric, oriented toward influencing the way society works" (Jacobsson & Korolczuk [eds.] 2017: 3). A dividing line can be drawn between formal and informal volunteering (Wilson & Musick 1997). While the former refers to activities within an association or organization, the latter signifies less formally organized activities with the aim of helping and supporting relatives, neighbours and friends, for example, grocery shopping, gardening, cleaning and caretaking (cf. von Essen, Jegermalm, & Svedberg 2015: 61), thus including what is sometimes referred to in terms of "informal helping" (Henriksen, Strømsnes & Svedberg [eds.] 2019). However, the boundaries between different forms of volunteer practices are fluid and hence difficult to establish (Lilja & Åberg 2012), and the purpose is here primarily to point at how volunteer practices were comprehended as important aspects of rural living. In fact, the interviewees did not always recognize their own practises as "volunteering" at all, but rather as just something that they did and that was part of living in a small community. How a practice was comprehended was strongly dependent on the discursive realm within which it was articulated.

Being "resilient" as a community was an implicit goal within many interviews. "Resilience" usually refers to the ability to handle change, to cope and to recover, as well as to

develop after a hardship of some kind (Magis 2010). Originally deriving from the study of ecological systems (Holling 1973) and developed to fit also socio-ecological systems (Adger 2000; Adger 2003), the concept points at the ability of groups or communities to adapt and endure (Adger 2003; Stenbacka 2015; Keck & Sakdapolrak 2013), with the aim to maintain or renew a society or a system. While the translation of the concept of resilience from the context of ecology to complex social and cultural contexts was met with criticism (e.g., Walker *et al*. 2004), there have been plenty of efforts to adapt the concept. Scott (2013) has identified two main perspectives in the research on resilience. Equilibrium resilience represents a system's ability to "bounce back" or return to normal after a stressful event, for example, an environmental hazard, while evolutionary resilience stands for the capability to rather "bounce forward" by developing alternative trajectories. Applied to studies of rural areas, the importance of resilience is especially connected to the challenges faced within contexts characterized by more or less rapid transformation—social, political or environmental (Scott 2013). This is reflected in Magis' (2010) definition of community resilience, which refers to: "... the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise" (Magis 2010: 401).

There are various phenomena that are said to contribute to resilience. History and tradition (people's habit of acting), equality (Magis & Shinn 2009), optimism, collective and strategic action (Magis 2010), and local and charismatic leadership (Herbert-Cheshire 2000; Sorensen & Epps 2005) are some examples. Further aspects of importance, not least for rural resilience, are the introduction of new technologies, for example, broadband (Stenbacka 2015), social media, local medical training and cultural heritage (Beel *et al*. 2017). Rural resilience is furthermore linked to local engagement and volunteer work (Stewart *et al*. 1996/1997; cf. The Scottish Government 2009). Both formal and informal involvement in community life are said to be of importance, together with social networks, local identity and place belonging (McManus *et al*. 2012; King & MacGregor 2000). According to McManus *et al*. (2012: 22), place belonging "form[s] the basis for action." Thus, rural resilience is often related to local circumstances and people's engagement in volunteer work.

In this study, I am interested in the meanings that are attributed to volunteer work by members of rural communities that are facing significant changes. The changes can be instant, for example the sudden closure of a local business or care centre, but they can also be long-term restructuring processes, including social, political and economic transformations during time-periods characterized by urbanisation processes and neoliberal reforms (Pike *et al*. 2010). In what way can people's voluntary efforts to counter shut-downs, urbanization and deteriorating community services through volunteer work be understood in terms of rural resilience?

Results

The material seemed at first glance to have a rather uniform character. Both the volunteer workers and the politicians expressed similar views on volunteer work. However, it soon became apparent that the material was characterized by contradictions. The interviewees described engaged inhabitants and a great deal of positive activity in rural communities, while at the same time referring to the negative development of society, as evidenced by a severe decline in collective engagement. They emphasized that people in rural areas are known for being helpful and bighearted, but they also pointed out that

people are becoming more and more selfish. But there was also a difference between how the politicians and the volunteer workers talked about volunteering as such. All interviewees referred to a general situation with cutbacks in service. But while the politicians paid strong attention to specific structural factors, such as changed economic conditions for rural municipalities, the volunteer workers rather focused on changes in people's everyday lives, for example, how the impact of television had made people less inclined to volunteer. It did not seem to matter greatly if they were engaged in formal or more informal types of volunteering. In the following, I will describe the material and its inconsistencies, and then discuss how it can be understood in relation to rural identities and rural resilience.

The Evasive Character of Volunteer Work. Informal Volunteer Work

"Voluntary work" occasionally had an evasive character in the interview narratives. For example, in response to direct questions, the interviewees could state that they had no idea if people were engaged in volunteering or not in their community, or they could claim that people generally manage on their own without the help of others, that is, "you take care of your own" (Int. 4, volunteer). However, in the next sentence they could emphasize that people in small communities are used to helping each other without being paid. This was partly a conceptual confusion: the interviewees did not associate informal helping with informal volunteering; instead, it was regarded as a "natural" part of rural living. Thus, informal volunteering was common, for example, helping a neighbour or a relative, but it was not conceptualized as "volunteering," and hence not recognized as such. However, when the interviewees were asked about organized activities or formal volunteering (cf. Wilson & Musick 1997; von Essen, Jegermalm, & Svedberg 2015) within the framework of local associations, it became more obvious that people in the rural communities were highly and actively engaged in voluntary work.

An Engaged Local Population. Organized or Formal Volunteer Work

Some of the interviewees represented and held formal positions in village and interest associations, and they often described the origin of these associations. Several of them had been founded with the purpose of meeting some common needs in the community. One association was formed for practical and infrastructural reasons in order to install broadband in the village, and it had since then developed into something bigger with more responsibilities. Another association emerged as a successor to an older village organization. However, many associations appeared to be relatively late, founded during the post-war period—some of them in the 1990s or 2000s.

What activities, then, characterized the rural associations according to the interviewees? There was a wide variety of activities. The interviewees described different feasts, such as fermented Baltic herring parties and moose hunting parties—the latter in relation to the hunting season. They talked about course activities, craft fairs and craft cafés. Furthermore, they referred to maintenance work, snow clearing, cleaning of beaches and renovation of common premises:

> We have a large association building that was voluntarily built, in -46 [1946] I think it was, that we have renovated. It is like a community hall. It is very big, and we have everything from small meetings to big dances with three to four hundred people. We have a bakery,

> we have a sauna, you name it, we have almost everything there. And because the premises are so big, we can use them for many different activities. Play ping pong and gym and other things. It also has a good kitchen. (Int. 2, volunteer)

Here the interviewee stated "we have almost everything there" and created a picture of a very dynamic association with many different activities. It was also said that people in general were actively engaged in or supported non-governmental organizations:

> [...] there are *many* members. There are many who support, it is probably almost everyone among these 257 [households]. Or, yes, there are actually more! There are more members than accommodations! It's a bit interesting. And then you see guests and those who support and think it is fun to have an association. But the active are probably around 70. (Int. 8, volunteer)

It was also pointed out that older men (pensioners) are so eager to help that they almost compete with each other for driving the tractor and shovelling snow. It was further said that there are so many activities during the summer months that there are not enough visitors, and that different associations have to compete against each other. Although there were also voices claiming that the will to volunteer had gone down (cf. Lundgren 2020), it was clear that for the ones who were formally engaged, it was of great importance to be able to describe the many different and periodical activities based on voluntary work undertaken in their communities.

Voluntary Work and Its Multiple Meanings

What, then, are the village associations and their activities considered to mean for the local community? According to all of the interviewees, a central driving force for voluntary work was that it felt important and meaningful (cf. von Essen 2008), not least on a concrete everyday level. The interviewees also emphasized that voluntary work was important for the village community in general, and that the associations could be described as the glue that holds the village together. Volunteering was regarded to be significant in both practical and social terms:

> I think it's really important. The alternative, then, is to take the car to activities. And that takes time. And energy. When you come home from work, then it's not so easy to get around. If it's in the village, it's easier, and it will be, after all, it's a community and it's important to get to know each other! Which I think wouldn't be as easy if we didn't have this forum to meet. (Int. 8, volunteer)

The interviewees also said that volunteering is very important for rural areas overall, not least for the welfare sector, in order to maintain important social services. Furthermore, it was believed that volunteer work is central to "preserving what already exists, because it's so damn much work done already" (Int. 6, volunteer).

The associations were also attributed a certain financial significance. By renting out premises to tourists, moose hunters and other open-air people, the associations could at least cover their operating costs and maintain the village-based business. However, the non-profit associations were given even greater importance. Some of them were, or had been, essential from an infrastructural perspective in modernization processes of the countryside, for example, for maintaining or improving the standard of roads, maintaining commons, arranging common wells or—as mentioned above—installing broadband.

Identity, Loyalty and Helpfulness

Stories of voluntary activities and committed villagers comprised descriptions of concrete and everyday local events, but they also mediated notions about people in rural areas in general, about their characteristics and living conditions. Especially the politicians often raised their eyes from the local plane and concludingly described people's experiences of living in sparsely populated areas, and the social and material changes that they must deal with. They talked about all the challenges that residents in smaller villages face in the absence of a basic community service, and they said that people in the countryside had to cope much more on their own compared to people in cities. Here, the stories were characterized by moralistic and, indirectly, also urban-critical ideas; urban areas were considered to be prioritized at the expense of rural areas. Thus, descriptions of volunteering became a platform for recreating a positive rural identity with Norrland's rural areas as a point of departure, and where expressions of a need for "rural loyalty" were central (cf. Bye 2009).

Helpfulness and solidarity were common themes in narratives characterized by rural loyalty. The interviewees pointed out that it is impossible to manage in rural areas unless people help each other. Quite often the stories developed into benevolent depictions of the characteristics of people in the Nordic countryside:

> If you have a snow blower standing in your yard, and you have an old neighbour, it's natural that you'll help the neighbour with snow clearing while you're at it. [...] I think that's very common, that you try to help as much as possible. And I think it's quite natural for us, up here. [...] Everyone knows everyone in a different way in a small place, so ... You take care of each other, and keep a little watch on each other, in a different way. (Int. 22, politician)

Thus, the interviewee said that it is "quite natural for us, up here," that everyone knows everyone, and that everybody takes care of each other. Other interviewees provided other concrete examples. If you are out clearing snow, then it is obvious that you also will clear the neighbour's driveway, one of the interviewees emphasized (Int. 16, politician). Someone pointed out that helpfulness is a "must," there are no alternatives, "you have to help each other with snow clearing, ditching, haymaking and so on" (Int. 18, politician). Furthermore, it was said that people are socially interdependent, and through various forms of voluntary activities, feelings of community and belonging were maintained.

The interviews also comprised notions of younger people's responsibility for older people; older people have, according to the interviewees, the right to expect help in different forms, considering everything they have done for the society:

> You can't expect to be paid for everything. As people get older, you have to do something. You have to take care of the elderly, if society is to function. It's older people that have built society. I think you should help out without anyone having to beg for it. (Int. 2, volunteer)

The stories emanate from both concrete life experiences and more general moral conceptions. It is, according to the interviewees, for practical, social and moral reasons that people help each other and take a collective responsibility for different tasks. However, these stories also resulted in the creation of a "we" in relation to a more or less diffuse "they." This was specifically clear in recurring formulations such as it is '"natural for us, up here" and that "you take care of each other, and keep an eye on each other, in another way." Words and phrases like "us, up here" and "in another way" suggest that helpfulness

is something that is special for people in the rural north. Helpfulness seemed also to extend beyond village boundaries:

> We had problems with the snowmobile in our association; we have a snowmobile to maintain snowmobile trails. It was broken [...]. Then we called a guy in the neighbouring village. He fixes many things and such. And we said, "you won't get paid." No, but comes here with the snowmobile anyway: "I'll help you," he said. He was not paid for it, but it was obvious that he would help a neighbouring village. It's just something you do. (Int. 9, volunteer)

"It is just something you do," said the interviewee, an expression that can be regarded as an aspect of the production of a common identity. The interviewees positioned themselves against some kind of "other," indirectly represented by people living in cities and in the south of Sweden. Thus, employed in a discourse on rural identity or specificity, helpfulness and volunteer work become central characteristics that connect the present with notions of the past. It is a construction of a collective identity that connotes "idyllic rurality" (Horton 2008; Baylina & Berg 2010; Nilsson & Lundgren 2015), a symbolic construct according to which people in rural areas have a high quality of life and are living in harmony with each other and the nature, and in which egalitarianism, solidarity and belonging are central (cf. Woods 2003). This identity represents an important resource and a social glue in smaller communities, but it can paradoxically have some unexpected consequences in terms of rural resilience. I will return to this later.

Lost Engagement, Lost Helpfulness

Volunteer commitment sometimes had an evasive character, and the interviewees did not naturally associate their local activities with "volunteer work," which could give the impression of a "lack" of non-profit engagement in the rural communities where they lived. This impression was reinforced by explicit stories about the decline of non-profit activities in the countryside. These stories functioned as counternarratives (cf. Delgado 1989; Delgado 1995) to the narratives about helpfulness. The interviewees emphasized that there is only a small number of people who are involved in associations of different kinds. They said that many youth associations lack leaders because of a decreasing interest among parents, which has resulted in many associations and clubs closing down. This tendency for declining engagement was, according to all interviewees—volunteer workers as well as politicians—characteristic of rural areas in general.

