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Re-Mapping Lagerlöf

Performance, intermediality,
and European transmissions

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position, informed by the codes and canons, interests and agendas of certain domestic social groups'; at the same time, however, translation and transmission can also 'create possibilities for cultural resistance, innovation, and change at any historical moment' (Venuti 1998, 68). In the case studies below, the dynamic contributions that Lagerlöf's work and public persona have made to the formation of cultural identities as well as to cultural innovation on the European and American scenes are illuminated.

CHAPTER 15

Text and transnational terrain, 1888–1918

Bjarne Thorup Thomsen

This essay will reflect on the role of what may be termed the transnational terrain and on peripherality in Lagerlöf by discussing texts—most of them 'marginal' in the author's output—which, although set in Sweden, display a desire to destabilise national parameters and/or use liminal zones as sites for the articulation of welfare and utopian ideas and for literary experimentation. The texts to be investigated range from the virtual exhibition pamphlet *Officiel Vägvisare vid Verldsutställningen i Landskrona 1888* ('Official Guide to the World Exhibition in Landskrona, 1888') to the wartime German-language mapping of Sweden entitled 'Lapland–Schonen' (1917, 'Lapland–Skåne'). Comparative consideration, moreover, will be given to some of Lagerlöf's canonical work from the period, primarily the key novelistic narratives *Nils Holgersson* (1906–1907) and, in particular, *Bannlyst* (1918, *The Outcast*), whose spatial ambition extends across, and indeed beyond, the national terrain. A common trait of all the texts under consideration is their affinity with travel writing, some theory of which will therefore additionally inform the discussion.

A laboratory for literature and welfare

When Lagerlöf in August 1885 took up a post as a schoolteacher in the southern Swedish coastal town of Landskrona, located on the narrow Sound between Sweden and Denmark, she arrived in a borderland setting—and an industrial, socially stratified sphere—that would prove a decisive environment for her personal, ideological, and literary development. The extent of Lagerlöf's early engagement with social,

political, and pedagogical questions is documented retrospectively in an essay from 1923 on her literary mentor Sophie Adlersparre, republished in 1933 in a collection entitled *Höst* (*Harvest*):

What interested me the most during these early Landskrona days were the many social questions which circulated at the time. Everything that concerned teaching, peace, temperance, the women's rights movement, poverty relief captured my attention. I had some vague notion of devoting myself fully to my calling as a teacher and channelling all my strength into creating a model school, in which all the shortcomings of the current pedagogical system would be rectified.¹

The utopian impulse that informs this passage formed a general tenet of Lagerlöf's thinking and production in the period, evident, for example, in her 1897 novelistic enquiry into socialism and Christianity, *Antikrists mirakler* (*The Miracles of Antichrist*), and already figured prominently, as we shall discuss below, in the 'Official Guide to the World Exhibition in Landskrona'.

It can be argued that the utopian impulse is bound up with Landskrona's marginal location, offering proximity to the neighbouring Nordic nation and its capital centre of Copenhagen, which contributed to a culturally productive centre-periphery ambiguity in the environment in which Lagerlöf operated. In 'Thinking Landscape and Regional Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe', Michael Jones and Kenneth Olwig (2008) argue that borderlands possess a particular innovative potential that can 'perhaps later provide inspiration for changes at the core'. This margin-core dialectic may be applicable, moreover, to the relationship between 'peripheral' and canonical, or 'minor' and 'major', in Lagerlöf's production, with Landskrona constituting a literary laboratory of sorts in which ideas and forms of expression could be tested in occasional forms before feeding into more prominent work at a later stage.

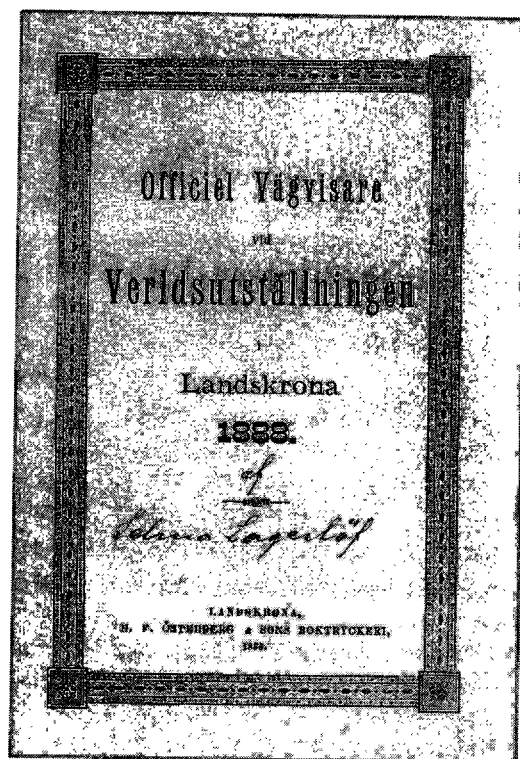
The significance of Landskrona's borderland status is emphasised by several Lagerlöf scholars, and by the author herself. In an informative monograph, *Lagerlöf i Landskrona* ('Lagerlöf in Landskrona'), Erik Eliasson stresses the special relationship between the Swedish town and the Danish capital the other side of the Sound as evidenced by the close traffic connections: 'The ferry connections were surprisingly good. In some months three daily crossings in either direction were advertised, and on some holidays no fewer than four'.² Eliasson views



Illus. 1. The teaching staff at the girls' school in Landskrona where Lagerlöf was employed from 1885 to 1895. Lagerlöf is standing second from the left, between her friend Anna Oom and the headmistress Josepha Ahnfelt.

