PEER REVIEWED ESSAY

Cool Nature: Utopian Landscapes in Sweden 1780–1840

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Abstract: In this essay, an interdisciplinary group of researchers sets out to address the period 1780–1840 in Sweden in a new way, by placing nature at its centre. With the help of ecocritical and transcultural theory, combined with renewed attention to the Swedish fine arts, learned discourses, and practices, we suggest a new approach to these revolutionary decades. The perceived dissonance, the interplay between climatic conditions and cultural template in early modern and modern Sweden, has not been fully addressed in current research, despite the fact that the relationship between humankind and the environment is a central issue in contemporary society and scholarship. Representations of nature situate the nation, they negotiate the relationship between a sensed reality and an ideal, between human and more-than-human beings. We suggest a focus on the unpredictable space created by negotiations of nature in Swedish representations during this crucial period, and, furthermore, on the ways in which this creative space is charged with utopian possibilities in the early Anthropocene. This is the background and the driving force of the planned research project 'Cool Nature: Utopian Landscapes in Sweden 1780–1840'.

Keywords: Nature; Ecocriticism; Ecology; Ecopoetics; Transcultural theory; Enlightenment; Romanticism; Atmosphere; Gender; Utopia.

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Introduction

Are there any lions in Sweden? The largest indigenous feline species is the lynx, and not even the historical distribution of lions during the Neolithic age extended further north than Bulgaria and the southern parts of today's Serbia. Despite this fact, the most prominent symbol of the Swedish realm, the escutcheon of the Swedish kingdom from the sixteenth century onwards, is supported by two lions, and two more lions appear on the shield. Two bronze lions were placed in front of the new Royal Palace in Stockholm in the eighteenth century, imitating the lions of Villa Medici in Rome.[1] In fact, all the monarchies of Europe exhibit a lion in their national coat of arms, flying in the face of the reality that no lions exist in their indigenous fauna. These Swedish lions are an obvious case of cultural transfer, whereby the lion as a symbol of royal power known from Mesopotamia, and of Christ – the Lion of Judah – has been incorporated into the cultural imagination of nations far beyond its former habitat in Palestine, Southwest Asia, Greece, and the Caucasus.

A subarctic and hemiboreal nation such as Sweden, positioned at the furthest extent of the reach of Christianity and the Graeco-Roman legacy, found ways to address and integrate the cultural code of Mediterranean and West Asian nature with the lynxes and elks of its indigenous fauna. Generally, the contrast was ignored and, in eighteenth-century Sweden, a dual focus is evident – in poetry, lovers generally took shelter from the power of the midday sun, while readers of the very same poems basked in the returning sun after a long, cold winter. Kings turned into an Alexander or an Augustus, while fighting in blizzards, and an area just outside Stockholm was renamed Frescati by King Gustav III, as a slightly distorted version of the Italian Frascati. The nightingale was a frequent visitor in poetry and song, but the only migratory nightingale to be heard in early June in southern Sweden is the thrush nightingale. The song of this related species is not nearly as beautiful as that of the common nightingale, but for centuries it has blended into the laments known from ancient Greek poetry, and into the voice of nature and the poetic creations of Western romanticism.

While the cultural conventions of Antiquity and Christianity dominated, often by simply ignoring the climate and geography of Scandinavia, notions of particular values attributed to the North were introduced at specific moments in time and in specific contexts. The 'gothicist' history of Sweden as the former Atlantis

[1] Catrine Arvidsson, 'Lejon och lusthus på Djurgården', *SFV kulturvärden*, 4 (2000), pp. 3–9 [accessed 25 January 2022]. Crossref. As Arvidsson shows, lions were often exchanged as sumptuous gifts between royals in the early modern period, and live lions did arrive in Stockholm.

was launched in the late seventeenth century but, ironically, the goal of this movement was to identify Sweden with the places of Antiquity. The pillars of Hercules were, simply, moved to the north. Far from desiring to establish an alternative to the classical legacy, the polymath of seventeenth-century Uppsala, Olof Rudbeck, tried to rewrite the map, and transform the North into the centre and cradle of Western culture.

In the eighteenth century, climate theory introduced another way of handling the differences between the southern and northern parts of Europe.[2] The French philosopher Montesquieu sought to establish a firm link between climate and society. He described people from colder regions as brave, strong, trustworthy, and honest. These features have been used as cultural templates in politics as well as in the arts, and offered an alternative to the dominance of Mediterranean culture in Scandinavia, and to the suppression of the hemiboreal climatic conditions of Sweden.

Many examples of both the dual vision of the Swedish landscape during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and of the negotiation of a broad Western culture and a specific Nordic identity, could be cited. What is suggested by the examples mentioned above is that the representation of nature is both essential and perplexing – these representations situate the nation, they negotiate the relationship between a sensed reality and an ideal, between humans and more-than-human beings (to use the current ecocritical term).[3] This perceived dissonance, or rather the interplay between climatic conditions and cultural template in early modern and modern Sweden, has not been fully addressed in current research, despite the fact that the relationship between humankind and the environment is a central issue in contemporary society and scholarship. This is the background and the driving force of the planned project 'Cool Nature: Utopian Landscapes in Sweden 1780–1840'.

Mapping Swedish Nature

In this essay, our aim as co-authors is to introduce a new research idea about the Cool Nature of Sweden during the revolutionary period around 1800. As we bear the incongruence between cultural template and climatic conditions in mind,

[2] Carl Frängsmyr, *Klimat och karaktär: naturen och människan i sent svenskt 1700-tal* (Diss. Uppsala; Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 2000).

[3] The term 'more-than-human' designating non-human animals, plants, and so forth, is usually traced back to David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (New York: Pantheon, 1996) and has become a standard expression in ecocritical research.

questions inevitably arise. While we embrace an ecocritical approach that focuses on the essential interrelation and dynamics of 'culture' and 'nature', we suggest a distinction between these terms for heuristic purposes. Adopting this methodological perspective would allow us to probe into the following questions: How do the multiple and imaginary versions of Swedish nature interact, compete, or interfere with each other in cultural representations and practice at the beginning of the Anthropocene? What kind of issues are approached in representations of nature in Sweden, during the revolutionary period 1780–1840? What kinds of utopian possibilities are articulated with the help of representations of nature, made possible by the creative space opened up by the interrelation between cultural template and natural conditions in Sweden?