This notion of a fading commitment was sometimes explained with references to local circumstances, for example, the experience of an increasingly unequal involvement among inhabitants. It was said that some people work intensively and take a great deal of responsibility, while others engage more sporadically, a few only after persuasion from other villagers, and quite a great number do not participate at all. Some people seem to obstruct, said one interviewee, and also pointed out that, while those who are active "work for the benefit of the whole village," many residents seem ungrateful (Int. 10, volunteer). The criticism of villagers who did not engage in volunteering had a moral undertone based on notions of reciprocity as central to rural life (cf. Stephens, Breheny & Mansvelt 2015).

A failing commitment was furthermore explained with references to changing conditions for rural communities in general. This was especially evident among the politicians, who pointed out that a reduced commitment can be explained by structural factors, such as aggravating (political and economic) circumstances. The politicians empha-

sized that the finances in rural municipalities are catastrophic, because the government transfers more and more costly tasks from the state to the municipalities. This means that they no longer have the same resources as before to compensate those who, for example, are willing to engage as sports leaders for children and young people, which has led to a reduced commitment. There were also those who blamed the state for recent developments, and argued that it was feelings of having been let down that caused the reluctance to engage: "Since they have taken all the people away from here in the past, few want to volunteer" (Int. 20, politician). According to this interviewee, people have lost hope for the future of the countryside. "Why get involved when it will lead to nothing?" the same person asked, rhetorically.

A recurring tendency in the interview stories in general was for interviewees to compare "yesterday" with "today," a comparison that usually resulted in the idea that everyday life has become tougher. That the pace is quicker, and people work more intensively than before and therefore cannot cope with voluntary work to the same extent as previously, was a commonly held view. Other explanations were that people of today want to be compensated financially for everything they do, and that they lack time for non-profit work because they have such high material standards that all their spare time is spent on gadgets:

> people in general have too much money and they have too many things. They have too many cabins, and so they have so damn much to do. It has become like that. Damn, there is not a man who doesn't have three, four snowmobiles and quad bikes, and everything must be used. (Int. 5, volunteer)

Other explanations for the declining engagement in volunteering was the impact of television, and that people in general have become less interested in taking responsibility for others in everyday life, for example, by helping a neighbour with grocery shopping. "I think that the Swedish people are becoming more and more lazy. It was not like this before. People used to take responsibility for all their associations" (Int. 20, politician). Another interviewee pointed out that not long ago people could spontaneously visit with their neighbour, they helped and took care of each other, and they did not have to lock their front doors. This is, however, not the case anymore:

> This I remember, if any farmer, for example, was ill during some period of haymaking or something, then almost all helped. Everyone who could help helped this man. That's how it used to be. That kind of helpfulness doesn't exist anymore. But of course, if I were sick and I couldn't do anything, change tires or something, as an example, then someone would come and help, of course. That's how it is in a village. After all, there's always someone you can call to get help. (Int. 1, volunteer)

"That kind of helpfulness doesn't exist anymore," the interviewee explained, but said in the next sentence that in a village there is always someone to help you out. This ambiguity—which also characterized the interview materials as a whole—is not unique. People's stories tend to be multifaceted and contradictory (Riessman 2003). There is, however, things to be learned from exploring the contradictions as related to the various contexts that were actualized in the interview narratives.

Different Stories, Various Contexts

Stories about identity and place have been described as simultaneously local and global (Massey 1998), because they are based on interaction and information that are not

(only) locally dependent but which exceed geographical boundaries. Such stories have sometimes been defined as glocal (see Thornton 2000). In the following, I am interested in how the interview stories were used in relation to different contexts, both local and global.

When the interviewees talked about a decline in helpfulness and a fading commitment, they took a wider social context as a point of departure, a context based on general notions of a changing social climate in general. Thus, it was not always people's own experiences or local community that constituted the material for their stories, but a notion of the development of society in general.

However, when the point of departure for the interview story was a concrete situation in the interviewee's own village, helpfulness and non-paid engagement stood out as self-evident: "Then someone will help out, of course," as one of the interviewees said. This form of local narrative has a glocal character, because it is not only a comment on local characteristics but represents a common counternarrative to the established stereotypes of rural Norrland as passive, needy and backward (cf. Eriksson 2010), and rural areas as primarily marked by lack and absence (cf. Wollin Elhouar 2014). The interviewees are accustomed to the effects of urban norms, cutbacks, decommissions and exploitations: "actually, it is an overexploitation of Norrland, in the sparse countryside, you have probably heard it before" (Int. 16, politician).

Glocal narratives are thus used by the interviewees as a defence of their place of residence against derogatory stereotypes; they emphasized that rural areas comprise qualities that are well worth preserving, for example, that people in the countryside are more considerate, empathetic and helpful than others. According to similar notions, people in rural areas are more authentic and loyal to their employers than people in large cities in the south of Sweden. The latter are regarded to work "just until they get another line on their resume, then they change jobs" (Int. 5, volunteer). Thus, the construction of rural specificity in the stories about rural volunteering, reacted against, but also reproduced geographic stereotypes. In that sense, the stories about rural volunteering were not only descriptions of facts and experiences, but were also invested in, and organized by, a spatializing logic of centre and periphery (cf. Sjöstedt Landén 2012). According to this logic, notions of Norrlandic rural volunteering seemed implicitly related to ideas about the urban. This is not unique for the county of Västerbotten; rather, it can be seen as an effect of the glocal rural-urban divide identified in many rural (and urban) areas. Against this background, stories of helpfulness and of extensive volunteering become comprehensible, and an important part in the construction of local identity.

Hence, there was a parallel existence of partly antagonistic discourses about rural volunteering, one about reduced voluntary commitment and one about active and highly engaged rural inhabitants. What this contradiction means in terms of rural resilience is the topic of the next section.

Discussion

Based on the interviews, volunteering is crucial for people in smaller communities in northern Sweden. Non-profit work provides social benefits, maintains social networks (cf. Eckstein 2001) and social services, confirm identities (cf. Agarwal & Buzzanell 2015), enables altruistic efforts (cf. Mowen & Sujan 2005), and attracts visitors and in-migrants. These aspects can, of course, be said to be central for resilience in general (Stewart *et al*. 1996/1997), but volunteering as a collective action (Magis 2010) can be regarded as a specifically essential resource necessary for the survival of smaller rural communities. This is

especially important in relation to the overall transformations that have characterized the northern countryside since the mid-1900s, for example, urbanization, depopulation and deteriorating community services.

In the interviews, these transformations are (partly) comprehended as the effects of neoliberal reforms, increasingly transferring responsibility to the regions to produce their own growth (see also Hudson & Rönnblom 2007; ITPS 2005; Müller 2017). Rather than highlighting earlier structural transformations leading to out-migration from rural areas in search of work (Sörlin 1988), emphasis was placed on how de-regulations of the welfare society have meant that the government and the municipalities no longer take the same responsibility for rural community services as before. According to interviewees, much volunteer work has then become a replacement of the lost services (cf. Szebehely 2000). Partly in opposition to research problematizing any straightforward relations between welfare provision and civic engagement (Henriksen, Strømsnes & Svedberg [eds.] 2019), this comprehension of volunteer work as *compensation* politicizes volunteering and supports the suggestions that people's willingness to volunteer when needed has indirectly legitimized and partly camouflaged the retraction of governmental services from rural areas (Little 1997). Interestingly, the tendency to politicize volunteering in this vein was noticeable across all interviews, regardless of the type of volunteering discussed—whether it was formally organized or rather characterized as informal helping. There was a strong discourse that gave volunteer experiences a symbolic meaning, and provided support for the feeling of being unfairly treated by regional politics.

I will in the following—against the background of the contradictory narratives and experiences that characterized the interviews—discuss the ambiguous relationship between volunteer work and rural resilience. On the one hand, the interviewees emphasized that helpfulness and volunteer work were central aspects of rural areas, and on the other that the form of commitment that previously characterized their communities was lacking today. This division, and oscillation, between the two types of narratives permeated virtually all interviews. There was, however, a difference between the politicians and the rest of the interviewees. Although there was coherence around the view that rural areas were generally being unfairly treated by regional politics, the politicians were more likely to focus on changing economic and political conditions on a policy level when they explained why people's non-profit activities had declined, while the interviewees with personal volunteer experiences rather tended to emphasize how contemporary societal developments have made it more difficult on an individual level to find the time, energy and interest to engage in volunteering.

Beside this difference, notions of helpfulness and engaged villagers were prominent when the interviewees talked about local conditions rather than general tendencies in society. Thus, the locally based stories were to a great extent based on place belonging (cf. McManus *et al*. 2012), i.e. on feelings of belonging to a certain community and a certain context. But stories of helpfulness were also used as a defence of the countryside in Norrland and of the qualities that the interviewees attributed to rural environments as well as rural people (cf. Eriksson 2010). Compared to metropolitan residents, people were portrayed as authentic and reliable, and were said to take responsibility for their villages and the collective, in general, through a strong non-profit commitment. This commitment had, according to the interviews, a traditional character. People arranged, for example, handicraft cafés, parties with traditional Norrlandic dishes and events with the purpose of attracting in-migrants (and also out-migrants to move back "home"). And, as mentioned earlier, it was considered important to help each other with ditching, snow

clearing and shovelling, haymaking and lawn mowing, i.e. activities that have a partly traditional rural character.

There are, of course, many reasons for the traditional character of rural volunteer work. One is that it corresponds with local material needs and interests that have a lasting character, for example, that roads have to be cleared and maintained, and that people need help with different kinds of everyday activities. In that sense, volunteering practices had a central and upholding, as well as economic, function in the rural communities. For example, by renting out a common assembly room to guests, a village association can cover its costs. Volunteering is also socially important (cf. Eckstein 2001). It contributes to the creation of social cohesion and a community of interest, for example through common arrangements of various activities such as village holidays. It also happens that such activities attract visitors from nearby villages and communities, and thereby contribute to a temporary population increase, and a feeling that something "happens." However, in many cases, the effects of these volunteer activities were temporary, and, when not concerned with covering up for cutbacks in service, often of a traditional character. As such, they were associated with a positive rural identity based on, among other things, notions of a long-established solidarity in the countryside. While this was described as decisively important, not least because it worked to form a positively charged rural identity in opposition to negative stereotypes, it also implied a problem. The effects of more traditional identifications have been discussed. Studying the grassroot festival centered around volunteer residents' serving of soup as a peasant dish, Ducros (2018: 296) suggests that the festival constitutes a space for villagers to "revitalize the rural and showcase it as a place of creativity." However, Edwards and Woods (2006) have warned that the tendency of rural volunteering to engage in and confirm established rural values and identities, may also stand in the way of renewals.

Here one can ask what the traditional character of volunteering means for rural resilience and a sustainable rural landscape in a longer perspective. Can volunteering, because it primarily supports an established rural identity, in some sense complicate or even aggravate rural development opportunities and the ability to meet new challenges? The problem can be that neither rural voluntary work nor traditional rural identities in an obvious way include a readiness to deal with the new conditions and requirements that rural communities directly or indirectly face. Examples of such conditions and demands are the cashless society, digitalization, higher taxes on gas-fuelled cars, young people's (changed) views on suitable leisure and cultural activities and consumption, and the interests of potential in-migrants—such as possibilities for a sustainable ecological lifestyle. One could argue that it is not on rural volunteers to solve the challenges of such changed conditions and demands. There is, however, reason to ask whether rural village associations would benefit from a greater openness also to other kinds of activities, for example, organic farming, sustainable development and sharing economies.

Volunteering cannot dramatically change the social conditions of contemporary rural areas in northern Sweden. Urbanization, depopulation, declining social services and impaired communications are tendencies that are difficult to counter in the long term through volunteer initiatives. Here, too, volunteer engagement seems to represent a kind of "artificial respiration;" it contributes to the survival of rural municipalities, but tends to primarily contribute to rural resilience in terms of equilibrium resilience. It is characterized by the ability of "bouncing back" rural communities to return to a former state, through the potential to compensate for lost community services. Although there are exceptions, much of the volunteering described in the interviews was characterized as

equilibrium resilience; it seemed to lack the capability of "bouncing forward" (cf. Scott 2013).

But has not volunteering been of great importance for the technological development in rural areas (cf. Brennan 2007)? Many village associations and community-led organizations have certainly been established with the aim of arranging, for example, street lighting, common wells and broadband (cf. Stenbacka 2015; Ashmore, Farrington & Skerratt 2017; Cras 2017), which have been central for local identity, for the possibility of people staying in rural communities and for rural resilience. However, such rural volunteer work has, at the same time, a lagging character, because it has mainly contributed to the creation of a technological infrastructure that since long has been self-evident in urban areas. Rural volunteering can thus indirectly reproduce a stereotypical picture of the countryside, especially in the light of a dominant urban norm, as traditional and old-fashioned (cf. Eriksson 2010).

Another problem with rural volunteering is that it may create the impression that rural communities manage on their own after all. The aforementioned loyalty, helpfulness and willingness to work for the common good mean that residents in rural areas arrange social services previously provided by the state, county council and municipality by themselves. Although there are protests against this arrangement and against cutbacks in general, as was the case with the recent Countryside uprising (Swedish *Landbygdsupproret*), it can be difficult to get support for such protests if volunteer work makes it possible, at least temporarily, to maintain a relative high standard of living in northern rural areas.

Conclusions

Rural volunteering refers to practices that are elusive and multi-layered. The words used to capture practices of volunteering seemed to point the interviewees in different directions, and to forget or not recognize certain practices as practices of volunteering. The focus in the interviews was on practices organized by associations, but as conversations proceeded, also less formalised practices were included and deemed important. In the interviews, rural volunteering was constructed as being simultaneously part of traditional rural identity and a necessity for rural survival, and was also simultaneously seen as a characteristic of prospering rural villages and a symbol of decline. The interviewees all testified to volunteering being immensely important—specifically against the background of their concrete experiences of state withdrawal and cutbacks in service—but it was clear that the stories about it were used to project partly different experiences.