Landskrona as a Swedish–Danish melting pot situated in a transnational crossover zone, in which Lagerlöf manoeuvred with ease and enthusiasm from the outset of her stay in the town. Her contacts with cultural circles of the neighbouring capital, especially connected with the Danish women's movement, were intensified around and after the publication in 1891 of her breakthrough work *Gösta Berlings saga* (*Gösta Berling's Saga*). Similarly, in a discussion of Lagerlöf as a national icon, Vivi Edström observes that, in the Landskrona period, the author was orientated as much towards Denmark as towards Sweden (2001, 62), while Ulla-Britta Lagerroth in a study of 'nordism' in Lagerlöf argues that the author's cultural encounters on the 'other' side of the Sound contributed to the formation of her pan-Nordic inclinations (2000, 130).³ Poignant insights by Lagerlöf herself into her participation in the cultural mobility across the Sound can be found, for example, in a recollection from 1927 (republished in *Harvest*, Lagerlöf 1933b), not without irony, of her meeting with the influential Danish critic Georg Brandes in Copenhagen in 1893, concluding with an empha-

Illus. 2. The cover page of the 'Official Guide to the World Exhibition in Landskrona 1888' was printed in an arresting purple colour, in keeping with the festive, and perhaps also the utopian, dimensions of the pamphlet.



sis on the impact on her own career of multidirectional currents of literary dissemination, reception, and recognition flowing across national boundaries.

Published anonymously but attributed to Lagerlöf, the playful 'Official Guide to the World Exhibition in Landskrona' renegotiates the relationship between town, city and world, applying a 'glocal' perspective with utopian overtones. In respect of its generic and stylistic hybridity, its interplay between the fictional and the factual, its properties as a travel text, its use of miniature and model, its embrace of modernity and industrialism, its interest in 'import-export' transactions between 'home' and 'away', the publication reads, moreover, as a 'guide' to or catalogue of some of the characteristics of Lagerlöf's future literary practice. The publication signposts a charitable event organised in aid of local victims of poverty, thus reflecting Lagerlöf's social orientations in the period. The event took place in Landskrona's *festivitetshus* ('assembly rooms') on 1 December 1888 and was modelled on the international

exhibition culture of the time. In the guide, the charitable event is ironically measured against Copenhagen's 1888 Nordic Exhibition of Industry, Agriculture and Art, which 'to some extent has served as an example and a model', but outperforming this to become 'a colossal, indeed world-wide enterprise'.⁴ This self-aggrandising rhetoric works as an apt imitation of the style and the dreams displayed, for example, in the Danish *Nationaløkonomisk Tidsskrift* ('Journal of National Economics') of 1888, where the Nordic exhibition is envisaged to become 'an event which could give a new reality to Copenhagen's faded dreams of being a world city'.⁵ Echoing such ambitions, the guide transforms the peripheral regional setting into a continent and the exhibition space into a global magnet for a transnational gathering where 'the most civilised nations on earth decided to ... be represented'.⁶

In a similar vein, the central part of the guide, 'Orientering på terrängen' ('Orientation in the Exhibition Area'), evokes the modern metropolis and its bombardment of the senses, reminding the charitable visitor to 'accustom the eye to the multi-coloured mix of products, signs and people on display'.⁷ At the same time, the orientation reads as a journey of adventure *en miniature* into a multicultural, exoticised, and erotised landscape, populated by people, primarily women, from a range of nations and ethnicities. There is no shortage, either, of industrialists or representatives of the imperial powers of the day.

This tour of a virtual transnational terrain of attractions and diversity echoes the contemporary culture of entertainment and consumption. It is, however, framed by a consideration of the very real social hardship which the charitable event is designed to alleviate. This frame in part adopts, or imitates, a higher literary register. It consists of an introductory 'exhibition cantata' and a concluding account of a journey on foot through Landskrona. This second travel account, a counterpoint in several ways to the preceding exotic exhibition orientation, incorporates an additional poem, 'Sjöpromenaden' ('The Sea Promenade'), which reads as a statement on the literary potential of the 'periphery'. The frame as a whole seems to project a potential regional route that leads from a dystopian state to a utopian one, envisioning the marginal local community transformed into a role model and a dynamic centre reaching beyond national confines.

This trajectory informs, moreover, the composition of both parts of the frame in themselves. The crisis point in the cantata, its dystopian turn, is thus connected with closed borders. It occurs when a wondrous



Illus. 3. The members of the sewing circle who organised the virtual world exhibition in Landskrona, photographed in 1885.

and poeticised vessel loaded with treasures from around the world is, in what is also a clash of discourses, denied entry by, so to speak, customs and excise, because the local social misery makes 'joy ... contraband'.⁸ The key device in the poem from this point onwards is to redefine the implied 'protectionism' from a mercantile to a social strategy, which will eventually break down the barriers towards the fulfilment and enjoyment of life:

There must be coal in poor people's hearths
And food in the corner of the school bag
Stocking on the foot which the clog wears

And rooms where cradle and bed can stand.
And therefore friends, oh good friends
Open your heart and purse and hand!
Because as long as need is felt
Will also joy be contraband.⁹

In the concluding part of the frame, 'En vandring genom Landskrona' ('A Walk through Landskrona'), the level of social ambition as articulated in the cantata is increased further: from a fulfilment of fundamental human needs to an embryonic notion of a welfare society. This ostensibly much more mundane travel text depicts how a female collective, the local sewing circle that is also organising the charitable event, dialogically decodes and, importantly, re-imagines the local townscape that the women traverse. This is reconstituted from a stronghold of poverty to the originating site of a vision of welfare provision: 'Would it not be a credit to our town if it were the first to establish, say, a welfare committee whose whole ambition was focused on prevention and sustainability'.¹⁰ In a typical play with scale, the sewing circle then morphs into the welfare provider, aiming to abolish not only poverty, but also its attendant social ills of crime, disease, alcoholism, and 'evil' behaviour as such.