The period relevant to this suggested inquiry, 1780 to 1840, encompasses the romantic period as it is defined in English literary history, 1780–1830, a period that also cuts through the so-called *Sattelzeit*, a designation coined by Reinhard Koselleck, which includes the entire century between 1750 and 1850. We suggest studying a time period beginning with the 1780s, designated as a sentimental renewal of literature, and also an era of aesthetic, political, and cultural ambitions during the reign of King Gustav III. The choice of ending with the 1840s, a period during which a new royal dynasty was established with King Karl XIV Johan's reign (1818–44), alongside the expansion of a bourgeois cultural sphere, relies on a similar consideration of cultural and political aspects.

By choosing this timeframe, we wish to challenge certain assumptions about the differences between the late eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. With the help of ecocritical and transcultural theory, combined with renewed attention to the Swedish fine arts, learned discourses, and practices, we would like to approach the period from new perspectives. The predominant historiography is well known, and can be summarized as the process of a mechanistic, Enlightenment natural world being replaced by a Romantic celebration of wilderness, which embraces the creative force of nature. Furthermore, the progression from a perceived contrast between nature and representation of the late eighteenth century to the unconditional acclaiming of 'real' Nordic nature in the early nineteenth century, seems to be yet another simplification. Literature will serve as an example of the complex relationship between representations of humans and nature throughout the period: lilies and other indicators of the established cultural conventions of Western nature tended to turn up in the 'new' Romantic poetry of the nineteenth century, while elks certainly trespassed on pastoral scenes during the eighteenth century. In the context of the suggested framework, we intend to focus on the unpredictable space created by this perceived need to negotiate nature in Sweden during the entire period, and, furthermore, on the

ways in which representations of nature function as a creative space with utopian possibilities.

Research about Scandinavian representations of nature is a case of late bloomers, and our survey of the field functions as an encouragement to study representations of Swedish nature of the past. It is not only that ecocritical studies written in English constitute the norm, a norm that extends beyond the position of English as the *lingua franca* of twenty-first-century scholarship. The privileged position of the nature writing of Henry David Thoreau or the poetry of William Wordsworth within this field of study is well known. They carry with them a view of historical epochs that accords with the history of British and American culture, and tends to privilege the temperate zone, which is the climate and form of nature that dominate in Wordsworth's England and the north-eastern areas of the USA where Thoreau's Walden is situated. From this perspective, Sweden is a subarctic outlier. Additionally, Scandinavian research is often a receiver of Anglo-Saxon or European continental theory, which means that theoretical scholarship is grafted onto a Northern subject matter. As a receiver of these Western and, to some extent, continental European modes of studying nature, and in relation to the dominant hemiboreal climate, a late blooming is to be expected, as a function of both the climate zone and the workings of scholarly trends dominated by the anglophone world.

By incorporating Swedish source material, we will be able to not just extend the empirical basis of current claims, but perhaps even challenge them too. Furthermore, the cross-fertilization of theory and empirical evidence may well lead to some adjustments to the theoretical assumptions of current ecocritical theory, as well as contributing to the vast field of Classical reception studies. The hemiboreal periphery both reads and writes back, even as a notorious latecomer.

While ecocriticism in a broad sense has been part of the theoretical landscape of the humanities for some time, the specific Nordic perspective is of a more recent date, as is the concern with the period around 1800. In 2020, the Norwegian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies held a conference with the theme 'Nature and the Natural in the Eighteenth Century', which highlighted disasters such as the volcanic eruptions of Laki, as well as the Linnaean ordering of nature. The conference also shed light on the tensions within Enlightened views on global humankind and the responsible governance of an increasingly colonial world, based on notions of 'noble savages' from the Arctic region.[4] Featuring the environmental historian Dominik Collet, and Linda Andersson Burnett from the history of ideas

[4] For documentation of the conference, see Per Pippin Aspaas et al. (eds.), *Naturen og det naturlige på 1700-tallet*, Septentrio Conference Series, No. 1 (2021). Crossref

as keynote speakers, the conference continued the interdisciplinary work that is common in eighteenth-century studies, this time with a specific focus on nature.

Despite the above-mentioned initiative, the publications within this field of Nordic studies of nature around 1800 are dispersed across various journals and anthologies.[5] In 2018, the network ENSCAN published *Nordic Narratives of Nature and the Environment: Ecocritical Approaches to Northern European Literatures and Cultures*, a volume with the purpose of introducing studies about the Northern region to a global environmental scholarly community.[6] The book is introduced as 'the first English language anthology that presents ecocritical research on northern European literatures and cultures', and the editors suggest that 'there is a need for culture-related and language-related diversification and for comparative approaches within the environmental humanities in general and in ecocriticism in particular'.[7] However, the focus is on modern literature and culture, and the eighteenth century is only mentioned in passing.[8] The brief introduction to the nineteenth century touches on keywords such as industrialization, national romanticism, and the modernization of agriculture.[9] It is clear that this kind of sketchy outline does not alter mainstream views of history in any fundamental sense, although it may add a green border to the discussion.

A turn to neighbouring periods of time disturbs the general view that it was during the late eighteenth century that English literature began to address the consequences of the Anthropocene. As Ken Hiltner argues in *What Else is Pastoral? Renaissance Literature and the Environment*, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature is in fact a kind of nature writing. While avoiding direct mimesis, the poems in question deployed what Hiltner labels 'a gestural strategy'. This gestural approach to nature was a direct response to very apparent environmental crises, such as pollution or changes in land management.[10] With Hiltner's recogni-

5 See for example *Exploring NORDIC COOL in Literary History*, ed. by Gunilla Hermansson and Jens Lohfert Jørgensen (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2020); *Samlaren: Tidskrift för svensk och annan nordisk litteratur*, 141 (2020). https://svelitt.se/samlaren/2020.

6 *Nordic Narratives of Nature and the Environment: Ecocritical Approaches to Northern European Literatures and Cultures*, ed. by Reinhard Hennig, Anna-Karin Jonasson, and Peter Degerman (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020). On ENSCAN, see https://enscan.net/ [accessed 25 January 2022].

7 Reinhard Hennig, Anna-Karin Jonasson, and Peter Degerman, 'Introduction', in *Nordic Narratives*, ed. by Hennig, Jonasson, and Degerman, pp. 1–18 (p. 3), with reference to Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2012).