Regardless of whether the volunteer practices that were described were about compensating for cutbacks in social service, attracting in-migrants to increase the local population or organizing a handicraft café, they were symbolized primarily in terms of equilibrium resilience (cf. Scott 2013) which, at least indirectly, may prevent changes. On the one hand, the stories about successful volunteer initiatives and their valuable effects may strengthen a logic of competition and individualism, where rural communities more than urban ones become dependent on whether their inhabitants are able and willing to contribute enough. On the other hand, there is also the risk that rural volunteering, and the stories making sense around it, contribute to give the impression of a countryside that is self-sufficient and that offers a relatively high quality of life despite the discontinuation of community services and despite the degradation of living conditions that people report. This suggests volunteer engagement may risk being perceived as an institutional fix (Macmillan & Townsend 2006), performing work that was previously

the responsibility of the public sector, thereby possibly legitimizing the withdrawal of the public sector from basic service provision in rural areas (Little 1997). This becomes particularly pressing as there seemed to be a void between the needs described in the interviews and the highly tradition-related volunteer initiatives that the interviewees talked so proudly about. There was an awareness about this situation that was sometimes reflected in expressions like: "In the end, we'll go down, I think we will. But it'll take some time, because we who live here are still pretty tough" (Int. 5, volunteer).

One might ask what the alternative for rural communities could be? Would an even more active political engagement, explicit rural protests and direct actions organized within the framework of non-profit organizations be a more effective way to counteract the challenges that many rural communities face and to secure their future? Or could a renewal of volunteer organizations in the direction of sustainable development be a way to create a long-term perspective on resilience in the northern countryside?

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AUTHOR

Bo Nilsson is a professor in ethnology at the Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University. His research interests are, for example, rural resilience, rural volunteering and rural politics. He has participated in different research projects financed by among others the Swedish Research Council, Vinnova and Formas.

bo.nilsson@umu.se

Roger Andersson (ed.), *Heliga Birgittas texter på fornsvenska. Birgittas Uppenbarelser*, vol. 4, Stockholm: Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia 2018 (Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia. Editiones 12), ISBN 9789188568748, 391 pp.

The goal of the infrastructure project "Bridget of Sweden digitally: Making St Birgitta's revelations in Old Swedish accessible" sponsored by Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, is to make all relevant text carriers available online in high-resolution colour images, to produce diplomatic transcriptions of all text witnesses and to prepare, in accordance with established scholarly principles, a "critical comparative and synthetic edition of the textual works," the latter both in book format and in the form of a digital online version that is available in the Literature Bank. As before, Roger Andersson was in charge of the textual establishment and the edition. The first volumes in this series have previously been reviewed in this chronicle (*Journal of Northern Studies* 10:2, 2016, p. 161 f.; 12:2, 2018, p. 109 f.), and we will now turn our attention to the fourth volume. This book is the longest of the eight books of revelations. In the Latin version, there are 144 chapters as compared to 146 in the Old Swedish one. In this book, we get a clearer understanding of Birgitta's views on domestic politics than in the previous ones. In the introduction, Roger Andersson presents a pilot study on the text's history of origin. There are some indications as to which Latin text the Old Swedish translation is based on. According to Andersson (p. 14), there are factors that point to a manuscript in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (MS. 3960), but so far, this theory is of a purely conjectural nature. Andersson points to certain tendencies in the Old Swedish translation in this book. For example, it is observed that the Old Swedish text contains a small part of the additional material in the original text (*addiciones et declaraciones*). One example is Chapter 16, which is about a bailiff from Östergötland who travelled to Rome. However, this historical context is missing in the translation. In the excluded supplement to Chapter 71, we learn that the text is actually about Birgitta's daughter Cecilia, but this, too, is not included in the Old Swedish translation. It is quite clear that the translation emphasises edification at the expense of history. In some places, the content of the Old Swedish translation is diluted. An example of this can be found in Chapter 33, where a letter containing concrete details has been transformed into "a generally edifying but rather uninteresting text" (p. 129). This is also the case in several other places in the translation. An account is initially given of the manuscripts, and the publishing principles are described in detail. Andersson also mentions previous editions and translations. The text offers a rich reading experience. For example, Chapter 7 contains a drastic account of Niccolò Acciaiuolo at the burning furnace, which is about an angry "blue man" (Lat. *Ethiops*) and an armed knight who are arguing about the fate of a soul before a judge. The tormented soul is shown to Saint Bridget next to a burning furnace, and a macabre vision of hell is conveyed, for example in the following passage:

> Its mouth is open, its tongue is pulled out through the nostrils and its teeth are like iron nails attached to the palate. Its arms reach all the way down to its feet. Both hands are holding and squeezing fat that resembles tar. The skin of the body is like a linen cloth soaked with male semen.

In Chapter 131, which is about "the flawed sculpture," we find the following passage:

> Christ is like a sculptor who makes a beautiful image out of clay and intends to gild it. Later, he discovers that the sculpture has been damaged by some liquid, the mouth is distorted and now resembles a dog's jaw, the ears hang down, the eyes have turned inside out, the face and cheeks are sunken. The master tells the sculpture that it no longer deserves to be adorned with gold. He breaks it, and makes and gilds another one instead.

As can be seen, the text is based on a suitable parable and it has been suggested that it refers to King Magnus Eriksson. In Chapter 141, the so-called *Rebellion Revelation*, Saint Bridget incites a rebellion against King Magnus. This text is also preserved as one of the Saint Bridget Autographs. In the texts in volume 4, Saint Bridget appears as a keen-sighted observer and, as shown by the above examples, the narrative is sometimes very drastic. The publication of these medieval texts is progressing, and one looks forward with anticipation to the remaining volumes.

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

Dansk sproghistorie. Vol. 2. Ord for ord for ord. Editor-in-chief: Ebba Hjorth; Editoral board: Henrik Galberg Jacobsen, Bent Jørgensen, Birgitte Jacobsen, Merete Korvenius Jørgensen & Laurids Kristian Fahl, Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag 2018, ISBN 9788771841633, 506 pp.

In 2016, the first part of a comprehensive *Dansk sproghistorie* ['Danish language history'] was published by the Danish Language and Literature Society. A website linked to the publication contains text examples, images, sound elements, etc., and references to this online material are made via icons in the margin. Volume 2 and, elsewhere in this chronicle, volume 3, are presented in greater detail. Volume 2 is entitled *Ord for ord for ord* ['Word for word for word'], and words are, of course, the focus of this volume. The volume consists of five chapters. In a chapter on orthography, Michael Lerche Nielsen, with the participation of Marie Stoklund, writes about the runic period, and Britta Olrik Frederiksen addresses Middle Danish orthography, i.e. the period between around 1100–1500/1515. The rich variation during this period is highlighted with the help of instructive overviews (e.g., on pp. 33, 37–39, 41, and 44). Early modern Danish orthography is treated by Hanne Ruus. Here, both the orthography in printed books and manuscript orthography are highlighted. As expected, the variation is much greater in the manuscript sources. Henrik Galberg Jacobsen, finally, writes about modern Danish orthography in a presentation focused on the printing norm. Here, too, the presentation is accompanied by easily accessible overviews (pp. 76, 78, and 83). The second chapter deals with punctuation. The period before 1500 is described in a section authored by Ebba Hjort, whose presentation contains examples of punctuation in runic inscriptions and manuscripts. In a rich section with ample examples, Galberg Jacobsen treats of punctuation from about 1500 onwards. What is stated about the use of commas is quite familiar also to a Swedish

reader. Pronunciation and pronunciation changes are the focus of a separate chapter consisting of five different sections. The pronunciation during the oldest period is described by Lerche Nielsen, again with the participation of Stoklund. Here, the authors discuss both the language variation during the Viking Age and the dialect situation more than a thousand years ago. The language development during the Middle Danish period is presented by Olrik Frederiksen, whose presentation contains several illustrative maps. I was especially attracted to the sections on loanwords. Simon Skovgaard Boeck writes about the pronunciation during the early modern Danish period. Here, the general problem of describing the speech sounds of older times on the basis of written sources is highlighted. The pronunciation during the modern Danish period is reported by Lars Brink and Jørn Lund in a section where, not least, various Copenhagen studies are accounted for. Brink also wrote the chapter's last section on glottal stops, stress and intonation. Vocabulary is the subject of an extensive chapter consisting of no less than eight sections. Eva Skafte Jensen writes about the concepts of native (i.e., not borrowed) words, loanwords and foreign words, and word formation is treated systematically with many good examples by Bent Jørgensen. Marita Akhøj Nielsen then writes about the vocabulary during the Runic Danish and Middle Danish periods, and Skovgaard Boeck is the author of a section on the early modern Danish period. The vocabulary and its development during the modern Danish period are summarised by Henrik Andersson, where, among other things, the discussion about eighteenth century purism, nineteenth century linguistic Scandinavism and the section on words that "have acquired a new, often opposite, meaning," Danish *pendulord* (cf. *skunked words*), catches one's attention. Technical language from different times is dealt with in a section written by Anne Duekilde, and slang is treated with many good examples by Peter Stray Jørgensen, who also writes about attitudes to slang. The last section in this chapter, authored by Vibeke Dalberg, is about names, where, among other things, what is said about place-names as a source for studies of the etymology of words is particularly interesting. The last chapter of the book deals with words from other languages. The influence from Greek and Latin is treated by the author duo Johnny Christensen and Niels Grotum Sørensen, while loans from German are discussed by Vibeke Winge; the latter section treats of both Low German and High German loans. Henrik Lorentzen writes about loans from Romance languages, providing examples from French, Spanish and Italian; personal names in Danish from these languages are also included here. English influence over time is addressed in a section by Pia Jarvad which includes ample documentation illustrating, among other things, syntactic influences. Else Bojsen writes about the influence from the other Nordic languages from the Middle Ages onwards. The last section, by Pia Quist, addresses the influence of newer immigrant languages, where we find, among other things, discourse particles such as *wallah*, *wallah billa* and *wallah koran*. The website containing additional material was mentioned above. It is stated in the preface that the opportunities provided by this website have proved really useful in the production of this volume, not least in the writing of the chapter on pronunciation. The website is truly an excellent resource. The second volume of this work is comprehensive and the examples and the many pedagogical graphs enrich the reading experience. This, together with the website, means that this work has all the necessary qualities to reach a wide readership.

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

Dansk sproghistorie Vol. 3. Bøjning og bygning. Editor-in-chief: Ebba Hjorth; Editors: Henrik Galberg Jacobsen, Bent Jørgensen, Birgitte Jacobsen, Merete Korvenius Jørgensen & Laurids Kristian Fahl, Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag 2019, ISBN 9788771841640, 436 pp.

This is the third volume of the Danish language history whose second volume also is presented in this chronicle. This volume focuses some classic areas, namely inflection and syntax, and in addition dialects and sociolects are treated. The first chapter deals with inflection. As for the morphological development, the runic period is treated by Michael Lerche Nielsen with the participation of Marie Stoklund. The inflectional forms are systematically reviewed, and it becomes obvious that Danish at that time was a developed inflectional language. The Middle Danish period is treated by Britta Olrik Frederiksen, highlighting processes of change, for example in verb inflection, case inflection of nouns and strong inflection of adjectives. The inflectional systems of individual word classes change, both as a result of categories disappearing and various simplifications taking place. Some geographical differences are also highlighted. The development during the early modern Danish period is reported in a short section by Hanne Ruus. The starting point is that, generally speaking, the inflectional system that existed at the beginning of that period is quite reminiscent of that of contemporary Danish. Differences between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Danish and contemporary Danish noun inflection (p. 87) are shown in easy-to-grasp graphs, and the overview of the numerals *to / tu / tuende* 'two, second' and *tre / try / trende* 'three, third' (p. 91) is also enlightening. Henrik Galberg Jacobsen treats of changes during the modern Danish period in a section based on language history texts, dictionaries and grammars. The author holds that spelling dictionaries have had, and still have, "a significant stabilising and standardising effect on word forms" (p. 111). Syntax is discussed in a subsequent chapter. The section on the syntax of the runic period was compiled by Sebastian Møller Bak. The syntactic structure of early runic inscriptions is initially described from a language typology perspective, even though it is difficult to establish reliable sentence models given the scarce source material. Lars Heltoft, in collaboration with Marita Akhøj Nielsen, is the author of an account of the long period from Middle Danish to contemporary Danish. This is a comprehensive section, almost 100 pages with 46 different graphs and 704 language examples, and it is not entirely easy to get an overview of it. Initially, a comparison is made between medieval and present-day syntax. How the case system is gradually phased out is described in detail, as are subject and nexus; for example, it is interesting to read about subjectless clauses and topical constructions. Definitiveness and modality are also dealt with. In no less than seven sections, the next chapter deals with the Danish dialects. Karen Margrethe Pedersen writes about the study of the dialects and the sources. Dialect pronunciation is then described by Lars Brink, whose contribution includes several easy-to-understand graphs, maps and text examples. Vocabulary is the focus of Viggo Sørensen's contribution. Various processes that renew the vocabulary are highlighted, such as loans and domestic renewal whereby words are used in new meanings or existing words are compounded or derived. One is also reminded of the fact that words are not very reliable criteria for grouping dialects together or distinguishing between them. This is followed by a section that deals with dialectal word formation, again by Karen Margrethe Pedersen. She then goes on to discuss both inflection and syntax in the dialects. Various fea-

tures of verbal, nominal and adjective inflection are discussed and exemplified, as well as the prepositive definite article and double definiteness. A number of features of dialectal syntax are also presented. A generous number of examples and a few maps accompany the text. Finally, the orthographic dimension is elucidated by Viggo Jørgensen on the basis of a number of texts. Inge Lise Pedersen is the author of all six sections in the final chapter on Danish sociolects. The chapter begins with an account of social structures and language variation which includes examples from different times. This is followed by a section that deals with socially-related pronunciation differences in Danish, where, not least, the results from various Copenhagen studies are presented. Next, the vocabulary is treated where, among other things, bilingualism and language contacts between social groups from different times are described. Inflectional and syntactic issues are then dealt with, and here, too, a few studies of the spoken language in Copenhagen are presented. Inge Lise Pedersen concludes the chapter on Danish sociolects with a section on orthography, where several examples of orthography as a social marker can be found. The third volume of this work is very well crafted. I would, however, have liked to have had an account of the broad outlines of, for example, the morphological and syntactic developments; now the reader must try to form their own picture of the overall changes. Many graphs and, in quite a few places, also maps, accompany the presentations throughout the volume. We look forward to the continuation of this series, which will comprise three volumes on "Danish in Use," "Danish in Interaction" and "The Authors' Danish."

