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Southern Perspectives on the North: Legends, Stereotypes, Images and Models

What does the north represent for the people of the south? Do Southerners have a common image in mind when forming a perception of the north? These interesting and intriguing questions can be partially answered quite easily, but they might turn out to be quite complex if the aim is a generalised *north-south dichotomy*. Southern discourses on the north (and vice versa) have often long and profound historical roots. Stereotypes and images form their own sphere of reality, created in an empirically hazy mental landscape where historical facts, rhetoric, legends and intentional or unintentional misunderstandings are mixed in a seemingly chaotic way. However, these images are reality if they are thought, felt, spoken and written in order to define *the other.*

Some discourses on the other can be traced and defined empirically. First, we have a *spatial dimension*: what geographical point is the origin of the image, and what geographical space does it focus on? It is obvious that there is a different meaning of the concept 'north' for a person from Alabama, who thinks of the old union states in the northern USA, and for a Peruvian, who sees the north as North America with its Anglo-Saxon and protestant traditions. Second, there is a *temporal dimension*. The content and definition of certain dichotomies can vary considerably from time to time. An interesting example is the image of Russia, which has oscillated between a northern and an oriental definition in the Occidental core regions. Peter the Great's Russia was a northern (Baltic) power at a time when the absolutist state philosophy was quite *comme-il-faut* in Europe. In the late cold war period, president Reagan did not hesitate to name his enemy the Evil Empire, thus linking the image rather with the unchristian Huns than with a society of high western educational standards.[1] These examples demonstrate the need for taking into account both the spatial and temporal aspects of each and every document on the north-south dichotomy.

Describing the other has several functions, and it is not seldom that its main purpose is to reinforce one's self-definition, rather than to be informative about some unfamiliar and remote place. It is a well-known fact that many authors of travel literature tend to be more interested in commenting on things at home than on their experiences abroad. Like the classical structure of fairy tales – with its moral examples of right and wrong incarnated in noble princes and evil witches – the description of other cultures and societies tends to contain moral evaluations. Some features of these other societies are seen as horrible, and are mentioned to give the reader a certain satisfaction from living in a place where such things do not occur. Other events and experiences might be presented to the reader in order to point out the bad state of affairs at home. This latter method is as easy to find in real travel accounts as in satirical social critiques often toned down by a fictive travel story (Rennie 1998, 66), for example *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift, *Lettres persanes* by Montesquieu and *Cartas marruecas* by José Cadalso. The main purpose of this type of argumentative style is to increase the perspective of self-understanding, by exposing an outsider's view. For the same reason, travel literature and other accounts written by outsiders are considered interesting fields of study by researchers today. Besides giving some answers to the genesis and evolution of images

and stereotypes, these accounts offer a natural focus of interest: Don't we all want to know what others think about us?

North and South as a figure of thought in Europe

Having stated the general remarks above on dichotomies such as *we – the other* and *north – south*, we can now take a closer look at the geographical entity which interests us here: *the Baltic Sea area*. The first task is to find a partner for this region in the context of the north-south dichotomy. If the Baltic Sea area represents the north, what other area could represent the south? What region thinks of the Baltic as the north? In a historical perspective it is in the self-understanding of the Mediterranean area that we can find the most natural partner for constructing a north-south *figure of thought* involving present day Europe and thus also the Baltic Sea area. It is in the rough historical context of Romania and Germania that this essay has its parting point. The aim is to detect this dichotomy during different eras, and to examine its substance.

However, there is more to north and south than simple directions in a geographical sense. From the earliest descriptions of the north and its people, a continuous process of loading the concept north with certain meanings has developed. Attributes such as *love for freedom, simplicity* and *lack of vanity, drunkenness* have become substantial parts of the discourse on what the north and the northerners are. At some stage this process of defining the north takes a turn; the image substance takes over and starts to define the direction. One good example of this is the perception of the northern romantic landscape in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. An authentic romantic landscape had to be untouched by Man, preferably mountainous, and if possible, the home of wild animals and untamed rapids. This kind of dramatic landscape could often be found in the north (Norway and Scotland), but could as well be situated in the Swiss Alps. The wild as a symbol for *northernness* became as much a state of mind, or a literary *topos*, as a physical direction. A person searching for the romantic landscape of this period would not be pleased with the Danish cultural landscape, nor with the splendid architecture of St. Petersburg. One can notice a process of *northernisation* of the north in the same sense as the *orientalisation* of the Orient, suggested by Edward Said. The thesis in his book *Orientalism* points to a more alienating discourse on the Orient than one would be prepared to suggest for the North. However, there is a clearly traceable tendency, starting from classical texts all the way to modern day literature, to reproduce a certain *northernising discourse*[2], i. e. to search for and perceive certain elements in customs, nature, and society, as typically northern. This tendency has most surely not been diminished by the fact that the method of northernising the North has often been implemented by the Nordics themselves. Since the "old Vikings" got their horn equipped helmets in the early 19th century – as a consequence of then fashionable romantic ideas – most Northerners (*nordbor*) have learned to be proud of their inner Viking. Thus a northernising discourse refers to an ensemble of topics, stemming partly from real facts and experiences, which guides people to uncritically reproduce certain images.

Four moments in the Northernising discourse

In order to expose the northernising discourse, with its features of continuity and discontinuity, four different epochs which have actively formed the image of the north will be described here. These cursory expositions will part from the Classical period and its Renaissance echoes. The second part deals with the 17th century division of Europe into religious blocks, while the third section examines the image of the north during the transformation period between the Enlightenment and the Romantic movement. Finally the late 19th century brought new connotations to the northern concept through Neo-Romanticism and racial theories.

