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In a Red Little Cottage:
Icons of Identity and Nation in Sweden

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Germanic Languages

by

Anna Jenny Katarina Blomster

2016

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

In a Red Little Cottage:
Icons of Identity and Nation in Sweden

by

Anna Jenny Katarina Blomster

Doctor of Philosophy in Germanic Languages

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Timothy R. Tangherlini, Chair

The image of a red cottage with white corners in a rural idyllic setting holds an iconic status in visual representations of Sweden, and has been produced and reproduced in commercial advertising and tourist industry as well as in the visual rhetoric of contesting political parties for over more than a century. The cottage's conspicuous position in visual representations of Sweden speaks to the need for an in-depth analysis of the cottage as a trope of national identity. Despite this, it has not received greater attention in research on national symbols and national identity in the field of Scandinavian studies. My dissertation aims to fill this gap by a sustained, close reading of the red cottage as a continuous symbol through which national identity is manifested, and problematized.

To fully understand the contemporary position of the red cottage's position as "key-

symbol” in visual representation of Sweden or ”Swedishness”, it is crucial to put it in its socio-historical context. In this dissertation, historical analysis is paired with semiotic visual studies. The broad use of the red cottage furthermore calls for an interdisciplinary approach. The theories used in the different sections are therefore drawn from the broad field of cultural studies, anthropology and consumer culture theory.

The stereotypical picture of a red cottage in a rural idyll emerged from the dovetailing of the urgent housing situation for the working class and the quest for a new, democratic nationalism during the early twentieth century. By using examples from education, tourism, advertising and politics, the dissertation shows how the red cottage over time was transformed into a Barthesian “myth”, where all possible meanings has been condensed and naturalized to the “Swedish home.” Through this overdetermination the rural idyll attracts users from a wide spectra, and has often been used to manifest opposing interests. Despite the stereotypical representation of the Swedish countryside, the cottage-idyll is part of a dynamic process of becoming rather than being. Although the depiction of the cottage idyll has remained quite static over the century, the question of who is to inhabit this home is a matter of constant negotiation.

The dissertation of Anna Jenny Katarina Blomster is approved.

Dell Upton

Arne O. Lunde

Timothy R. Tangherlini, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

For Johanna and Lovisa

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Vita

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Introduction

The “House of Sweden” in Washington DC, which houses the embassies of both Sweden and Iceland as well as exhibition halls and an event center, is an impressive glass and wood building constructed by the architects Gert Wingårdh and Tomas Hansen. The sleek building is, allegedly, a “physical representation of Swedish values such as openness, transparency and democracy” (<http://bit.ly/1iYTy9N>)¹. While visiting “House of Sweden” during the fall of 2011, I noticed another building closely connected to “Swedish values” peeking out from behind the corner of the minimalist façade of the main building. On the patio, facing the Potomac River, sat a miniature red cottage (fig. 1). The cottage, which measured approximately 160cm x 120cm, had red-painted paneled walls, white corners, window frames, and bargeboards, and a dark green door (fig. 2). Looking inside, I saw doll furniture decorating the interior; the house was apparently the home of a Pippi Longstocking doll. A representative for House of Sweden informed me about the authenticity of the cottage, reassuring that it was handmade by a Swedish carpenter, who had even taken pains to give it a shingled roof, and paint it with traditional red paint made from ferric oxide, a bi-product from the mining of copper in Falun, Dalarna² (fig 3).



Figure 1: House of Sweden, and Cottage on the Potomac.



Figure 2: Cottage on the Potomac.



Figure 3. Map of Dalarna. *Grundskolans kartbok*. Stockholm: Esselte Studium. 1981.

A sign outside the cottage stated:

“After juggling the everyday responsibilities of urban life, one needs a place to recharge internal batteries. To a Swede, a little red house, whether in the countryside or on a community garden plot, is the ideal place for recharging. Children are welcome to play in the Little Red House on the Potomac.

The sign on “Little Red House on the Potomac” makes it seem as though a red painted cottage in the countryside is a reality for the majority of the Swedish population. Although it is true that many Swedes own or have access to a vacation home, it is far from the majority of the Swedish population that can enjoy the privilege of a retreat in the shape of a red cottage surrounded by nature. In 2013, 37% of the Swedish population had access to a vacation home, but only 17% owned one, according to the service of statistics *Snabba Svar* (<http://bit.ly/1HGhk5X3>). How many of these were painted red is an unanswered question. Indeed, the Swedish population is diverse in terms of ethnicity, economic opportunities and living habits, and it is likely that a great deal of the population does not even have the inclination to recharge their batteries at a red painted cottage in the country. Despite this, the “cottage-idyll” continuously reoccurs in visual representations of Sweden.

As Nils Edling points out in *Det fosterländska hemmet* (1996), the concept of home took on ideological proportions during the early twentieth century, permeating most areas of popular culture, politics, and art. Home became a “metaphor we live by,” in the words of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). According to this “home-ideology” of the early twentieth century, the red house in an idyllic rural setting emerged as the “authentic Swedish home”. Since then, the cottage-idyll has appeared in advertising, film and political propaganda, among other places. In advertising, it is used to sell everything from chocolate to laundry detergent. It has an

undisputable position in films whenever the setting is rural summer in Sweden, and it appears in political propaganda for all political factions, and adorns postcards, representing not only a specific region, but the nation as a whole (fig. 4).



Figure 4: Greetings from Sweden!

The most recent proposal is to land a red cottage on the moon, with the artist Mikael Genberg claiming in *The Local* on October 11, 2006, that it will be a “symbol for mankind” ([http://bit.ly/1NPk56m⁴](http://bit.ly/1NPk56m4)). Just as Christopher Tilley claims is the case with the English cottage garden, the red cottage, beautifully situated in perpetual summer either on the archipelago or by a forest lake surrounded by summer greenery “is almost too idealized to actually exist except in representations” (2008: 225). Rather than as a place for relaxation recognized by the generic “Swede,” as suggested by the sign on the “Little Red House on the Potomac,” the idyllic image of a Falu-red cottage with white corners in a rural setting is a “key-symbol” that holds an iconic status in visual representations of Sweden.

The cottage’s conspicuous position speaks to the need for an in-depth analysis of the cottage as a trope of national identity. Current work that focuses on the red colored houses of Sweden largely highlight the special qualities of Falu-red paint from a cultural heritage, or building preservation perspective, avoiding the theoretically rich dimensions of the cottage as symbol altogether. These publications have, in many cases, been published by Stora Kopparbergs AB, the company that owns the brand *Falu Rödfärg*, and today the company synonymous with red paint made from ferric oxide (Romdahl 1932; Rentzhog 1970; Kjellin, Ericson 1999). Occasionally, the books are designed as “coffee table-books,” and include homages to red-painted buildings accompanied by stunningly beautiful pictures (Edenheim 2004). These books should be considered part of the idealized picture of the Swedish rural idyll and hardly rise to the challenge of a thorough analysis of the red cottage’s position in the index of national representation. Considering that the red painted cottage has been a common feature in the visual representation of Sweden for more than a century, and considering the ongoing and deeply contested debates concerning national identity in Scandinavia, it is imperative to question

the underlying ideology of these representations. Despite this, the cottage has not received attention in the research on national symbols and national identity in the field of Scandinavian Studies. This dissertation aims to fill that gap. Through close-reading, and critical analysis of the use of images of the idyllic red cottage, I “unpack” the multivalent interpretations and implementations of the Swedish cottage, and highlight it as a dynamic tool in the negotiation of national identity(ies).

To fully understand the contemporary position of the red cottage as a key-symbol in visual representation of Sweden or “Swedishness,” it is crucial to put it in its socio-historical context and pair it with semiotic analysis. This socio-historical and intertextual perspective makes available an analysis that emphasizes the cottage-idyll’s marked position in the ideology as more than an isolated phenomenon. In line with Anne Mager, who uses a socio-historical perspective on commercial images, I suggest that by applying a socio-historical perspective on the use of the cottage-idyll in popular culture, it is possible to “find out how value systems are made and negotiated in consumer societies” (2005: 168)

The broad use of the red cottage calls for an interdisciplinary approach. The theories used in the different sections are therefore drawn from the broad fields of cultural studies, anthropology and consumer culture theory. My point of departure depends on the idea that nationalism is not only about extreme and aggressive right-wing political factions expressed in clashes between juxtaposed groups, but is also a matter of identity, embedded in our worldview and expressed in more or less unreflective ways. Nationalism is a three dimensional phenomenon, according to the sociologist Craig Calhoun (1997). Besides a social and political movement, Calhoun regards nationalism as discourse, a “production of cultural understanding and rhetoric” that leads people to think in terms of nation and national identity (1997: 6).

Nationalism is therefore not only the aggressive movement that sometimes surfaces, but also a discourse that has come to inform the way that we think about inclusion and exclusion (Calhoun 1997: 3). Accordingly, nationalism should be understood as an ideology, not in the sense of a “välordnat och genomarbetat tankesystem” [well-ordered and marked of system of thought] but rather opinions, values and imaginations tied to the idea of nation and permeating most aspects of society, including popular culture and reproduced in mundane and expected ways (Edling 1996: 24).

In the seminal book *Imagined Communities* (2006 [1983]), Benedict Anderson argues that both nation and national identity are constructed. Both need to be understood as “cultural artifacts of a particular kind” (2006: 4). Anderson situates the foundation of the feeling of community in the breakthrough of print-capitalism. Due to the possibility of large-scale printing and distribution of newspapers, paired with the increase of literacy and improvement in infrastructure, it became possible for many people to “think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others” (2006: 36). The concept of nation should be understood as an “imagined political community,” and the feeling of national community should be understood as imagined, since “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 2006: 6). The “imagined” nature of nations, however, does nothing to diminish its power as a unifying concept – quite the contrary. The “imagined sameness” and the idea of belonging to a nation are very real (Gullestad 2001: 38).