8 Hennig, Jonasson, and Degerman, p. 6.

9 Hennig, Jonasson, and Degerman, pp. 6–7.

10 Ken Hiltner, *What Else is Pastoral? Renaissance Literature and the Environment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 5.

tion of non-mimetic representations as contributions to nature writing, the period studied in this volume can be read anew, but with a specific focus on the conditions in Sweden.

The scholarly field is currently moving in both time and space, as well as across disciplines. Apart from extending the timeframe beyond Romanticism, ecocritical and ecological studies expand the geographical focus from the Western world to encompass the entire globe.[11] This fact contributes to our conviction that it is relevant to incorporate a Swedish perspective into this global research area. Since we wish to contribute to a transcultural discourse, there is every reason to turn to research in Swedish, in order to take part in the dialogue. In fact, contributions from periods before the invention of 'ecocriticism' are of great value. As Kate Rigby has rightly pointed out, German romantic philosophy is essential for any study of the period, including the study of Swedish sources. In fact, Swedish–French, Swedish–German, and Swedish–British exchanges have been the focus for several major studies. Scholars working in the early twentieth century, such as Martin Lamm and Anton Blanck, established connections with European thinkers such as Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Herder, marking the inclusion of French, British, and German interlocutors in the Swedish debate about nature.[12] However, our aim is to exchange their traditional view of a one-way 'influence' for a more dynamic concept of interrelatedness and cultural transfer.

A Cool Utopia

In order to approach complex questions about nature and representation, a multidisciplinary approach is essential. The research field we are trying to demarcate is based on collaboration between the disciplines we represent: the history of ideas, musicology, literature, art history, and theatre studies. In the following, we offer examples of possible empirical studies within these fields, relating to a shared theorical framework.

We suggest that the discourse of nature is a prominent site for articulating utopian thought, and for suggesting alternative worldviews, be it the concerns of

[11] *Early Modern Écologies: Beyond English Ecocriticism*, ed. by Pauline Goul and Phillip John Usher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020); *Ecocriticism, Ecology, and the Cultures of Antiquity*, ed. by Christopher Schliephake (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017); *Ecocriticism of the Global South*, ed. by Scott Slovic, Swarnalatha Rangarajan, and Vidya Sarveswaran (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015).

[12] Anton Blanck, *Den nordiska renässansen i sjuttonhundratalets litteratur: En undersökning av den 'götiska' poesins allmänna och inhemska förutsättningar* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1911); Martin Lamm, *Upplysningstidens romantik: Den mystiskt sentimentala strömningen i svensk litteratur*, 2 vols (Stockhom: Geber, 1918–1920).

everyday life or questions of eternity. The starting point is to address the historical concept of nature anew, informed by current theory. For these reasons, it is essential to bring together a richness of sources that invite conclusions on a scale that transcends the specific examples. The songs, poems, operas, dramas, or paintings we wish to study are not simply discussed in aesthetic terms, as fine art, an area that was gaining autonomy during this specific historical era. In a similar vein, the diaries, theological or medical treatises, travel reports, and political texts are not separated from the fine arts. On the contrary, our aim is to emphasize nature as a focal point for the period's thought and practice. We suggest that the very combination of a broad array of sources provides the necessary basis for studying the relevance of the hybrid space of Swedish nature during the decades immediately before and after 1800.

More specifically, we argue that representations of nature in Sweden carry a utopian potential. This is certainly true in the case of the mineral springs as sites, practice, and experience.[13] The Swedish spa set in the countryside was presented as a separate world, a microcosm with utopian qualities, intended to create better conditions for people to regain their health and well-being. The rural setting and the landscapes surrounding the spas were central to the idea of nature as a healing force, while at times in need of improvement according to the ideals of the English garden. In medical literature, as well as in fiction and art, the spa was presented as a paradise on earth, or a happy Arcadia, where health was recovered by liberating people from the stressful and morally corrupting impact of the city.

The spa was also presented as a utopian society that allowed unconventional interactions between the sexes and between different social classes. Spa guests could experiment with ideas connected to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, not only involving notions of nature, reason, utility, health, happiness, science, medicine, sensibility, and the five senses, but also ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity – even the rights of women – at least for a couple of weeks during the short Swedish summer. This utopian space was also represented on the theatre stage, as in August von Kotzebue's sentimental pieces and in the operas of the Karl Johan age composed by Édouard Du Puy.[14] Kotzebue was a prolific German playwright, and the sheer number of plays translated, adapted, and performed on Swedish theatre stages calls for a closer study of his work, within the Swedish con-

[13] Swedish spa culture is studied by Elisabeth Mansén, Professor of History of Ideas, Stockholm University.

[14] The Swedish translations and adaptations of Kotzebue's drama are studied by Meike Wagner, Professor of Theatre Studies, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich. The operas by Édouard du Puy are studied by Johanna Ethnersson Pontara, Associate Professor of Musicology, Stockholm University.

text.[15] His concepts of city and countryside as morally coded spaces were always inscribed within an interrogation of concepts linked to the Enlightenment and citizenship, therefore providing mental space for dramatic utopias. The dichotomy between country and city life was reinforced during this period by urbanization and industrialization, which created a complex pattern to be studied in many of the sources from the period.

The salon setting of the early nineteenth century provided yet another kind of secluded space, albeit staging a very different world order. In this bourgeois, urban space of the salon, the expressiveness of song contributed to exploring a new gender contract, forged by means of national concerns, and by articulating a specific atmosphere of nature.[16] Female poets expressed utopian alternatives to their restricted lives by means of references to nature. In the songs of Swedish composers and poets – male as well as female – landscape, nature, and even flowers became expressive in the music, giving agency to that which had only been depicted in earlier vocal music.[17] Furthermore, aesthetic theory and practice became a site for an intense debate about nature, involving key concepts such as the sublime and the picturesque. In current research, the gendered aspects of the sublime have been highlighted, and the concept is certainly relevant to the national aspirations of the European nations around 1800.