1. The Classical Mediterranean World and the North

In classical Greek and Roman texts and legends, the north was seen as a remote part of the outside world. The Mediterranean civilisation had its more or less clearly defined borders in all directions: The pillars of Hercules in the west, the Sahara desert in the south and a geographically hazy but mentally clear border with the Orient. In the north there was the border between the Roman Empire and the lands of the German tribes, or *Germania* as Tacitus named it in his work on this region *De origine situ moribus ac populis Germanorum*[3] dating from 98 AD. This border ran along the Rhine and the Danube, with the fortification line Limes linking both rivers to a continuous border. Today we know very little about the exact conditions of the contacts between the Mediterranean world and the north. Many of the classical texts have perished and are only known through other sources. Most of the texts were revived during the Renaissance, and there is very little knowledge on how much they might have been altered from their original form.[4] Nevertheless, the classical texts had a great impact on the image of the north during the entire modern era.

Tacitus' *Germania* is probably the best known and most popular of the classical texts on the north. Tacitus draws his testimonies partly from older literary sources, such as the Greek Posiodonius and the Roman historians Pliny the Elder (Plinius, 24 BC-79 AD)[5] and Livy (Titus Livius, 58 BC-17 AD)[6]. Another source of information was naturally Julius Ceasars' *Commentarii de bello gallico* (written in 50-40 BC). Tacitus' thorough description of all the northern tribes has affected both southern and northern images (many German soldiers would carry it in their backpacks when heading out for the trenches in the First World War). Tacitus points out both positive and negative features when describing the German tribes. Some of the positive features mentioned are: untamed passion for freedom, lack of vanity and greed for gold and other luxury items (see Tacitus, ch. 5, 18 and 27), high sexual morals and matrimonial fidelity (according to him the only barbarians to implement monogamy; ibid., ch. 18 and 19), good care of the children and generous hospitality towards guests (ibid., ch. 20 and 21). Furthermore, Tacitus points out that lending of money and collection of interest were not known to the Germans (ibid., ch. 26). In describing the virtues of the Germans, Tacitus is obviously directing a critical glance towards the Roman society, needing the Germans in order to point out its decadence. In this respect the Germans became part of a literary *topos* that described an *other* world. In Chapter two Tacitus holds that the German tribes were pure of external mixture and that very few Romans in the past had any real incentive for reaching these far away shores.[7] The German tribes are described through their otherness, which is underlined by the above-mentioned purity.

Apart from moralising about the decadence of the Romans, Tacitus' text also describes a potential enemy (Anderson 1970, xi). Knowing the enemy was and is essential for security. When evaluating the potential enemy, Tacitus mentions negative features as well. Such for example are: brutality and raw manners, lack of aesthetic sensitivity, inebriety and a weakness for dice games. German architecture was simple and the constructions had little beauty.[8] Their eagerness to enjoy alcoholic beverages was in Tacitus' opinion a potential advantage for the enemy in a possible hostile encounter.[9] Thus the Roman image of the Germans is a mixture of admiration for the virtues of an unspoiled non-civilisation on the one hand, and a self confident scorn of barbarian tribes on the other. The Germans are robust and their virtues are admirable in their simplicity. However, they have a weakness for vices which the civilised man is supposedly able to handle; whereas the Mediterranean man enjoys wine and finds amusement in games, the German loses his head when drinking beer and is ready to risk everything he owns due to compulsive gambling.[10]

The content of *Germania*, when seen as an important contribution to the discourse on the dichotomy of north and south, is thus characteristically the discourse of a subject representing civilisation. In classical times the Europe of today did not exist, and the

areas outside the empire were considered barbarian. This otherness, however, included a positive dimension, the image of something pure, unspoiled, ideal and Arcadian. This image of the north as an ideal and mystical paradise on earth (though practically in another world) is probably best represented by the Greek myth of the *Hyperboreans*. According to an old Delphic legend the Hyperboreans were a mythical people intimately connected with the worship of Apollo at Delphi and also of Artemis at Delos. The name is a derivation of Boreas, the north wind, and hyper – beyond – thus defining the Hyperboreans as the people living beyond the northern wind. They lived for a thousand years in a paradisiacal region where no hardships were known, and where curiously enough the sun also would always shine. According to the legend, Apollo would spend the three winter months with the Hyperboreans (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1967:II, 1075).

This legend, saved for later generations by the Greek historians Herodotus (approximately 480–420 BC)[11] and Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC), suggests that the region in the north was a paradise. This is remarkable, taking into account that the terrestrial paradise in the occidental tradition normally has been situated in the Orient. In most medieval accounts the north is considered a cold and uninhabitable place. Therefore it is not surprising that in the aftermath of the Renaissance the Hyperborean legend would find new believers in Scandinavia and more precisely in 17th century Sweden. Still today, Uppsala professor and poly-scientist Olof Rudbäck's *Atlantica* (first edition 1679) is remembered as the foremost testimony of this idea. The Roman tradition of writings on the northern parts of the continent were also rediscovered to some extent during the Renaissance. The classical texts that had been preserved became reference literature for the new European intellectual elite. Even though the medieval epoch probably did not constitute such an interruptive period culturally as was suggested by Renaissance scholars, the idea of dividing Europe into north and south slowly re-emerged as the modern era approached.

A third important figure of thought that affected people in the Mediterranean area during classical times is Aristotle's climate theory. According to the Aristotelian scheme (or one attributed to him) each direction was incorporated in a system of corresponding variables. These were the four elements: fire, air, earth and water and the four humours: choleric, sanguine, melancholic and phlegmatic. Further, there were the four primary qualities, or contrarities: the hot, the cold, the dry and the moist (Aristotle 1944, 13). In this system the north – or Septentrionalis – was associated with water, moist and phlegm, which supposedly explained the phlegmatic, rigid and "cold" character of the northerners. The Aristotelian system would have an important impact on the mental mapping of the terrestrial universe not only for the classical Greek and Roman societies, but also for later representatives of the core region of the Occident. Even though Aristotle's theses on chemistry and physics would be replaced by new scientific paradigms, the seed he planted on character types in the realm of a collective occidental mindscape preserved its roots, well nurtured throughout centuries.