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

Kåre Hoel, *Bustadnavn i Østfold 18. Trøgstad. Utgitt av Institutt for lingvistiske og nordiske studier, Universitetet i Oslo ved Tom Schmidt*, Oslo: Novus Forlag 2019, ISBN 9788270999231, 515 pp. + map at the end.

The publication of this masterpiece in the field of onomastics is progressing rapidly. As mentioned in several previous chronicles (*Journal of Northern Studies* 4:2, 2010, p. 121 f.; 10:2, 2016, p. 174 f.; 12:2, 2018, p. 118 f.; 13:2, 2019, p. 152 f., p. 154 f., and 155 f.) it contains the interpretations in Oluf Rygh's *Norske Gaardnavne* (NG), Kåre Hoel's treatment of the area's place-names and the editor's—in this volume, Tom Schmidt's—name investigations, all of which are presented separately. Typographically, one can see which author wrote which section in the volume. Initially, it is pointed out (p. 17) that the publisher's comments will sometimes precede Hoel's: In particular, this applies where the publisher has wanted to supplement Rygh's comment, for example with information about the comparison material. In this way alone, can full justice be done to both Rygh and Hoel. This is an excellent choice by the publisher. The object of investigation in this volume is the names in the district of Trøgstad in Østfold. The origin of the name *Trøgstad*, which is also a parish name, is not entirely clear. It has been suggested that it might derive from a byname meaning 'someone who walks with snowshoes,' i.e. from *truge* 'snowshoe,'

but this is not a particularly convincing theory. An explanation based on *þrúga* 'threat,' i.e., a byname meaning 'fighter' etc., might be more likely. The discussion concerning *Skrene* (p. 25 f.), where Hoel proposes an interpretation based on *skrinn* 'poor, barren,' is interesting. However, the publisher also offers an interpretation based on *skrede* 'landslide,' an explanation that can also be factually substantiated. *Ruken* (p. 37) might be derived from Old Norse *hrjúkr* (cf. *hraukr* 'stack, cone-shaped stack or heap'), referring to "a stack-shaped height above the farm." If the name *Strønes* (p. 116 ff.) is a parallel to the names *Strø* and *Strö* in Denmark and Sweden, respectively, it contains an old first element formed on a word related to *ström* 'stream.' The name *Mønstret* (p. 119) is believed to be derived from *munnr*, *muðr*, 'mouth,' which is used in place-names with reference to "a narrow fjord or a bay which forms an opening or mouth" (as proposed by Per Hovda). According to Kåre Hoel, *Dillevik* (p. 185 ff.) could be discussed in the light of the verb *dille*, meaning 'meandering.' However, as the publisher points out, it seems more likely that the name contains the plant name *dylla* (*Sonchus arvensis*), denoting a plant that grows on beaches. The name *Kallak* (p. 177 f.) is believed to be derived from *kaldr* 'cold' and *ákr* (*akr*) 'field,' i.e., 'the cold (i.e., waterlogged) field.' If so, it is likely a derogatory name. An interesting pair of names is *Pella* (p. 280), probably from Old Norse *kapella*, and *Venta* (p. 288 f), perhaps from Old Norse *konventa* or *próventa* and likely referring to properties with some kind of ecclesiastical connection. A relatively younger name is *Roligheta* (p. 73 f.). *Fuglesangen* (p. 277 f.) is a kind of transfer name, from German *Vogelsang*, and *Sorgenfri* (p. 313) goes back to German *Sorgenfrei* (cf. French *Sanssouci*). *Bernhus* (p. 98) is a transfer name from *Bergenhus* (*Fæstning*) and *Trandum* (p. 276 f.) is probably named after *Trondheim*. *Vittenberg* (p. 103) might derive its name from the German city of Wittenberg, or else "a mountain with bright, whitish spots or veins may have inspired the name." However, even if the name comes from the latter topographical feature, the German city name was probably a contributory factor in the choice of this name (cf. here the discussion about *Lybekk* [p. 152], where it is stated that "a location by a stream seems in most cases to be a prerequisite for naming a place after Lübeck"). In many places in the volume, we find investigations of the meaning of terrain words. The element *slor* 'narrow and damp plain near water' is discussed in connection with several names. The meaning of *hvammr* 'depression surrounded by heights,' is also addressed (p. 312 f.) and discussed on the basis of Jørn Sandnes' theory about the element's use in place-names. Determining the meaning of **Skin(h)eimr* (p. 327 ff.) is not easy. Here, however, I find it difficult to see how one could further advance the publisher's interpretation. The first element in *Båstad* (p. 342 ff.) is difficult to interpret; it might be an original **Boðstaðir*, **Boðsstaðir* from *boð* 'feast,' in which case the name could be compared to names formed on *gille*. As for *Grevla* (p. 140), Hoel's interpretation is based on what Rygh has suggested, i.e., a watercourse name derived from *gruvla* 'root, dig.' Concretely, Hoel states that the reference of the first element is "a long, steep and deep valley, which has been carved out by a stream." In connection with the name *Gylta* (p. 197 f.), it is discussed whether *gylta* 'sow' may have been used here in the formation of the name of a mountain ridge. I would have liked to have seen this further developed by the publisher. In connection with *Hundstorp* (p. 235 ff.), various possible interpretations of the first element are discussed. In my opinion, however, this discussion is not quite complete. The origin of the name *Kjesegg* (p. 51 f.) remains obscure; the first element is said to derive from **kæsir* 'cheese rennet,' perhaps after some plant. An alternative, but again not very convincing, interpretation involving a byname is also presented. The meaning of the name must be considered unexplained. *Sluppen* (p. 260 f.) also remains unclear, even though various alternatives are

proposed here. At the end of the volume, there is a section on lost names, older "district and village names," an extensive section on topographical words (pp. 365–435), as well as several indexes listing the district's place-names, place-names outside Trøgstad, and the appellatives occurring in the volume. In addition, there are indexes of personal names and bynames. There is also a map of the district in a pocket at the end of the book. The name interpretations in the volume are, as usual, highly meritorious, both linguistically and, not least, factually. We look forward with great anticipation to the day when the settlement names in all of the twenty-two districts in Østfold have been published.

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

Anu Lahtinen & Mia Korpiola (eds.), *Dying Prepared in Medieval and Early Modern Northern Europe*, Leiden: Brill 2018, ISBN 9789004284890, ix + 211 pp.

The volume contains an introduction by the editors which summarizes the topics that individual chapters address. These consist of eight essays, of which five deal with Sweden, one with a medieval English bishop, one with Iceland, and one with Lesser Poland (the provinces of Krakow, Sandomierz, and Lublin). Four chapters deal with or include the Middle Ages; six focus on or include the Early Modern period. The authors examine sources ranging from the thirteenth through the seventeenth centuries which include wills, funeral sermons, legal texts, court records and fictional historical narratives (sagas).

Readers of the volume are assumed to be knowledgeable about the concept of, and literature concerning, a "good death" in these periods. For those who are not, I strongly recommend beginning with Bertil Nilsson's contribution; pp. 190–199 in particular describe the ideas about penance and purgatory that prevailed in the Late Middle Ages. It should be noted that although there can be deathbed "repentance" (or "penitence") and confession, deathbed "penance," in the sense of "satisfaction," is impossible, as by then it is impossible to carry out the required actions: the soul of an individual in this situation will go to purgatory. This is sometimes not clear in the other articles that deal with this period.

In Lutheranism, of course, there is no place either for penance or purgatory, although a formal deathbed confession was thought to ease the way into the next life. Such confessions included not only sins and forgiveness that would affect the fate of the departing soul, they also had legal implications. Mia Korpiola examines the way sworn testimony concerning such confessions could be used in court as evidence for debts by—or to—the deceased, while statements about someone dying from wounds could significantly influence the fate of the individuals involved.

Cindy Wood shows that Bishop William Wykeham's concern for the fate of his soul in the late fourteenth century was not a sudden, deathbed decision, but had been characteristic of his entire career. Among other foundations, two educational institu-

tions, Winchester College and New College, Oxford, were originally intended to provide prayers for him in the afterlife.

Anu Lahtinen examines preparations for their passing made by aristocrats in Early Modern Sweden. Like Wykeham, Baron Henrik Fleming of Lais (1584–1650) had made donations to churches in his community, not in the hope of post-mortem benefits but rather to ensure that his memory be maintained. Another young nobleman faced with execution arranged not only for the welfare of his soul but also for the honorable treatment of his corpse, and of his surviving female relatives. Lahtinen notes the role played by the women in the family in preserving the memory of the deceased.

Dominika Burdzy's article examines Catholic and Protestant wills from sixteenth century Poland as well as foundation documents for ecclesiastical institutions and statutes of guilds and confraternitites. Sixteenth-century funeral sermons give insight into the society of the time—I was particularly struck by the number of women whose business and administrative activities were recorded. Also striking was the case of the noblewoman Katarzyna Radziwiłł (1544–1592), whose funeral led to the publication of two polemical sermons, one Catholic and one Calvinist (her husband belonged to that denomination). This wide-ranging chapter presents material comparable to that used by other authors in the volume, and would have benefitted by an English proof-reader familiar with the ecclesiastical concepts involved. Although the author defines terms such as "Dry Days" and "mourning masses" (once miswritten "mournful"), other terms are less clear. "Temple," for example, is not commonly used for a Christian religious building in the western church. "Diocesan and religious temples" on p. 110 clearly include the cathedral and, based on the remainder of the article, churches rather than convents or monasteries. To what extent are the altar foundations mentioned similar to chantries?

What can be done for individuals not a in position to prepare themselves properly for their deaths? Otfried Czaika examines the situations of soldiers who die on the battlefield, women (and their children) who die in childbirth, and how their lives (or their mothers') as a whole could be interpreted as "preparation."

Both before and after the Reformation, suicide was the ultimate crime, as it implied lack of faith in God's mercy. While the families of Swedish suicides did not face confiscation of the property of the deceased, the issue of the salvation of the individual's soul, and burial in a churchyard, were important for the survivors. Riikka Miettinen considers the types of evidence (including a pious position of the body, or a plea of insanity) that might be admitted in such cases. It appears that the authorities were often willing to give a verdict of insanity that would allow respectable burial within the churchyard. An unusual strategy of prospective suicides may have been confessing to real or imagined crimes that would lead to their execution—before which, of course, they would be able to repent and receive communion, thus making a "good" death that would enable them to enter heaven (p. 177).

Kirsi Kanerva's paper is something of an outlier, as the evidence she examines is not contemporary with the deaths involved. The Icelandic sagas she discusses were written by thirteenth-century Christians but are set in the pagan ninth–tenth centuries. They describe an imagined past, one that cannot be verified by any sort of documentary evidence. It is generally agreed that authors of sagas accepted the "difference" of pre-Christian times—magic, for example, was considered a perfectly normal activity "back then." It is interesting to see how thirteenth-century Icelanders imagined preparations for death in that pagan past. Obviously, there is no question of preparing one's soul for heaven. Kanerva examines how the matriarch Unnr in *Laxdæla saga* makes her final

preparations, obtaining a "good memory" and (as far as her descendants are concerned) unproblematic afterlife. Hrappr, in the same saga, also prepares for death but, consistent with his character while alive, his living corpse causes problems after his death, killing the servants and laying waste to his farm. Þórólfr in *Eyrbyggja saga* makes no such provisions, but his son anticipates trouble and tries, unsuccessfully, to pre-empt it (cf. *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* Ch. 58). I was surprised by the absence from this chapter of one Christian character in *Eyrbyggja saga*—the Hebridean Þorgunna—who not only makes preparations for her death and burial at a future Christian site, but revives afterwards to see to the restoration of social equilibrium (as defined in the thirteenth century) in the form of the expectation that parties taking a corpse for burial would receive proper hospitality during their journey. It is interesting to note that she, like Unnr (who however remains passive after her death), contributes to the well-being of the living, as opposed to the two male revenants who cause death and destruction.

