The Old Cultural Regionalism – and the New


Contemporary globalization is often presented as a modern master-story, undermining the hegemony of nationalism and emancipating local, regional narratives on the one hand and cosmopolitan and multicultural ones on the other. Several overlapping arguments both illustrate and complicate this view by means of Swedish examples of uses of history in regional settings. A regional-national dynamic is an intertwined process which should not be analyzed as a phenomenon qualitatively different from other identity processes with a territorial dimension involved. Recent multi-cultural-approach attempts to update the territorial representation of diversity to a diversity of ethnicity in the 21th century have a similar integrative feature. Regional movements used to be and are still dialectic and ambiguous in relation to their cultural-political effects. Earlier regional divisions and now multi-culturalism might reinforce a national understanding – or undermine it. A one-sided focus on the political aspects of regional processes and narratives fails to fully understand the attraction and power of certain projects in comparison with other projects. This becomes perhaps even more evident when we move from historical to contemporary regional dynamics.

Place is often used as an analytical category other than region and, above all, nation. Face-to-face relations, praxis and everyday experience are contrasted with the cultural construction and institutionalized framework of larger communities. There is, however, a constructed narrative structure also in individual biographies and local communities. These, too, need representation, even if their meaning could be more embedded and in need of non-textual contextualisation. The analytical dichotomy needs to be questioned in order to theoretically approach the varying resonance that different projects have in historical culture at large. Concepts like meaning (identity, history), territory and
power are a more productive analytical set to start out from than the territorial hierarchy of nation, region and place.

All the arguments lead towards the need for a comprehensive theory of the use of history in the construction of identity which identifies the possible and perhaps necessary dynamics between different parts of historical culture.

A long-term regional-national dynamic pattern

Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland often used to boast about belonging to the exclusive group of nation states that actually lived up to the idea of one people, one country and one state, statements that were continuously repeated during the nineteenth century. Although there seems to have existed a layer of description which recognized the Nordic peoples (Scythic, Indo-Germanic by descent) and Scandinavia as a natural or desirable territory for co-operation and cultural similarities, the very late nation states of Denmark (1864/1920) Norway (1814/1905), Finland (1809/1917) and Sweden (1809/1905) have managed to be established as the natural and desirable eternal shape of states in the region. Iceland and Sweden are often presented as among the few regions in the world that match the ideal of one nation, one state. This view has in theory been problematized by the impact and now firmly installed perspective of cultural constructivism. Not even by scholars who move the establishment of national sentiment a few centuries back in history is the perspective of constructivism challenged, only the idea of the close relationship between modernization and nationalism.

There are, however, fewer differences than one might think between Scandinavia and other European countries in regard to regional questions. A millennial and Nordic perspective would help us, instead of ideal nation states, to paint the picture of a dramatic failure to measure up to the medieval unionist project, centuries of federal complexity, ethnic diversity, endless wars between the aspiring Baltic empires of Sweden and Denmark, national movements within the emerging states of Norway, Finland, Iceland and border areas with uncertain loyalties and ethnic minorities lingering on, creating dissolving empires well up

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to the 20th century (Schleswig and Holstein, Jämtland, Skåne, Carelia, the Sami regions, Iceland etc). 2

To make a long history short: a fairly ordinary European experience could be sketched as regards the potential region-national complications in Scandinavia. What might need an explanation is why this heritage of potential injustices for most of the provinces was not utilized for aggressive nationalist purposes in the age of nationalism, or later in the age of regionalism. It is my argument that a triple integrative strategy construction has been at work: The establishment of a Nordic cultural nation and historical culture is the first important factor in the process of building the Nordic nation states. The second is, of course, the successful investment in a national (historical) culture in many spheres of life: sports, language politics, literature and welfare politics. However, the third integrative strategy has been less appreciated: the ability to deal with regional differences as a national cultural orchestration, and later as a purely administrative aspect of allocating equal opportunities, moved the question of diversity from a potential political arena of identity and power to that of cultural heritage and personal sentiment. 3