This notion of making the peripheral town a model, an attraction even, is reinforced in the climactic stanzas of the poem 'The Sea Promenade', recited at the appropriate point of the walk, right at the edge of the Sound, with mirror effects between the fictional and the factual that are characteristic of the 'Official Guide' and of Lagerlöf's writing more broadly. The poem vows in ways that would seem prophetic of Lagerlöf's literary career to strive to develop the local setting into a world literature location:

Oh, my fair friend, if only
I could write novels
You should become the scene of
Wonderful episodes
You should become as classical
As a street in Verona¹¹

It is logical, therefore, that towards the end of the tour of the town it is Landskrona itself, and not just its fantastical exhibition, that emerges



Illus. 4. This photograph of Lagerlöf sporting an emancipated haircut was taken in Copenhagen in a high-street studio on one of her frequent visits to the city while based in Landskrona.

as a competitor, in terms of being emblem of the dynamic world, both to classical cities such as Athens and Rome and to Copenhagen. Using traffic and transportation as key tropes—again, favoured techniques in Lagerlöf's subsequent literary practice—the text sums up its prospective redefinition of the periphery and its innovating role in the following redirection of influence and illumination, dialogically achieved:

The ferry from Copenhagen squeezed into the narrow channel between the public baths and Græn, with a yellow lantern placed high up in the prow.

'That is the spark of life which the big radiant world sends into our darkness,' someone joked.

'It will soon be our turn to transmit sparks of life.'¹²

Utopian continuities

The welfare ideas which the 'Official Guide' introduces in a borderland context are developed in later, more canonical, and nation-orientated texts by Lagerlöf, for example in the seminal 'Hem och stat' ('Home and State') speech of 1911. This likewise links a women-led organisation, in this case the family household rather than a charitable circle, to a conception of the inclusive society, anticipating, perhaps, the notion of the Swedish *folkhem* ('People's Home'), as formulated politically in the 1920s and 1930s. If so, it may be argued, then, that seeds of this societal idea may be found in Lagerlöf's earliest work. In *Selma Lagerlöf efter Gösta Berlings saga* ('Selma Lagerlöf after Gösta Berling's Saga'), Bengt Ek (1951, 233) suggests that socially utopian ideas inform Lagerlöf's work throughout the 1890s and beyond the turn of the century, also impacting on *Jerusalem* (1901–1902), her major novel of emigration and the quest for an ideal spiritual community (although ambiguously portrayed in the text). And the utopian influence does not stop there, we could add, but is also evident in her subsequent 'macro' novels *Nils Holgersson* and *The Outcast*.

In a discussion of utopian literature, Fredric Jameson argues that, alongside wish fulfilment and the elimination of evil, utopian writing is fuelled by a further form of satisfaction, namely the creative stimulation of constructing models and designing miniatures:

the pleasures of construction may not be so evident: you have to think of them in terms of the garage workshop, of the home-mechanics erector sets, of Lego, of bricolating and cobbling together things of all kinds. To which we must also add the special pleasures of miniaturization: replicating the great things in handicraft dimensions. (Jameson 2004, 35)

This analysis is clearly of relevance not only to the 'marginal' 'Official Guide' but also to the main work of *Nils Holgersson*, which could be said to present a utopian picture of national interaction—a picture in which the reworking of regions into models, miniatures, and components of the national machinery is a decisive device. This reworking, in turn, depends on the miniaturisation which the eponymous hero himself experiences at the beginning of the narrative to enable his, and the reader's, participation in a literal bird's-eye-perspective that can 'shrink' the national terrain into

perceivable and aesthetically pleasing dimensions. The 'Official Guide' and *Nils Holgersson* share, moreover, the freedom of form and thought that the hybrid textual category of travel writing may, according to several theorists, afford, as it occupies a liberating borderland between the factual and the fictional. In *Defining Travel*, Susan L. Roberson (2001, 61) identifies what she calls a play of ideology and imagination (of obvious relevance to both the Landskrona guide and the national geography adventure) as central to the 'creative' qualities of travel writing. Similarly, in his own 'guide' to modern travel literature, *Resa och skriva* ('Travelling and Writing'), Arne Melberg takes travel literature to be a 'nomadic' form of writing that borrows freely from a variety of text types ranging from journalistic reportage to novel and poetry. Although it has often been marginalised by criticism and cultural institutions, he sees it as a freer form of writing and a 'joker' in the literary game, offering the writer room for innovation and experimentation (Melberg 2006, 9, 13, 32). Again, it would seem meaningful to consider both the Landskrona guide and *Nils Holgersson* as generic 'jokers' of this type, challenging traditional literary categorisation.