In a volume like the present one, with contributors whose native languages are not English, it is more than usually the publisher's duty to provide careful proofreading. This could have been done more thoroughly in the present volume. There are numerous misplaced adverbs such as "confession takes normally place" (p. 144), odd vocabulary such as *stung* for *stab* (pp. 73, 75), *rest* for *bury* or *put to rest* (p. 120), which should have given a native speaker pause, as should the "camera complex scholastic apparatus" (p. 120) or the preparations made "in front of" a violent death (p. 133). *Reformatory* instead of *Reform* or *Reformation* (p. 191) will make North American readers think of detention centers for juvenile criminals.

The contributors are, however, to be praised for their detailed research, as are the editors for allowing footnotes rather than end-notes. These notes are full of valuable information and will repay readers' attention, the more so since the Bibliography is "select" and numerous references found in the notes are not included in it. The volume as a whole makes a significant contribution to the field.

Margaret Cormack
College of Charleston, USA
& University of Iceland
cormackm@cofc.edu

Shane McCorristine, *The Spectral Arctic. A History of Dreams and Ghosts in Polar Exploration*, London: University College London Press 2018, ISBN 9781787352476, 275 pp.

In Westminster Abbey in London there is an epitaph written by Lord Alfred Tennyson: "Not here! The white North has thy Bones; and thou Heroic Sailor-Soul art passing on thine happier Voyage now toward no earthly Pole." The hero Tennyson refers to is Sir John Franklin, perhaps the most famous polar explorer of them all. He and his 133 companions manning the ships *Erebus* and *Terror* went missing in the Baffin Bay area in the High Arctic in 1845. They all perished and it was not until 1854 that the Hudson Bay Company employee John Ray was informed by Inuit witnesses of the fate of the expedition. There was clear evidence of cannibalism among the British sailors according to the Inuit. This was of course contested in Britain and the Inuit were even accused

by the author Charles Dickens of having killed the noble mariners. The failed Franklin expedition was a major event in the history of British polar exploration that still haunts the Canadian Arctic as the historian Shane McCorristine tells us in his well-written narrative. The Arctic is in his opinion spectral or haunted and ghostlike creatures accompany everyone that attempts to conquer its vast vistas. The ghosts the author refers to is actually History itself or the wider Historical Context that polar exploration was and still is an integral part of. The events that took place in the salons in Britain in the 1850s and what happens today in the political institutions in Canada are as important as the expeditions themselves for understanding the significance of the High Arctic in Western imagination and culture.

In his book McCorristine questions the heroic tales of the "Barrow's boys" or the naval officers commissioned to Polar travel by the Second Secretary of the Admiralty John Barrow: men such as John Ross, William Edward Parry and John Franklin, daring British mariners on the quest for the elusive North-West Passage. The book describes the intricate details of the search for Franklin's lost expedition that took place in the 1840s and 1850s. As a result of the many search expeditions for Franklin the North West Passage was eventually found by Robert McClure. But because of the harsh ice conditions, despite of the effects of the current climate change, the North-West Passage is still of little practical value for shipping. If the climate changes further the Passage will become of vital interest for the nations concerned, especially Canada. This book also tells us a story about British imperialistic ambitions in the High Arctic in the nineteenth century. Britain's geopolitical interest in the Arctic was inherited by the new Canadian state that claimed ownership of both the British Arctic regions and its dramatic history wherein British polar exploration was the key factor. Franklin thus soon became a tragic and heroic figure also in Canadian history and folklore.

This book informs the reader about the story of the British Arctic exploration, with a focus on the glorious period c. 1820–1880, but it tells this often-told story in a very unusual manner. The protagonists are not dashing and brave British naval officers, nor brilliant scientists, not even able seamen. Instead you meet a group of plain, modest, soft-spoken, uneducated and even illiterate young servant women. Such judgements of their character have nothing to do with how they actually were but instead these judgments indicated how their special talents should be appreciated. McCorristine stresses the importance of their lack of education, this was the key factor that made them trustworthy as informants. At the time it was believed that such common servant girls did not have the mental capacities to invent any stories. Enter Emma L., Sarah, Jenny, Ellen, and my special favorite, the three-year old Anglo-Irish ghost Louisa Coppin or Weesy! What special talents could these young women and this child ghost have one may wonder? Wonder is the key word here. And awe.

When Franklin's expedition went missing in 1845 official Britain rallied all its resources in an effort to find it. As McCorristine points out, in contemporary Britain there was a widespread interest in mesmerism and spiritism in polite society. Because of the mysterious disappearance of the expedition far up North and the dearth of any reliable information on what had happened novel means of information gathering had to be tried in the search for Franklin. Jane Franklin, the energetic wife of Sir John Franklin, was one of the protagonists for alternative data gathering methods, in this case seances. Mediums, i.e. the young servant women, were questioned about the location of the expedition and about the condition of the Franklin men. As clairvoyants the women travelled in the manner of the Inuit shamans to the High Arctic, met Sir John Franklin, inter-

viewed him about his health and future plans. Plans that seemed to be quite prosperous considering the dire straits he was in. But where to find Franklin? This was the major concern of the naval officers present at the seances. What was the time of day and what was the position of the sun at the location where the mysterious meeting with Sir John took place? A good navigator could, using that kind of information, get a rather good idea about the geographical whereabouts of the Franklin expedition. But the young uneducated women had great difficulties in reading the professional chronometers adorned with Roman numerals used by Royal Navy officers. The clairvoyants instead had to resort to lofty descriptions of the Arctic landscape and the sun's position at the time of their encounter with Franklin. Scientifically inclined skeptics, that were present at the seances, wondered why the traveling medium did not ask Franklin where they were? The women never did that for some reason.

McCorristine gives ample evidence that the nineteenth century, heralded as the century of reason and logic, of science, technology and industrialization also was a century of alternative beliefs and a strong interest in what sir Isaac Newton might have called "white magic." It is wrong to assume that the scientific polar expertise at the Admiralty were immune to the possible contributions of the mediums. Instead the seances could be understood as a novel and complementary method for gathering information. Another equally contested method as seances was to interview the Inuit about the whereabouts of the Franklin expedition and the information given by the Inuit was seldom trusted. As we know when John Rae was told by the Inuit in 1854 that a hunting party had found evidences of cannibalism among the Franklin men Charles Dickens immediately rebuffed these findings. In the 2008 documentary film *Passage*, by John Walker, Dickens great-great grandson Gerald Dickens apologizes for the hurt caused by his great-great grandfather to the Inuit more than 150 years earlier. Of more practical value for the Inuit was that the wrecks of *Erebus* and *Terror* became a good source of hard-to-find iron that could be used for making knives and other essential tools.

The book concludes with an interesting chapter on how archeological expeditions conducted by the Canadian governmental agency, Parks Canada, undertaken in the 2010s finally managed to find and claim the wrecks of Franklin's expedition vessels, the *Terror* and the *Erebus*. The intriguing story of the Franklin expedition, of the search expeditions and of the crucial Inuit contributions to these search efforts both in the 1840s and 1850s, and also the recent findings of the Franklin ships, all contribute to shape a special Canadian view of the Arctic. As Tennyson writes, Franklin's body is not buried in Westminster Abbey, but his soul is passing on towards no earthly pole. His body has never been found and even if his ship *Erebus* was found in 2014 Franklin has actually ever since he disappeared been a kind of ghost that still haunts the High Arctic. He may have been dead since 1848 but as he lives on in present day memory he is immortal. As the author Shane McCorristine writes in his concluding remark: "The past does not simply vanish—it hangs around in landscapes, bodies, dreams and stories. It is *ongoing*, like an unexploded mine. This should not be forgotten." Franklin and his men are still with us today. Whether we like it or not.

Pär Eliasson
Dept. of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
par.eliasson@umu.se

Norsk språkhistorie. Editors-in-chief: Helge Sandøy & Agnete Nesse. *Vol. 2: Praksis*. Editor: Brit Mæhlum; Assistant editors-in-chief: Sine Halkjelsvik Bjordal & Stig Rognes, Oslo: Novus Forlag 2018, ISBN 9788270998487, 684 pp.

The first volume of a projected four-volume work on Norwegian language history was published in 2016. In the editorial board's preface to the entire work, it is stated that it will be a modern reference work with broad perspectives on language seeking to explain the development of the Norwegian language, that it will provide insights into the links between the Norwegian language and Norwegian society, that the Norwegian identity, which at different times has been constructed on a language basis, will be highlighted and that non-Norwegian languages that have existed in Norway for a long time will also be addressed. The broad commitment from the Scandinavistic scholarly community in Norway vouches for a high-quality work. The first volume, entitled "Patterns," treats of form, structure and the grammatical system, while the second deals with language use, the third with ideology and the fourth with timelines. (I will return to volumes 3 and 4 below in the chronicle.) In volume 2, which consists of seven chapters, language use is at the centre. The first chapter, compiled by the author trio Jan Ragnar Hagland, Agnete Nesse and Hildegunn Otnes, shows how the Norwegian language community became script-based. It contains accounts of runes and later writing in Latin letters that appears in manuscripts and eventually in print, and also information on Norwegian and North Sami braille. In addition, features that characterise digital writing are treated. More surprising is that the last section of the chapter deals with spoken language practices on radio and television, but it is a stimulating section all the same. The chapter on informal spoken language, authored by Jan Svennevig and Ingrid Kristine Hasund, is rewarding. It addresses an area that has previously often been overlooked in works on language history, namely pragmatics. Concretely, slang and swear words are treated, but also pragmatic particles that have functions "on the interpersonal and discursive level" (p. 138). In the latter section, the starting point is taken from material in different speech corpora. The geographical and social variation in Norway is described in a chapter compiled by Ivar Berg, Edit Bugge, Unn Røyneland and Helge Sandøy. The main features of the modern dialect areas seem to have been established by around the year 1600. The earliest language changes took place in eastern Norway and the most conservative dialects are found in the inner fjord areas of Vestlandet and in the mountain areas from Setesdalen and north to the inner Trøndelag. The chapter presents a systematic review of phonetic and morphological features and language changes over time, with a number of maps illustrating the geographical conditions. An important section in the chapter deals with the dative, while the concluding section addresses the spoken language of today with its different varieties, styles and registers. A subsequent chapter, authored by Inge Særheim and Kristoffer Kruken, treats of place-names and personal names. With regard to the oldest name layers, Særheim reviews what has been written about pre-Indo-European name substrates in Norway, adopting, for good reason, a negative attitude towards such theories. In addition, he treats of Nordic names from different times, both original natural names and settlement names of various kinds, and Sami and Finnish names are also discussed. The same knowledgeable treatment is given to personal names by Kristoffer Kruken, who focuses on and discusses personal names from different times in the light of historical processes and currents of influence. In this connection, a similar discussion about Sami

and Finnish personal names would have been interesting. In Chapter 5, a trio of authors, Johan Myking, Sylvi Dysvik and Håvard Hjulstad, address technical language work. This is a somewhat unexpected element in a work on language history, but it clearly makes an important contribution to the whole. Not least, it is interesting to acquaint oneself with the presentation of Norwegian terminology work and also with the oil language. The two concluding chapters deal with languages in Norway other than Norwegian (Chapter 6), and Norwegian as a second language (Chapter 7). Chapter 6 was written by Tove Bull, Espen Karlsen, Eli Raanes and Rolf Theil. The first section treats of language contacts at different times in history between Norwegian and languages such as Celtic languages, Frisian, Middle Low German, French and the sister languages Swedish and Danish. This is followed by a section on the Finno-Ugric languages, i.e. Sami and Finnish. Here, one finds an interesting section on Sami influence on Norwegian (and other Scandinavian) dialects, where reference is made to, for example, Jurij Kusmenko's work. While some Sami substrate features could perhaps have been discussed a bit more critically, it is still important that these previously overlooked perspectives on the language development are now included in a description of language history. This is followed by sections on Latin and Greek influence over time, Middle Low German influence in the Middle Ages, where an assumed *semicommunication* is discussed, and the influence of English over a long time perspective. Next follows sections on Romani and sign language. This is the book's most multifaceted chapter. Finally, Finn Aarsæther writes about Norwegian as a second language. The time depth is considerable, as he takes as a starting point an inscription on a wooden spade from the Icelandic farm Indriðastaðir previously believed to be a Sami word; however, this theory is somewhat dubious, as Kendra Wilson has shown in an article, without actually presenting a new, completely convincing interpretation of her own. The chapter also deals with other minority groups in Norway. An interesting, albeit rather short, section deals with the development of multilingual Norway after 1970. As shown in this review of the various chapters, volume 2 is a very comprehensive one. While it is natural that themes recur in different chapters, this is not always made clear by means of internal references. The contributing scholars refer in a meritorious way to the latest research, and the literature is listed in an extensive and cohesive reference list. The latter is a mine of information for those who want to know more. Only very rarely, are references to relevant studies lacking. I find the sections that deal with pragmatics and terminology particularly interesting, perhaps because one did not expect to find such perspectives in a work on language history. The editors and authors have good reasons to be proud of this second volume.