There is no doubt that academia has taken a massive part in this integrative dynamic. To put it very short, the traditional division of labour between the disciplines has enhanced the integrative function: history forgets regions and naturalizes nation states, ethnology culturalizes regional differences and social science instrumentalizes regions. The net sum is a massive naturalization of the present order. The dominance of a constructivist approach is furthermore in phase with flexible capitalism – teaching citizens reflexivity and the ability to change and adjust, which today is more valuable than the capacity to sacrifice the lives of soldiers at war. 4

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4 Sennett, 1998; Aronsson, 2000a
Changing regional dynamics?

Provincial strategies might, however, vary in a way that is not to easy to reduce to ready-made explanations. It is possible to see five different ideal types, here exemplified in the Swedish regional landscape:

1. **Self-government – federation – periphery/centre.** This is the long-term classic integrational struggle between regions with different aspirations in the nation-building project. The typical trajectory through history is from the perspective of the region a combination of a federative status and self-government, where the federative aspect has been gradually diminished and the self-government aspect more and more a rhetorical residual, while it has de facto developed into more of a local state.

2. **Resistance.** If the first strategy is a negotiating position, this implies a harsher attitude of resistance. Its military aspect was real until the Dacke feud in 1541 and Skåne in the 1670s, but it has had outbursts which even more implanted fear into the central government, a fear that was alive well into the 19th century. Today, it rather takes the forms of ridicule and even civil disobedience with reference to the lack of legitimacy of the Swedish occupational government – this is the attitude most commonly fostered in the regions conquered in 1645/58, Jämtland, Skåneland, and in the rest of the country in a milder form against people from the capital.

3. **Cultural mapping, cultural credit in a national framework.** This is the major strategy of regional cultural elites, going back as far as the 17th century, but becoming a main part of historical culture from the mid-19th century. (Dalarna, Småland)

4. **Winning regions.** If the idea of resistance regions had a renaissance in the 1970s, it was soon to be followed by the even stronger demands from the strong regions to revolt against supporting the less fortunate ones over the tax-bill. (Mälardalen, Öresund)

5. **Attraction landscapes.** As part of a leisure and experience economy a new regional landscape is constructed which aims both to give an impetus to civil society, net-working, and life-value within the local community and to produce assets worth selling to visitors coming for tourist purposes or even moving into the landscape as resident tax-payers to help counteract the continuing massive trail from the countryside, and from smaller towns into the three or four main urban regions in Sweden (Gotland, Österlen, Arnland)
6. **Indistinct regions**: All regions do not choose a strategy, or at least they do not succeed equally well in being recognized in any of the strategic landscapes. Blekinge and Halland might be seen as examples of this.

I will now continue to say something of three forms of regional cultural dynamics that are the most prominent in contemporary Sweden: resistance, winners and attraction landscapes – not seldom in conglomerate combinations: peripheries form a resistance identity as part of an attraction landscape to challenge the winning regions. The starting-point is the well-established imagery that Sweden is built up of natural provinces, landskap, literally “landscapes”. Ever since the 19th century they have organized geography, text books, literary images, tourist imagery – but, and this is a crucial point in their earlier function as cultural regions, without administrative or political functions.\(^5\)

**Changing landscapes: Jämtland**

One of the most researched cases of regional movement and identity in Sweden is Jämtland. The argument here is that the construction of a regional identity is no less complex than that of a national identity. It is moulded out of conflicts within the region, with neighbouring regions and in relation to the nation state. However, there are also changing elements in the construction depending on what coalitions and strategies for the future are preferred.\(^6\)