Anderson’s idea of national identity as an imagined community has become public property within academia. At the same time, several scholars have criticized him for being too historicist and neglecting more contemporary expressions of national identity, such as film,

material culture and even everyday habits, such as gardening (Edensor 2002: 7-8; Tilley 2008, Marklund 2014). It has also been argued that the focus on the nation-state neglects the role of electronic media on the concept of national identity. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argues that electronic media has changed the scope of the collective imagination. People living in diaspora can still take part in the current political and cultural happenings in their home countries via electronic media. The ability of this media to move freely across national boundaries means that the “community of sentiment” is no longer dependent on place (Appadurai 1996: 8). Instead, one can talk about “virtual electronic neighbourhoods,” which promote the continuance of the production of locality (1996: 197). Indeed, material culture travels abroad as well, the “Little Red House on the Potomac” being an example of this. Thus, it is not only electronic media that enables the community of sentiment to cross national borders. Regardless of the critique of Anderson’s historicist perspective, his idea that national identity is an imagined community appears to be a matter of consensus. In this dissertation, nation will be regarded as an imagined community reproduced in an everyday mode of which the multi-faceted use of the cottage-idyll in popular culture is one but many ways that nation is communicated.

The best known attempt to explore the manifestation of nation in an everyday mode is presented by Michael Billig in *Banal Nationalism* (1995). Billig argues that nationalism is often placed on the periphery, as something happening at the outskirts of the Western world, reserved for extreme political groups, or something that occasionally flares up in the case of war (1995: 5). The more unobtrusive expressions of nationalism, such as money, national representation in sporting events, and the choice of politicians and magazines to use “us” and “them” in speech and writing has been neglected for these more bombastic expressions of “flag waving”. By

introducing the term “banal nationalism,” Billig’s aim is to explore the “ideological habits”-- the mundane and taken for granted ways that established nations are reproduced (1995: 6).

Similar to Anderson’s focus on the printed press, Billig’s focus is primarily linguistic and concerned about how words such as “us,” “we” and “them” are used to separate one nation from another in political speech and in reports on sporting events. As Billig claims, however, his study is preliminary and the mundane “flag-waving” is not limited to printed material, but also acknowledges that almost anything can be used to flag the nation (1995: 9).

Several researchers have expanded on Billig’s take on banal nationalism (Edensor 2002; Foster 2002; Tilley 2008). Tim Edensor states in *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (2002) that the rise of a feeling of national community cannot be limited to literacy and the printed press, but also has to consider other non-literary expressions such as radio, film, fashion, popular music and architecture (2002: 7). In line with Billig, Edensor argues the mundane aspects of nationalism have been pushed into the background for the exploration of invented traditions and political economy, despite the fact that these comprise a rather small part of the expressions of nationhood. The reason that nation continues to be a powerful aspect of identity is, according to Edensor, that it is grounded in the popular. In order to understand the attraction of the idea of nation, it is crucial to look at these everyday expressions (2002, iv). Coins, stamps, and license plates are but a few examples of items that function as reminders of national identity on an everyday basis (ibid 2002: 113; Raento, Bunn 2005). Besides these mundane, though obvious markers of nation, national identity is communicated through the use of less official national symbols in popular culture. Edensor demonstrates this by looking at how nationhood is expressed in material culture, film, sport and in the depiction of the rural landscape. In a similar way, Robert J Foster claims in *Materializing the Nation: Commodities,*

Consumption and Media in Papua New Guinea (2002) that the “checklist” for expressing nationhood is, to large degree, an “inventory of banalities,” and that the nation “materializes more often in these banal and unremarkable forms than in the spectacular and emotion-charged displays often associated with Nationalism” (2002: 11). He illustrates this by looking at how “Papua New Guinea-ness” is expressed in various types of public culture, from advertisements to official policy documents.

In line with Edensor and Foster, the material for this dissertation is gathered from broad sources, ranging from educational posters and political campaigns to advertisements, web pages for vacation villages, and TV-shows. Where Edensor and Foster look at different motifs and expressions, I have instead chosen to focus on the reoccurring motif of the red cottage in the rural idyll in different expressions of popular culture. As will be shown, the use of the red cottage has been a way to “flag the nation” in this most banal manner for more than a century.

The idea of nation as an imagined community relies on symbols that carry the idea of community. Naturally, official symbols, such as the anthem, national flag, coins and national coat of arms comprise such symbols—essentially constituting a “do-it yourself kit” for national identity (Löfgren 1989: 8). Unofficial symbols, or “symbols that gently remind people of who they are” are those that, to a greater or lesser extent, pass by unnoticed (Palmer 1998: 181). Indeed, if they are and when they become symbolic is even subject to debate. TV-shows, and commercial brands, as well as “ideological habits” such as how to arrange a garden or how to do the dishes can be used as a means by which to distinguish between nationalities (Billig 1995: 6; Tilley 2008; Linde –Laursen 1993). For the discussion of symbols, I will rely on anthropologist Raymond Firth’s definition. A symbol, Firth claims, is not only a thing that stands for something else, but also has a strong emotional aspect. Secondly, a symbol has a communicative aspect. It

is a way to share ideas and feelings which otherwise would be hard to communicate.

Furthermore, a symbol is not static. What is communicated depends on the relationship the person or group using the symbol has to the society in which it is used (1973: 73). Such symbols are rich in meaning and can be used by different groups.

Anthropologist Sherry Ortner defines the types of symbols that hold a particular status within a society as “key-symbols,” and distinguishes between summarizing symbols and elaborating symbols (1973). While elaborating symbols are vehicles to sort out “complex and undifferentiated feelings and ideas, making them comprehensible to oneself,” summarizing symbols communicate a “conglomerate of ideas and feeling --- and it stands for them all at once. It does not encourage reflection on the logical relations among these ideas. Rather they “operate to compound and synthesize a complex system of ideas” (1973: 1340). Summarizing symbols have a quantitative aspect since it is the broadness and the great number of potential applications of the symbol that is the key-function (1973: 1339). The red cottage in the rural idyll has the quality of a summarizing key-symbol. It sums up a nostalgic idea about childhood, carefree country living and closeness to nature. This worship of nature is also a quality that is often said to be particular to the Swedish national identity – the “Little Red House on the Potomac” being one of many examples. An emotional link between the red cottage, home and nation is established through the constant connection made between Sweden and the red cottage. This is done explicitly through text or through a combination with the Swedish flag, as well as implicitly through the pre-understanding that comes with it, at least for the people sharing cultural values and who are part of the same “imagined community” of Sweden. The cottage, as a pervasive symbol for the vague and multi-layered concept of “home,” thus becomes the perfect vehicle for

both the tourist industry and commercial interests as well political parties from both the left and the extreme right-wing factions.

Connected to the idea of key-symbols as vehicles for communication of national identity is Roland Barthes concept of “myth” (1972). In “Myth Today” Barthes describes myth as a “second-order semiological system” (1972: 114). In first-order semiological systems, the signifier and the signified are summed up in a sign, or meaning. For example, a small dwelling house made of wood and painted red is the signifier of a red cottage, which can be understood as home. In the system of myth, the sign becomes a signifier (ibid). In a second-order semiological system, such as Barthes’ myth, an object is conceived of as already rich in meaning. Besides meaning a home, the red cottage carries both a history of building tradition, and a socio-political history. In the system of the myth, these other meanings are put at a distance, and replaced with a mythical concept, consisting of “shapeless associations” (1973: 119). For example, the “Swedish home” garners ideas of a particular kind of interior, summer, childhood, closeness to nature and ultimately, ideas of “Swedishness”. Myth is thus a form of ideology. In this way, the mythical concept corresponds with the “ideological habits” or the “un-waved flag” of Billig’s banal nationalism (1995: 6). It passes unnoticed and is taken for granted. According to Barthes, that the myth “transforms history into nature” is the very principle of myth (1972: 129). The relationship between the myth and the object becomes hidden and appears as natural, unreflected “innocent speech” (1972: 131). The myth states a fact without explaining it. In this dissertation, the cottage-idyll will be regarded as a Barthesian “myth”. The meaning of the cottage-idyll as myth, or the associations that it evokes as the symbol for a vague idea of Swedishness “goes without saying” and all there is left to do is to enjoy the “object without wondering where it comes from” (1972: 143,151).

That landscape serves as a prominent symbol for summing up national identity is a well-researched field of study (Hooson 1994; Bunce 1994; Short, 1991; Schama 1995; Edensor 2002). Historian Simon Schama states, in *Landscape and Memory* (1995), that “national identity [---] would lose much of its ferocious enchantment without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition” (1995: 15). The idea that particular landscapes were intimately connected to nation emerged during the eighteenth century, concurrent with the founding of national associations. This idea was spread not least of all through the tourist associations that became popular during the late nineteenth century. Nature was used as a way to demarcate one nation from another. Particular landscapes and sceneries were singled out and said to mirror special qualities of the nation and its people (Bunce 1994: 53; Hettne, Sörlin, and Østergård 1998: 336)

For many nations, it is the rural landscape that holds this special position. Julian Agyeman claims, “the countryside, changed out of all recognition as it is by the ravages of agriculture, is still portrayed by advertising and the media as the true keeper of [national] culture. --- It harbors a whole host of patriotic reactions in the collective psyche” (Agyeman 1989: 336; cited in Agyeman and Spooner 1997: 207). In the same way, David Bell claims that the rural idyll first and foremost is a “receptacle for national identity – a symbolic site for shoring up what it means to be English, or Dutch, or whatever” (2006: 150). Of course, it is not just any rural landscape that is given this status as national landscape, but certain features that are claimed to be more “national” than others are put together to form a coherent whole. The English rural idyll with the thatched roofed cottage, billowing hills and grazing sheep is perhaps the most well-known example. Despite the fact that rural landscapes are diverse in both appearance and population, there appears to be a popular consensus concerning what the rural landscape means and looks like (Cloke, Milbourne, and Widdowfield 2000: 728). As long as this common consent

is in line with the discourse of the majority or with those in power, it can be regarded as an ideological landscape, summing up nationhood (Cresswell 1996: 3). In this way, the representation of the rural landscape is a physical place as much as it is a mental picture, a “mindscape” (Löfgren 1989).

As Christopher Tilley points out, Swedish ethnologists have studied aspects of this banal nationalism before the term was coined by Billig (Tilley 2008: 222). Several examples of the rural idyll with the red cottage as a symbol of Swedishness can be found, particularly in the works of Orvar Löfgren (1989; 1990; 1993a; 1999; 2000). In the article “Materializing the Nation in Sweden and America”, Löfgren suggests that the rural idyll with the red cottage at its center was turned into a popular representation of Sweden during the early twentieth century, and that a “mere reference to the “little red cottage” conjures up a whole universe of images and associations in Swedish life and thought” (1993a: 178, see also 1989: 14). In *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (1999), Löfgren claims that the way we react to a piece of landscape is the result of process of institutionalization that has turned the landscape into a “cultural matrix,” giving it iconic status (1999: 99). In particular, his chapter on “Cottage Cultures” provides the background for the development of the cottage as the ideal vacation home, reminiscent of summer and childhood, in what Löfgren calls a “cottage-utopia” (1999: 152).