The above-mentioned images are in many ways difficult to relate to what in a positivistic sense could be called "real" historical facts about the contacts between the Mediterranean and the Baltic regions during antiquity. We know that the amber trade in the south-east region of the Baltic was vital in forming contacts towards the south. We also know of some probable maritime endeavours between the areas, such as the Greek Pytheas voyage from Massalia (Marseilles) to the Baltic in the 4th century BC. On the image level, however, there are two discourses on the north that can be separated from each other. One is the civilised-barbarian dichotomy, which especially symbolises the attitude of the Roman Empire (and later the Roman church). The other discourse is the Greek and specifically Hellenistic tradition of romanticising the north (Klinge 1995, 7). The former is at least to some extent based on a factual perception of the north, while the latter is rather the expression of an idea than the documentation of a place and its people.

2. Protestantism as a divider of Europe

The protestant reformation in the 16th century was to have a considerable impact on the political constellations of European state politics. What in the beginning was yet another schism within the Catholic church soon became an instrument in the hands of princes and warlords. In an analysis the causes, success and further development of the Reformation, it is clear that the historical reality of the Baltic Sea area does not support the generally accepted idea of the Reformation as once again dividing Europe in north and south. The fact that Poland would remain strong in its Catholic faith and that the Greek Orthodox church was a natural part of the Baltic world, reminds us of the heterogeneity of the Baltic Sea area in religious matters. During the 16th century, Protestantism had been a universal phenomenon within the Catholic world, with a Catholic reaction in Finland and underground Protestantism in Spain, to mention just two examples. However, from a more general European perspective the North was to become the symbol of Protestantism during the 17th century and the Thirty Years' War.

The Protestant movement was *northernised* with the entrance of Sweden on the German scene of war. This was especially the case on an image level. The Swedish king Gustav II Adolf was hailed as the Lion from the North – *Löwe aus der Mitternacht* – by his partisans. It was he who was to fulfil the prophecies and eschatological visions of a *Schwedische Rettung der christlichen Kirche*. His opponents also gave him attributes which strengthened the mythological character of his person. In Spain, one of the main enemies of Sweden, the figure of the king became the subject of several literary observations. Among the learned Spanish authors the king earned nicknames such as *The monster of Stockholm* (Francisco de Quevedo), *The Tyranni of Sweden* (José Palafox), *The Wild from the North* (father Ambrosio Bautista) and *The new Attila* or *Proof of Anti Christ* (Clavería 1954, 106f). Not only the king but also the soldiers of the Swedish army were portrayed as ferocious northern fighters. Diego Saavedra Fajardo (1584-1648), one of the most brilliant 17th century intellectuals in Spain and known for his participation in the peace treaty process in Westfalen in 1648, gives proof of this in his famous work *Corona Gótica* (1645): "Not being able to contain themselves in the mists of the North, they broke through the clouds like rays of lightning, and repeatedly pushed forward to embrace the world" (Saavedra Fajardo 1949, 712f; see also Clavería 1954, 110).[12]

The historian Fadrique Moles' biography of Gustav Adolf (1637), also comments on the physical appearance of the northern warriors when entering the continental scene: "On June 24th 1630 on the island of Rügen, with twenty thousand robust Goths, hardened in war and whose potency was in concordance with their brutality..." (Moles 1637, 24; see also Clavería 1954, 11). The picture of semi-barbarian provincial Europeans is complete. In the case of the Spanish-Swedish interrelationship there is, however, a curious detail which Moles includes, seemingly of pure habit.

The special historical relationship between these two remote countries relates to Gothic tradition and history. During the latter part of the medieval era, the Christian kingdoms in northern Spain started re-conquering the territories lost to Islamic hegemony. As the term *reconquista* suggests, the Christian kings had a clear idea of re-establishing something noble and of the true faith. Of all the civilisations that the Iberian peninsula hosted, the only Christian heritage was that of the Visigoths, whose time of glory lasted from the 7th century to their defeat in 711 (Vives 1997, 43–46). For later Catholic princes and ultimately during the consolidation of the Spanish national state resulting from the Castile-Aragon union of the Catholic Kings (i. e. Ferdinand and Isabella), the idea of the Gothic tradition as the most noble soon became generally accepted. According to this tradition, the new kings were the legitimate successors of the Gothic monarchy and together with the aristocracy they represented an unbroken chain between an old and a new *regnum Gothorum* (Nordström 1945, 258). The expression "to be of the Goths" came to mean being of noble Christian aristocratic descent, and was used in the

entire Hispanic world. In the American realms it was sometimes used as a pejorative term for the representatives of the Spanish crown, symbolising the centralised peninsular bureaucracy (Corominas 1954, 734–7; Clavería 1960, 1–16). In this respect the Gothic heritage had a positive connotation for those who defended the idea of Spain as a great monarchy and restorer of the Christian Gothic regency.

The Gothic ideas found substance in numerous medieval chronicles from the Christian kingdoms in the northern Iberian Peninsula (Asturias, León, Castile, Aragon, Navarre and Catalonia).[13] The tradition was initiated by Isidorus of Seville's (c. 560-636) *Historia Gothorum*, where Spain is hailed as the most perfect place on earth. This land was conquered by the Goths, which according to Isidorus proved their supremacy as a ruling tribe with respect to the Romans. From then on Spain was promoted as patria Gothorum and "the land of the Goths" (Nordström 1945, 265). The Castilian historians of the 13th century, such as Lucas Tudensis and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, identified the term Goths with the Christians on the Iberian peninsula.