The salon, together with institutions such as the Swedish Academy, The Royal Academy of Art, or the Royal Opera, offer abundant examples of how landscapes and more-than-human creatures become central means for articulating, negotiating, and discovering ways of relating human experience to the environment. In a very literal sense, the pictorial representations of Swedish nature at the time coincided with attempts to evoke nature as a symbol of a harmonious society or as an instrument to forge a new national sense of community.[18] Celebrating the new king Karl XIV Johan, the opera *Balder* (Du Puy, 1818) staged representations of the various climate zones, presenting a new national unity based on chosen aspects of

[15] Svenskt Översättarlexikon lists more than 40 translations of Kotzebue's plays. See also Marie-Christine Skuncke, *Sweden and European Drama 1772–1796: A Study of Translations and Adaptations*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Historia litterarum, 10 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1981), pp. 42–43, 70–72.

[16] Elisabeth Mansén, *Konsten att förgylla vardagen: Thekla Knös och romantikens Uppsala* (Nora: Nya Doxa, 1993).

[17] The Swedish songs are studied by Erik Wallrup, Associate Professor of Musicology, Södertörn University. Poetry is studied by Anna Albrektson (FKA Cullhed), Professor of Literature, Stockholm University, and Vera Sundin, PhD candidate in Literature, Stockholm University, as a postdoctoral project.

[18] Paintings, prints, and illustrated travel reports are studied by Mikael Ahlund, Director of Gustavianum, Uppsala University Museum, and Associate Professor at the Department of Art History, Uppsala University.

Swedish nature and folklore. This national unity was further defined in gendered terms, as an emotional masculinity based on a Northern nature, but blending in impulses from southern Europe. All of these examples, from courtly to bourgeois settings, contribute to positioning nature as the central space for exploring ways of sensing the world, as a mineral spring, as an aesthetic experience, as a means for forging the nation, or – indeed – as a parallel to the creative process.[19] Nature was the preferred site for articulating improved possible worlds and societies.

With this emphasis on nature, we invite discussion about the 'real' world of nature, a mimetic aspect central to traditional ecocriticism. It is not difficult to find examples of natural disasters during the period. For example, the volcanic eruption of Laki in Iceland in 1783–84 led to crop failures, causing famine, and it also became a theme for poets in Sweden. Bengt Lidner wrote a poem commemorating the year 1783, vividly describing hungry children and desperate mothers failing to save their loved ones.[20] In this long poem, the facts of the environment are combined with a strongly sentimental aesthetics, creating a tear-jerking picture of the conditions in rural Sweden. In relation to nature, it becomes apparent that 'utopia' is twinned with 'dystopia', even during the early Anthropocene. Natural surroundings, climatic conditions, the local environment, the changing of the seasons, and everyday weather remain fundamental contexts for this project. However, taking inspiration from ecocritical theory, the binary separation between nature and cultural representation is brought into question. Our aim is not to dissolve the boundary completely, but to investigate how the relation is produced and articulated within the sources. While we inevitably foreground negotiations of nature, real and imaginary, the focus remains on representations of nature, of a creative space of 'worlding'.

To sum up the main focus of this proposed research area, we suggest that the representation of nature in Sweden is crucial to the idea of the nation, to definitions of femininity and masculinity, to subjectivity, to new forms of art and creativity, to religious belief, to science and medicine, and not least to the sensory existence of humankind in a hemiboreal climate zone. We further argue that the interrelation between the template of nature in Western culture, a Mediterranean *locus amoenus*, and the partly subarctic, partly more temperate climate of the Swedish realm during the period in question needs further study. From current research about European culture, it is evident that invocations of nature and pastoral settings often encapsulate a longing for a golden age of the past. Indeed,

[19] Ideas of national character and masculinity will be studied by Sara Ekström, PhD candidate in History of Ideas, Stockholm University, in a postdoctoral project.

[20] Bengt Lidner, *Året M.DCC.LXXXIII. Skaldstycke* (Stockholm: Kongl. Tryckeriet, 1784) [accessed 25 January 2022]. Crossref

at times, references to a golden age function as the starting point for discussions about a better future. The project Cool Nature suggests that we focus on this end of the spectrum, the utopian qualities of representations and articulations of nature, because nature is situated as a central arena of change and utopian ambition in Sweden during the period 1780–1840. However, this striving for change entails a complex negotiation of real and imagined nature – at times even casting a dystopian shadow – creating a hybrid world that is not fully contained within the simple labels of Enlightenment or Romanticism.

The modern period is often described as a progression towards the increasing mastery of nature. Nevertheless, there are many examples of ruptures, ambiguities, and detours in this development, not least in the arts. The environmental movement of today has its origins in the resistance to urbanization and industrialization rooted in the same moment as when these phenomena first appeared. We propose studies of this theme in order not only to contribute to the historiography of the relation between humans and nature, city and countryside, but also to investigate models of the past that are relevant to today's world. The concept of 'ecopoetics', as explained by Kate Rigby, entails an ecological perspective on poetics, on reading, and on writing. Rigby writes:

> Pointing beyond itself by foregrounding its own status as textual artifact, and marking its own limitations as such, poetic writing can nonetheless indicate why such experience, knowledge, and action in support of the flourishing of more-than-human life might be called for.[21]

As this research area extends beyond writing, we would like to apply Rigby's suggestion to other kinds of sensory sources. Accordingly, our aim is to pose questions about models from the past that can contribute to an enriched and more sustainable relationship with the surrounding world, now and in the future.

A Theoretical Landscape: Cultural Transfer

The lion on the Swedish coat of arms mentioned earlier signals our desire to highlight the practice of cultural transfer. The concept of cultural transfer has been articulated particularly clearly in studies of German–French encounters, while at the same time incorporating insights from postcolonial theory. Alessa Johns, in her study on 'Bluestocking' feminism and German–English relations, defines it as follows:

[21] Kate Rigby, 'Ecopoetics', in *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, ed. by Joni Adamson, William A. Gleason, and David N. Pellow (New York: New York University Press, 2016), pp. 79–81.