Although the position of the Swedish rural idyll has been given attention in this way, the red cottage as key-symbol in the visual representation of Sweden is more or less taken for granted and no closer exploration of the emergence and broad use of the rural idyll in popular media have been carried out. Neither has the use of the rural idyll as means to both manifest and interrogate the idea of nation been problematized. Löfgren has noticed that the cottage is used in right wing extremist propaganda, mentioning that he found a picture of the rural idyll on a poster

for an anti-immigration organization (2000: 249). The focus of his attention, however, is not the rural idyll or the red cottage, but the Swedish flag. If right-wing extremists' use of the cottage-idyll is a well-known fact, the question of if and how the rural idyll can be used to discuss and interrogate the notion of Swedishness is an unexplored field of study. This dissertation aims to provide this double-gazing perspective and regard the "cottage-idyll" as an expression of a "dynamic process of thought setting ideas in motion and keeping them in motion." (Firth 1973: 73).

The first chapter gives a brief overview of the great changes that took place in agriculture during the second part of the nineteenth century, as well as the urbanization and the social differentiation that accompanied these changes. Special attention is given to destitution within the working class, which was discussed at great lengths in terms of the housing situation.

Chapter Two describes the formation of the new nationalism during the early twentieth century that was fashioned with the private and national home in focus. Attention is given to the complex dovetailing between politics and art and the "egnahemsprojektet" [own home project], which in many ways can be regarded as the materialization of the red cottage as a symbol for Sweden.

The third chapter focuses on *hembygd* [local community] education in common elementary school. Although the idea was to educate the children about local community, the main goal was to educate them as members of a greater whole, the nation. To a large degree, this was done through stereotypical pictures of the "national *hembygd*," in text and illustrations, frequently a red cottage in a rural landscape. These examples of texts and pictures used in educational materials for children, support the argument that the frequent use of pictures of idyllic country sceneries with the red cottage, and the constant connection made between this

image and the concept of the nation, is of crucial importance to the spread and cementation of the red cottage as the ideological national home.

Concurrently with the rationalization of agriculture during the 1940's, the red cottage surrounded by nature was transformed into the ideal vacation home and embedded in an aura of nostalgia. As Löfgren claims, it gained a utopic dimension (1999: 152). The fourth chapter is a close-reading of how the idea of authenticity and nostalgia is used in the marketing of the red-painted vacation village *Lilla Sverigebyn* [Little Sweden Village], which is aimed primarily at German tourists.

Perhaps the most “banal” flagging of nation is the frequent use of red cottages in commercial advertising. Chapter Five explores how the red cottage, and the “Swedish values” attached to it, have been used in a century of commercial advertising, and have been adapted to fit many different aspects of nation.

Chapter Six focuses on how the red cottage has been used in political campaign material. Starting with a close-reading of a campaign poster from 1920 and moving forward through the twentieth century, the chapter ends with a campaign film from 2006 for the anti-immigration party, *Sverigedemokraterna* [Sweden Democrats]. Using the idea of the red cottage and idyllic rural landscape as “purified space,” the chapter focuses on how the red cottage has been used both as a unifying symbol, representing the national ideological home and as an invisible fence, protecting from suggested threats from the outside.

By far the most common use of the cottage-idyll is to let it stand as a symbol for Sweden. In line with Firth's definition of symbol however, the red cottage can also be used to manifest opposing ideas. In the last chapter, this multivalent meaning is explored through an examination of the TV-series *Det nya landet* (Hansteen Jörgensen 2000). By close reading three

key scenes from the series, this section explores what happens when this “purified space” is used as a means by which to interrogate the rural idyll as a symbol of Sweden. By using Linda Hutcheon’s idea of parody and Victor Turner’s take on liminality, it is argued that *Det nya landet*, through its’ “parodic” and over-explicit use of the ideological landscape(s) and stereotypical Swedish national markers, questions these things and opens up a possibility for reshaping the ideological landscape, and the values it conventionally represents.

CHAPTER ONE

Development and Destitution: Demographic Changes in the Twentieth Century

It was primarily among intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century that the question of the national home, based on rural building traditions, was shaped. This discussion took place at the same time as Sweden was undergoing far-reaching reforms in agriculture, and experiencing rapid industrialization. Large waves of migration, both from rural to urban areas as well as emigration to North America, profoundly altered the demography of Sweden. At the same time, rapid urbanization contributed to the growth of a destitute urban population, and the rise of a rural proletariat. The “national home” was, to a large degree, developed with this new working-class in mind. In discussions about how to handle emigration, destitution, and the fear of a socialist revolution, “home” emerged as the ultimate solution.

To understand the obsession with the rural and the construction of the national home during the beginning of the twentieth century, it is crucial to give a brief overview of Swedish economic and political developments at that time. In addition, one must understand the demographic changes, as well as the emergence of the new proletariat in the early twentieth century. Of course, agricultural conditions in Sweden varied to such an extent that it is almost impossible to give a fair picture of the nation as a whole. The implementation of reforms and demographic shifts varied greatly from south to north, and between the forested areas and the flat, arable country (Lundsjö 1975; Winberg 1977; Gadd 2000; Wiking Faria 2009). The picture presented here is necessarily simplified. It aims to describe the main features of the socio-economic development that formed the foundation on which the red cottage was constructed, part of the rural idyll informing the “national home” during the twentieth century.

The greatest dividing line between social groups in nineteenth century rural Sweden was between the *besuttna* (those who owned land, or cultivated a property large enough to be taxable) and the *obesuttna* (peasants who cultivated a patch of land too small to be taxable, and/or had to labor to get additional income to survive) (Hellspong 1994: 74). The landed group was populated by persons of rank—the nobility, civil servants, priests, and *bönder* [farmers] who owned or cultivated a *hemman*. *Hemman* was an undefined unit of measurement that included all parts of the agricultural landscape and, to be counted as such, had to be large enough to support a family. The possession of a *hemman*, or part of one, was the prerequisite to be eligible to vote in parish meetings and in the parliament. The size of a *hemman* was measured in *mantal* and estimated in how many barrels of grain it could yield. *Mantal* was the basis for taxation and a property that was valued below $\frac{1}{4}$ *mantal* was not considered a *hemman*. Thus it was not taxable and the (male) proprietor not eligible to vote.

Below these limits for the landed was the large group of peasants who either were landless and immediately dependent on the landed class (i.e. day laborers), or those whose rented a plot of land that did not meet the tax requirements. A particularly large group of the *obesuttna* were the *torpare* (crofters), who rented their land from landowners with the terms of the lease regulated in a contract. A *torp* was never measured in *mantal* (Gadd 2000: 86). The crofter paid rent to the farmer who owned the land either through daily labor on the main farm (villeinage) or by monetary or in-kind payments or both. In general, the plot of land that came with a *torp* was rarely sufficient to support a household. Consequently, in addition to farming, the crofter had to make his living through extra day labor and by the production and sale of crafts. The living situation among the group of *torpare* varied greatly however, and the most well-to-do *torpare*

were on an equal economic footing with the land-owning farmers, the only difference being that they did not own their property (Edling 1996: 38).

Backstugusittare lived in small cottages situated on the *utmark*—the outlying land or on the property of a farmer. In general, no land belonged to these cottages. In many cases, *backstugusittaren* were elderly, disabled or not fit for work of other reasons. This group also included, however, blacksmiths, shoemakers and tailors, as well as others who earned their living by means other than agriculture (Hellspång 1994: 77). The population of *backstugusittarna* increased dramatically during the nineteenth century, and it was to an increasing extent, young, able-bodied individuals and married couples that occupied the small cottages (Gadd 2000: 224). The obligations of the *backstugusittare* to the landowner were not as regulated as those of the crofters, who had the number of villeinage days set in their contracts; yet their rights of occupation were far more uncertain than that of the crofters. On the other hand, the *backstugusittare* were not tied to a specific farm, but could seek work opportunities on different farms. While this freedom of employment allowed for flexibility as opposed to farmhands and maids who were subject to the *legostadgan*, an early law regulating the relationship between the employer and the employees, *backstugusittaren* had no such protections, and could be dismissed depending on the needs of the employer. In demographic statistics, paupers, *inhysesjon*, are often mentioned together with *backstugusittare*, providing a clear indication of the very low economic status of the *backstugusittare*. The paupers, in contrast to the emerging group of younger *backstugusittare*, were largely elderly or disabled, with neither land nor house. They survived largely through nascent poverty assistance programs, and were lodged at farms or in small cottages on the property of farms (Hellspång 1994: 78; Gadd 1999).

Starting in 1825, *statare* begin appearing as a category in demographic summaries. *Statare* were agricultural workers employed on a yearly basis on the large farms and estates. Payment for their work included accommodation, in most cases a small apartment, and payment in kind and in money. In opposition to farmhands and maids, who, in most cases, were unmarried men and women who served a few years before getting married and eventually taking over a farm of their own, *stataren* were often already married. Indeed, a prerequisite to finding employment as a *statare* was that the person's entire household would be available to the employer. By hiring a *statare* with family, an estate owner got access to the cheap labor of women and children (Hellspong 1994: 88; Gadd 1999).

During the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Swedish agriculture underwent significant changes, both in regards to the organization of farms and farming, and in regards to crops, machines, cattle, and the development of arable land. The farmers' stronger economic and political position coupled with the transition to a capitalistic, market-oriented agriculture, mainly during the second half of the nineteenth century, were driving forces in this agrarian revolution. The nineteenth century was marked by increasing economic prosperity and frequent market reforms. People who, prior to these reforms, had little exposure to market economies, found themselves as full-fledged market players. At the same time, there was a marked population growth, and a far-reaching differentiation of social classes.