The above-mentioned facts are interesting when we examine what has been called the Gothic renaissance in Sweden (Johannesson 1982, passim). With the publication of Olaus Magnus' history of the Nordic people, *Historia gentibus septentrinalibus*, in 1555, the Gothic theme became a common intellectual commodity among the learned in Sweden. The book was published in Rome where Olaus Magnus stubbornly insisted on acting as Sweden's catholic archbishop in exile. A year earlier his brother Johannes Magnus had published a history of the Visigoth kings from a Swedish perspective, *Historia de omnibus gothorum svenumque regibus*, in which he canonised a Swedish proto-romantic Gothic discourse (Nordström 1975, passim).[14] The chief argument was that in the 6th century work *Getica* (*De origine actibusque getarum*) by the Roman-Gothic historian Jordanes one could find justification for seeing Scandinavia as the "womb of the nations". Jordanes' mention of the island Skandza is the subject for later supporters of this idea:

The same mighty sea has also in its arctic region, that is, in the north, a great island named Scandza, from which my tale (by God's grace) shall take its beginning. For the race whose origin you ask to know burst forth like a swarm of bees from the midst of this island and came into the land of Europe.

(Mierow 1960, 53)

By the 17th century the idea of the Scandinavians and more precisely the Swedes as the original Goths was widely and eagerly accepted. Today Olof Rudbäck's *Atlantica* (1679), is seen as the most prominent example of this Gothicism. However, if we go back to the time of the Thirty Years' War, considerable contributions had been made even before Rudbäck to promote the Gothic idea. In 1604, Johan Skytte published a short work, *Eenoration om the suenskes och göthers första ursprung, och mandom j krijgh*, where he justified the expansive ambitions of Sweden through its presumable status as the womb of nations (Nordin 2000, 216). Thus when Gustav Adolf and his men, as Saavedra Fajardo puts it, "broke through the clouds like rays of lightning" (obviously an intentional or unintentional paraphrasing of Jordanes), they thought of themselves as Goths. At least the king – *Rex gothorum* – nourished his self-image from these traditions of belligerent virtues.

Here lies the paradox which confronted the Spaniards after the death of the Swedish king. When the news reached Madrid, it obviously caused joy and content. The fall of the Protestant king was a triumph for Spain and the rest of the Catholic side. However, many Spaniards instinctively felt sympathy for their Gothic kinsman. Dismissing his compromise with a heretic belief, several contemporary commentators remembered the king with respect, and hailed him as a great commander and a courageous warrior. This has to be seen partly as a normal procedure and model for such epitaphs in the Baroque epoch. On the other hand it's obvious that many, like Fabricio Pons de Castelví, hailed him as a *gothic hero* (*heroe godo*, Pons de Castelví 1968; see also Clavería 1954, 115).

This leads us to consider the Spanish position as quite unique in comparison to the rest of the Catholic League. Although heresy had separated the Swedes from the common faith, blood constituted a link.

The intriguing details about the Gothic aspect are, however, only a part of the ideas concerning the north in the 17th century. The civilisation–barbarianism dichotomy was still quite alive, and as such for example also formed a part in the Gothic admiration; the Goth vitality and robust brutality was sometimes preferred to the Roman legacy, with its civilised and even decadent features. However, this admiration was largely overshadowed by the traditional idea of the northerners as inferior to the civilised southerners. The Spanish historian and ethnologist Julio Caro Baroja states that the Southern European peoples – later called the Latin Europeans – firmly believed in their supremacy in the 16th and 17th centuries (Caro Baroja 1970, 79–80). Consequently the main ideas were still those shaped by Tacitus. In one of the most emblematic works of the Spanish Baroque epoch, *El Criticón* (1651–57, three volumes), the author, Baltasar Gracián, surveyed all peoples known to man. In this *feria de todo el mundo* – exposition of all mankind – Gracián comments on the vices that the gods have inflicted on different peoples. The Germans carry the burden of representing the uncivilised north, and "Gluttony, with her sister Inebriety"[15] are thus associated with them (Gracián 1996, 265). The Swedes are mentioned, and, with the Thirty Years' War fresh in mind, Atrocity (*la Atrocidad*) is their goddess of vice par excellence. In general, these negative features are not especially associated with the North, but rather with all areas outside the Latin civilisation. Thus Barbarism (*la Barbaridad*) is attributed to the Turks and Idleness (*la Pereza*) to the indigenous peoples of America. Similar judgements on the Protestant Northerners are not hard to find in 17th century literature. Swedes, German Protestants and the English are all in the same category. In an extensive recompilation of the Spanish way of thinking in the 17th century, Miguel Herrero García has collected statements by Spanish authors on the Northern European people. Also here suspicions aroused by Protestantism and the excesses in food and drink stand out as the most common themes linked to northernness (Herrero García 1928, passim).

3. From Enlightenment to Romanticism

The Enlightenment generally represents a substantial shift in the focal point of discourse on the North. The fact that the centre of what was considered the European core region had slowly moved towards the north-west (France, the German areas, the Low Countries and England), was to have a great impact on the north-south dichotomy in Europe. This regional shift in the self definition of Europe and Europeanness has ever since constituted perhaps the single most important variable in the universal imagery of North and South. This thinking is well displayed by Thomas Jefferson in 1785, when, in a letter to the Marquis de Chastellux, he lists the differences between the people in the North and in the South (O'Brien 1979, 3). Although he refers to the United States, Jefferson, as a representative of the Protestant, Anglo-Saxon and Northern European sphere, brings up the main content of this discourse:

In the North they are:	In the South they are:
cool	*fiery*
sober	*voluptuary*
laborious	*indolent*
independent	*unsteady*
jealous of their own liberties, and just to those of others	*zealous for their own liberties, but trampling on those of others*

interested	generous
chicaning	candid
superstitious and hypocritical in their religion	without attachment or pretensions to any religion but that of the heart

The discourse presented here is a combination of traditional attributes of northernness, and new interpretations which reflect the earlier mentioned shift in the European core region. Northern Europe changed from an object to a subject and the civilisation-barbarian dichotomy changed considerably from earlier epochs.