> Cultural transfer, drawing on notions from postcolonial theory, emphasizes complex processes and hybridity and modifies the idea of simple influence or reception: that is, the pat, unidirectional impact of one nation, perceived as impermeably bounded and inhabited by a monolithic population imbued with a homogeneous national identity, on another entity equally uniform.[22]

This perspective moves beyond the comparison of nation states, and beyond the categories of 'origins' and 'influence'. As stated in a recent edited volume, *Cultural Transfer Reconsidered* (2021), the perspective has developed further during the last few decades. Firstly, it has been used beyond Europe, and secondly, it has spread from literary studies and history to a vast array of other disciplines within the humanities: 'art history, musicology, the history of sciences, book history, media studies, gender studies, ethnology/anthropology, cultural studies and translation studies'.[23] Perhaps more importantly, a conceptual rethinking has also taken place, giving greater emphasis to aspects of hybridity in the reception process. This tendency towards the dissolution of central categories has also affected the notion of spaces, such as the nation, and encouraged a definition of cultural areas as 'dynamic and interrelated systems', with a similar dissolution of the relationship between 'space' and 'culture'.[24] These tendencies are evident in Johns' application of the perspective.

The Swedish nation saw immense geographical and cultural changes during the period in question. After the wars of 1808–09, the eastern part of the realm, Finland with Åland, became subject to Russian rule. Swedish legislation and the Swedish language remained part of Finland while it was a Grand Duchy within Russia, and some of the poets included in this project wrote nature poetry about Finland in Swedish. In 1814, Sweden and Norway became united under the Swedish monarch, a union that lasted until 1905. As a consequence, the longstanding transfer relations between the Mediterranean and North-Western European space, including Sweden, were also transformed within this new geography – imaginary as well as real – of the nation. Political upheavals call for renewed discussion about the position of nature as part of the cultural transfer process.

[22] Alessa Johns, *Bluestocking Feminism and British–German Cultural Transfer, 1750–1837* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), p. 1.

[23] Steen Bille Jørgensen and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 'Introduction: Reframing the Cultural Transfer Approach', in *Cultural Transfer Reconsidered: Transnational Perspectives, Translation Processes, Scandinavian and Postcolonial Challenges*, ed. by Steen Bille Jørgensen and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Leiden: Brill, 2021), Approaches to Translation Studies, 47, pp. 1–20 (p. 5). Crossref

[24] Bille Jørgensen and Lüsebrink, pp. 6–7.

Transfer processes are well known within several scholarly areas, for example the iterations of professional casts of singers, actors, composers, musicians, painters, and so forth, who toured the European courts and cities during the period.[25] Likewise, human-made artefacts, inanimate natural objects, plants, and seeds crossed borders and became part of the Swedish realm. Many prominent individuals in Sweden were members of this migrating group of specialists, such as the composer Joseph Martin Kraus, born in Germany, and the Swiss-French violinist, singer, and composer Édouard Du Puy.

Cultural transfer processes were not merely a question of a migrating cultural cast. For example, Kraus' presence in Sweden illustrates the complexity of the exchange. Since the song type labelled romans emerged in Sweden after Kraus' long European journey of 1782–86, during which he became acquainted with this new form of song writing in Germany, we find this to be an exemplary case of cultural transfer leading to a specific form of poems set to music. It is related to the German tradition but with its own character, and was transmitted back to the German sphere thanks to close personal contacts, especially those between Lindblad and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.[26] This Swedish genre, with its ramifications, forms a particularly suitable area for further study, and similar processes are evident in opera, poetry, and theatre. For example, the French and Italian operatic traditions were reshaped in Sweden during the first decades of the nineteenth century and gave rise to staged productions for which Du Puy, for example, gained great influence and popularity.[27] Furthermore, Sweden experienced 'Kotzebue fever' between the 1790s and the 1830s, with a flood of translations, localizations, and performances.[28] In fact, we suggest that even national identity is subject to cultural transfer.

Swedish spa culture serves as yet another example of the process of cultural transfer, highlighting both the interrelatedness of European spaces, and the local

[25] See Sabrina Norlander's project 'Art and Science: Cultural Transfer in the Age of Liberty', funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond [accessed 25 January 2022]. Crossref

[26] Michael Werner and Bénédict Zimmermann, 'Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung: Der Ansatz der Histoire croisée und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 4 (2002), 607–36; Silke Neunsinger, 'Cross-over!: Om komparationer, transferanalyser, *histoire croisée* och den metodologiska nationalismens problem', *Historisk tidskrift*, 1 (2010), 3–24; Andreas Åkerlund, 'Kulturtransfer och kulturpolitik: Inledande kommentarer kring två begrepp', in *Kulturtransfer och kulturpolitik: Sverige och Tyskland under det tjugonde århundratet*, ed. Andreas Åkerlund (Uppsala: Historiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet, 2011), pp. 5–16; Eva Öhrström, *Adolf Fredrik Lindblad: En tonsättare och hans vänner* (Skellefteå: Norma, 2016).

[27] Johanna Ethnersson Pontara (2021), 'Svensk opera som "cultural exchange"' Unpublished paper delivered at 'Mötesplats Opera 2021' Opera symposium in connection with the Royal Academy of Music's 250th anniversary, Royal College of Music, Stockholm (October 29).

[28] Skuncke, p. 42.

appropriation of shared scientific and aesthetic ideals. Although the tradition was imported from Britain and Continental Europe, Swedish spas developed a specific national and local character, inspired by scientists such as the chemist Urban Hiärne and the botanist and physician Carl Linnaeus. This character favoured rural locations and linking itself closely to nature. The most important Swedish spas consisted of isolated health resorts in the countryside, where they formed a society with specific rules and detailed regulations, offering special sensory experiences.

The well-known poems about migratory birds by the canonical authors Erik Johan Stagnelius (1812), Esaias Tegnér (1821), and Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1828–29) offer further opportunities to study cultural hybridity as a result of transfer processes. Far from removing meridional elements, these poets tended to create new spaces and interrelations with more-than-human beings – the birds as moving agents soaring across the world, from tropical regions to the far North. These spaces tended to incorporate both local and otherworldly creatures, and a mixture of landscapes. From a transcultural point of view, adapting the conventions of European Romanticism to a Northern space can be compared to the negotiations of classical *topoi* in Sweden. This new history of Swedish poetry would position both classicism and nationalism within a fundamentally hybrid landscape, visited by both Zephyrus and Boreas.