The construction of a deep medieval history is not seldom triggered by rapid change and a search for legitimate unity when threatened by class struggle or regional disintegration.\(^7\) It might be suggested that the very rapid economic cycle for the timber industry in western Jämtland 1880-1900 can be seen as an example of how an exploiting industry which does not meet a developed local counterpart will have an almost colonial dynamic: a short swing upwards for a mono-cultural economy followed by a long period of more or less chronic crises.\(^8\) The social forces in this turmoil were to a large extent migrants from outside the region. This goes both for capital and workforce, also challenging the inhabitant normatively by an excessive use of alcohol, triggering both the

\(^7\) Fewster, 2002.
\(^8\) Edquist 1989.
temperance and the local history movement. It can be looked upon as a cultural front, excluding the immigrants from the regional narrative, but of course it also gives an opportunity to “learn” both a tempered disciplined way of living and to internalize a historical narrative to become part of a regionally defined identity. Perhaps this is a social explanation of the impact of the regional dimension: the opportunity to integrate in a local community is more difficult since that is more tightly connected with birth and a way of life than a learned narrative. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the regional elite, who are the main bearers of the regional narrative, do not overlap with either the contemporary construction of a local narrative and cultural heritage of the only city, Östersund, or the many local historical societies.⁹

The narrative consists of the strong and early institutionalized establishment of the region as a historical subject, as an early medieval “Republic of Jämtland” only loosely collaborating with other nations such as Norway. The Frösö Thing (Jamtamotet) used to be the central institution for the independent political unit, uniquely in use until 1862. The existence of a regular Jämt language, not only a dialect, is part of the national argument. Consequently, the decline of the Republic corresponds with the rise of the strong nation states. The development is suppressed, first by Denmark-Norway (direct rule from 1536) and later by Sweden (occupation since 1645). The second heyday of the culture is connected with a special blend of trading farmers (förbönder) in 1750-1850, exploiting the regional position between the two states. The growing importance is verified by the establishment of the regional centre of Östersund in 1786. The short industrial exploitation of the forest resources at the beginning of the 20th century is followed by a long era of emigration, caused by the oppression and neglect of outside forces.

In the regional history of Jämtland we can clearly see the relationship to the centre and the power of the state becoming one of conflict. Competition with neighbouring regions was a prominent feature as early as the start of the twentieth century.

The local culture and history movement reinforced the patriotic currents at the turn of the century even more explicitly. Even if the narrative might look anti-national, it is striking that the territorial border of the historical subject for no good cultural historical reason follows the county territory – including the two provinces of Härjedalen and Jämtland proper, and within these quite different ecotopes and ways of life, from Sami minorities and forested

peripheries to the central farming district around Lake Storsjön. It was the latter that formed the model for the identity of the region. The regional elite was, however, never uncontested. In Härjedalen tradesman Erik Fundin established his own alternative institutions in Funäsdalen, but he was not supported by the important power elite and formal institutions of Östersund (in the province of Jämtland) and could not challenge the hegemony built up around Jämtland’s antiquarian association in 1886, the Arts and Craft of Jämtland, *Jämtslöjd*, 1908 (founded by the wife of the governor), the building of an outdoor museum in the 1910s, instituted as Old Jamtli, *Fornbyn Jamtli*, in 1912 under the leadership of Eric Festin. Other acts of creation, such as the revitalization of the Jamtamot, the Song of Jämtland, and *Arnljotspelen*, an epic play about the origin of the country by the famous composer Wilhelm Peterson-Berger performed from the early 20th century onwards, mediate to the public the idea of a community based on a grand regional past. These societies, phenomena and books are sanctioned by the state when their national romantic buildings of a county archive together with the county museum create a cultural agora at the gates of Jamtli, in intense competition with the coastal town of Härnösand. In 1930 the imposing milieu is inaugurated as a monumental proof of the existence of a real historical background to the regional narrative.  