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

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This Norwegian language history project is presented in more detail elsewhere in the chronicle, namely in the review of Volume 2, see above. Here, I will dwell on the third

volume. The publication of an entire volume on language ideology in a language history context is greatly welcomed. The concept of ideology is discussed in detail, in particular language history ideology and all that it includes: language policy, language attitudes, views of language and language variation, language—variety—dialect issues, as well as language development as such and the perceptions of it. The perspectives change: on a macro level, we find language regularisation and language standardisation, on a meso level, language as an expression of group identity, and on a micro level, language as an expression of individual identity. The volume comprises six chapters, including the introductory chapter, written by Tove Bull. In the introduction, we are reminded of Brit Mæhlum's somewhat drastic statement (1991) that in Norwegian language history writing, scholarly standpoints are often handed down from one generation of linguists to the next (Mæhlum: "a copying syndrome"). Her statement draws attention to the fact that it may be difficult to advance new insights and new understanding. This is true also of other academic fields. Later in the introduction, it is stated that Norwegian language historians have traditionally attached great importance to the spoken language and its development. The standard language ideology has not been as firmly established in Norway as in many other countries; the internal variation that exists in the standard languages in Norway is notable. Odmund Løkensgard Hoel is the author of the next chapter, which is focused on Norwegian language history writing. The chapter provides the reader with a chronological overview of this field and is more historiographically-oriented. It appears that historical science and historically-oriented linguistic research were very strongly intertwined throughout the nineteenth century. How different linguistic paradigms then affect the language history writing is elucidated and we are acquainted with historical-comparative and structuralist research, as well as research related to sociolinguistics and language contacts. Here, for various different reasons, I find works such as Ivar Aasen's *Bidrag til vort Folkesprogs Historie* (1885), Achille Burguns *La développement linguistique en Norvège depuis 1814* (posthumously published in 1919–1921) and Hallfrid Christiansen's *Gimsøy-målet* (1933) particularly interesting. Helge Sandøy shows in a chapter that language is well suited for ideologisation. Concretely, he sheds light on how and when notions of Norwegian as a language in its own right began to appear and, similarly, how notions of the language variation arose. The account of the perceptions of dialects expressed in the replies to the 1743 questionnaire sent out to officials in different parts of Norway and Denmark is very readable. The next chapter, written by Brit Mæhlum and Stian Hårstad, deals with national and regional identities and highlights the connection between language practices and geographical anchoring to a place, a region or a country. It is well known that language forms have an outstanding ability to function as identifiers or distinguishers between people. The historical development is illustrated by means of two regions, where the districts of Møre og Romsdal and Valdres and Hallingdal, respectively, are the focus areas. In addition, two areas with a strong influx of people from different parts of the country are highlighted, namely Målselv and Bardu in Indre Troms. An important part of the chapter is the description of the Norwegianisation policy directed at Norway's ethnic and linguistic minorities. The latest developments in the field of language and place in a globalised world concludes the chapter. Standard language and language regularisation are the theme of a chapter compiled by Lars S. Vikør which discusses correctness, language norms and standard language. For example, Norwegian spelling is discussed in an interesting way in the light of different ideological positions. The establishment of a language norm means that some usages are considered correct and others incorrect. The chapter also exemplifies how language norms can be in conflict

with each other. Tore Janson, finally, writes about changes in perceptions of languages in Norway and the outside world. Two time periods come to the fore in his analysis, the period from prehistoric times to the fifteenth century and the nineteenth century. The chapter dwells on the names of the Nordic languages and Norwegian from different times, names for different varieties, when issues of language variation and language differences begin to attract scholarly interest etc. The comparative perspectives from completely different language cultures adopted by Janson are valuable. The volume as a whole, illuminates the language development in Norway in a multifaceted way, while at the same time presenting quite a few general perspectives. Naturally, the reasonings in the different chapters are sometimes tangential to one another, but never in a way that takes away from the reading experience. It is to be hoped that the volume will reach a large number of readers, even beyond those primarily interested in Norwegian language history.

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

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This is the last volume in the four-volume work on Norwegian language history presented in more detail in the review of Volume 2 above in this chronicle. Its nine chapters comprise a summary produced by various experts which appears to be based on the latest research findings. An introductory section on period division, sources and language history points of departure is written by the volume's editor-in-chief, Agnete Nesse. The oldest period (up to about 700) is described by Michael Schulte. This chapter also includes a short section on the origin of the runes (pp. 70–72) by Henrik Williams. The chapter focuses on the sound changes that eventually distinguished Old Norse from Germanic, and a synchronous description is given of what can be said to be Old Norse phonology, morphology and syntax. A number of individual runic inscriptions are also presented. Schulte is also the author of an account of the language history of the Viking Age (750–1050). Here, too, we find a presentation of the most important development lines and a description of the features of the language system on a synchronous level which clarify the changes that took place during this era. The presentation is accompanied by concrete language examples and a number of easy-to-grasp graphs. A short section, which could beneficially have been deepened and problematised, deals with dialectal variation during this time period. In addition, there is a section on dictionaries and imported words. The language history of what is referred to in this section as the High Middle Ages (1050–1350) is treated by Odd Einar Haugen. The source situation is now completely different, thanks to the addition to the runic material of manuscripts with Norwegian texts written in Latin script and diplomata

(letters), making a broad range of source material available to language historians. The chapter contains a review of the language changes of the period, and variation and dialectal differences are illustrated by means of an informative map (p. 273). In general, this seems to have been a fairly stable language period. Endre Mørck is the author of a chapter on the language history of the late Middle Ages (1350–1536), the Middle Norwegian period. Historically, this period is characterised by the consequences of the Black Death and other periods of plague in various areas. The chapter includes an interesting discussion (pp. 306–307) about the impact that the Black Death may have had on the language development. An account is given of extant runic writing and writing in Latin script, and the chapter's description of the language changes of the time is important. Contacts with other languages are also dealt with. The long Danish period (1536–1814) is treated in a chapter co-authored by Agnete Nesse and Arne Torp. The authors describe the Danish-Norwegian written language used in this period and the changes that can be observed in the Norwegian dialects. Variation in the spoken language is illustrated and there is also a section that deals with urban dialects in Norway at that time. The language development during the almost one hundred years that Norway was in a personal union with Sweden (1814–1905) is described by Oddmund Løkensgard Hoel. Here, we can follow the development of the spoken language in cities and districts, the development of "the higher spoken language" (*det høgare talemålet*) and the Danish-Norwegian written language. The changes that took place in printing and writing technology are also discussed and the language policy and language debate of the period are dealt with in detail. An apt summary of the development trends of the time period is given at the outset: "The presentation emphasises that 1814–1905 was a period of minor language changes, but major language policy changes" (p. 425). The development during the period from the dissolution of the union until the end of the Second World War is dealt with by Gro-Renée Rambø. Against the background of societal conditions and structures, the language debate and language development of the time are described. Social arguments are particularly prominent in the language debate. The school system plays an important part when it comes to language choice, but also the language choices made by the administrative, ecclesiastical and broadcasting sectors. Attention is also paid to the efforts aimed at Norwegianising the Kvens and the Sami, and the consequences this had for their minority languages. Lars S. Vikør, finally, dwells on the Norwegian language history of the post-war period. The author of this chapter is presented as

> a person who himself lived through the entire period described, first as an object of socialisation and later as an actor in language development, and who is thus an informant and researcher at the same time.

The language community is the focus here, but also certain observed development trends. Finally, a couple of general observations will be made regarding this volume. In several chapters—and this is natural—the time periods dealt with are in turn divided into shorter time segments to enable detailed descriptions. However, this places great demands on the concluding summaries, which could probably have been expanded in places. A large number of language examples are given, especially in the chapters on the older periods, but it is not always easy to find the examples cited. This could have been facilitated if, like Odd Einar Haugen, the authors had numbered their examples and then simply referred to them. That said, this volume offers rich and exciting reading. The research reported is completely up to date, and the concluding reference list provides additional

opportunities for in-depth reading. We are very grateful that this knowledgeable work is now completed, rapidly and successfully.

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

Roland Scheel (ed.), *Narrating Law and Laws of Narration in Medieval Scandinavia* (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, vol. 117, eds: Sebastian Brather, Wilhelm Heizmann & Steffen Patzold), Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2020, ISBN 9783110654219, eISBN (PDF) 9783110661191, eISBN (EPub) 9783110662320, ISSN 1866-7678, x + 295 pp.

The volume comprises an introductory chapter by Roland Scheel: "Narrating law and laws of narration." The first contributor is Jón Viðar Sigurðsson. The title of his contribution is "Chieftains and the Legal Culture in Iceland c. 1100–1260" (pp. 39–55). First he shows, the political and legal structure of Iceland according to *Grágás*. Although the legal system of Iceland is presented by the *Grágás*, there is neither an assessment of a judgement after the prescriptions of *Vígslóði* nor of *Baugatal* because the law in Iceland appears rather to be part of the power play between opponents among the magnates, who had much skill in acquisitions of resources and acted for an arbitrated settlement. The manuscripts of the *Grágás* are not an official collection of laws, but a private collection. After the subjugation of the Icelanders under the Norwegian crown the king gave them new laws in 1271, the *Járnsíða*. On the one hand handling of the law was part of the powergame between opponents among the magnates, but on the other hand the law was powerful because it did not take into account, that there were settlements negotiated. The actions in the sagas demonstrate that the magnates were anxious that their business and their deeds were lawful. It appears therefore, that law was not identical with the written law, but based upon shared knowledge of the magnates and the law was ready to be converted into a powerful resource for them.

Hans Jacob Orning analyses in his contribution (pp. 57–76) "Making King Hákon great again. Law, God, morality and power in Björgvin, 1223." This meeting intended to find out, who was the rightful king of Norway. The status of the law in this meeting as described in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* was precarious because there were five claimants to the throne invoked, underlining that "law was not a sharply defined text but a corpus of rules open to negotiation." King Hákon emerged victorious from the struggle with Skúli because he was the successful player in that game. He had his natural/legal/divine/right to rule maintained. The power game at the meeting was vested in legal garments according to *Hákonar saga*. But law was not only at the mercy of raw power because the difference between these options is also shown by the ambiguity of God's will in the interpretation of ordeals. Before the state built robust legal institutions, other means were used to establish connections between appearence and essence. The alternatives were not reduced to law versus power, the sagas of the 1220s show how a mix of law, God, morality and power interacted to establish truth and this made king Hákon great.

Ármann Jakobsson writes upon "Law personified. The ignored climatic speeches of Brennu-Njáls saga" (pp. 77–87). In this saga Njál is the legal hero. This is shown in the outstanding legal procedures finishing the conflict between Mörðr and Hrútr, and ending the alliance of Gunnar and Njál. His remarkable achievements of establishing of the Fifth Court and Iceland's Christianisation are contrasted by his sons's vain attemps to get the support of the entire Icelandic elite after the killing of Höskuldr Þráinsson. Njál is not only the protagonist of the saga, but he is embodying the law of the late Mörðr gígja Sighvatsson, all his life and until the legal procedures at the *alþing* after his death and that of his sons'. Because there was no one to replace him adequately this seems to have been the reason why the law was so ineffective thereafter. Furthermore, by chronicling the breakdown of the legal procedure and by describing the resultant battle this parallels how Iceland's society developed in the battles between 1238 and 1246 and how it made them seek help with the Norwegian king to keep peace in Iceland.

Hannah Burrows is treating "Court poetry. Assemblies and skaldic verse" (pp. 91–116). The quotation of skaldic verse at an assembly is a comparatively unusual event in the sagas. But sometimes there are a few examples in which skaldic verse is said to be enough to incite legal action. In Norway poetry was a common means of communication, Skalds and patrons tried to maintain the poetic justice of skaldic poetry. On the one hand, particularly the saga authors used to present skaldic verse as a powerful tool in legal matters. On the other hand an assembly could be a dangerous arena for the recitation of skaldic verse, particularly the *Grágás* has special provisions against reciting insult to a person at *lögberg*. The offender is subject to full outlawry and forfeited his immunity for a year. But the chances of offending more people and wanting to take immediate revenge are much higher at an assembly like the *alþing*. Sometimes placing verse into an assembly was—as the author has shown—an effective way of heightening tension, allowing to alternate voices and critiquing law and justice. Therefore þing-poetry can be found in Old Norse narrative, for instance Hjalte Skeggjason's poetic *níð* against Freyja was spoken at Lögberg as Iceland debated its conversion to christianity (*Íslendingabók* Ch. 7).

Kyle Hughes contributes "What is 'good law.' Law as communal performance in the Íslendinga-sögur" (pp. 117–133). In Iceland disputes were generally ruled by settlements and not by resolutions. Hughes demonstrates, that the significance of the Law within the family sagas is inextricably interwoven with the polity and thus with communal performance being a corporate aspect, which is guaranteed by the supporters und arbitrators. These persons must find a balance between personal honour und social stability to make law good. By that the *Grágas* laws are not enforced, but they are based upon interpretations of the laws and they constitute law as far as they prove repeatedly to be effective in the majority of cases. As a result law encodes the narrative conflict and good law vindicates the community.

Roland Scheel—after having given an introduction on "narrating law und laws of narration" in the north, especially in Iceland (pp. 1–20)— is overviewing some Icelandic sagas in the chapter "Revenge or settlement? Law and feud in early sagas of Icelanders" (pp. 135–167). When the skalds don't stress one larger feud but stretch their narration over years like in *Laxdœla saga*, the authors do not focus on revenge and escalation, but focus on peacemaking through wise arbitrators who settle the disputes. Successful revenge usually happens within the frame permitted by written law in these early texts, and the free will of the characters and the necessity of moderation are stressed through the constellation of characters and their fate. But the early sagas demonstrate how the Icelandic form of government without a central authority could work: they keep to the law and apply it in the

sense of equity in their settlements. If a law was broken, they reacted in patterns of norms, which constitute law in an anthropological sense. In the *Samtíðarsögur* from 1236 onwards the struggles among the chieftains obtain a new fashion: Sturla Sighvatsson tried to crush the other magnates and tried to establish a single rule in the name of the Norwegian king. From then on the magnates especially in *Sturlunga saga* caused no more trouble about justice and equity.