Sweden was an agricultural nation well into the twentieth century, and the majority of the population increase happened in the rural areas. Well into the nineteenth century, 90% of the population lived in the countryside (Winberg 1977: 17; SCB 1969: 45). As in other nations in northwestern Europe, Sweden's population started to increase during the eighteenth century, but with great variation in the rate of change from decade to decade. After 1810, the population

began increasing at a steady rate, with a year-to-year rate exceeding 0.7%. Consequently, between 1800 and 1870, the population of Sweden increased by 77%, reaching 4.2 million inhabitants (Gadd 2000: 187, SCB 1969: 46). Importantly, prior to the 1870s, the increase was almost entirely a rural phenomenon (Lundsjö 1975: 12).

After 1870, population growth started to slow, and even decreased in the rural areas during the first half of the 1880s (SCB 1969: 46). Instead, small cities and towns grew up around the various emerging industries, and these population centers experienced a steady increase with approximately 20,000 new urban dwellers per year. Although the rural population started to decline in the 1870s, the majority of Swedes continued to live in the rural areas well into the twentieth century. In 1870, 87% of the population still lived in the countryside. The proportion of the population that made their living largely from industry did not exceed the farming population until the mid-1930s (SCB 1969: 82; Gadd 2000: 189; Morell 2001: 14).

Alongside, and connected to, population growth, was a far-reaching social differentiation. Between 1750 and 1800, the number of farmers increased by 7%, while the number of landless increased 127%. As Figure 4 shows, this economic differentiation was an ongoing trend and by the mid-nineteenth century, the group of landless peasants was as almost large as the farmers (Gadd 1999,15,195). The number of landless peasants continued to grow until the 1870s, after which it declined (fig. 5). Meanwhile, the group of landed farmers continued to grow (Wohlin 1909: 26). As Mats Morell notes, these were small farms in the forested areas of mid- and northern Sweden (2001: 36).

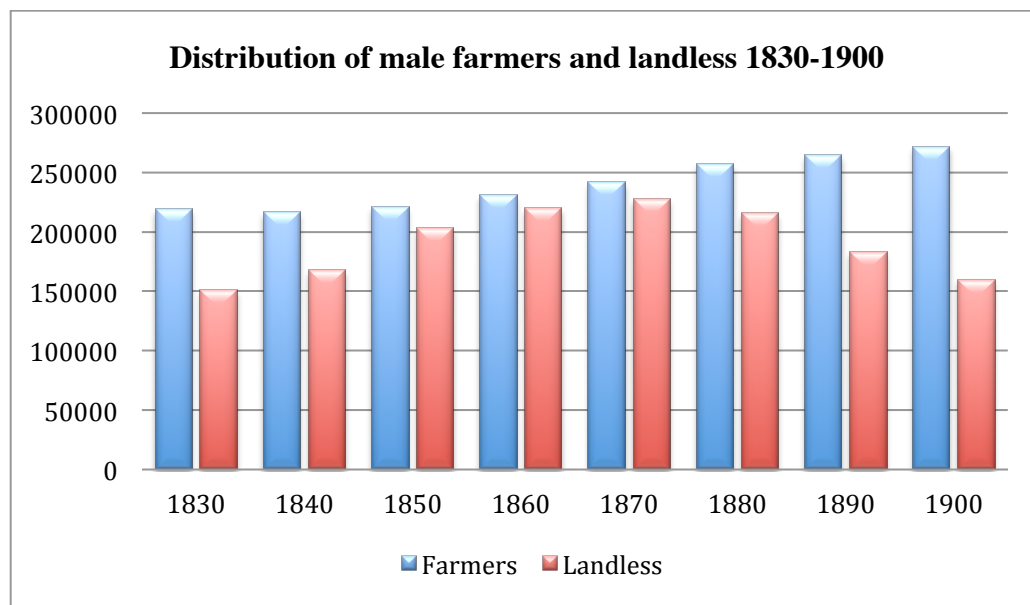


Figure. 5: Distribution of male farmers and landless 1830-1900.
 Based on Nils Wohlin. *Den jordbruksidkande befolkningen i Sverige 1751-1900: Statistisk-demografisk studie på grundval af de svenska yrkesräkningarne*. Emigrationsutredningen, Appendix IX. 1909: 26 Stockholm: Norstedt och Söner.

There was also a considerable redistribution of wealth and status within the landless group. As part of the extensive *Emigrationsutredningen* (report on emigration), statistician Nils Wohlin presented statistics of the Swedish population occupied in agriculture between 1751-1900 (1909). His material is divided between men and women. As he points out, however, the numbers are somewhat insufficient, since categorizations of the different groups have changed over time. In particular, the numbers concerning women are so inadequate, in particular before 1860, that it is hard to use them to draw any conclusions (1909: 24). Still, the material gives some information about the distribution of the landless classes over time.

Besides a peak in 1860, the number of *torparna* started to decrease, as Figure 6 shows. At the same time, the number of *backstugusittare* and *inhysesshjon* increased. In 1830, the numbers of *backstugusittare* were approximately 54,500, and in 1870, they numbered about 101,000. After this peak, they decreased and in 1900, the group was almost as large as it had been in 1830. *Statare*, who formed their own group in the statistic material from 1825, increased steadily until the 1880s. By 1830, the number of *statare* reached approximately 10,400. By 1880, they had increased to approximately 34,150. The number of *backstugusittarna* slowly declined after 1880, however they still numbered about 33,350 in 1900 (Wohlin 1909: 26). Besides these categories, Wohlin presents statistics on groups that included farmhands, sons over the age of fifteen living at home, and a large group of “tärande personer” [dependent persons], which consisted of children under the age of fifteen, the elderly and disabled persons who lived with relatives (ibid).

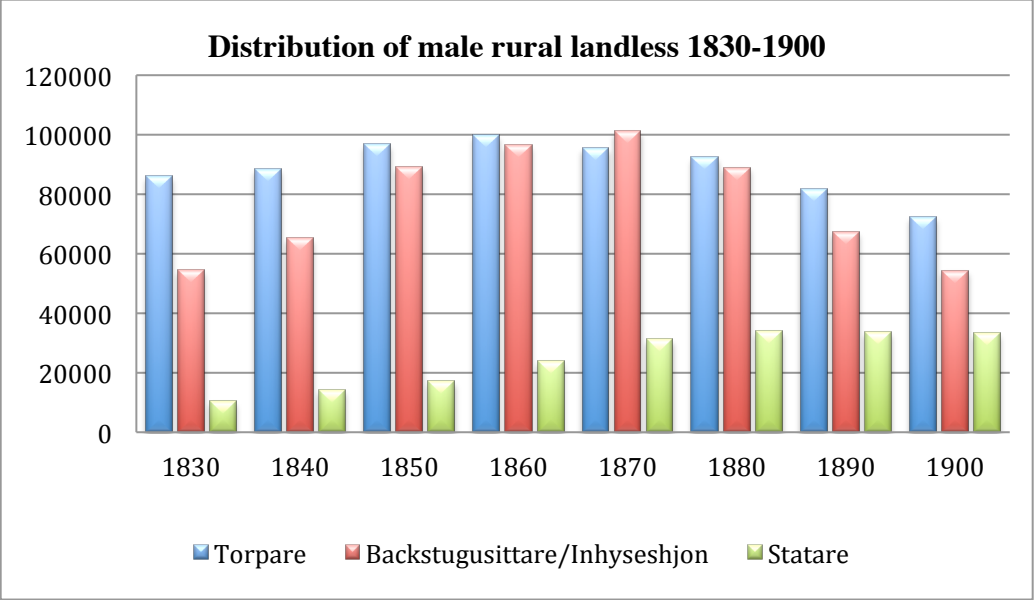


Figure 6: Distribution of male landless 1830-1900.
 Based on Nils Wohlin, *Den jordbruksidkande befolkningen i Sverige 1751-1900: Statistisk-demografisk studie på grundval af de svenska yrkesräkningarne*. Emigrationsutredningen, Appendix IX. 1909: 26 Stockholm: Norstedt och Söner.

From 1900 on, *daglönare* (day-laborer) was listed as a separate group in the statistic material. As *backstugusittare* and *inhysesshjon*, they were not subject of the *legostadgan* and were therefore not tied to a particular farm but survived entirely on their labor. It is likely that a large number of *backstugusittare* and *inhysesshjon*, groups whose numbers declined after the 1870 census, are actually hiding within this group. In 1900, this group amounted to 70,000 persons and in 1910, they had increased to 110,000 (Edling 1996: 39).

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Swedish farmers were experiencing both social and economic advancement. Through several law changes and tax reforms, beginning in the late 1700s, the economic and political situation of the land-owning farmers improved. The most prominent change was the farmers' increased opportunities to buy land, both from the State and from the nobility (Utterström 1957: 16). At the same time as the opportunity to buy land increased, so did the prices, likely because demand surpassed supply. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the price for a *mantal skattejord* had increased eight fold, as compared to the price one hundred years earlier. The prices continued to rise and, between 1810 and 1860, the prices had again increased six fold, while the salary for a farmhand only increased by half (Larsson 1994: 24). This meant that it became more or less impossible for the poorer peasants to acquire land other than through inheritance or marriage (Gadd 2000: 197, 198).

Besides the reforms that increased farmers' opportunities to buy land, the reapportionment of farmland, a process carried out in three stages between 1750 and the early 1900s, was an important part of the agrarian revolution (Gadd 2000: 300). These reforms greatly altered the organization of work and also transformed the structure of villages. Prior to the reform, the property of the village was divided in *inägor* (infields) and *utmark* (outlying land). *Utmarken* was common ground for the villagers to collect firewood and building material,

and constituted grazing grounds for cattle as well as dwelling sites for the landless peasants. *Inägorna* consisted of meadows and arable land, separated into fields. Each field was in turn divided into small subplots and distributed among the farmers. The property of the farmer was thus spread out over a relatively large area and, even if the farmer mainly cultivated his land by himself, he was subordinated to community decisions when it came to sowing, harvesting and the grazing of cattle. Due to the divisions of *hemman*, the plots became even smaller and the structure of ownership even more complicated, with movement between properties becoming even more time consuming.