When the tide turns once again in the late 1950s and early 1960s the rapid transformation and outward mobility trigger a new flavour of regionalism, as in many parts of western Europe. A Freedom movement is created in connection with a festival, *Storsjöyran* and the first president is elected, the entertainer Yngve Gamlin, again an exile Jamt. Government policy was seen as the main enemy, crowned by the suggestion by a committee in 1967 to merge the county of Jämtland with the county of Västernorrland and make Östersund’s rival city, Härnösand, the capital. A humorous touch balances the alleged parallelism with liberation armies in the third world. The movement abates somewhat in the 1970s when low temperature in the economy elsewhere to some extent reduces the demographic movements. In the 1980s it regains momentum and the aggressiveness is communicated with the establishment of JRA, *Jamtlandska Republikanska Armén* (1983) and a new exile entertainer, Moltas Eriksson, as President declares that “the Republic is 51% fun and 49% serious”. The army works as a guard of honour for the president and appears as a mock border-controlling guard during the festivals, nevertheless in a carnivalistic manner communicating a territorial message. References are made both to contemporary

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10 Sane, 2004; Tengström, 2003.
European liberation movements, nurtured by not only the medieval story but also by the fact that the region was part of the provinces conquered from Denmark-Norway by Sweden in the mid-seventeenth century. Rituals produced in this setting are packed in symbols like the flag and everyday references to the republic as an identity-marker and are again institutionalized in narratives of institutions like Jamtli under the distinct regionalistic and publicly successful leadership of Sten Rentzhog.\footnote{Rentzhog, 1984; Hansen, 1998; Hansen, 2001; Häggström, 2000; Tengström, 2003.}

Within the movement the need for balance between excluding and including strategies has been recognized. The historically based narrative tends to contain an ethnic or even racist bias which makes it difficult to include newcomers and also to be accepted outside a fanatic core. The other way of constructing a community is to make belonging a question of option and voluntary identity choice. In the 1995 presidential speech it is once more stated that being a Jamt is a question of attitude, a “longing for freedom and uncompromising struggle against chauvinist Swedishness”.\footnote{Hansen, 2001, cit. p. 509, the author’s translation.}

The topographically rooted novel, especially the historical novel with its modern mediated counterparts, has had an important impact on the creation of the above-mentioned resistance landscapes. To become successful as such does not only require that the social and political preconditions have to be fulfilled. There must also be a rather precise presupposition of the unity at play, of its facticity, symbolic representations and narrative messages to later generations. It is not a coincidence that so many cultural workers and media professionals are active also in Jämtland. One of the more active in the 21th century is Carl-Göran Ekerwald, famous for his literary-cultural books and many biographies on prominent figures in European intellectual history. But he has also engaged in writings on Jämtland and Jamt identity, the latest book arguing for the real existence of the Old Jämte against the relativizing activities from the museum officials and other academics.\footnote{[Ekerwald, 2004 #1705].} He explains the animosity between the defenders and attackers of the idea of the republic and the Old Jämte as “tribal thinking”. By this he means that the attacks on the idea of the existence and prevalence of a distinct Jamt culture, denying the differences in skull formation, the evidence of the runic stones and patterns of inter-marriage emanate from sub-conscious chauvinist Swedish tribal sentiments fostered at Uppsala University. The truth is there, but it is easier to discern from the marginal.
is why the classic professional breakthrough in Swedish historiography was made from Lund and Skåne, by Lauritz Weibull of Danish descent, writing the history of the province. The lesson to be learned is however, according to Ekerwald, not political, but personal. But on that level it is a lesson with implications – for those who care to listen.14

Here the argument is still firmly rooted in the legitimate existence of past actions and realities. The importance of the lesson is not entertainment, tourism or local development. The opposite might be the case. These phenomena threaten to diminish the sense of reality and make a vulgar commedia dell’arte of the regional. That the road to recognition is at least using edutainment as a tool, and sometimes more than that, is however the main strategy used by many pretenders to success. Even Jamtli Historyland might be seen as choosing this path as a tool. Gotland with Visby is the best explored example in Sweden, but many ecoparks and edutainment landscapes have been developed all over the world, exploring the dynamics of the experience economy, making more or less use of historic reality as a source of imagination.