At this stage the great impact of the climatological theories presented by Montesquieu cannot be ignored. The idea of connecting climate to a regional character was formulated into a programme that was more imposing than earlier suggestions in the same direction. In *Esprit des Lois* (1748), Montesquieu not only ties the study of history and mankind closer to the natural sciences, but also gives a formula for what is understood by national spirit:

Plusieurs choses gouvernent les hommes: le climat, la Religion, les lois, les maximes du gouvernement, les exemples des choses passées, les mœurs, les manières; d'où il se forme un esprit générale qui en résulte.

(Montesquieu 1748: XIX, ch. 4; see also Blanck 1911, 5)

The importance Montesquieu gave to the causality between climate – customs – character – laws of society, became important to enlightened scientists who displaced themselves from the libraries to examine the world through empirical methods. The Enlightenment and the gradual emergence of romantic ideas created an atmosphere where documents such as Jefferson's were created *en masse*. In this process the North was given a certain role and meaning. Montesquieu writes:

Vous trouverez dans les climats du Nord des peuples qui ont peu de vices, assez de vertus, beaucoup de sincéreté et de franchise. Approchez des pays du Midi, vous croirez vous élogner de la morale même: des passions plus vives multipleront les crimes; chacun cherchera à prendre sur les autres tous les avantages qui peuvent favoriser ces mêmes passions.

(Ibid.: XX, ch. 2)

North as the home of cool, sober, laborious and independent people became a common thought and stereotype. This was in many ways a continuation of earlier northernising discourses. What was new was that the definition of the other now to a considerable extent was directed towards the south. The Greco-Roman civilisation heritage was separated from the present south, which confronted travellers on their grand tour. In Goethe's travel diaries from Italy (1786-88) the locals are often portrayed as poor but joyful people, whose innocence grants their happiness in a warm climate:

Der milde Himmel, die bequeme Nahrung läßt sie leicht leben, alles was nur kann ist unter freiem Himmel. Nachts geht nun das singen und lärmen recht an.

(Goethe 1990, 63)

The former core region had become the home of the voluptuary, generous, candid and emotionally inclined southerners who lived in a semi-periphery where climate had granted them a splendid nature with sunshine and fruit trees. In this process some of the attributes that Tacitus gave to the German tribes slowly but steadily changed sides in the Romania-Germania dichotomy. The Germans were no longer lazy. These new images, or

as Antoni Maczak calls them *Denkschablonen* (Maczak 1982, 317), slowly started to alter the image of the north among people in the south. The Arcadian, idyllic and at the same time uncivilised and brutal north, became the home of rationality and progress.

With this in mind, we approach the complicated theme of the so-called break between Enlightenment and Romanticism. The ideas brought forward at the time of Enlightenment were confronted with new ideas introduced by the Romantic movement, which, however, did not completely take over the scene. Sub-currents of the Enlightenment preserved their vitality throughout the first decades of the 19th century. Yet Romanticism became the major force in the revitalisation of the North and northernness in Europe at this time.

In general the romantic movement was idealistic, preferring sensibility to sense, whereas the Enlightenment had favoured the intellect and mechanistic thinking. Analysis, criticism and linear progress were now substituted with harmony, synthesis and a belief in a spiral, organic development. Aristocratic and elitist cosmopolitism was overshadowed by a new interest in people (peasants, women and children) and the national project. This schematic polarisation is mainly a separation of two sets of ideas, rather than a division of persons into two groups. Actually, romantic and enlightened ideas were often simultaneously present in literary works of this time.

One literary field which experienced great development both in content and numbers was the travel account. Proto-romantic works such as Lawrence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) and Rousseau's novel *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) introduced new ways of perceiving travel, landscapes and nature. The sentimental traveller began to seek images, experiences and feelings that were in concordance with the romantic programme (Knapas 1949, 194; Urry 1990, 1–5 and 66–81). The anti-Enlightenment ideals stressed the savage nature and the irrational domains in the human mind. In this context the North became a symbol of purity and freedom. Features in the northern landscape that matched those held dear by the romantic travellers came to redefine the image of the North. Rousseau's description of the free and anti-civilisational (anti-Paris) Swiss Alp landscape introduced a new aesthetic fashion. Mountains, rapids and other dramatic landscapes became objects for positive feelings. This was different from the Enlightenment ideals, which held that the cultural landscape, where Man had "conquered" and tamed nature, were to be preferred to the somewhat scary and irrational power of the wilderness.

This dualism between enlightened and romantic ideas is present in the way the North was seen by travellers. While the European core region was now situated further up north than in earlier centuries, the role of the wild north was also moved further away from the centre. Scandinavia and other peripheral regions in the north preserved their status as regions of non-civilisation and otherness. The testimonies of this are numerous. Partly due to the romantic fashion, and partly due to the practical obstacles and dangers for tourists in continental Europe at the time of the French revolution and later during the Napoleonic wars, many travellers would steer their course towards the north (Barton 1998,4). Most travellers were from the British Isles or Central Europe, but some voyagers from the Mediterranean sphere have also published travel accounts from that period. Perhaps the most extensive of these accounts is Guiseppe Acerbi's *Travels through Sweden, Finland, and Lapland to the North Cape*. The Lombardian Acerbi travelled in 1798 and 1799, and his travel account was published in London in 1802. The main goal of Acerbi's journey was the North Cape, and his description of the arrival there is an excellent document of a sentimental traveller, or *promeneur solitaire* à la Rousseau:

Here everything is solitary, every thing is steril, every thing sad and despondent (...) The northern sun, creeping at midnight at the distance of five diameters along the horizon, and the imeasurable ocean in apparent contact with the skies, form the grand outlines in the sublime picture presented to the astonished spectator. The incessant cares and pursuits of anxious mortals are recollected as a dream; the various forms and energies of

animated nature are forgotten; the earth is contemplated only in its elements, and as a constituting part of the solar system.