In line with new ideas about rationalization, the reapportionment of farmland was initiated in order to increase efficiency, and to simplify the structure of ownership. The regulations required that every farm have their land gathered in one place (Gadd 2000: 283). The time it took for the realization of the reform varied greatly between the Swedish landscapes. *Storskifte*, was initiated in the 1750s and aimed to join the narrow plots to larger units. The rules were short and diffuse and, apart from the flat areas of Sweden, *storskiftet* was largely not carried out (Winberg 1977: 35; Gadd 2000: 275). With *Enskiftet* and the following *Laga skifte*, the idea that every farmer should have their fields in one place and in connection to the farm was developed and followed through on. With the enactment of *Laga Skifte*, initiated in 1827, the new law became a general one for all of Sweden, with the exception of the northern part of Dalarna. This reform also reinforced the mandatory relocation of farms onto its associated fields, which had been initially prescribed in the *Enskifte*. In accordance with this law, once reapportionment had been completed, a farmer was required to physically move his house and buildings to his assigned property. Approximately one hundred thousand farms were moved in connection with the *Enskifte* and *Laga Skifte* (Hellspong 1994: 62).

It was enough for reappportionment to be carried out if one landed farmer of the village demanded it. In general, it was the more well-off farmers who demanded reappportionment, since the costs of clearing of new land, moving or rebuilding houses were expensive. For the less well-off, those who could not manage these costs, reappportionment meant, in the worst cases, that they had to sell their farm and seek employment as farm laborers (Fridholm 1977: 42-43). The reappportionment also made the subdivision of farms far easier; consequently, after reappportionment, the division of farmland and farms increased significantly.

Opinions differ on whether the reappportionment was a driver of, or a natural consequence of, the agrarian revolution (Wiking-Faria 2009: 29). The impact of the reforms did not stop with changes in land use and agricultural practice. *Laga skiftet* is frequently mentioned in architectural history, and has been given the status of a point of refraction between the “traditional” and modern way of rural living, both when it comes to the structure of villages, the organization of work, and building modes. In some scholarship, the fashion of painting dwellings Falu-red is connected to *Laga Skifte*, as part of the modernization of the buildings (Bäck 2008: 134; Sjöberg 1990: 133).

How much weight should be attached to reappportionment as an independent factor leading to the agrarian revolution as well as to changes in rural building styles is a matter of some dispute. In his dissertation, *Hus och gård i förändring* (2004), Göran Ulväng questions the importance that has been ascribed to *Laga Skiftet* when it comes to the changed building modes and architectural styles in the countryside during the nineteenth century. He argues that the development of vernacular architecture has always been in constant interplay with society both before and after the second part of the nineteenth century. As such, reappportionment is only a small part of a considerably larger and more complex process. Other changes, such as increased

specialization, a new division of labor, and increasing social differentiation, must also be taken into consideration in order to understand changes in architectural styles and the way buildings on farms were organized during the nineteenth century (2004: 49). This questioning of the importance of *Laga Skifte* also concerns the coloring of houses. Anders Franzén (2008) has carefully studied the detailed protocols of buildings that were drawn up in relation to *Laga Skifte*, in order to determine their reliability. In his research, he finds that the protocols from *Laga Skifte* are not concordant with other sources, such as fire insurance protocols, descriptions of undivided villages made by museums, and paintings. His conclusion is that it is impossible to determine from the building protocols whether or not the farmhouses has been painted or not prior to the reapportionment. Indeed, he finds the notes on red painted houses in the building protocols so insufficient that he disregards the noted on painting in his further research (2008: 171, 218).

Furthermore, although the majority of villages were reapportioned in the mid-1800s, the process was a protracted one. While some villages were reapportioned as early as in the 1830s, other parts of Sweden remained undivided until the early twentieth century (Gadd 2000: 300). Indeed, the reapportionment of a village could take several years. It is therefore not possible to regard the reapportionment as a leap, as so often is the case; instead it should be recognized as the rather long-winded process that it was.

Although there is room for debate over the extent to which reapportionment had an impact on architectural style and coloring of houses, it certainly affected the structure of the villages, particularly in the mid nineteenth century, when the majority of the reapportionment was carried out. The moving of farms resulted in the disappearance of many smaller farms in parts of Sweden. When a farm was to be divided as part of an inheritance, for instance, heirs could either demand to get their part in farmland, or in money from the heir who took over the

farm. According to Christer Winberg, when the opportunity to gain income through labor increased, it is likely that more heirs requested buy-outs, rather than the division of the property. Instead of becoming farmers, the landless heirs supported themselves as laborers (Winberg 1977: 55). In parts of Sweden, the number of small farms decreased, while other farms enlarged their property and moved toward large-scale production (Hoppe 1997: 269). This change was not even across Sweden. In the northern parts of Sweden, small farms grew in number. New ground was broken and put to the plow, and this establishment of new small farms carried on well into the twentieth century. Here, farming was combined with forestry work for the growing forestry industry. This shift toward mixed-used agricultural practice was also undertaken by many of the small farmers who remained in the rest of Sweden (Isacson, Morell 2006: 204).

The reforms also had direct consequences for *torpare* who rented land or who lived in the *utmarken*. Due to the decree that mandated moves, large portions of formerly uncultivated lands were requisitioned and many *torpare* were evicted (Hoppe 1997: 268). Displaced crofters had few choices and many simply became *backstugusittare*, accounting in part for the increase in this population. Unlike earlier, when the majority of *backstugusittare* consisted of elderly or disabled individuals, an increasing number of *backstugusittarna* during the latter part of the nineteenth century were of productive age (Hoppe 1997: 269).

On the one hand, the reapportionment thus meant impaired conditions for the less well-to-do farmers and also had consequences for the peasants who were immediately dependent on the land-owning farmers. On the other hand, reapportionment and the transition to large-scale production meant better opportunities for the *obesuttna* since the need for day labor increased when farms were moved and new ground had to be broken and enclosed (Dribe and Svensson 2006: 124). In addition, the forestry industry, along with railroad construction during the late

nineteenth century, offered employment opportunities for the growing group of *obesuttna*, and for the small farmers who no longer could survive on their farms (Löfgren 1994: 301-308).

Better opportunities to survive through labor made it possible to start a family at an earlier age, since marriage was not possible without the economic means to support a family. In turn, this lower age of marriage and a more stable source of income caused the birthrate among the landless to increase (Winberg 1975).

Even though the economic foundations for starting a family increased during this period, crowds of children did not suddenly appear among the landless peasants. Rather, family size was more or less stable across the economic classes with slightly larger family size among the landed farmers. Christer Winberg, for instance, shows that the birth rate was higher among the landed farmers than it was among the landless. In his studies of the parish *Dala* in *Västergötland*, Winberg shows that the number of children to survive to the age of five between 1776 and 1830 was 3.1 among the farmers, while it was 2.7 among the landless (Winberg 1977: 245). In addition, he shows that half of the *obesuttna* families in 1850 were sons and daughters of landed farmers, and the majority of *statarna* came from the farmer owning class (Winberg 1977: 265). Rather than a high birthrate among the landless, the formation of an agricultural proletariat was instead dependent on a downward socio-economic spiral (Winberg 1977: 55; Fridholm 1975: 41 Gadd 2000: 229). The proletarianization among the rural population is thus paradoxically intertwined with the agrarian revolution and the improvement of the living conditions among the farmers. Increased opportunities to survive on labor further nourished the process. Consequently, with the beginning of rapid industrialization in the 1870s, a large proletariat was ready to be put to work.

In its initial phase, Sweden's industrialization took place in the agricultural sphere. The

famine of 1867-1868 was followed by strong economic growth with an increased demand for agricultural workers (Gadd 2000: 350). As a consequence of this demand, farm workers' salaries rose. Increased competition from the USA and Russia in the grain market, along with falling prices worldwide, led to a decline of the domestic market and weakened export of oats. This led to a significant recession in the agricultural sector in the 1880s. On the one hand, the recession represented a deep crisis for Swedish agriculture. It was, like many economic crises, accompanied by bankruptcies, forced sales and increased unemployment among agricultural workers (Morell 2001: 79). On the other hand, a concurrent transition to animal production and lower prices on machines and tools compensated, to some degree, for these economic losses (Morell 2001: 97; Edling 1996: 45). Regardless of the generally low economic impact, the crisis gave rise to an intense political discussion and, in 1887/1888 duties on imported grain, flour, pork and feeding grain were levied (Edling 1996: 45; Morell 2001: 113). The duties favored the farmers who could specialize in the large-scale production of grains. Mitigating this favoritism was the ongoing transition to animal production (Magnusson 1996: 334)

Once markets stabilized, the recession was followed by increased production and higher salaries for agricultural workers. Prosperity and a more pronounced specialization led to higher consumption, both in the countryside and in the cities. Less of what was produced was consumed within the household of the farm. Instead, it was sold on the emerging domestic market (Morell 2001: 84). Of particular importance was the nearly limitless demand for butter and animal products on both the international and the domestic markets, especially in the cities.

Animal production demanded more even access to labor, and the large estates could offer full-time employment on a yearly basis. Consequently, the large number of workers who had been tied loosely to a landowner and made their living from seasonal work on different farms

decreased and were replaced with *statare*. Because of the high demand for dairy products, women found themselves in increasing demand as labor on the estates. Partly, this demand for women laborers was a result the long-rooted tradition: In family-based agriculture, it was the women's task to care for the cows, particularly the milking. This division of labor continued on the large farms. In addition, female workers were cheaper than their male counterparts. While the men were charged with the more mechanized aspects of agriculture, women were charged with the dairy production (Schön 2012: 199).

Besides of the increased production of industrial agriculture, brickworks, iron mills, and sawmills expanded rapidly in the countryside due to the efficiency of situating these factories close to the raw materials (Morell 2001: 85). The establishment of industries in the countryside meant that rural communities and small cities experienced small industrial booms. In small cities throughout Sweden, shops, free churches and worker's associations were established in close vicinity to the rural industries. With the expansion of the railroads, industrial cities and communities grew larger.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the urban population had increased in line with the rural population, albeit not at the same pace (Gadd 2000: 189). From 1850, the urban population grew faster due to decreased mortality and high migration from the countryside (Edling 1996: 48). Between 1850 and 1870, the number of cities with more than 5,000 inhabitants doubled, and nine cities had more than 10,000 inhabitants (Hellspong 1994: 183). In these cities, the production of machines for the expanding agricultural and textile industries, as well as a growing chemico-technical industry was established (Schön 2012: 181; Magnusson 1996: 319). Gothenburg, on the west coast, and Landskrona, in the southernmost province of Skåne, became export centers and a large-scale ship building industry emerged. Stockholm became the financial center and, at the

turn of the last century, also the urban area that experienced the most intense industrialization (Eriksson 1994: 23-24).