The complicated relation to the construction of a homogenizing identity based on a very selective culture has its parallels in academic and political debates all over the world. The interesting thing here is that it is mirrored also on the regional level. One of the major institutions for securing the reality of Jämtland’s separate and unique culture is the County Museum and its extraordinarily popular outdoor museum, Jamtli. It has for some decades also served as a bridge between scientific legitimacy and the popular construction of regional identity. The basic exhibition in the new museum building from 1995 must still in 2004 be said to communicate the grand narrative of the region as a country, added with Sami culture in a well defined corner: a mythical Viking founding era is complemented with the celebrated heydays of the trading farmers of 18th- and 19th-century pre-industrial society and in between the troubles of the conquest and occupation by Swedish troops.15 This is a function that has recently been questioned in both thematic exhibitions and by adding more troublesome dimensions to the outdoor museums since the successful main theme of the 1970s: History is fun!

The change in policy resulted in an intense public debate around the question-mark after the exhibition in summer 2003: Urjämten – finns han?,

“The Ur-Jamt, does he exist?” The new regime of the county museum set up by the recently appointed Danish director Henrik Zip Sane in 2002, reinforced by a national assignment to develop the outdoor museum, confronted the set of ideas accumulated in the 20th century. The question mark after regional identity was registered as an insult and the common academic constructivist approach as an accusation of building identity on a conscious lie. The traditional argument in favour of the existence of an autonomous Jamt tribal culture was by association connected with biologist and even racist arguments typical of the 1930s and earlier. The newspaper debate came to circulate around an accusation, even brought to court, that the museum associated narratives with a tribal, biologist and racist discourse, and by association with Nazism. The museum director, on the other hand, investigated the possibility of taking legal action as a reply to what he thought of as defamation. The struggle raged in the regional media in 2003, among not too many people, but with a grave intensity. The defender of the traditional viewpoints had proponents in one of the newspapers, Länstidningen, and a group of well-known cultural workers and journalists assigned the titles like “Foreign Minister” and “National Source of Knowledge”, respectively, by the “Government of the Republic”16, in association with local historians. The proponents are both the newspaper Östersundsposten but above all a group of professional academics arguing for a more modern and updated, one might say, politically and scientifically correct perspective: universal human rights, pluralism, differing interpretations and the like. The program of the museum reflects this change in its overall activities, dealing with less happy and cheerful topics than before and treating subjects like war, migration and refugees. As mentioned, this is in tune not only with developments within cultural sciences, but also in national cultural politics, like the national reform program for cultural heritage brought to a conclusion in 2004, Agenda Kulturarv.17

Somewhat surprisingly, one might describe the position once again as the culture and worldview of the national institution imposing over strong regional narratives. The message once formed and legitimized by government and scientific institutions to enhance the position in the national system has been expelled to popular culture. The academic leadership in coalition with modernizers argue for the need to expel the idea of Jamt identity as a basis for community-building and exchange it for universal human rights and a functional

17  Funke, 2004
need to cooperate in the region where one happens to live. However, in a territorial power perspective this position under-communicates its national agenda. It might be looked upon as a strategy to once again reinforce and legitimate the power structure of the Swedish nation state, but with a rhetorical anti-nationalist nationalism. The proponents for a traditional Jamt narrative are on the other hand not ‘ordinary people’ but rather organic intellectuals in Gramsci’s sense, at least in their articulation of a sceptical outlook on constructivism, relativism, the higher academic esteem of long roots and traditional ways of life. Most of the activists are, however, people who are either immigrants to the republic or professional emigrants. These life experiences make it more necessary to establish a conscious and a reflected narrative around what for most people remains unarticulated everyday life experience.