These transcultural processes and similar hybrid landscapes are also prominent in the pictorial representations of Nordic nature in landscape paintings, engravings, and not least in the illustrated travel descriptions of the period. Various approaches and strategies were used to refine the varied Northern scenery by applying a 'Southern filter' when observing, describing, and depicting the Swedish landscape. In the images and published letters of the artist and travel writer Jonas Carl Linnerhielm, the rustic North was frequently transformed into an archaic setting, with clear references to Claude Lorraine and the tradition of ideal Italianate landscapes. At the same time, however, Linnerhielm was anxious to allow this scenery to retain its typical Swedish features with its spruces, birches, and characteristic farm buildings.[29]

At the level of specific representations and practices, the elements drawn from a shared European learned culture, based on their common past rooted in the Graeco-Roman world, were highly visible. Indigenous and more temperate natures were positioned side by side in both the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, and this fact draws renewed attention to the cultural transfer process as a defining element during the entire period in question. In fact, the national turn in the arts during

[29] Mikael Ahlund, '"En urbild för sjelfve Claude-Lorrains målning". Reseskildringar, bildkonst och naturidyller i 1700-talets Sverige', in *Från Arkadien till Arktis. Diktad natur och idyll*, ed. by Claes Ahlund, Litteraturvetenskapliga meddelanden från Åbo Akademi, 40 (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 2012), pp. 20–45.

the first decades of the nineteenth century relied heavily on German philosophical ideals, localized within the Swedish realm. It is these complex iterations, these very 'dynamic and interrelated systems', that require further study, in order to map the negotiations that brought forth these multiple representations of Swedish natures.

A Theoretical Landscape: Ecocriticism and Gender

Within the Environmental Humanities, certain theoretical directions have developed rapidly since the 1990s. Ecocriticism, especially as applied in the study of literature, is both a vast scholarly field and described as lacking strict borders. During the last few decades, a large number of introductions have been published in English.[30] They all share a concern with referentiality, mimesis, and the differentiation between 'Nature' (as a symbolic and 'otherworldly' concept) and 'nature' (as encompassing beings such as plants and non-human animals), and – as Laurence Coupe concludes – the main point is the insistence 'that the non-human world matters', as a challenge to 'culturalism'.[31]

With Timothy Morton's 'dark ecology', ecocriticism takes a step beyond this foregrounding of nature. In *Ecology without Nature*, he moves beyond notions of 'nature', and highlights the entanglement of all creatures in a vast 'mesh' as the basis for ecological thought. We are all 'strange strangers' in relation to each other, and Morton further dissolves the distinction between human and more-than-human creatures. His perspective on the 'interconnectedness' of nature, humans, objects, and more-than-human creatures provides a radical opportunity to analyse utopian representations of nature in Sweden during the period 1780–1840.[32]

While the connection between literature and ecocriticism has now been firmly established, new approaches in areas such as musicology are continuously being developed. During the last fifteen years, the English musicologist Daniel Grimley has published a series of works on music and landscape, especially concerning

[30] *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press,1996); *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, ed. by Laurence Coupe (New York: Routledge, 2000); *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, ed. by Greg Garrard (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment*, ed. by Louise Westling (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); *Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader*, ed. by Ken Hiltner (London: Routledge, 2015).

[31] Laurence Coupe, 'General Introduction', in *The Green Studies Reader*, ed. by Coupe, pp. 1–8 (p. 4).

[32] Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

English and Scandinavian composers.[33] Since the relationship between culture, nature, and music/sound is a starting point, we study Swedish song and opera with help from the concept of 'ecocritical musicology'.[34] Borrowing the terminology from Aaron S. Allen, we can see this approach to music as 'poetic', highlighting 'ideas that show music as reflective of nature, place influencing music, and composers engaging the pastoral'.[35] Allen has pointed out that opera is a subject that is rarely invoked 'in relation to ideas about nature'.[36] One recent endeavour, however, is Emanuele Senici's study of the connection between landscape and gender in Italian opera, as made through the figure of the Alpine virgin.[37] Discussing Italian operas from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Senici shows that the Alpine landscape was a means by which to associate these operas' female protagonists with 'innocence', thus reinforcing their virginity.

The prolific Kotzebue wrote more than 280 plays, and about a third of them were adapted, translated, and performed in Sweden. He is exemplary as a historical case study of the dichotomy that was established between the city and the country, a stock binary of ecocriticism since Raymond Williams' classic outline.[38] Kotzebue's 'serial utopianism' appeared specifically in works proposing an opposition between the urban environment and pastoral settings. The former was deemed to provide good education and developed cultural activities, while prone to degeneration and declining morals, while the latter was considered to offer beneficial conditions for the blooming of true authentic values and healthy morals, yet always at risk of leading to conservativism and traditionalism, thus blocking the beneficial influence of rational thinking and good-hearted common sense. Kotzebue's protagonists move between worlds – Europe vs. India, young vs. old, urban vs. countrymen – negotiating changing codes and cultures as they go. The dramatic conflicts stem from these negotiations, which parade a whole array of Enlightenment concepts before the eyes of the reader and spectator. We would like to focus on the dramatic negotiations that are based on the contrast between

[33] Daniel Grimley, *Grieg: Music, Landscape and Norwegian Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006); Daniel Grimley, *Delius and the Sound of Place* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). Crossref; Annika Lindskog, 'Natures and Cultures: The Landscape in Peterson-Berger's "Symphonica Lapponica"', *STM-Online*, 14 (2011) [accessed 6 May 2022].

[34] Aaron S. Allen, 'Ecomusicology from Poetic to Practical', in *Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology*, ed. by Hubert Zapf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 644–63. Crossref

[35] Allen, p. 648.

[36] Aaron S. Allen and Devin Dawe, *Current Directions in Ecomusicology: Music, Culture, Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 274.

[37] Emanuele Senici, *Landscape and Gender in Italian Opera: The Alpine Virgin from Bellini to Puccini* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[38] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973).

city and countryside, while considering the idea that Kotzebue plays on imaginary geographies rather than relying on real geographical settings.

Our study of nature poetry focuses on ecopoetic aspects and the intertwining of conventional and existing landscapes. This new reading of the poems emphasizes the complexity of the views of nature that already existed in the eighteenth-century examples, in relation to the Romantic *natura naturans*, the notion of a creative nature that dissolves the boundaries between the subject and nature. Similar observations can be made about the growing wealth of images of landscape and nature that emerged on the expanding Swedish art market around 1800. In paintings, engravings, and illustrated travel descriptions, nature was used simultaneously throughout the period for a variety of different purposes – to comment on economic debates, to make social and political statements, and to express an emotional appreciation of the Nordic wilderness.