The establishment of industries in the cities meant a considerable increase in population. Before 1870, many of the workers in the rural areas were employed on a seasonal basis and moved between employment in agriculture, forest industry and sawmills. The cities were also characterized by such seasonal workers, who moved to the cities during periods when the demand for agricultural labor was low, and left when the labor peak on the farms was the highest. In the region of Dalarna, for example, the tradition of a seasonal labor migration was long-established and well-organized. Stockholm, in particular, experienced a high influx of seasonal workers from this region (Löfgren 1994: 302). After 1870, industry became more specialized and mechanized, seasonal work decreased, and an intense urbanization followed (Schön 2012: 186).

The good times within agriculture meant even better times for the growing industries. Regardless of high salaries and access to work in the agricultural sector, migration to the cities and the expanding industrial communities increased, where workers could find even higher salaries. In 1850, there were approximately 100,000 industrial workers in Sweden. By 1890, this number had increased to 320,000 (Schön 2012: 183). In 1850, approximately 352,000 Swedes lived in cities (about 10 percent). By 1900, this population had more than doubled and amounted to approximately 21 percent of the Swedish population (SCB 1969: 46). Primarily, it was young men and women from the large group of *obesuttna* who left for the cities and jobs in industry. For women in particular, cities offered higher paying jobs where they could work as maids and servants or in the growing textile industries (Göransson 2006: 241). Thus, it was not bad times in the agricultural sector that led to this urban migration, but rather the comparatively better times

in the industrial sector (Morell 2001: 79).

Industrialization was not universally embraced by all sectors of society. Among politicians, social scientists, and intellectuals, there was a growing concern for what the consequences of this industrialization and urbanization might be. Partly, the concern was that the countryside would be emptied of labor, and that, as a consequence, the inferior dwelling and employment situation, with its concomitant poverty, would lead to a revolution among the rural and urban working classes. At the same time, estate owners who needed a large, stable group of agricultural workers pushed for laws to facilitate that. They increasingly saw the growing group of poor workers who moved frequently between job opportunities as a threat, accusing this highly mobile workforce of being a threat to social order, and promoting increasing vagrancy and indecency (Petersson 1983: 26). There was, among certain powerful groups, a keen interest in keeping a large group of “free” workers available. Yet there was also a growing feeling that these free workers needed to be controlled.

Under the umbrella term “the social question,” issues such as poor relief, workers’ rights, women’s rights, and the housing question were discussed (Wisselgren 2000: 14). This social question took on different inflections depending on whether it was the urban or rural situation that was being discussed. While the social question in the cities became more or less focused on the worker question, in the countryside, the situation of the agricultural workers became equal to *jordfrågan*—the question of access to arable land (Stråth 2012: 375). A general question addressed under this umbrella, and one that would have considerable impact on the creation of a national home, was the question of emigration.

Between 1860 to 1930, 1.4 million people left Sweden, primarily for North America, with a first peak after the year of famine in 1868, when 40,000 individuals left (Morell 2001: 76).

After a decline in the 1870s, emigration started to rise again in 1879 and continued at a high level until 1893. During this period, 500,000 Swedes left for America. In addition, approximately 70,000 migrated to other European countries, especially to Germany and Denmark (Edling 1996: 51). After a decline in the 1890s, emigration again increased and reached a new peak in 1903. In 1923, it reached a last peak before it abated due to the American Immigration Act of 1924 (Morell 2001: 77).

It is hard to determine how many of the emigrants came from urban or rural areas. Mats Morell claims that many of the emigrants initially left the countryside for the cities, and from there continued to their new destinations in the hope of a better future. Furthermore, the landowning farmers who left Sweden during the early decades of the twentieth century, in many cases only left Sweden for a few years, and then returned. During the early period of emigration, the departure of whole families was common, while young single men from the countryside dominated emigration at the turn of the twentieth century (Morell 2001: 76). Towards the end of the emigration wave, the emigration of young single women sometimes exceeded that of the men (Stråth 2012: 296). Poverty, unemployment, and religious oppression paired with high expectations about the possibility of making a good living in America are some of the “push- and pull- factors” that explain the great emigration (Stråth 2012: 296)

Although the first wave of emigration happened already in the late 1860s, emigration did not gain much attention prior to the turn of the last century, overshadowed as it was by the threat of urbanization (Edling 1996: 190). Closer to the turn of the twentieth century, opinions on emigration were almost unanimously negative. The year 1903, when emigration again increased, is often considered a turning point, since several political initiatives were taken, not least from agrarian interests, in an attempt to reduce emigration (Kälvemark 1972; Edling 1996). In these

discussions, emigration was presented as a threat to the nation and described as the gravest national misfortune, draining the Swedish countryside of able-bodied individuals (Morell 2001: 78; Stråth 2012: 302).

“The flight from the countryside” gave birth to a discussion that was primarily concerned with how the agricultural worker could be hindered from leaving the agricultural business. A driving force behind the investigation, and attention given to the social question was the foundation *Lorénska Stiftelsen*, founded in 1885. On their request, Urban von Feilitzen, in 1890, investigated the agricultural workers living situation based on their level of income. *Statarna* were the poorest, while the most well off were the *torpare*, who had access to land. Feilitzen did not turn against the system of using *statare* as such, but like other critics of the 1880s, his opinion was that the lack of opportunities to earn extra income through agriculture made agricultural workers passive and contributed to the reproduction of destitution (Feilitzen 1890: 11-12; Edling 1996: 57). There was also a belief that *statare* were inferior to other rural groups, in particular *torpare*. In *Nordisk Familjebok* 1891, power of initiative, life force, self-respect and sense of community are described as stronger in the homes of *torpare* than in the homes of *statarna* (1891: 389). Inferior living conditions paired with an inclination to move frequently resulted in the *obesuttna* leaving for North America or the expanding cities where they would be part of the urban proletariat - “den allmänna otrygghetens samhällsfrätande bekymmer” [this corrosive social problem that stems from the general insecurity] (Feilitzen 1890: 7). According to Feilitzen, the future of the Swedish agriculture depended on the level of the agricultural worker’s income (1890: 10).

Stataren’s housing standard differed widely between different farms. The use of unused *torp* and barracks for housing was not uncommon (Hellspong 2008: 167). During the nineteenth

century, when the use of *statare* increased, storerooms, washhouses, and granaries were rebuilt into dwellings for *statare*. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it became more common to build large barracks to provide the growing groups of *statare* with housing. The standard of living in these homes left a great deal to be desired. Gerhard Halfred von Koch gives a description of the homes of *stataren*.

“Deras bostäder äro ofta uslare än de visserligen förfallna kåkar man ser i städernas utkanter; ofta utgöres bostaden af ett enda lågt rum hvarest hela familjen skall sofva och äta, där maten skall lagas, ytterkläder upphängas, där det öfverflödar af väggohyra och där regnet sipprar ner genom takspringorna. Icke sällsynt är att grisarne inhysas i samma hus som stataren eller att godsägarens svinhus med tillhörande gödselhög och urinbrunn bygges alldeles intill statarbostaden.” (1902: 34)

[Their dwellings are often more wretched than the decayed shacks that you can see on the outskirts of the cities; the dwelling often consists of a single room with a low ceiling where the whole family sleeps and eats, where food is prepared, coats are hung, bugs overflow and the rain pours down through the cracks in the ceiling. It is not unusual that the pigs live in the same house as the *statare* or that the landowner's pigsty with adherent dunghill and manure pit is built right next to *stataren's* dwelling]

Similar reports about damp, drafty and crowded apartments where rats and bed bugs tormented the inhabitants could be read well into the 1930s (Hellspong 2008: 178; Stråth 2012: 282).

Naturally, the living conditions for the workers within agricultural industry varied greatly. Later researchers have argued that the living standard for *statare* was on the same level as that of the majority of the working class population. If one considers the lower prices of food in the countryside and the possibility of growing at least some of the foodstuffs themselves,

living standards could be seen as more or less equivalent (Lundh 2008: 152). However, working hours for agricultural workers were generally longer, payment was lower, and quality of life was not higher than that of the urban working class (Edling 1996: 50). Thus, it should have been possible to discuss improvements in insurance, working hours and payment as a means to improve the living conditions of agricultural workers. According to Nils Edling, this was not, however, the case. Instead, it was access to arable land that was regarded as the best safety net for the agricultural worker (Edling 1996: 68). For example, Feilitzen's solution to these problems was to increase the opportunity for agricultural workers to occupy arable land through changes in the law on leasehold, coupled with better education in farm management (1890: 7,10). Von Koch, who criticized the exclusion of agricultural workers in the new laws on working environment, also fails to mention changes in laws in his article. Instead, he argues that the agricultural workers should be turned into independent and engaged subjects through the establishment of small farms (1902: 36). When *Svenska Lantarbetarrörelsen* (Swedish Society for Agricultural Workers) eventually raised the question, it was to a large degree the dwelling conditions that gained attention (Thörnquist 1989; Hellspång 2008: 177). Thus, the consensus solution to destitution among the rural workers, and not least to the "flight from the countryside," was to make it easier for the agricultural workers to get access to land, and a home of their own. Consequently, the social question in the countryside became equivalent to *jordfrågan*, which in turn would become a key question in the agricultural policy during the early twentieth century. It also became the central question in the *egnahemsprojektet* [the own home project]—the governmental project that aimed to provide workers with small farms (Edling 1996: 61-66).

The opinion that a good, rural home could be a solution both for problems in the countryside and to stem emigration, reappeared in a comprehensive report on emigration

initiated in 1907, and published in 1913. Although the commission investigated several aspects of the reasons and the cure for the emigration, a large focus was placed on the conditions of agricultural workers. In particular, the commission focused on how the working- and dwelling situation could be improved, as a means to put an end to emigration (Kälvemark 1972: 140). Here, Nils Wohlin (who left the commission in 1910 and became a founding member of *Nationalföreningen mot emigrationen* [National Association Against Emigration]) claims that *stataren's* inability to acquire a home of his own led to a social standing below that of the crofter, *torparen*, both in regards to his ability to work and to his morals (1908: 88). Wohlin argued that, if *statarna* could gain access to a plot of land and a pleasant home instead of the poor dwelling described by von Koch and his contemporaries, the willingness to work would increase and emigration would be prevented. Through this, the status of *stataren* would become closer to that of *torparen*. A plot of land and a home of their own became the essential and natural goal of the agricultural worker.