The contemporary and conflictual alternative to a Jamt identity can be compared with the construct of a Sami identity. The ethnic definition has been very strong here since both the Swedish majority culture and the minority group itself had a common interest in the establishment of a strict dichotomy between the cultures and ethnicities in the late 19th century – steadfast farmers on the one hand and nomadic reindeer economy on the other, disregarding parallel diversities in the real culture of both groups. The establishment of Sami reserves, Sami villages for an exclusive reindeer economy, was the result of this. When in the 1980s another strategy, namely that of claiming property rights, was tried out, it did not succeed. The power of written evidence should have discouraged any oral culture from attempting such a strategy. Today the cultural construction of an ethnic past going back to the Stone Age is also pursued by official institutions that would not even consider the same argument (openly) for the majority culture. In the official cultural policy, cultural diversity in ethnic and territorial terms is proposed as the alternative to obsolete nationalism.

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19 It is tempting to compare with the Maori struggle in New Zealand where the very existence of a written ‘constitutional agreement’ between the British and Maori makes a foundation for the legal and cultural settlement of disputes. Where this is lacking, as for the Aborigines in Australia, minority rights seems to be the only way to enhance the legal position of a minority in a liberal democracy.
Struggling to become a winning region: Skåne

Parallel cases of protest identity and other strategies for regional formation are also to be found in Skåne. The rhetoric to integrate a province conquered in the second half of the 17th century, and to articulate resistance, has shifted over the years. An open-air museum was opened in Lund, the cultural capital of Skåne, in 1892, only a year after the Skansen museum in Stockholm.20 But here one can discern three parallel narratives without the intensity of the struggle for hegemony that has been possible in Jämtland. In Skåne there is a parallel protest identity, struggling for liberation, but without the characteristic Jamt smile. That the occupation power should return the stolen cultural heritage to where it belongs is the message from the Resistance region.

At the other extreme, there is regional presentation as a clear example of a Winning region ambition. This concept was refined in the first enthusiasm for the Öresund bridge and emphasizes the trans-national Öresund region as a high-tech metropolitan region defined by fast communications, world-leading biotechnology and a dense university structure.21 A more neutral presentation in continuation of the one proposed by county officials and tourist boards is what might be called the Official or EU province, with its distinct blend of local uniqueness and the idea of being encompassed within a European family, in sharp contrast to the more solitary (and anti-EU) otherness fostered in Jämtland.

The three different regions are taken for granted and developed in their respective cultural genre and historical culture.22 They are also presented very demonstratively on their respective homepages: Skånes Framtid (resistance), Region Skåne (official) Öresundskommittén (winning). The fate of the regions differs according to varying desires and threats projected into the future. The varying logic among these three shows clearly how the representation of the past relates to the future, which determines their structure and narrative. The official homepage is a negotiated story where the politicians’ wish to underpin regional identity has met the professionals’ unwillingness to do so (they would prefer either to be more local or more universal).23 Should history create a dark

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20 The ”Swedifying” processes are again under debate in the historical literature. See e.g. Lerbom, 2003; Bergman, 2002, articles in Kulturen 1995 and 2000.
obsolete background (old industry) to a bright high-tech (bio-medicine) future? Should it give critical examples of abuse from occupation forces or create local space to identify with and feel at home in?24

In the region of Skåne there are more interpretations on the public arena, especially the stronger stance for the modernistic master-narrative which prefers to look into the future to looking back for legitimacy. The separatist voice lacks the ambivalent overtone of laughter and good humour, and is hence more marginal than in Jämtland. Both landscapes do make excessive and multi-dimensional use of their history in order to suggest to the present a way or several ways into a threatening future.

A theory of the uses of history

Developments within science and contemporary history have led to an increased interest in how history is (re)created in other arenas than the scientific. This article suggests that such concepts as the culture of history, the uses of history and historical consciousness are just as potentially important concepts in historiography as are social aspects, culture, mentality and gender in terms of their potential for changing the perspective of research.