(Acerbi 1802: II, 110)

On this description of the local people, Acerbi fully implemented the idea of the noble savage. When passing through the Swedish countryside on the journey up north, Acerbi's idea of the free, good natured and noble indigenous people prevailed. In Finland, then forming the eastern part of the Swedish realm, Acerbi found the people he had prepared himself to meet:

Having crossed the river at this place, our guides informed us, that we had no farther occasion for them, and that we might pursue our journey without the smallest apprehension. They instantly left us without waiting for any sort of recompence for their services; and when we called them back and offered them money, they seemed astonished that we should think of rewarding them. One of them remained deaf to all our importunities, refused our money with firmness and dignity, and went away without it (…) Such examples, but to[o] rare and too little known in the polished circles of great towns, are not so in those places which are far removed from a metropolis, where morals have become the victim of selfish and corrupt passions.

(Ibid.: I, 235)

The intermingling of previously set images and new observations on local conditions, could also have an opposite effect. Acerbi in fact was quite disappointed when meeting with the Lappish (today called Sami) people. They did not meet his expectations of the ideal noble savage people, and he felt that they were rather untidy, unreliable and only too interested in alcohol. This rude awakening of Acerbi underlines the importance of pre-fabricated images and *Denkschablonen* in the epoch of the sentimental journey, when the romantic image of untouched northern nature and the noble northern people was canonised. The idea of the Northerners (*nordbor*) as the new Hellenic Greeks was strongly promoted for example in Denmark and Finland (Klinge 1994, 102). This happened at a time when the ideas of the French Revolution had created a fashionable admiration for peoples who were free, or wanted to be so. It was both convenient and logical for Europeans of that time to adapt revolutionary and romantic ideas to the north, which originally had been associated with the Central European wilderness.

4. The progressive Arcadia or the inhuman Barbaria?

By the end of the 19th century the differences between north and south grew on the level of images. The industrial revolution and the emergence of a capitalistic world order and *bourgeois* culture were in many ways seen as the triumph of Central and Northern European regions. England ruled the waves and the young Germany led the perfection in science. The Protestant, white male ruled the world in many ways. The development in America was seen by many as proof of this. Many questioned the ability of the Latin race to compete with the Northerners. Bismarck is often quoted for having stated that the Latin race was the feminine race of Europe (Litvak 1980, 26). These ideas were taken into consideration not only in the North, but also in the South. The French defeat in 1871 and the military drawbacks of Italy and Spain in the 1890's, reduced self confidence to minimum in many South-European countries.

The racial theories and the importance given to collective psychology, produced an abundant quantity of literature on this subject. The French sociologist Gustave Vacher de Lapouge introduced a division of racial types in Europe in works such as *Les sélections sociales* (1896) and *L'Aryen, son rôle sociale* (1899). He defined three main racial types: Homo Alpinus, Homo Meridionalis and Homo Europaeus. According to him the Mediterranean type was short, coward, exhibitionistic and Catholic, and apparently not fit

to represent Europeanness. Homo Europaeus, he wrote: "existe partout, depuis les Iles Britanniques et le nord de la France jusqu'a Moscou et au lac Ladoga" (Vacher de Lapouge 1899, 14). This racial type was now to define Europe, and Vacher de Lapouge stated that progress was its most inner need and Protestantism was its religion (Vacher de Lapouge 1896, 15).[16]

One important factor in these decades was the confrontation between the new and the old, between modernity and tradition. For many the North stood for the new while the south embodied traditions. This figure of thought has a strong dimension of stereotype, but nonetheless it would affect the way Northern Europe could be perceived in the South. Generally speaking one can categorise three different sets of images that southerners had of the North. Firstly, there was a clear image of the northerners as barbarian and uncivilised; this image had its roots in classical times and later counter-Reformation rhetoric. Hints of heretic customs, raw manners and loose morals expose this line of thought in the southern European *traditionalist discourse*, which held the Mediterranean culture and society as superior to the rest of the world.

Secondly, there was the opposite set of ideas about the North, a positive and admiring view of these societies. For many who wanted to reform their own society, the North became an example of how things could also be done in the South. They advocated progress and modernity and could be said to represent a *modernist* or *progressive discourse*. Those representing this group were often republican and anti-clerical, and for them the modern northern society was a model.

Thirdly, there was a new variation of the traditionalist discourse which was transformed in accordance with the new modern society. I call this set of ideas the *Pan-Latinist discourse*. As the traditional discourse, it was mainly negative towards the northern societies, but it did not share the same uncritical admiration for its own present society. The Pan-Latinist discourse replaced Luther with the steam machine and the idea of progress. They felt that progress was a new form of barbarianism, which excluded important Mediterranean – or Latin – traditions and features. According to the Pan-Latinist movement such features were aesthetical sensibility and a deeper understanding of cultural traditions. They saw the northerners as simple-minded utilitarians who had created a materialistic world order.

They also urged renewal, but with other pretexts than those held in the North. The Pan-Latinist movement was a child of its time, drawing its motives from linguistic and racial mystification. Concrete events, such as the Franco-Prussian war, the Italian military hardships in Africa and Spain's defeat to the USA in 1898 also fostered the ideas of a Latin regeneration. The formal efforts of organising a Pan-Latinist action, well described by Lily Litvak, plays only a secondary role in this context. The Pan-Latinist ideas also had an impact outside the inner circles of Latin action. Even those who did not feel that they belonged to the Pan-Latinist movement could proclaim ideas that were straight from their programme. In other words, these were common thoughts at that time throughout Latin and Mediterranean Europe.