Keith Ruiter gives a study of "Berserks behaving badly. Manipulating normative expectations in *Eyrbyggja saga*" (pp. 171–184). Styrr's brother Vémunðr brings two powerful Swedish berserks, Halli and Leiknir, to his farm to increase his prestige. They are good allies, but their tempers need to be kept in check. After a short time Halli tries to marry Styrr's daughter Ásdís claiming that the physical support of him and his brother makes him a better match for Ásdís than the wealth or power of any farmer in the district. After discussing the issue with his neighbour Snorri goði, Styrr comes to the conclusion that Halli under common understandings is only a servant and not compatible with his honour, his kin group and his social network. Therefore a marriage with his daughter was out of the question, particularly since Snorri goði himself wants to marry Ásdís. Therefore Styrr kills both berserks in his bathroom. This killing can be understood as a rectification of social balance after the attempted assault of Styrr's daughter and his honour. Morality, honour and law were forming a complex of normative expectations, which were causally related to his conduct. Styrr was not able to follow only the law, but had to weigh the social consequences of his doing.

Daniela Hahn discusses "Social and diegetic hierarchies in cases of thievery. A study of *Mǫðruvallabók*" (pp. 185–202). The property disputes in the Icelandic sagas are always connected to power and honour. While the legal texts seem to assume that both parties are equal in the eyes of the law, the narratives portray a hierarchical society. In the fourteenth-century *Mǫðruvallabók* there is a group of 144 theft cases committed in Iceland. They are solved by five acts of revenge, two direct settlements and seven potential court proceedings; of these two are abandoned and five result in a settlement (self-judgement). But not a single person is condemned of thievery. There are crimes that are more likely to be brought to court than others. Rán is most often counteracted with acts of violent vengeance, while þjófnaðr ['theft'] most often leads to a lawsuit, because a thief comes in secret, most often because he fears the reaction of his victim. Like within a feud the little man's chance in the process lies in winning powerful supporters, especially if they want to harm the defendant for other personal reasons and because of that start a dispute. In medieval Iceland people were in principle equal in the eye of the law, but neither in common view nor in legal practice. Already in case of theft the state authority takes the position that a chart in court is perceived as an insult as worthy of a high degree of punishment as the theft itself and the bravest men approve of that.

Heike Sahm studies "Feudal law and gift economy. The discussion of different social systems in the queens' dispute in the *Nibelungenlied*" (pp. 205–224). Prünhilt shows the view, that Sîvrit, Kriemhilt's husband, holds a position of inferiority as Gunther's vasall, to find confirmation of the legal situation. When Kriemhilt comments in praise of her husband suggesting an inversion of this hierarchy, Prünhilt is provoked. She argues that customary privileges are granted to those of a higher social standing than a subordinate and she claims to be entitled to the customary privileges granted to those of a higher social standing than an subordinate: her position being higher than that of Kriemhilt and Sîvrit. He is a territorial sovereign, but in the queens' dispute the relationship between *herre* and *man* remains unclear. All the heroes live at the court in close proximity to the king. There

is no mention of a feudal relationship. In the outer court all are bound to the court by gifts. Sîvrit has increased his prestige and the potency of his kingdom by conquering the greatest treasure that ever a hero could gain. Therefore Gunther again aspires to asserting equal status in the manner guests are welcomed. But Prünhilt does not share Gunther's wishes. The epicist brings the queens' dispute into profile by playing the structures of social order against each other and having the validity of each disputed by one of the queens. The argumentation in their dispute follows archaizing lines (feudal law) by Prünhilt, and contemporary lines (gift economy) by Kriemhilt.

Jiří Starý contributres "History or idea? The legendary laws of Old Norsemen" (pp. 225–253). Are legendary laws remnants of ancient lawgiving? For this question no universal answer can be given. The issuing of an old law and a probably "nonsense" in it says nothing about its validity. Already Cicero said: *Sive fuit sive non fuit, nihil ad rem; loquimur quod traditum est* ['Whether it happened, whether it did not happen, it does not matter here. We just reproduce what the tradition reports']. Legendary lawgiving belongs primarily to the realm of legends, it resides in the neighbourhood of heroic stories and myths. On p. 234 the author mentions Eskil Magnusson, who created the Swedish *Västgötalag*. He was no legendary, but a historical person, of whom we know personal details. Similarly he proves to tell about Frederic the Great und his quarrel with the miller Graevenitz of Sanssouci (p. 246, footnote 57). This tale is nothing but a manufactured myth, which did not really happen (cf. Vilsen & Wadewitz 2006). But Jiří Starý is right to assume that the legendary laws are part of the culture and history of law exactly to the extent of which the reasoning is a part of history and culture.

Anne Irene Riisøy discusses "Vǫlundr—a gateway into the legal world of the Vikings" (pp. 255–273). In her paper she explores the jural world of Eddic poems which traditionally are associated with the Old Norse pagan religion. In its traditional form the palimpsest *Vǫlundarkviða* contains names, themes, and terminology drawn from a wide area, and these elements were added to the tale at different times, beneath them genuine pre-Christian legal notions. One option was to claim compensation, but it was more honorable to retaliate, and revenge was a powerful feature not only in the mythological world, but in the real world as well. In contrast to *Grágás* the earliest Norwegian provincial laws stressed the obligation to take revenge.

Matthias Teichert tributes "Týr, Fenrir and the *Brísingamen*. Tales of law, crime, and violence in Eddic mythology and their Indo-European subcontexts" (pp. 275–288). The central idea of Týr having lost his hand belongs to the Migration period, an era long before Óðinn took over und usurped the top of Asgard. Both share the trait of a physical handicap: Týr has lost his right hand, Óðinn lost one eye. Fenrir is a fiend being so powerful and menacing that he cannot be vanquished in the ordinary way. Keeping Fenrir under control requires a physical sacrifice and systematic lawbreaking and oathbreaking involving the deity of Týr. His sacrifice is necessary to keep the cosmic order by using violence against Fenrir.

The twelve contributions are all showing a considerable progress in understanding the changing conditions between law and laws of narration in medieval Scandinavia.

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Dieter Strauch
University of Cologne
Germany
dieter.strauch@uni-koeln.de

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When the first Danish and Moravian missionaries arrived in the land they called Greenland in the early eighteenth century, they thought they would encounter survivors of the Norse settlements. The last of the Viking colonisers had, however, perished about two centuries earlier. Instead, the two competing groups of missionaries met an indigenous population with language and worldviews that differed considerably from their own. Early on, the missionaries began collecting material concerning indigenous traditions and beliefs about the world, human life, and the invisible beings of the "Other World," in the hope that such information would help them in their missionary endeavour. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, more indigenous traditions were collected by travellers and ethnographers. It is this comprehensive material that Birgitte Sonne has used as the basis for her analysis. But that is not all. She also seeks "to relate precolonial Greenlandic ideas about their way of life and its preconditions to the cosmologies of the other Inuit and the Yupiit" (p. 10). Using this comparative method, she suggests interpretations of themes and details that the Greenlandic sources are silent about. The result is an informative and highly readable text, based on an impressive amount of literature and several decades of wrestling with the sources and different interpretations thereof.

The early pages of the "Introduction" (pp. 1–48) give some basic information about Greenland and the various indigenous populations. This is followed by short sections on the process of colonization, research history, method, and pre- and early contact history. Next, the author presents the sources for each region and briefly explains the various theoretical perspectives that have informed the study. The final part of the introduction sketches out the plan of the ensuing chapters.

In Chapter 1, "Space and Time" (pp. 49–114), the central focus, Sonne writes, "is on the analogies of bodily positions, movements, and the senses, which dominate relations between This World and the Other World(s)" (p. 50). One of the main concepts here is *sila*, an Inuit term that connotes space, air, the visible world, etc.—and in Sonne's interpretation also "balance." This the author discusses in relation to both time and space, including the invisible spaces that are populated by beings who speak a language of their own. One section deals with orientation, another with balance. In the former, Sonne describes how the year, the day, and the life-spans of humans and wild animals were divided, and how one oriented oneself in space with reference to the point the speaker occupies on the boundary between land and sea, standing facing the sea, with right, left, forward-downward and behind-upward as the cardinal directions. Here she also briefly reviews how people sustained themselves from land and sea, the animals they hunted, and the materials they used when making equipment for transport, hunting, and building longhouses. In the section about balance, Sonne discusses the balance of both the land and the human body. For example, since the world was regarded as a disc, which, according to one story (found in several variants) had once turned upside down, thus making the mountainous underside the new surface, there is a widespread fear that the world might suddenly flip back over once again. For the human being, or more precisely, for a person with *sila*, it was the mobile upright position that was regarded as balanced and typical. The final sections of the chapter deal with imagined beings of the sea (ani-

mal- and human-like) and the land (like dwarves and giants), and how they are presented in traditional narratives.

In addition to its titular themes, the second chapter, "Seasonal Rituals and Rituals of Crises" (pp. 115–156), examines life-cycle rituals. Although Sonne regards the role of the seasonal rituals as negligible, she does discuss some examples in relation to comparable rituals among other Inuit groups. At New Year (winter solstice) there was feasting, drum singing, the strictly ritualised exchange of spouses (which Sonne refers to by the traditional term of wife exchanges), and, in East Greenland, also masked dances and the occasional public initiation of a new ritual specialist, the *angakkoq*. Further, during spring, summer, and autumn collective rituals were celebrated in different parts of Greenland. However, the source material contains little information about these seasonal rituals. What they tell us more about is the life-cycle rituals in connection with "individual birth (and abortion), menstruation, 'ritual firsts,' the death of a relative, and the life-renewing rites of individual animals" (p. 147). The "ritual firsts" that were celebrated include, for example, the first tooth and the first step, but the celebration that ranked highest was that of a young man's first catch. A young man could marry after the celebration of his first catch, a young woman once she had put up her hair in a topknot after her first menstruation (which was not celebrated); she was regarded as an adult only after the birth of her first child.

In "The Other World(s) and Its Beings," Chapter 3 (pp. 157–209), Sonne begins by comparing two terms for the Other World(s) or for different aspects of them: West Greenlandic *silam aappaa* for the realm of death, and East Greenlandic *asia* for the Other World of the land and its spirits. Whereas dwarves and giants were regarded as living "inside hummocks, hills, and mountains; the *innersuit* (big fire spirits) [...] [were found] upside down under the foreshore and skerries" (p. 158). These *innersuit* were regarded as human-like, but without noses, because, according to the narratives about them, there is no wind where they live and therefore they do not breathe. Nevertheless, they live like humans and hunt at sea. The land spirits, on the other hand, were regarded as doing many things differently from humans, but their methods, so the stories tell us, differed depending on their size. The *angakkut* (sg. *angakkoq*), the most important ritual specialists, were considered the only humans capable of travelling to the Other World(s). Using examples of these journeys as described in the stories, Sonne notes differences between West and East Greenlandic traditions. Spirits were regarded as more similar to humans than animals, although neither had the correct (human) balance in their bodies. However, unlike humans, who are mortal, the spirits lived forever. Deceased humans were regarded as existing, in a realm either beneath the sea or above in the sky, where they produced the Northern Lights by playing ball.

Also in this chapter, Sonne discusses "origin myths." These include variants of the Inuit flood story and stories about the origin of death, noted down by Poul Egede as early as the 1730s. Sonne illustrates a serious source-critical problem with a Polar Inuit (i.e. not Greenlandic) story about the origin of the earth, recorded by Knud Rasmussen. She compares his original manuscript in Greenlandic with a later fair copy (with Danish translation) and notes that in the latter version Rasmussen combined the original short, incoherent notes into a story, a type of construction it is easy to be seduced by, but which, needless to say, one should not trust.

Another section deals with "anthropology" in the strict sense, i.e. how people perceive other human beings, in this case in relation to both animals and different types of non-visible beings. Sonne begins with an analysis of the central concept *inua* which she

glosses as "a being with recognizable habits and a characteristic way of life, individually, or by species" (p. 192), i.e. a person. After a discussion of the theoretical perspectives of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Terence Turner, she returns to Greenland and notes that both animals and humans dress in animal skins when they go outside. But inside, humans are undressed except for their underclothes (*naatsit*), which Sonne interprets as "the visible cultural mark of (Greenlandic) humans" (p. 198).

Another interesting section is about *taartaq* (East Greenlandic), the language of the beings of the Other World(s). In the stories, this language is presented as being intelligible to humans. One of its characteristics was that it described humans as active. Words for body parts, for example, focused on action. Another characteristic of *taartaq* was that it was gendered. Summer, for example, which in ordinary language is called *aasaq*, was called *arnaavoq*, 'the season of women.' Another important aspect was the opposition between outside and inside. For example, "to die," which could be expressed with "to go out" in the language of humans, was "to go in" in the language of the others. When an *angakkoq* performed, he would begin by using ordinary human language, but when he started using *taartaq*, it was a sign that a spirit had entered into him and was now the one who was talking.

The fourth chapter (pp. 211–325), with the title "*Angakkut* (Shamans)," is by far the longest. As mentioned, the *angakkut* were the most important indigenous ritual specialists. Most were men, and a few were women. They lived ordinary lives except when performing. No less than around 20 per cent of the population were *angakkut*. There were various ranks, among which the highest was held by those who were considered capable of travelling to the Other World(s)—by flying, gliding or floating. In East Greenland, where the most important material about them was collected, an elder *angakkoq* could ask parents to entrust a child to him or her as a pupil, or one could start on one's own. If a child wanted to become an *angakkoq*, it was expected that the parents should be supportive, although it was also important to keep the activity secret during the many years of apprenticeship prior to a ritual public disclosure. A baby born with a caul or whose elder brothers and sisters had all died could also be cultivated as an "*angakkoq*-to-be" by ritual or teaching. Finally, a person could be called by a spirit to become an *angakkoq*, although stories about such callings are not common in Greenland, Sonne concludes.