Moving on to *Bannlyst* (*The Outcast*), this combination of anti-war and romantic novel clearly contains its own dystopian-utopian agenda, while also having a transnational and welfare vision in common with the 'Official Guide'. The period around the First World War seems to provide the foundation for a renewed scrutiny in Lagerlöf's production of the national parameters and the validity of a singular national perspective. Whereas *Nils Holgersson*, its considerable interest in southern and northern borderland settings notwithstanding (see also Astrid Surmatz's discussion of its representation of Lapland elsewhere in this volume), has as its obvious ambition the demonstration of the attractiveness of the entirety of the national terrain, *The Outcast*, just like the 'Official Guide', is dominated by a drift of its imagination towards the sea, away from the solidity of the national terrain and national understanding, and towards a wider vision. This is not to say that *The Outcast* does not share features with the novel of nation. As several critics have pointed out, *The Outcast* draws on the nationwide approach to spatial representation that Lagerlöf developed in the *Wonderful Journey*, giving regions, whose locations range from the coastal south-west to the new industrialised north of Sweden, significant roles in the narrative, connecting them through character mobility and multiple modes of transportation. In particular, the novel activates, but also subverts, what Franco Moretti has identified as the plot

paradigm of the national marriage, the joining together in romantic relationships, especially in the nineteenth-century novel, of characters from different parts of a country in order to create a deeper sense of the nation as homeland (Moretti 2009, 18). In *The Outcast*, however, the national marriage is an unhappy one (apart from its rescue in an unconvincing happy ending), dominated by the territorial and oppressive behaviour of the male party (mirroring at a micro level the belligerent behaviour of aggressive states). Instead, real romance is invested in an extra-marital relationship between the female party and the novel's 'new man' hero, two sea-connected soulmates, who are both characterised by extra-national experiences or aspirations and by their charitable and welfare activities, which form part of the novel's utopian dimension.

As for the war theme, and the anti-war message, the west-coast region of Bohuslän functions in *The Outcast* not only as the site of the national marriage and the extra-national romance, but also as a transnational contact zone, in principle not unlike the Landskrona of the 'Official Guide', although in this instance the interface is first and foremost with the gruesome consequences of modern military conflict, making any sense of 'neutrality' illusory. Inspired by Lagerlöf's 'touristic' trauma of witnessing scores of corpses of dead sailors drifting towards land when she was holidaying on the Bohuslän coast in the summer of 1916 at the time of the largest naval battle of the First World War off the west coast of Denmark, the novel shifts its perspective offshore, right into the centre of the maritime crisis. Here, the macabre bodily performances of the dead, scattered across the sea like so much refuse, create graphic and uncanny slippages between life and non-life that shocked readers. The novel's uncanny components are essential, however, not only in depicting the dystopia of war, but also in facilitating the breaking down of the barriers between living and dead, national and foreign, friend and foe, which is central to the novel's agenda of peace. Thus, the transforming impact on a variety of characters (several of whom have occupied roles of opponents in the narrative up to this point) of witnessing the manifestations of the carnage leads to a transnational burial scene, set in the local cemetery, in which the rescued bodies of British and German sailors alike are redeemed. Although the subject matter and the register are very different from what we found in the 'Official Guide', the underlying linkage of welfare and porous borders seems similar.

The ultimate vision in *The Outcast* of a world of continuities rather than territorial hostilities is articulated by the contested character of

Lotta Hedman, who at times operates as an embedded narrator in the novel. A factory worker, and a visionary, from a Lapland in the grip of new industrialisation, she is a proletarian product of the periphery, yet set on a nationwide mission that eventually takes her to the west coast, in keeping with an overriding motif of female mobility in the text. And the range of Hedman's vision by no means stops at the national borders. It is from her perspective that the novel provides its most globalised, and most sublime, 'Google Earth' image of the joined-up nature of both geographies and destinies.

Global sentiments in local environments

While *The Outcast* was Lagerlöf's main work of the First World War period, several more marginal sketches, memory pieces, and short fictions reveal intense engagement with the urgent questions of the time in hybrid, experimental, and more fragmented forms, reflecting, perhaps, the 'splintering' of worldviews, beliefs, and ideologies that the global conflict itself entailed. Thus, in the so-called *Stämningar från krigsåren* ('Impressions from the War Years'), Lagerlöf seems to take a variant route, reminiscent of the 'Official Guide', to the promotion of transnational thought by downgrading, or simply bypassing, the national perspective that remains strong in *The Outcast*, in favour of a pronounced interlinking of local and global, typically capturing 'eruptions', reflections, or refractions of wartime events and moral dilemmas on the small screen of apparently sheltered environments and mind-sets. Four of the impressions were published in periodicals during the War and republished, together with a further two texts, under their umbrella heading in *Troll och människor. Andra samlingen* (1921, 'Trolls and Humans: The Second Collection'), while others remained unpublished or were published posthumously. In a commentary, tellingly entitled 'Världsbrand i småstadsperspektiv' ('World Conflagration in Small-Town Perspective'), written in connection with her publication in 1960 of one of the manuscript impressions, Ulla-Britta Lagerroth proposes a modification of what she calls the critical axiom that Lagerlöf experienced a lack of creative vision and productivity during the War. Instead, she argues that Lagerlöf harboured an overarching ambition, although only fairly partially realised, of creating 'a boldly designed and envisioned work, joined together by short stories, sketches and sentiments, which should all prismatically reflect the light from the mighty

world conflagration'.¹³ In the following, two of these war impressions, one published posthumously, the other unpublished, will be used to sketch a route that leads from Lagerlöf's rural home region of Värmland in western Sweden down to Bohuslän and its coastal exposure to the world, as already encountered in *The Outcast*.