The culture of history consists of the artefacts, rituals, customs and assertions with references to the past which allow us to link the relationship between the past, present and future. Occasionally they are direct and explicit interpretations of this link. Uses of History is a concept including the processes where parts of the culture of history are activated to form definite opinions and action-oriented totalities. Historical consciousness comprises those views of the link between the past, present and future which steer the use of history and which are established and reproduced in its use. A certain selection of the culture of history is activated as communities of memory and forms a historical consciousness. The concept of the historical categories space of experiences and horizon of expectations fits well into this framework. Knowledge and descriptions of the past create opportunities for certain assumptions about the future. The hopes and fears created by images of the future in the present influence the way the relationship between memory and that which is forgotten is organized in the spaces of experience. The uses of history take place in the

dynamic process that links the spaces of experience and horizon of expectations in a specific situation.

The field of cultures of history might be separated into communicating spheres, where some are more explicit and some more implicit in their use of history:
Two hypotheses related to this graph are:

1. The impact of a specific combination is dependent on the intertwined combination of uses in several spheres. When an epoch like the medieval reaches an epochal interest above others, or when a regional level is articulated more then national or local levels, this is possible because it speaks through all these channels. The production of meaning is often enhanced, rather then undermined, by contradictory combinations.

2. The source of legitimacy heavily invested in the right side of the graph has spread more evenly during the last few decades. Legitimate uses of the past are legitimately and publicly recognized both as private experiences, political community-building and commercial goals, the striving for knowledge being only one special interest. The interaction between them seems to be a matter of legitimacy by cross-reference rather than contradiction, which used to be the foundation of the traditional evaluation of critical science.
The storyline, the inner meaning, can change over time, but the forms are restricted to four logically possible narratives of historical consciousness. These four can be logically constructed by their way of relating past-contemporaneousness-future:

1. the past as the *Good old days*, where the grass was greener, people finer and more real. (Classic Jamt, Skånes framtid)
2. the story about continuing *Progress*, where little by little or by revolutionary acts the bad old days develop into our own time with ourselves as the crown of historical development. From poverty to welfare capitalism (the main story of the Western world) (High-tech, transnational Öresund)
3. history as a *Never-never-land* indisputably and qualitatively separated from our own presentness (tourist landscapes)
4. and the opposite idea: *There is nothing new under the sun*. Humans are basically the same and we live in one time-space of experiences to learn from, be seduced and horrified by. (providing the subjective opportunity of empathy)

Many good stories contain a combination of these four narrative genres, thereby allowing the tale to respond to different needs. These four types designate the formal connection between the past and the present in the narratives. However, their meaning is not restricted to the storyline but is also attached to their capacity to work as symbols and metaphors.

This might seem like a contrary way of organizing experience through symbol, icon, metonymy and metaphor. A symbol might seem as a frozen statement without the chronology of the narrative. When it works as metonymy, however, there is an effective interplay between the storyline and the symbolic use, a kind of shorthand, where it is possible to connect metaphors both as the effective outcome of a narrative and as a necessary framework for a narrative to work. Epochal designations like ‘medieval’ might be used both ways. The use of symbols to communicate meaning is then not contrary to the narrative approach but the two have rather to be combined to make understandable the strength and effect they might produce in combination. By connecting both identity and difference in an open manner, metonymy has a capability to create authentic experiences in a way that more precise concepts are unable to. Using this perspective in historical experience seems most appropriate, since it can give a mimetic reflection of the impossibility of a ‘historical experience’ proper. It has

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to be produced in a metaphoric process combining the past with the present. The logic of this process is given only when we bring the future into the horizon. Understanding is an action which relates to a ‘full’ perspective of connecting an experience of the past with fears and longings regarding future realities, horizons of expectations, and brings them into the realm of present understanding and action
space of experiences

horizon

mimetic logic

narrative logic
New regional dynamics – playing with identity, mass media and regional development