Stories about the lives of well-known *angakkut* allow us to distinguish three stages in the initiation process, which Sonne summarizes with many good examples. (1) There had to be a meeting with a spirit and a private initiation. This was followed by (2) several years of securing, in secret, the help of other spirits. And finally, (3) a ritual disclosure with the first public performance. The private initiation normally took place in summer, the public ritual at New Year or in spring.

(1) According to the stories, during the first initiation, the apprentice was "killed," and while unconscious he or she would receive light (*qaamaneq*), from the moon, some stars, or the Northern Lights, before being reborn with the ability to see both This World and the Other World(s).

(2) Our knowledge of the years of apprenticeship derives from East Greenlandic sources. One of the purposes was, as mentioned, to enlist helping spirits (*taartat*), some of whom were inherited from deceased *angakkut*, although most were *inuat* (pl. of *inua*) of land, shore and sea. Apprentices had teachers, often several, who were payed for their instruction. It is also reported that spirits sometimes served as teachers. Some *inuat* came to the apprentice of their own accord. Others were invoked by various methods, such as rubbing a small stone on a larger one in circles, or were encountered by chance. The *taar-*

tat were regarded as servants of the *angakkoq* and assisted him or her when called upon, one at a time. Sonne also discusses certain individual "spirits" and their role, and discusses them in relation to historical research.

(3) It was the first public performance that made the novice into an *angakkoq*, someone "who travels to places beyond the reach of ordinary humans" (p. 214). Although the public performance was the main event, often the ritual also included the presentation of the helping spirits of the *angakkoq*. Sonne uses the biographies of some well-known *angakkut* as the basis for her presentation, in which she also compares different versions of the ritual. For male a *angakkoq* it was a requirement that he should be married. Further, he needed a male relative who was willing to participate in the ritual as a support.

In her analysis of the functions of the *angakkoq*, Sonne looks "across the northern continents for comparisons" (p. 217). In her descriptions, she uses the word "shaman" far more often than the Greenlandic word, thus identifying the *angakkoq* as such. When it comes to two other types of ritual specialists, the *qilalik* (p. 218 f.) and the *ilisiitsoq* (pp. 250–259), she, like earlier researchers, is more hesitant. Concerning Bernard Saladin d'Anglure's hypothesis that Inuit "shamans" belonged to a third sex, Sonne concludes that there is no example of cross-gendered upbringing in the preserved *angakkoq* biographies. Even if one could earn fame and respect as an *angakkoq*, "the element of entertainment was as prevalent as curing and restoring the balance with the Other World," she later adds (p. 399).

One section (pp. 250–259) in the chapter is devoted to *ilisiinneq*, a practice that on the one hand was "meant to do harm, be that for individual or social ends" (p. 252), and on the other was used to counteract *ilisiinneq* by others and for protection. Here, Sonne begins by reviewing the sources, ranging from Hans Egede, who did not distinguish between *angakkut* (practitioners of *angakkuuneq*) and *ilisiitsut* (practitioners of *ilisiinneq*), and his son Poul, who was the first to present the simplistic idea (still sometimes held) of the former as good, the latter as evil, through to the ethnographers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Sonne emphasises, "*ilisiinneq* was not necessarily an immoral act" (p. 256). The morally benign uses of the practice included, for example, to

> decide on the right name for a new-born baby; cure bad luck in hunting; stop an attack of insanity [...], kayak dizziness, or shingles; calm down a storm; and ingeniously remove a severe taboo on eating during starvation. (p. 256)

Chapter 5, "*Angakkoq Puulik* (Shaman with a Bag)" (pp. 327–382), deals with the few *angakkut* who were considered capable of becoming invisible to the inhabitants of the Other World(s). This was regarded as necessary if he or she wanted to visit there. If the *angakkoq* did not render themselves invisible through the use of a *pooq*, 'cover, skin, clothing; protection,' for example, an anorak made from the gut of the bearded seal, he or she would be attacked by the dangerous guardians of the Other World(s). This type of *angakkut*, which only occurs in stories from East, Southeast and South Greenland, has long been one of Sonne's focal interests. She published her first article on the subject in 1986.

In her "Conclusion" (Ch. 6) (pp. 383–416), Sonne comments on the text and her method of aligning the Greenlandic material with information about other Inuit groups and the Yupiit. Her conclusion is the she has discovered "no contradictions, only variations" (p. 383). She also makes some interesting comments on her own interpretations of elements of Greenlandic worldviews: her arguments for adding the meaning of 'balance' to *sila*; and for regarding the trickster Raven as impersonating "the transformational

boundary between sea and land" (p. 385), balancing between above and below. Related to this is the balance in body that is characteristic of human beings (in contrast to both animals and "spirits"). She illuminates the importance of the rituals at New Year, including the public initiation of a new *angakkoq*; to the fear that the sky might fall, despite the various ideas people had about how it was held in place—by pillars and mountains, by the winds, or by the rainbow; to the crucial role of naming, which "transformed the baby into a genuine human" (p. 395); and to the idea that "animals, deceased persons, and spirits belonged in the Other Worlds" (p. 398). On the subject of sex and gender, she notes that "a level of male dominance cannot be talked away" (p. 397). In a short "Coda" (pp. 383 f.), she repeats that she has been inspired by many different theoretical perspectives but has found others insufficient.

In addition to the text, the book contains several maps and other illustrations (photos and drawings). Two of them show "the mirror effect of the localizers (right, left, up behind, down in front" in relation to the cardinal directions on the west and east coasts respectively (p. 38 f.; unfortunately, there is a misprint in fig. 7: *avannamut* on the top should be translated 'to the right', not 'to the left'). The book ends with a reference list and a very helpful index.

If the tendency in culture studies is towards a focus on the local, Sonne has—as her subtitle makes clear—chosen another perspective. In analysing the worldviews that interest her, she relates them to and interprets them against the background of a comprehensive Inuit context. This means that where information is lacking in the Greenlandic source material, Sonne adduces comparable circumstances among other Inuit groups and also among the Yupiit. She then looks for words that are etymologically related to Greenlandic words under the assumption that the phenomena these words denote in Inuit and Yup'ik also existed in Greenland. But even if this assumption might be true, it cannot be taken for granted. Here and there, there is a tendency to jump to the parallels too quickly. If there is an Inuit or Yup'ik parallel somewhere, Sonne uses it to fill in the lacunae in the Greenlandic material as if related cultures were always similar, even in their details. This strategy is probably influenced by her commitment to the idea that Thule Culture was predominant throughout the area from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries (p. xv f.). However, closely related cultures often manifest interesting differences. Here I think it would have been a better strategy to base the analysis to a greater extent on the Greenlandic sources and to accept that, where the local sources are silent, we cannot know what Greenlanders traditionally did or thought. The parallels could then perhaps be used in support of carefully formulated hypotheses (which should be presented as such), not as short-cuts to the construction of a coherent narrative without any gaps. This hunt for parallels as tools of interpretation becomes even more problematic, I think, when in some instances they are looked for among Native American and Siberian cultures.

As a historian of religions, I find it interesting to note that, although the themes discussed in the book are usually (or at least often) summarized under the label of "religion," that concept is not used (except very occasionally, and the same is true for "religious"). This is an interesting choice, and there are probably good reasons for it. "Worldview," on the other hand, is discussed, but neither justified nor defined. In any case, these Western concepts—and many others used in the book, like "shaman," "soul," and "spirit"—select certain phenomena for analysis, thereby (most probably) obscuring indigenous Greenlandic distinctions.

It seems as if Sonne does not always trust her own knowledge or the Greenlandic source material, but shows too much reverence for researchers with little or no knowl-

edge of Greenlandic traditions. In the section about how the human being was traditionally perceived, she tries to find what she calls "the common spiritual essence inside all bodies as defined by Viveiros de Castro" (p. 198), as if this excellent specialist on Amazonian cultures would be an indispensable source to and interpreter of Greenlandic anthropologies. And concerning the *angakkut*-to-be she writes that "some served a full apprenticeship, while others had to stop but might practice anyway, unintentionally disturbing the accepted definitions found in many academic writings" (p. 233). Although this might be meant ironically, the use and discussion of the concepts of "shaman" and "shamanism" makes me think that she lends too much weight to the "academic writings" of non-specialists (of Greenlandic worldviews, that is), as if forgetting that she herself is the pre-eminent specialist.

This unnecessary reliance on models developed in conjunction with the interpretation of cultures remote from the Greenlandic is especially evident in the chapter on the *angakkut*. In a brief review of historical research, she compares ideas from general studies on "shamanism" with information in Greenlandic sources that specifically concern the *angakkut*. Even if Sonne is critical towards the definitions of "shamanism" she refers to (those of Åke Hultkrantz and Ioan M. Lewis), she still retains the concepts of "shaman" and "shamanism" as points of departure for her own analysis. This obliges her to relate the Greenlandic material to discussions about these terms, discussions of questionable relevance for the analysis of the different roles and functions of the *angakkut*. This is especially surprising since she writes that she will treat the issues in Chapter 4 "in a Greenlandic context and limit comparisons to salient differences and similarities" (p. 211). Here it would have been possible to continue using the indigenous terms and terminologies as her main analytical tools, as she does in most of the other parts of the book. Instead of presenting "The East Greenlandic Shaman, Emically Defined" (heading on p. 217), to mention one example, one would have preferred an emic definition of *angakkoq*.

Despite these critical comments, I have only admiration for this excellent book. It is informed by the deep knowledge of an author who has studied the worldviews of Greenlanders and other Inuit for at least 50 years, and who knows the relevant languages (something which is not as self-evident as it should be). Agreements and disagreements with other researchers are noted and she gives good and (at least for the present reviewer) convincing arguments for her own position. Also, she mentions several examples of things where she has changed her interpretation during the many years she has been wrestling with Greenlandic traditions, and this is as unusual in academic texts as it is congenial. When Sonne uses a certain term where an alternative would have been possible, her reasons for doing so are—with a few exceptions—well considered, as are also many of the other choices she has made in the process of writing. As a reader one is guided by a highly knowledgeable author with great respect for the traditions she analyses.

Håkan Rydving
Dept. of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies, and Religion
University of Bergen
Norway
hakan.rydving@uib.no

Per-Axel Wiktorsson (ed.), *Fornsvenska legendariet, vols. 1–4* (Svenska Fornskriftsällskapet. Serie 1. Svenska skrifter 102; Skara Stiftshistoriska Sällskaps skriftserie 100), Skara: Svenska Fornskriftsällskapet & Skara Stiftshistoriska Sällskap 2020, ISBN 9789197988162, ISSN 0347-5026, 106 pp. + 604 pp. + 663pp. + 358 pp.

Fornsvenska legendariet ['the Old Swedish legendary'] is based on the Latin work *Legenda Aurea*, compiled by Jacobus de Voragine. Exactly when the Old Swedish legendary was created is not known, but it is believed to have been between 1272 and 1307. It is likely that the author was a member of the Dominican Order. Attempts have been made to determine the dialect of the author (compiler) and many indications point to Småland. The legendary is a rich collection, with a frame story about the history of the Roman Empire and the Roman Church. It contains edifying stories about Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, disciples and evangelists, a range of emperors, popes and saints, as well as a number of miracles associated with the saints. For example, there are very readable sections about the Seven Sleepers and the Eleven Thousand Virgins, and, interestingly enough, also about a number of Nordic saints: Saint Sigfrid, Saint Olav, Saint Magnus and Saint Erik. The legendary was first published by George Stephens in 1847–1874, then as now by the Svenska Fornskriftsällskapet. That edition had its merits but did not really meet the requirements for a philological publication, which is why Valter Jansson published a first booklet in the same series in 1938, comprising about one-eighth of the legendary. When Per-Axel Wiktorsson was reorganising the Society's archives in the early 2000s, he found the rest of Jansson's work, and initially he intended to complete his publication. However, he found that a new edition based on Jansson's work would not meet his own standards. For example, in Janson's edition, the page and line breaks in the manuscript are not indicated, the punctuation in the Old Swedish text is modernised and Jansson attaches less importance to the text of the manuscript Cod. Holm. A3 that to texts of other manuscripts. Wiktorsson wanted to remedy these shortcomings. In the introduction, he describes in detail the various existing manuscripts containing the legendary. The oldest extant manuscript, Cod. Holm. A34, "Codex Bureanus," was used as far as possible as the basis of this publication, while other manuscripts complement the main manuscript. The philological work in this new edition seems to be extremely well executed. Unlike in Jansson's work, the use of capital letters corresponds to that in the manuscripts, and the same is true of the punctuation (see above). Line ends are also indicated, as are page and column ends. The publisher has also added a translation into modern Swedish to the text edition. In addition, there are person and place indexes where the headwords are those that appear in the translation. As is well known, Wiktorsson is the author of the masterpiece *Skrivare i det medeltida Sverige* (vols. 1–4, 2015; see *Journal of Northern Studies* 12:2, 2018, p. 160 f.) and has also, among other things, published *Skrivare i det medeltida Skara stift* (2006) and *Västgötalagen* (2011; see *Journal of Northern Studies* 6:2, 2012, p. 117 f.). He can now add this extraordinary edition to these significant works. Per-Axel Wiktorsson and the publishers—Svenska Fornskriftsällskapet and Skara Stiftshistoriska Sällskap—are to be congratulated on the completion of this publication.

Lars-Erik Edlund
Dept. of Language Studies
Umeå University
Sweden
lars-erik.edlund@umu.se

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