The manuscript version of the war impression which Ulla-Britta Lagerroth published in 1960 under the title of 'Patron Ivar Halenius' ('Proprietor Ivar Halenius') is itself entitled 'Första kapitlet' ('First Chapter'), which leads Lagerroth to interpret it as the intended opening of Lagerlöf's planned 'prismatic' project. Although probably written in 1915, the narrative is set at the exact time when the news of the outbreak of war spread through western Sweden, tracing its impact on local behaviour: from tourists fleeing the seaside resorts to a run on the banks and panic buying, all expressed in terms of excessive traffic and stifling congestion. The narrative resembles the 'Official Guide' in using a walk through a townscape as the frame for an ideological investigation and a transnational turn. During the course of the proprietor's journey on foot through his home community—its location revealed by the inclusion of the signage for the 'Bank of Värmland'¹⁴—it becomes apparent that any isolationist inclinations and tendencies to appreciate the 'cleansing' potential of war the protagonist may hold at the beginning of the narrative are unsustainable.

The strategy of this impression is to challenge the notion of local sites as disconnected from a world scene—even the proprietor's idyllic garden situated on the outskirts of the town is constructed as an international tourist attraction, echoing, possibly, the magnetic force that Lagerlöf's home at Mårbacka exerted on the wider public in the author's later career and her own status as a world-famous literary figure. As the proprietor makes his way through the town (which, not unlike Landskrona, is figured as a place of mutual familiarity as well as social stratification), each encounter seems to offer a new concretisation of the complex interconnections between countries, which make the separation of them into enemy states a tragic absurdity. This reinforces the proprietor's own earlier observations on the density and richness of inter-European cultural and economic infrastructure, which render its division and destruction by battlelines preposterous in both moral and logistical terms. This perspective culminates when a young schoolteacher reports how the news of the outbreak of war turned the gathering of an international group of pupils assembled at the renowned arts and crafts folk high school in

Näås outside Gothenburg into a truly transnational manifestation, as the various anthems of the nations represented were sung in a distinctly serial and connected manner, making the pupils' status as members of enemy countries incomprehensible: "We felt such agreement there ... We were unable to understand why we should fight and be hostile towards each other".¹⁵ The Ivar Halenius impression reads in many ways as a farewell to the idyllic ways of a dying culture, and concludes with sensations of nausea and strangulation, highly prescient of the bodily reaction against war which Lagerlöf intended *The Outcast* to provoke in its readers.

An intensified articulation of uncanny war impressions can be found in another of Lagerlöf's precursor texts to *The Outcast*, the unpublished Bohuslän narrative 'Den fridsamme' ('The Peaceable One').¹⁶ This war impression is regarded by Lagerroth as approaching 'the artistic climax of the whole material'.¹⁷ While both *The Outcast* and 'Proprietor Ivar Halenius' chart collective tourism, 'The Peaceable One' focuses on the individual experience of its eponymous seaside visitor, the author's male alter ego of sorts (even the ambiguously portrayed Ivar Halenius may to an extent be considered in a similar way). From the first, the description of the protagonist's approach journey by train towards the sea is punctuated by the warning sounds of a westerly storm penetrating through the natural defences of the coastal cliffs and into the valley where the railway runs. When the visitor immediately after arrival at the Bohuslän resort makes his way to the most prominent point of the shore and challenges the wind-swept sea to display its secret life of sublime mythical beings, what emerges instead is a futuristic monochrome display of the monsters of the living, but dead, machinery engaged in combat on an industrial scale:

The whole gulf in front of him was filled by the most enormous battleships engaged in combat. Dark, tall colossuses of iron, grey like the sea, not resembling ships but some never-before-seen monsters. Battle raged between them, one was in flames, another turned with its stern sinking while the bow rose. And among these snorting monsters that spat fire and iron, a sea full of dead and drowning, of pieces of wreckage, of boats broken and capsized.¹⁸

In this apocalyptic vision the battle zone itself and its animated warships have been transported right into the vicinity of the shore (in more of a close-up of the machinery of war than even *The Outcast* would provide),

thereby creating a 'horror-of-scale' effect that works as a metaphor for the proximity of global conflict and the unavoidability of exposure and engagement. The impact of the visual shock is intensified by the fact that the scene only manifests itself for a moment. While the core of the narrative is a nightmarish fantasy, its frame signals authenticity (a combination of the fantastical and the actual also found in the 'Official Guide', although very differently modulated). The text opens with the temporal marker of '1916, early June'¹⁹ and concludes with exact background information that emphatically roots the preceding vision in the real horror of war. In another instance of the impact of scale, the enlarged and doubly darkened graphics of the modern news medium of the telegram convey to the tourist the news of the same naval battle off the west coast of Jutland the consequences of which *The Outcast* would later depict: 'Many ships were lost, and on the surface of the stormy sea masses of dead were rolling at this moment'.²⁰