The examples have illustrated both continuities and changes in the way regional histories are put to play over the centuries. As positive projects they are still relevant with their pseudo-national ambitions but perhaps more often so by establishing new economic clusters in an experience economy. As proponents for a strategy of resistance claims can be raised for a more aggressive strategy, exemplified by Jämtland, or a more begging one, asking for support nicely. The national rationale for supporting this, as well as the regional rationale in an inwards dynamics is integration, often through balancing a homogenizing narrative with the idea of Unity in diversity. This strategy is close to the integrative function also reproduced by all academic and educational activity: unity by knowledge, producing meaning, around and by historical subjects, territories and events and thereby giving them a reflected existence.26 This may all be seen as part and parcel of the old regional dynamics. Added to these, I would state that what is more typical of a contemporary set of conditions is when historical regions are set up, as is the case for example in a grand scheme in the county of Västernorrland to reactivate the industrial past with European Union money (180 million SEK in six years). Here the context is development, rather than national politics. Of course the nation is still important for allocating resources, also from the EU, but the faith in political decisions per se is not there any more. Connected with the hopes of making culture revitalize a visiting economy are often hopes and strategies to contribute to new business, often via enhancing social networking, in other words, trust, coherence and flexibility through cultural investments. Branding a community, making it a trademark, is often seen as a general tool for attracting both citizens, visitors and entrepreneurs to the region. As an extra bonus, if these rather direct hopes do not measure up, there are irreducible life values to add: health, well-being, knowledge.27

27 Aronsson, 2003 Weissglas, 2002
The construction of regional challenges to other levels of identities, local, national and universal, is not new. It has been suggested that we can view ancient monuments as communicators of ambitions of this sort.\textsuperscript{28} In Sweden it is well known that regionalistic ambitions on the political scale, so frequent until the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, change to more cultural forms in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. Even at this early stage the standard formula is to develop the argument that the region is in fact not a periphery but the legitimate centre of the early birth and growth of the nation. For regions where this seems like a hopeless strategy there still remains the classic historical capital in showing old settlements, the unique culture within the preferred territory, creating a historical subject to take part in the orchestrated national ensemble.

All the uses are in Friedrich Nietzsche’s sense monumental and not critical, at least in their message to outsiders. There might also for several of the readers and participants be uses which more resemble the antiquarian mode, relating the individual to a more existential, less directly political and more emotive landscape of inheritance and layers of meaning producing a sense of home with more dimensions then what is otherwise possible.\textsuperscript{29}

The monumental mode is connected with the narrative trope of the Golden Age, often combined with a clear, nostalgic and fantasy-opening distance between Now and Then, producing a Never-never land to play in. The latter is especially clear when it comes to medieval landscapes. When regional history is utilized as a political force, some of the traits might seem unchanging: the Swedish occupation of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century really never ended for Skånes Framtid or JRA, it just took on new forms of capitalist extortion or state policy of bringing both cultural goods and natural resources out of the province without any real reimbursement. But even more so, this trope is at play when people have an empathic viewpoint of the age, people and places they interact with.

On a more general level, the answer to the introductory questions is that regional projects and their uses of the past must be understood as negotiating meaning in the face of fears or longings projected on the future. The need for a theoretical development of the uses of history is urgent to regional history. When the legitimacy of traditional institutions is eroding, the constructionist perspective and the political function of academia become more open and

\textsuperscript{28} Bradley, 2002.

\textsuperscript{29} Nietzsche, 1980.
contested – as one of many aspirants to legitimate knowledge. The academic production of knowledge should not only be regarded as the external organization of cognition. It is at least functionally part of a division of labour with fundamental consequences to the production, representation and legitimization of territories. This does not change because the focus changes from nation to region. On the contrary, as politics and economics increasingly become politics of identity and the market looks to culture as a major resource, it integrates cultural sciences in a new societal division of labour. But the perspective also helps towards a radical historization of both the relationship between region and state, region and other divisions and, above all, the active role interpreters and knowledge producers have as not only mapping but also making the regional landscapes.

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