Until the mid-1800s, the “social question” had a clear rural focus. During the latter part of the century, there was a shift towards the urban situation (Olofsson 1996: 148). During the 1870s, organized workers began to be regarded as a threat by the authorities which led, in turn, to discussions about the industrial working environment and the need for social insurance. These items slowly emerged on political agendas in the 1880s. The debate over these issues intensified through the 1890s (Olofsson 1996; Stråth 2012: 372,375).

In connection to the industrial cities, such as Gothenburg, Stockholm and Norrköping, small working class suburbs lacking drainage and water supply were established (Stråth 2012: 377; Magnusson 1997: 337). During the 1880's and 1890's, workers' organizations warned the rural population against moving to the cities to avoid unemployment and poverty, and official

messages were read aloud in the rural churches. Indeed, unemployment was periodically extreme, with thousands of people looking for a job at the same time. The situation would become worse in the 1880s when the recession that hit agriculture also hit the building industry, which meant that most of the newly arrived city dwellers were met with mass unemployment and evictions as a result (Edling 1996: 48, 49).

The housing market was unregulated and the subject of far-reaching speculative investment. By 1900, the rents in Stockholm were the highest in Europe (Larsson 1994: 29). In the 1890s, and during the first decade of the twentieth century, several studies mapping out the housing conditions of workers in Stockholm were published. At the request of *Lorénska Stiftelsen*, Gustaf af Geijerstam (1894) gathered information about the living conditions of workers in two different industries, a mechanical workshop and a cotton mill in Stockholm. He found that the living conditions for the workers in each industry differed widely. While the workers at the mechanical workshop enjoyed a relatively high standard, the workers in the cotton mill lived in cramped, cold apartments, lacking water and drainage. Not only was this unhygienic, as af Geijerstam states, but also “verkade förstörande på den lilla rest af hemlif” [ruined the small remnants of domestic life] that still remained in the workers’ quarter (1894: 36). In 1903, the statistician Joseph Guinchard mapped out destitution among the workers in Stockholm and found that rents had increased 50% percent between 1894 and 1900, and so had problems with overcrowding and poor apartment maintenance. In many cases, both rain and snow came in through the decayed walls of the buildings (1903: 75). According to Guinchard's study, the most common dwelling in Stockholm was a room and a kitchen with approximately twenty-three square meters of floor space, housing on average three occupants. It was not unusual for seven, or even eleven individuals to share such an apartment (1903: 33). The most

expensive dwellings were also the ones that had the lowest standards. For a room without a kitchen, the average yearly rent was 40 SEK, and the average number of occupants was 2.9. It was also in these apartments that the system of taking lodgers was most common, which, according to Guinchard, was of greatest concern, described as a “social kräftskada” [social cancer] (1903: 28,77).

The large group of workers and their inferior living conditions were not only a problem for the workers themselves, but were also regarded as a threat to society. At this time, there was a notable shift in medical research from an individual to an epidemic-social perspective. New discoveries regarding health, including the breakthrough of bacteriology, coupled with the foundations of a health-care law in 1874, gained increasing attention near the end of the nineteenth century (Sundin 2005: 381). Medicine became a social science and the crowded dwellings and unsanitary conditions within the workers’ quarters were considered health hazards, not least when it came to the spread of airborne infectious diseases. Sanitary conditions were, in many instances, lower than they were in the rest of Europe with very high mortality rates related to infectious diseases. Measles, diphtheria and deficiency diseases were the most common causes of death. Along with the much feared tuberculosis, these diseases killed tens of thousands of individuals every year (Stråth 2012: 254). Special attention was given to access to fresh air in the investigations that were carried out documenting the living conditions among workers. Not surprisingly then, a considerable part of Guinchard’s and af Geijerstam’s research is dedicated to calculating the number of individuals in relation to the living area in cubic meters of these apartments.

In these arguments, overcrowding had a moral downside as well. Guinchard states that poor dwellings shelter poor tenants and these wretched and cramped hovels suffocate and

weaken the inhabitants both morally and physically. In contrast, a neat and commodious dwelling creates orderliness, cleanliness and ambition (Guinchard 1903: 72). Besides the rise in the incidence of what became known as the "Stockholm marriage" - cohabitation without marriage that seemingly ran rampant in the working class neighborhoods, the system of taking lodgers was regarded as especially dangerous (Guinchard 1903: 73). Not only did lodgers increase the risk of spreading disease, but they had an equally devastating moral impact. Geijerstam states, in his report on living conditions among workers in Stockholm in 1894, that the lodger system creates a crudity and demoralization beyond anything measurable by statistics. He blames this decadence as the reason for uncivilized children, the loss of female honor and the lack of male responsibility. Lodgers transform what could have been a home into a place where "män och kvinnor djuriskt insomna om hvarandra utan att någon morgondag kan gifva förhoppningen om ett bättre" [men and women fall asleep next each other like beasts, without hope for a better tomorrow] (1894: 52) By reestablishing the family—and by this he means aligning the family with bourgeois ideals—the worker could be saved both physically and morally.

Apart from the immoral ways of life that resulted from this overcrowding, the greatest threat to society was the risk of socialist revolution. The working class had begun to organize, which contributed to the focus on workers' rights in political discussions. Workers' unions grew more powerful and from 1889 onwards, advocacy for workers was primarily led by the newly established Social Democratic party (Stråth 2012: 375-376). According to Guinchard, solving the dwelling situation among the workers was of vital importance, not only for the workers' sake, but also for the sake of the well-to-do middle class. Guinchard makes clear that the diseases that raged within the workers quarters did not stop at the threshold of the wealthy. Similarly, the

demoralization of the workers hindered the sound development of society. If the middle class wanted to protect itself from epidemics as well as social revolution, a solution to the housing question would need to be found (1903: 78).

Regardless of whether the social question was expressed as the “worker question,” emigration, or as a question of access to land, a great deal of attention was placed on dwellings. In many ways, the housing situation was regarded as both the problem and the solution. The lack of arable land was described as the most significant reason for the poverty of *statarna*, emigration and also for supposed low morals and unwillingness to work. A plot of land and a home of their own were described as natural goals for the agricultural worker. For the industrial worker, a good home was the way to defeat social and moral destitution.

The best example of the realization of the idea of “home as the ultimate solution” was the *egnahemsprojektet* [the own home project]. Egnahemsprojektet was a political project aimed at giving members of the working class the opportunity to build a small farm in the countryside (Edling 1996; Germundsson 1993). Already being discussed in 1889, a bill was passed in 1904 to establish the *Egnahemslånefond*, a fund for Governmental loans for members of the working class that would provide low-cost access to funds to build “a house of their own.” Up until 1908, the loans were only given for the establishment of small farms in the countryside. Apart from the lack of space to provide workers with own homes in the cities, the *Egnahemskommittén* [committee for the own home] emphasized the hygienic aspect of the intended houses, thereby explaining the rural focus of their report. The countryside would give the opportunity for the worker to choose a sound spot for his dwelling which, besides sunlight, clean air and fresh water, would provide him and his family with the preconditions for good physical and moral hygiene (1901: 6). In 1908, it became possible to originate loans for the establishment of

bostadsegnahem, small homes within or in close vicinity to densely populated areas, but still outside of a city planning district. During the first decades of the twentieth century, an abundance of accommodation agencies, whose aim was to sell blueprints of workers' homes and to give loans to the urban population, were founded. Like *Österskär-Täby Kontoret*, the agencies tempted potential clients with “sol, frisk luft och hemtrefnad, dock ej för långt från staden” [sun, fresh air and hominess, although not too far from the cities] (1923). Access to fresh air would decrease the risk of epidemics, while also restraining immoral behavior and the organization of workers. Despite these early pushes, by the mid twentieth century, the idyllic suburbs became a reality for the bourgeois, rather than for the working class (Eriksson 1994: 400).

Applications for loans to build a small farm were slow to catch on when they were first introduced in 1904, but increased steadily over successive years. Between 1905 and 1946, approximately 110,000 loans were approved. The building of own homes continued at a relatively high rate until the publication of the *Egnahemsutredningen* [Report on own homes] in 1938. This report concluded that the era of small-scale farming had reached its end and, consequently, the own home project ebbed out during the Second World War (Germundsson 1993: 17; Edling 1996: 276).

The intellectual and political attention given to the home during the first decades of the twentieth century must be seen against the background of the profound demographic changes of the nineteenth century. Similarly, the finer grained social differentiation that characterized this period had considerable impact on the emergence of this increasing attention on the home. Although wealthier farmers prospered due to the introduction of new agricultural technology as well as reapportionment, the agrarian revolution forced a huge proportion of the rural population, in particular the landless groups and the less well-to-do farmers, to find livelihoods outside of the

agricultural sector. For many, emigration to other countries or relocation to the growing cities appeared as better alternatives than remaining in the countryside.

It is not likely that the rural home would have been the object of as much political interest without the dramatic increase in the urban proletariat with the diseases and destitution that accompanied the crowded and insufficient dwellings both in the rural and urban areas. This, paired with an increasing focus on physical and moral salubrity, and the political attention given to societal injustice, helped policy makers conclude that a rural home, with access to fresh air and surrounded by nature, was the best way to build a humane, and modern society.

Nationalism was a cornerstone of this future modern society. The longing to own one's own home which, according to the 1901 years' report, is both natural and human, had to be satisfied in order to save both the individual and the nation (1901: 14). The connection between home and nation was expressed through phrasings such as those of the Social Democrat and *hembygd* enthusiast Karl-Erik Forsslund, who declared in the program for *Brunnsviks Folkhögskola* [Brunnsvik Folk High School] in 1906, "*hemkänsla är fosterlandskänslans grund*" [a fondness for home is the foundation of patriotism] (cited from Knutsson 2010: 16). Sweden was to be turned into a "home for the people". The private home would be the source from which patriotism would arise—it was "*fosterlandet i minatur*" [the motherland in miniature] (Conricus 1903: 8).

CHAPTER TWO

A Swedish Home

In “Svensk natur,” published in 1897, August Strindberg wrote that, apart from wooden fences, red cottages were Sweden’s most characteristic feature and it would be more reasonable to call red and green the national colors of Sweden, rather than yellow and blue (1985: 257).