Related reworkings of apparent local idylls into something much more sinister are found in the war impressions entitled 'Den lille sjömannen' ('The Little Sailor') and 'Dimman' ('The Mist'), both published in wartime, in 1918 and 1916 respectively, and republished in 1921. 'The Little Sailor' (dated July 1916 and thus sharing the temporal, as well as the locational, setting of *The Outcast* and 'The Peaceable One') is a much more understated impression than the two previously discussed texts. Played out in what seems a programmatically peaceful and secluded place, it affords the observing narrator (a further alter ego of Lagerlöf) the role of a detective of sorts as she listens in on the conversation conducted—and deciphers the body language displayed—during a near-by coffee party consisting of a young sailor and his mother and maternal aunt. Conveyed in a mode that has subtly gothic overtones, the conclusion of this 'detective story' (a genre which would experience a golden age in the aftermath of the war) finds that a fourth, foreign, party has been present at the table: the pale shadow of a German sailor, whose dead body has been washed ashore and buried in the local cemetery the same day, is preying on the young Swedish sailor's mind, as he contemplates his own departure by ship the next day. The narrative in its ending thus eerily dissolves the boundaries between dead and alive, local and foreign, as the two sailors turn into reflections of each other. 'The Mist', finally, reads as a more abstract metaphorical summing-up of the warning against isolationism and small-world self-sufficiency which the war impressions together articulate. It is a central piece that

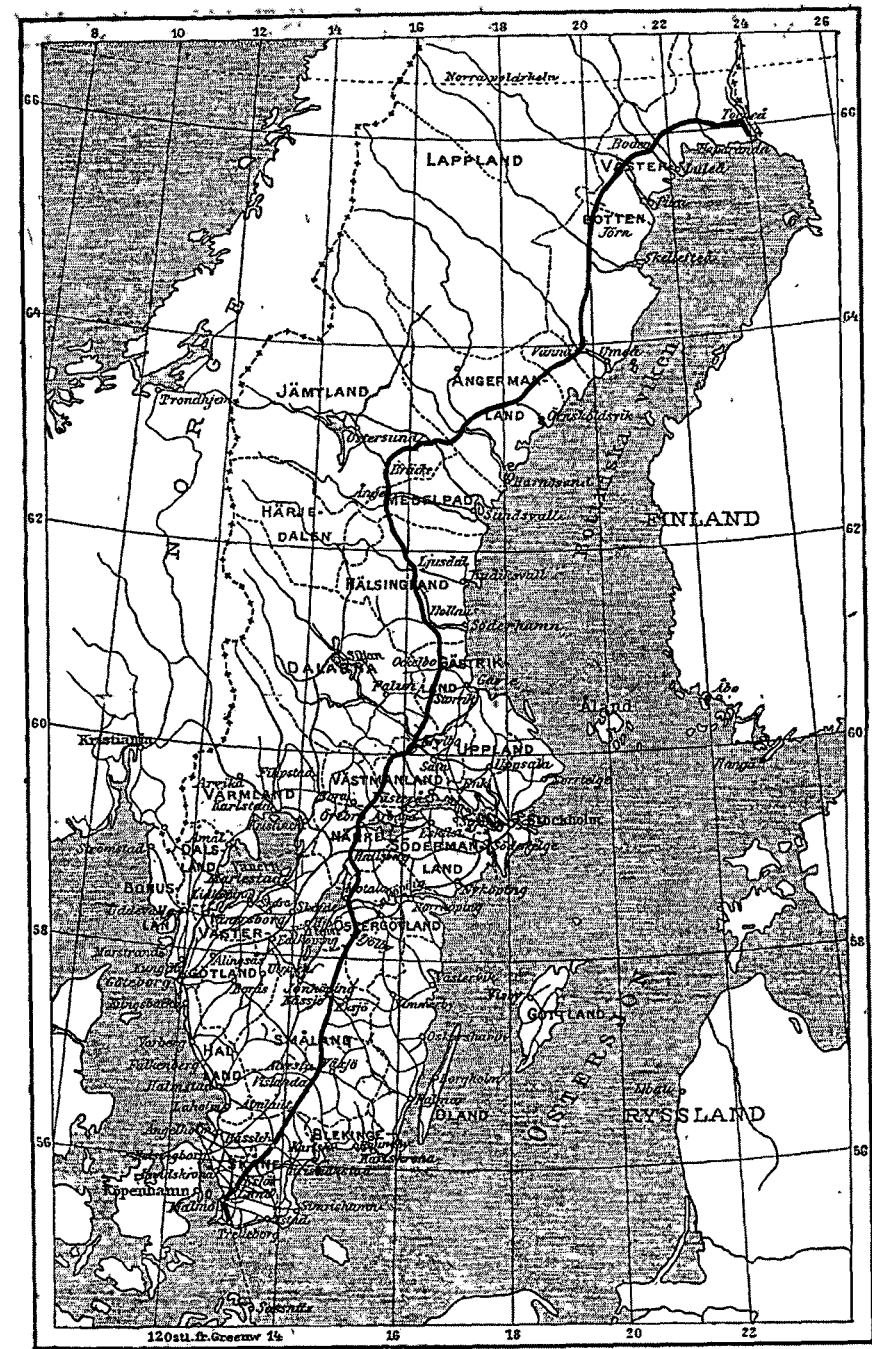
develops the psychological impact of a Nature-induced but symbolic shortened field of vision from painful and unsettling via aesthetically revealing and rewarding in its close-up perspectives to, finally, morally unsatisfactory in the context of global conflict and suffering.