To return to theory, the 'Anglo-American dominance' in ecocritical theory, represented by Morton and others, is now being challenged, step by step. In fact, Rigby's insights from a geographical periphery, in her case Australia, combined with her background in German literature of the nineteenth century, and her current position as a leading scholar of ecopoetics in the English-speaking world, remain exemplary. Within our project, the study of sources from a language area separated from the rest of the English-speaking world is also a theoretical statement. Currently, challenges to the dominance of English are developing alongside new focal points for ecocriticism, notably as a turn to cultural ecology. Hubert Zapf's work, and especially the edited volume *Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology*, offers some decisive reorientations. He describes his view of ecology as 'discursive realism', and concludes:

> For ecocritical literary studies this means thinking natural and cultural ecologies together without reducing them to each other, to take both their difference and their interrelatedness into account as necessary conditions of their theoretical and textual explorations.[39]

To Zapf, this ecological perspective entails a critique of Morton's doing 'away with the concept of nature altogether'. This move is seen as 'unhelpful':

> This basic premise of a vital interrelatedness yet evolutionary difference between culture and nature has significant consequences for ecocriticism. While it helps to overcome the deeply entrenched culture–nature dualism and its anthropocentric ideology of supremacy and exploitative dominance over nonhuman nature, it also resists oppo-

[39] Hubert Zapf, 'Introduction', in *Handbook of Ecocriticism*, ed. by Zapf, pp. 1–16 (p. 4).

> site attempts to simply dissolve culture into nature and to replace an anthropocentric ideology by a physiocentric or ecocentric naturalism.[40]

The discussion about the culture–nature divide is highly relevant to considerations of gender. Zapf recognizes questions of 'supremacy and exploitative dominance', but does not elaborate on the basis for these power structures. However, the relationship between gender theory and ecological theory has been articulated by Kate Soper. She develops an argument that challenges the opposition between the realism of much environmental thinking, and the constructivist challenge spelled out in gender theory, namely:

> At the center of my analysis is a confrontation between ecological naturalism and feminist constructivism, whose very divergent rhetorics I treat as symptomatic of a need for both to clarify their conceptualizations of nature.[41]

To Soper, a naturalistic view of nature may lead to the perpetuation of a patriarchal worldview. On the other hand, Soper argues that the other extreme, a poststructuralist denial of any distinction between nature and culture, runs the risk of overemphasizing culture, 'whose fixities and limitations on action can be just as exacting as any imposed by nature'.[42] To Soper, a fundamentally realist approach to nature promotes a position that takes both gender and ecology into consideration, with a cautious reminder of their intricate interdependences:

> Neither bodies (human or non-human) nor raw materials, nor wilderness, nor rural landscape are produced in this sense. But to refer to them as natural in this sense is not to imply that they have been unaffected by human culture.[43]

With her critical approach to notions of both nature and gender, Soper becomes a specific point of departure when studying female poets. Nyberg – or Euphrosyne – has been given only limited attention in twentieth and twenty-first century research, although it has been noted that the natural world plays an important role in her work.[44] We would like to investigate how nature is represented, constructed,

[40] Hubert Zapf 'Cultural Ecology of Literature – Literature as Cultural Ecology', in *Handbook of Ecocriticsim*, ed. by Zapf, pp. 135–53 (p. 139).

[41] Kate Soper, 'Feminism and Ecology: Realism and Rhetoric in the Discourses of Nature', *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 3 (1995), 311–31 (p. 312). Crossref.

[42] Soper, p. 326.

[43] Soper, p. 327.

[44] Vera Sundin will study Nyberg's poetry in her postdoctoral project. On Nyberg, see Gunilla Hermansson, 'The Attraction of Nordic Freshness: Melancholy, Eroticism, and Health in "Vårvindar friska"', in *Exploring NORDIC COOL*, ed by Hermansson and Lohfert Jørgensen, pp. 205–21; Gunilla Hermansson, 'Julia Nyberg / Euphrosyne: Romantic Poetry,

and embodied in Nyberg's work. It is a striking feature of her poetry that humans are often likened and connected to plants and animals.

Vera Sundin notes that the idealized landscape *topoi* of classical literature provided early modern female writers with an imaginary space, which potentially functioned as an emotional and intellectual refuge.[45] It has been argued that this creative potential was lost when the early modern pastoral code was challenged by changing attitudes to the countryside and to classical heritage.[46] We challenge this assumption, and suggest a stronger focus on the utopian and critical aspects of Nyberg's representations of nature and landscape. As Soper, among others, has pointed out: within an exploitative patriarchal system, 'women' and 'nature' are symbolically aligned; they are both subjugated due to their perceived inferiority to men.[47] As ideas of landscape in Swedish literature shifted, these changes affected the roles of women.

We intend to develop the intersection of gender and nature further within the proposed research area. During the late eighteenth century, discussions about nature and the Swedish national character often took their inspiration from southern Europe, and from France and Montesquieu's climate theory in particular – although simultaneously coupled with a fear of effeminacy and 'Frenchified' customs. In contrast, the early nineteenth century saw an inclination to embrace the cold, harsh northern climate and transfer it to an ideal masculinity and national character, in order to build a new and stronger kind of man.[48] These negotiations between climate theories and the construction of the Viking and free farmer of the North are traced in all the varieties of different sources that we aim to study, that is, on the theatre stage, in the spa setting, and in the poems emanating from the Swedish Academy, the salons, and journals, as well as in visual culture.

World Literature, and Superficial Reception', in *Swedish Women's Writing on Export*, ed. by Yvonne Leffler, Åsa Arping, Jenny Bergenmar, Gunilla Hermansson, and Birgitta Johansson Lindh (Göteborg: University of Gothenburg, Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, 2019), pp. 33–95; Eva Borgström, 'Den sköna Cunigunda. Om Euphrosyne', in *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria* 2, ed. by Elisabeth Møller Jensen (Höganäs: Wiken, 1992), pp. 75–80. Crossref

45 This line of argument is part of Sundin's doctoral dissertation, *Den pastorala koden*, forthcoming 2023.

46 Alfred Sjödin, *Landets SångGudinna: Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna och naturdiktens genrer* (Göteborg: Makadam, 2014), p. 223.