In my own research I have studied the Spanish travellers in the North during this era. The conclusions and generalisations are drawn in a wider north-south context, and are empirically based on that material. Examples of all three discourses mentioned can be found in the approximately one dozen travel descriptions studied. The travellers' observations mainly concentrate on the following set of themes:

Schooling:

Travellers often commented on the high level of education and the apparent wealth of the educational institutions. They also noted that the Scandinavian rate of illiteracy was much

lower than in England, and even lower than in Germany (Lazúrtegui 1898, 54).[17] It was a source of amazement for many that education was directed to all layers of society. This factor is stressed by Angel Púlido, doctor, politician and propagator of social improvements for the poor in Madrid, while discussing Denmark: "One understands when observing the splendidness of the primary education, so superficially described in this letter, that Denmark can legitimately propagate a noble thesis: that most of the intellectual development in this country can be attributed to the progress of primary education" (Púlido 1911, 79–80). The idea of educating *the people* (*folkskola*), first established in Prussia in the late 18th century and later successfully implemented in other northern countries in the 19th century, was seen as one explanation for the progress in the North. The importance given to education would be "read" by the Spanish travellers in the splendid architecture of schools and university buildings, which were often seen as palaces of education or palaces of science (Navarro 1901, 101–102).

The image of the well-educated northern people was a general concept, which apparently affected the social manners of Spanish diplomats. The author Angel Ganivet, consul in Helsinki in 1896-98, felt that he was confronted with a new situation when trying to win the hearts of the ladies: "Here Don Juan has to transform himself into a schoolmaster in order to win the hearts of the local Doña Inés, because she has stacks of diplomas. Instead of passionate declamations one has to argue like a sophist" (Ganivet 1998a, 103).[18] Such observations of well-educated women were common in the entire Baltic area. Manuél de Mendívil found the archetype of the modern woman in St. Petersburg and the only difference he detected between the Scandinavian and the Slavic woman was that the latter would smoke aromatic cigarettes. Otherwise they were all given the same free position in society (Mendívil 1911, 59). In this context, the northernising discourse encompassed the entire Baltic area, when defining the North through education as a sign of   modernity.

Technological advancement:

Almost all travellers commented on the efficiency and development of the technical infrastructure. Angel Ganivet writes from Finland: "Here the railways are owned by the Finnish state, and despite the sparse population they yield considerable sums of money . The service can almost compete with German trains, which are the most perfect in Europe" (Ganivet 1998a, 90; see also Navarro 1901, 27). The spread of telephones, both private and public, was also noticed by some: "Here you find telephones everywhere, and everybody is using them. There is not a single home that would not have one" (Mendívil 1911, 71; see also Ganivet 1998a, 90; Navarro 1901, 131; Buen 1887, 49). In general, competence and aptness in the field of technology are noted as a common feature for the people of the North. The discourse on progress takes place in the best tradition of the Enlightenment.

Democratic advancement:

By the end of the 19th century, the image of Scandinavia had been transformed in the Spanish mindscape. During the Napoleonic wars the Northerners were still considered as belligerent as anyone else (except for the peaceful and romantic Goethe-like Germans!). A century later this had changed at least for Scandinavia. Swedish neutrality policies apparently also affected the image of the Swedes. Navarro wrote from Stockholm that the Swedes were the most peaceful people on earth and that crime was unheard of. According to him nobody locked their doors or carried weapons, which could not be seen anywhere for sale (Navarro 1901, 142–143). Obviously Navarro applied a well-established Denkschablone of seeing the North as the home of a righteous people. When

they described Scandinavia and Finland, the Spanish travellers applied the idea of the free and thus democratic Northern societies. The image of Russia was different, as for many, Russia represented everything that one could find at home in Spain. These travel accounts are dominated by the image of Russia as a despotic society where the church was largely in control. When the biologist Odón de Buen described the botanical collections in St. Petersburg he qualified his admiration by stating that "without any doubt the Tsar seems to pay very much attention to the protection of plants" (Buen 1887, 96). The understatement here probably implied that the Emperor did not care equally as much about protecting the people. According to Buen, Russia was the most striking example of a society where science was the most modern and the political system the most antiquated.

Social structures:

One of the most striking features brought up by the travellers of the North, was the comparatively active and free role of the women in society. It was not only a question of education, but also of women working outside the home and taking part in public life. The emancipated and educated Nordic woman was, for the Spanish travel authors, a symbol of modernity and social engineering, and as such as much a symbol of progress as the trains and the telephones. The gender issue was, of course, also a dear subject for the authors, who were expected to offer exotic stories from this remote part of Europe. Their observations were mixed with the images made popular by the heroines of Henrik Ibsen's plays. The stereotype of the Nordic woman who breaks the holy institution of family in order to follow her inner feelings is typical of a traditionalist discourse. Those who were not so eager about the new social elements in the modern way of life were quite critical of the female emancipation. Angel Ganivet wrote about the unmarried women:

Some of these solitary women enjoy the free life and deliberately avoid the male yoke. They start by saying bad things about men, and then they buy a bicycle and finally they cut their hair.

(Ganivet 1998a, 104)

Besides *Cartas finlandesas*, Ganivet also wrote a series of essays on Norwegian authors: *Hombres del Norte*. In his essay on Ibsen, he remarks that many Europeans questioned the authenticity of the female characters in the plays of the Norwegian, regarding them as too exaggerated. Ganivet, however, is of the opinion that one has to live in the North in order to understand the behaviour of the Nordic women. In this way the characters created by Ibsen, are in fact too tame, as the reality was, according to Ganivet, even worse (Ganivet 1998b, 250).

In addition to the theme of female emancipation, other features of society were also widely observed by the travellers. One such detail was the absence of beggars in the streets of the Northern capitals. Those seeking to describe the Northern social climate in a positive way would hold this factor as proof of progressive social policies, and were wont to contrast it with the supposed backwardness at home (Púlido 1911, 33). The theme of beggars is connected to an East-West figure of thought. Odón de Buen wrote on his trip from Sweden to Russia that he could notice the change in Finland, where he started to see more military officials, long-bearded peasants and beggars (Buen 1887, 90).