Transnationalising a wonderful journey

We shall conclude our tour through some of the transnational terrains of Lagerlöf's work from the beginning of her writing career to the end of the First World War by briefly discussing a little-known but fascinating travel adventure, 'Lapland – Schonen' ('Lapland – Skåne'), which may be seen as a transnational take on Nils Holgersson's seminal journey through Sweden, while also displaying welfare and charitable concerns not dissimilar to those found in several of the previously discussed texts. This travel text will, moreover, bring us back to the southern Swedish region of Skåne, where we started our investigations. 'Lapland – Skåne' fronted the German-language pocket-sized anthology *Schweden* ('Sweden'), which was published by Norstedt in Stockholm in 1917. The anthology was sold in aid of, and handed out to, wounded German prisoners of war transported by train from Russia through neutral Sweden towards Germany. This type of train transportation in turn forms the foundation of the storyline of Lagerlöf's contribution itself. The narrative was never published in Swedish, although several variants or fragments of it exist in the author's Notebook 11.

The pedagogical challenge facing 'Lapland – Skåne' is to map out the long railway journey from Haparanda on the Finnish border to Sweden's southernmost town of Trelleborg in ways which would capture and retain the interest of its intended key readership of the war-wounded in landscapes they could be forgiven for regarding as merely an extended stepping stone towards a desired destination. Like in *Nils Holgersson*, Lagerlöf's answer is to invite the reader to participate in an embodied play with geographies, dimensions, scale, and types of mobility. In

Illus. 5. Lagerlöf's contribution to the German-language anthology *Schweden* ('Sweden') was illustrated with this map, the bold line indicating the railway route from Haparanda to Trelleborg which is covered by the travelogue. The illustration reads as a reworking of the intricate outline of an airborne migratory route projected onto the national map, which, from an early stage of its publication history, became emblematic of *Nils Holgersson's Wonderful Journey*.



'Lapland – Skåne', however, this *Spiel* is of a distinctly transnational type. The narrative reads as a radical example of James Duncan and Derek Gregory's conception of travel writing as 'an act of translation' mediating between foreign and domestic to produce a 'space in-between' (1999, 4). It also seems to bear out Andrew Thacker's argument in his study entitled *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* that modernist writing, in which he includes forms of travel writing in the modernist period, 'can be located only within the movements between and across multiple sorts of space' (2003, 8), which contributes to a sense of fluid boundaries and porous borders.

In a two-stage strategy, 'Lapland – Skåne' first turns to the lighter topic of tourism, a frequent theme in Lagerlöf's work, as we have seen. It depicts how a trio of Swedish hill-walkers playfully decode the various segments of a Swiss mountainscape through which they ascend by reference to regional landscape variations in Sweden. The tourists' continued grafting of Nordic geography onto the Alpine terrain offers them a scaling device, which enables overview and orientation in an unfamiliar terrain. At the same time, it introduces a method of miniaturisation in relation to the Swedish terrain, which the readers might find useful, while also inviting them to share a sensation of bodily command, including a superhuman ability to stride through entire lands. In the second stage of its strategy, 'Lapland – Skåne' (using the book itself as the communicating subject, a recurring device in the text) then returns to the train setting to encourage its travelling target readers to play a similar game to the one the tourists are engaged in, a game of familiarising the foreign, only reversed:

In order now to return to the travellers on the hospital trains from Lapland to Skåne, the book would like to suggest to them that they play the same game ... Could they not imagine the whole of Sweden as a high mountain and compare it with an Alpine peak which they themselves have climbed or at least heard described?²¹

The narrative then goes on to stratify and decode the Swedish cultural geography through which the train progresses on these premises. Thus, 'Lapland – Skåne' takes a profoundly comparative approach to landscape depiction by which the two countries, Sweden and Switzerland, and their characteristics are superimposed onto each other to create a truly transnational terrain. The effect of this double mapping and its comple-

mentary 'translation' processes is to build a common, yet plural ground in natural and cultural terms and imbue it with a shared dynamic that combines historical depth with the restless 'traffic' of the modern times.

While the immediate aims of the 'Lapland – Skåne' project are to provide entertainment and information on Sweden (also aimed at Lagerlöf's international audience more broadly), as the wounded make their long approach towards their homeland, its more profound ambition is to challenge the nationalistic causes of war by promoting the notion of countries as reflections of each other (not unlike the relationship between the German and the Swedish soldier in 'The Little Sailor'). This makes 'Lapland – Skåne' an important internationalisation of the idea of the wonderful journey, while also typifying the thrust of Lagerlöf's transnational sensibility as we have traced it over three decades of her writing career.

Notes

- 1 'Vad som mest intresserade mig under dessa tidiga Landskronadagar, det var de många sociala frågor, som rörde sig i tiden. Allt, som angick undervisning, fred, nykterhet, kvinnosak, fattigvård, fängslade min uppmärksamhet. Jag hade några obestämda funderingar på att helt ägna mig åt mitt lärarinnekall och att använda all min kraft på att skapa en mönsterskola, där alla det nuvarande pedagogiska systemets brister skulle vara avhjälpta' (Lagerlöf 1933c, 33–4). Unless otherwise indicated, the translations into English are my own.
- 2 'Båtförbindelserna var ... förvånansvärt goda. Vissa månader annonserades 3 turer dagl. i vardera riktningen och vissa högtidsdagar inte mindre än 4' (Eliasson 1958, 114).
- 3 See also Jørgen Ravn's study 'Selma Lagerlöf i Landskrona og København' ('Selma Lagerlöf in Landskrona and Copenhagen') which concludes that the author's intellectual contacts with Copenhagen in the Landskrona period profoundly impacted on her literary career overall (1958a, 150).
- 4 'i någon mån kunnat tjena till mönster och förebild'; 'ett kolossalt, ja verldsmattande företag' (Lagerlöf 1888, 5).
- 5 'en Begivenhed, der skal kunne give ny Virkelighed til Københavns blegnede Drømme om at være en Verdensby' (Bauer 1888, 2).
- 6 'jordens mest civiliserade nationer beslöto att ... låta sig representeras' (Lagerlöf 1888, 5).
- 7 'vänja sitt öga vid det brokiga virvarret af exponerade varor, skyltar och menniskor' (Lagerlöf 1888, 5).
- 8 'glädjen ... kontraband' (Lagerlöf 1888, 4).
- 9 'Kol skall det finnas vid arma härdar | Och mat i skolväskans ena vrå, | Strump på den foten, som träskon härdar, | Och rum, der vagga och säng må stå. | Och därför vänner, ack gode vänner, | I öppnen hjerta och börs och hand! | Ty ack, så länge man nöden känner, | Skall också glädjen bli kontraband' (Lagerlöf 1888, 4).