47 Soper, p. 314.

48 See Jens Ljunggren, *Kroppens bildning: Linggymnastikens manlighetsprojekt 1790–1914* (Diss. Stockholm; B. Östlings bokförl. Symposion: 1999).

Aesthetic Atmosphere and the History of Emotions

The question of how to address the nature–culture divide has led us to the German philosopher Gernot Böhme's ecological thinking, as a starting point for analysing representations of Swedish nature. In his first ecological texts, written in the 1980s, Böhme suggests a paradigm for the investigation of the relation between man and nature: the landscape garden as it emerged during the eighteenth century, as an alternative to the French formal garden.[49] The strict symmetries of severely pruned topiary of the seventeenth-century French garden can be understood as an expression not only of political power – in the emblematic Gardens of Versailles, this was an expression of the absolutist rule of Louis XIV – but also of man's domination over nature. The dichotomy of human domination and natural growth seems to imply that the English landscape garden allows nature to be what it is, but from a constructivist perspective the landscape garden is as much an intervention as the formal garden. New interpretations of the development of the eighteenth-century English landscape garden, modelled after Italianate landscape ideals, have also pointed out their role of functioning as an instrument to conceal the harsh exploitation of the agricultural landscape and to give the estates and their environments an aura of timeless harmony with nature. In real life, and not least in the frequent depictions of landscape gardens in paintings and engravings, with their carefully chosen viewpoints, their purpose was to diminish the impressions of the period's heavy-handed transformations of nature and countryside.[50]

Böhme nevertheless claims that a new relation to nature was being formulated: this theory of gardening was founded on the influence of nature on the visitor who walks or dwells in the park, where a specific constellation of trees would be soothing, the vegetation was supposed to speak to the mind, and physiognomic characters were ascribed to nature. Nature becomes not only an object but also a subject, a natural subject (*Natursubjekt*).[51] Thus, an alternative to the modern domestication of nature is indicated: humankind could and should co-operate with nature instead of dominating it.

Atmosphere is indeed the central concept in what Böhme calls a 'new aesthetics', or an 'aisthetics' (*Aisthetik*).[52] This takes its point of departure in the appeal (*Anmutung*) that the environment makes to someone who abides or acts within it. These atmospheres are bound to objects but are not objective, they are perceived

[49] Gernot Böhme, *Für eine ökologische Naturästhetik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989).

[50] Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[51] Böhme, *Für eine Naturästhetik*, pp. 29–30.

[52] Gernot Böhme, *Aisthetik: Vorlesungen über Ästhetik als allgemeine Wahrnehmungslehre* (München: Fink, 2001).

by subjects but are not subjective; instead, they are semi-objective and semi-subjective.

Works of art, especially poetry, are included in Böhme's 'new aesthetics' when he seeks to show how atmospheres are created and how things may appeal to humans. A poem has the capacity to bring about atmospheres, just as the garden has, but Böhme is also indicating that poetic language allows the recreation of the atmospheres of that garden. He writes: 'With garden art we find ourselves in a certain way in reality itself. The same atmospheres, however, can also be produced through words or through paintings.'[53] This stance has been criticized by Rigby, an otherwise sympathetic Böhme reader, who writes that this means eliding 'the shifts and slippages that inevitably occur both in the process of translating feelings into words and that of responding to words with feelings'.[54] This objection is rightly raised concerning the postulation that it is due to the identical atmosphere, but understood less literally, that a series of 'attunements' may take place which relate a landscape, a picture, or a poem to the beholder of that artwork. The atmosphere is not transported, as it were, from one medium (the garden) to another (the poem) and is then perceived; rather, a reverberation takes place.

Böhme's concept of atmospheres is well suited to studies of Swedish song, to highlight the turn away from musical depictions towards mood-making and musical atmospheres. In fact, the concept comes close to aspects of the history of emotions and sensory theory relevant to our study of spa culture and our examinations of national masculinity. We wish to explore the specific emotions that were encouraged in the search for a utopian national character/masculinity. It would seem that these affective 'attunements' call for a further discussion of the interrelatedness between atmosphere and the history of emotions. The shared assumption of our research ideas is that an affective activation of nature is central to artistic, medical, and political representations when striving for a utopian future.

It could be argued that the theoretical tendencies discussed so far – a cultural transfer perspective, the interconnections between ecological thought, gender, and aesthetic atmosphere – share the same focus on dissolving the boundaries between entities. It is not only nations that tend to dissolve into hybrid spaces, but also the very nature–culture divide itself disintegrates into a mesh, to speak with Morton. Through cultural and aesthetic practices, the boundaries are performatively redefined and reshaped, and the mesh is constantly differentiated.

[53] Gernot Böhme, 'Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics', *Thesis Eleven*, 36 (1993), 113–26 (p. 124).

[54] Kate Rigby, 'Gernot Böhme's Ecological Aesthetics of Atmosphere', in *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches*, ed. by Axel Goodbody and Kate Rigby (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), pp. 139–52 (p. 149).

We suggest that, bearing in mind Zapf's reminder of the possibility of balancing 'interrelatedness' and 'difference', or Böhme's 'atmosphere', this combination of ecological thinking and insights from cultural transfer and gender research can support a new interpretation of nature and the discourse of nature in Sweden around 1800. In fact, as our specific examples suggest, yet another leap is made possible: from theory to method. The starting points discussed above provide us with a shared methodology that focuses on comparison in a specific sense, based on the hybrid, interrelated, and non-binary aspects of the representation of nature, in relation to both the standard historiography and the multiple views of nature that were articulated during this vital period.

As mentioned earlier, our engagement with this broad theoretical discourse is combined with Swedish studies of the relevant representations of nature. Our turn to research from the last hundred years mirrors the scarcity of new studies concerning the specific sources we have begun to explore.[55] We are faced with a common predicament in our Nordic context – the combination of theory and recent scholarship on the period from abroad (mentioned earlier), and – at least at times – a scarcity of new perspectives on either canonical or rediscovered Swedish sources from the period. With this sketch of Cool Nature, it is our intention to open up the possibility of a particular research area, positioning Sweden during the period 1780–1840 in a global context, exploring the specific utopian possibilities of a nature that includes both the Arctic midnight sun and the fertile plains of Skåne – as well as lions.

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[55] In *Samlaren* 2020, with its theme of ecocriticism, all the essays except one concern contemporary literature [accessed 25 January 2022]. Crossref

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