Generally it can be said that many of the writers who had a positive image of the North found the Northern societies in a sort of proto-welfare stage. The doctor Angel Púlido reported eagerly about the Danish hospitals, and in Copenhagen he visited a newly built, and state financed, hospital that he found to be among the most modern that he had ever seen (comparing it with the Virchow hospital in Berlin; Púlido 1911, 36–38). Many

others commented on the active role of the state in Scandinavia, mainly in schooling and health care. Whether this correlates with the reality of the time is difficult to judge here, but at least that was the image given to the Spanish readers a century ago.

Conclusion

The Southern European image of the North has been shaped by different factors through history. Legends have nurtured stereotypes, and different images and patterns of thought have contributed to the perception of the North and the Northerners. Among the different images of the North, two main ideas emerge from classical times to present centuries. Firstly, there is the dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism, which was a fundamental figure of thought in the minds of the Mediterraneans. Secondly, there is the idea of the North as a paradise and home of the virtuous Hyperboreans. It is worth noting that the different images are not only created in the South, but also in the North by the Northerners themselves.

It is of great interest to examine the different discourses on the North over time, and it is especially interesting to identify the different changes in the mental relationship between North and South in European history. While medieval Christian culture aimed at unification, the Reformation brought a new division which strengthened the polar opposites of image formation. It is, however, the Enlightenment which creates the general pattern of a North-South dichotomy for contemporaneous Europe. The fact that the core region moved from the Mediterranean area to the North-West meant that the dichotomy between civilisation and peripheral backwardness was re-defined. Montesquieu's climatological theories, as presented in *L'Esprit des lois* (1748), formulated in many ways the new patronising Northern image on the South, widely reproduced ever since.

When entering the 19th and 20th centuries, the Southern image of the North is a mixture of older images of a barbarian and brutal periphery, and later images of the North as the home of progress and modernity. It is worth noting that in the South European perspective, the North has two dimensions. There is the modern and progressive North which leads the development of all mankind. Gustave Vacher de Lapouge defined the geographical home of this Homo Europaeus as covering an area from the north of France and the British Isles in the west to Moscow in the East and Scandinavia in the North. Then there is the exotic, mystic and *other* North further away from Europe's core region. Vacher de Lapouge had a separate category of *Homo hyperboreus*, locating this race among the Lappish people (Vacher de Lapouge 1899, 15).

Even though racial theories are not *comme-il-faut* among today's scholars and scientists, it is quite probable that they still affect images and stereotypes. Each era has its own scientific paradigms that guide them to explain the mysteries of our environment and social reality. Whether it is a question of Aristotle's system of elements, characters and contrarieties, Montesquieu's climate theories, racial Darwinism, or DNA tests of today, it is obvious that the answers of science are vital in the creation of stereotypes and in the process of legitimising civilisation norms. Older patterns of thought are obviously durables as sub-currents in contemporaneous thinking, and as such they are potential sources of unreflected inspiration in the intuition and invention of people of today.

Notes

1   This article will not deal with the important and interesting theme of east and west as a figure of thought. This is a specifically relevant theme in the question of the Baltic Sea area. However, here the focus is on the north-south   dichotomy.
2   The notion *northernising* is used by Richard N. Current within another area and in a somewhat differnt context, when he explains the ideas and actions taken in the USA to harmonize the South to the customs and values   of   the   northern   states   (Current   1983).

3   The full name was found in some of the manuscripts, but soon the first word in the text *Germania* was to give the name to the work.
4   Tacitus' *Germania* survived through the Medieval times in the *Codex Hersfeldensis* (830-850). The manuscript was brought to Rome in 1455 where it perished. There existed about 30 copies of the *Codex*, which was first printed in Venice in 1473.
5   *Bella Germanie*, a perished work on the Roman-German wars under the reign of Claudius, which supposedly contained about 20 volumes.
6   *Ab   urbe   condita.*
7   "…immensus ultra utque sic dixerim adversus Oceanus raris ab orbe nostro navibus auditur" (Tacitus, ch.2). This and all other quotes of Tacitus are taken from Tuomo Pekkanen's Latin-Finnish edition of *Germania* (Helsinki   1976).
8   "Ne caementorum quidem apud illos aut tegularum usus: materia ad omnia utuntur informi at citra speciem aut   delectationem"   (Tacitus,   ch.   16).
9   "…adversus sitim non aedem temperantia. Si indulseris ebrietati suggerendo quantum concupiscunt, haud minus   facile   vitiis   quam   armis   vincentur"   (ibid.,   ch.   23).
10   "Potui humor ex hordeo aut frumento, in quandam similitudienem vini corruptus…" (ibid.).
11   According to Herodotus the legend is mentioned by Hesiod (8th century BC) and in one of the Theban epics.
12   Translation   by   the   author.
13   *Chronicon Albeldense* (c. 883), *Chrónica de Alfonso III* (c. 880), *Acta translationis corporis S. Isidori* (c. 1063), *Historia Silense* (c. 1115) and *Chronicon Mundi* (1236) are mentioned by Nordström.
14   It is worth noting that the Swedish Gothicist tradition diverges from the assumption of parity of the terms Götar=Goths.
15   "La   Gula,   con   su   hermana   la   Embriaguez   …".
16   It is curious that he includes Moscow in this area, and at the same time links the Homo Europaeus to Protestantism.
17   Lazúrtegui mentions as his source *Hickmanns Geografisch-statishtischer Taschen Atlas*, where the illiteracy rates are given as: 0.6 per cent for Sweden-Norway, 1.4 per cent for Germany, and 14 per cent for England. The same figures from the same source are also given by Felipe Benicio Navarro (Navarro 1901, 77 and 193). Navarro made his trip in 1897, one year before Lazúrtegui.
18   Ganivet's letters from Finland were published in the newspaper *El Defensor de Granada* during 1896–98.

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