- 10 'Skulle det inte vara en heder för vår stad, om just den först inrättade en, låt oss se, en välfärdskomité, hvars hela sträfvän ginge ut på att förebygga och upprätthålla' (Lagerlöf 1888, 12).
- 11 'Ack, min fagra vän, om ändå | Jag romaner kunde skriva, | Underbara episoders | Skådeplats du skulle blifva. | Du så klassisk varda skulle | Som en gata i Verona' (Lagerlöf 1888, 14).
- 12 'Köpenhamnsbåten kom inkilande i den tränga rännan mellan badhuset och Gråen med en gul lykta högt i fören. ... "Det är lifsgnistan, som den stora, lysande verlden sänder in i vårt mörker," skämtade en. "Det bliver snart vår tur att sända ut lifsgnistor"' (Lagerlöf 1888, 15).
- 13 'ett väldigt upplagt och stort tänkt verk, sammanfogat av noveller, skisser och stämningar, som alla prismatiskt skulle reflektera ljuset från den stora världsbranden' (Lagerroth 1961, 35).
- 14 'Värmlandsbanken' (Lagerlöf 1961, 20).
- 15 "'Vi kände oss så eniga där ... Vi kunde rakt inte förstå, varför man skulle strida och stå fiendliga mot varandra"' (Lagerlöf 1961, 21–2).
- 16 The sketch is preserved in a group of manuscripts entitled 'Stämningar från krigsåren' ('Impressions from the War Years') in the National Library of Sweden, Stockholm (Ligg-pf, Sn-Sö, L1: 247).
- 17 'den konstnärliga höjdpunkten i hela materialet' (Lagerroth, 1961, 36).
- 18 'Hela viken framför honom var uppfylld av de väldigaste krigsskepp inbegripna i strid. Mörka höga kolosser av järn gråa som havet inte liknande skepp, men några aldrig hittills sedda vidunder. Det rasade strid mellan dem, ett stod i lågor, ett vände sig vacklande och sjönk med aktern medan fören reste sig. Och mellan dessa frysande vidunder, som sprutade ut eld och järn ett vatten fullt av döda av drunknande, av vrakdelar, av båtar som bräcktes och kantrade' (Lagerlöf, 'The Peaceable One').
- 19 'År 1916 i början av Juni' (Lagerlöf, 'The Peaceable One').
- 20 'Massor av skepp voro förlorade och på det stormande havets yta vältrade i denna stund massor av döda' (Lagerlöf, 'The Peaceable One').
- 21 'Um aber nun zu den Reisenden, die mit den Invalidenzügen von Lappland nach Schonen fahren, zurückzukommen, so möchte das Buch ihnen vorschlagen, dasselbe Spiel zu spielen ... Könnten sie nicht ganz Schweden als ein Hochebirge denken und es mit einem Alpengipfel vergleichen, den sie selber bestiegen oder den sie wenigstens beschrieben gehört haben?' (Lagerlöf 1917b, 20).

CHAPTER 16

The many facets of a diamond

Space, change and identity
in Selma Lagerlöf's *The Miracles of Antichrist*

Elettra Carbone & Kristina Sjögren

In Selma Lagerlöf's novel *Antikrists mirakler* (1897, *The Miracles of Antichrist*), public space is used as a catalyst for social change. In this novel the fictional Sicilian town of Diamante (Italian for 'diamond') becomes the setting of great transformations that affect not only the characters' personal development but also that of the whole community.¹ In this essay we examine how public spaces are used to problematise issues related to identity, gender, and social class, all of which, in line with the ideas of the Modern Breakthrough, were highly topical in the Scandinavian literature of the time. Rural idylls, dramatic scenes of poverty, social conformism, women's struggle for emancipation, technological innovation, and workers' and peasants' uprisings—these are just some of the aspects that make this fictional Sicilian town one of the most multifaceted spaces in Swedish literature.

Four years after her acclaimed debut with *Gösta Berlings saga* (1891, *Gösta Berling's Saga*), Selma Lagerlöf undertook a long Italian tour from October 1895 to the summer of 1896 with her friend Sophie Elkan. In 1897 she published *The Miracles of Antichrist*, a novel clearly influenced by her trip to Italy, and especially by the month she and Elkan spent in Sicily. They had followed in the footsteps of many Nordic artists who, particularly since the beginning of the nineteenth century, had travelled to Italy in search of direct contact with 'exotic' Nature and rustic life, classical culture, and Renaissance art. However, while most Nordic writers and artists travelled to Rome *en masse*, fewer ventured further south to Sicily like Lagerlöf and Elkan.² As Giorgia Alù rightly points out in her study on British women who lived in Sicily in the