Besides being regarded as the best tool with which to stem emigration and fight destitution, the idea of the home permeated politics, art, and popular culture during the early twentieth century. This notion of home also became a cornerstone of the rhetoric of an emerging new nationalism. Perhaps inspired by Strindberg, the conservative Parliament Member Rudolf Kjellén celebrated these cottages in the *Svenska Turistföreningen’s* [Swedish Tourist Association] 1901 yearbook, stating that:

“Hvad jag älskar dessa små röda hem i skogsbrynet. När utländska nejder utbreda sin stolta fågring kring mig, då går tanken längtande hem till de svenska bondstugorna med de röda väggarna och hvita fönsterkarmarna mot skogens gröna bakgrund. Rödt och grönt—det kunde lika gärna vara våra färger som blått och gult, ehuru blåklinten i rågen och blåa ögon under gult hår förvisso också äro svenska.” (1901: 270).

[How I love these small red homes at the edge of the forests. When foreign climes surround me with their proud beauty, my thoughts long for the Swedish cottages with their red walls and white window frames against the background of the green forest. Red and green—it might as well be our colors as blue and yellow, although the cornflower in the rye and blue eyes behind blonde hair are Swedish too.]

Kjellén's statement is a telling example of the conspicuous position that the red-painted cottage in a rural setting held in the national discourse of the time. Prior to the turn of the twentieth century, red colored houses were not regarded as particularly Swedish. After the turn of the century, and especially after the dissolution of the union with Norway in 1905, one could read about the superiority of the red color everywhere (Edling 1996; Stavenow-Hidemark 1971). The connection between red-painted cottages and Sweden was noted in magazines, handbooks on how to build small homes, in artwork, and across the popular culture spectrum. Indeed, the symbolic quality of the red cottage gained so much prominence that it began to be compared to the Swedish flag. This chapter provides a brief overview of the intellectual and political discussions during the early twentieth century, and explores the position of the home in the shape of a red cottage in Swedish nationalism during the early twentieth century.

Over the decades, the picture of the red cottage in a rural setting became both "nationalized" and naturalized, emerging as an expression of "banal nationalism" (Billig 1995). In "A Countryside Bright with Cozy Homesteads: Irish Nationalism and the Cottage Landscape," the art historian Tricia Cusack expands on Billig's idea by exploring how paintings of the Irish cottage landscape played an important part in the creation of a sense of national identity in the construction of a new Irish state in the late nineteenth century (2001). Cusack argues that the cottage initially was an element in "sublime-picturesque" painting, which was taken over by the late nineteenth century government and used as government propaganda (2001: 223). In Sweden, it is not possible to draw such a sharp dividing line between art and politics, artists and politicians. Michelle Facos, in *Nationalism and the Nordic Imagination: Swedish Art of the 1890s* (1998), points out that, at the turn of the last century, culture was not subordinate to politics and economics. Rather culture was "integral in shaping societal values" (1998: 2). As

will be shown in this chapter, the singling out of the red cottage as the emblematic home is an example on this complex dovetailing between art and politics.

That nationalism in Europe underwent dynamic change during the last decades of the nineteenth century is a matter of consensus among most scholars on nationalism (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Anderson 1991; Gellner, 2006). In *Den svenskaste historien*, (2000) Patrik Hall explores the construction of Swedish nationalisms from the fifteenth to the twentieth century and, in line with other scholars, states that Swedish nationalism underwent radical changes between the last decades of the nineteenth century and World War One. Nationalism prior to the 1880s can be defined as “bombastic nationalism” praising a bellicose, grand Swedishness. This nationalism regarded the past as a time when the people stood united and fought for God, the king and the nation (Björck 1946: 10-11). Although this nationalism could be discerned well into the twentieth century, with greater attention given to social differentiation, it became more antiquated and subject to questioning as the twentieth century dawned (Berggren 1999: 12). A new myth aiming at inclusion was needed.

While nationalism was in fashion in most parts of Europe, the changes in Swedish nationalism(s) were more a product of Sweden’s chaotic situation than any broad European movement. The historian Henrik Berggren claims that the political and intellectual climate in Sweden during the turn of the twentieth century distinguishes itself through the deep conflict in values between various social and political groups party to the debate, and the intensity and emotionality that informed these “discussions.” Even more interesting than the deep chasm between these factions is how fast the two almost diametrically opposed viewpoints were brought to a consensus (Berggren 1999: 6-7) The new nationalism that emerged during the early twentieth century can be regarded as a strange mix between liberal and neo-conservative ideas

and defined as “collective individualism” (Hall 2000: 222). This emerging nationalism blended German Romanticism with ideas of nation as a personality, added extreme right-wing ideas of the nation as a living organism, and sprinkled it with radical liberal and socialist ideas of the nation as the result of the activities of equal and independent citizens.

The socio-political situation in Sweden during this period was characterized by turbulence and great political conflict. Samuel Edquist goes so far as to define the period as the “final battle” between liberals and conservatives (1999: 77). Destitution among the growing urban proletariat became more apparent and the consequences of social differentiation could no longer be ignored. Diseases ran rampant in the crowded cities, and unemployment increased to unprecedented levels. Emigration reached a second peak in 1903 when approximately 36,000 individuals left for other countries, according to SCB [Statistics Sweden] (1969: 121). Socialism, which had become more organized through the foundation of the Social Democratic party in 1889, attracted an increasing number of supporters, a trend that greatly worried the bourgeois establishment. Occasionally, socialist factions used violence to make their voices heard. In 1908, a bomb detonated on the ship *Amalthea* in Malmö, which housed British workers hired to work during the Swedish dock strike. The attack resulted in one death and twenty-three injuries, and is one of few terrorist attacks on Swedish soil or seas in modern history. During the first decade of the twentieth century, several great strikes paralyzed the newly industrializing economy. In particular, the great strike of 1909 was an expression of the deep conflict between employers and workers, and was described as “ett krig mellan två stormakter“ [a war between two great powers] by the novelist Hjalmar Söderberg (1909: 161). Besides increasing demands for workers’ rights, strong voices were raised in favor of universal suffrage. After a drawn-out, and occasionally

fierce discussion, universal male suffrage was eventually inaugurated in 1908. Women, however, did not enjoy the right to vote until 1921.

A question of crucial importance that caused venomous dispute was how to handle Norway's request for independence. Relations between Sweden and Norway, which had been forced into a union with Sweden in 1814 as a consequence of the treaty of Kiel, were chilly. Demands for independence by Norwegians intensified up through the 1880s, and a more aggressive nationalism developed among them. Conservative Swedes answered in just as aggressive tones, threatening to put the Norwegians in their place by military force (Stråth 2012: 89-103). After protracted negotiations, the union was dissolved in 1905. A similarly energetic debate emerged over how to handle a supposed military threat from Russia. Sweden lost Finland to Russia in 1809 and, in connection with this, Russia also invaded the northern parts of Sweden before a peace agreement was reached. Fear of Russian invasion continued to flare up from time to time. Eventually, the fear of Russia led to a dispute known as "försvarsstriden" [the defense strife] during the first years of the 1910s.

The liberal and socialist critique foregrounded three issues: social inequality, the conservatives' desperate allegiance to a historico-military ideology, and hostile attitudes towards Norway's quest for independence. The liberal, and to some degree also the socialist critique, was formulated using nationalist wording, criticizing the prevalent backward-gazing patriotism. The novelist and poet Gustav Fröding called this prevalent patriotism "patridiotism" (patridiocy) and argued that, from the perspective of the conservatives, patriotism was equivalent solely to a strong defense posture towards foreign powers, completely ignoring the prevailing domestic chaos. According to the conservatives, sacrifice for the military defense of the country was patriotic, but sacrifice for education or political justice was treason, Fröding claimed (Björck

1946: 19). Yet a true feeling of national community could not be reached until social justice had been attained.

In 1898, Ellen Key, the most ardent spokeswoman for the rejuvenation of patriotism among the social-liberals, wrote in *Om Patriotismen* that participation was the Alpha and Omega for patriotism. Consequently, universal suffrage was fundamental for a rejuvenation of national pride (Key 1996: 248). In the same text, Key describes the historicism and the celebration of war kings and the glorious past as an antiquated patriotism that had “låt it nationens självkänsla bokstavligen leva av stenar istället för bröd—minnesstenar, gravstenar, minnesstoder” [let the self-esteem of the nation literally live on stones instead of bread—memorial stones, gravestones, monuments] (1996: 242). What Key, Fröding and their peers advocated was a heartfelt nationalism that stemmed from the peoples’ love for the nation rather than, as Key states, a patriotism limited to the celebration of the royal family (ibid).

However, the old conservative historicism was also challenged by a neo-conservative current, primarily expressed through the organization *Unghögern* [the Young Right], a branch developed from *Fosterländska Förbundet* [The Patriotic Society]. In accordance with the traditional conservatives, *Unghögern* were traditionalistic, pro-military defense, and royalist. Nevertheless, they argued that the patriotism advocated by their predecessors was “blood-less,” and did not serve the nation (Sörlin 1988: 196; Berggren, Trägårdh 2009: 168). In contrast to the old conservatives, the neo-conservatives were not against modernity, social reforms, and industrial progress. Instead, industrial progress, and social and political reforms would create a loyal, patriotic people, stem emigration, and secure the well being of the nation (Lindkvist 2007: 140). A project that would become of particular importance to *Unghögern* was the *egnahemsprojektet*. In 1907, Adrian Molin, one of the leading figures in *Unghögern*, was one of

the founding members of *Nationalföreningen mot emigrationen* [National Associations Against Emigration], which functioned as an umbrella organization for the small farming movement. It also emerged as a driving force behind the own home project.

What separated the liberals from the neo-conservatives was that, while liberal nationalists argued that patriotism sprang from individual participation in social and political matters, the neo-conservatives regarded patriotism as a natural instinct. For this latter group, the nation *per se* was the highest decision-making organization above the individual (Hall 2000: 198; Berggren, Trägårdh 2006: 168,174.) The neo-conservative take on nation had its foundation in early nineteenth century German philosophy about the *Volksgeist* and the mysterious organic connection between a nation and its people. According to this philosophy, nation was a natural creation, held together by the common spirit of its people, and expressed through different kinds of folk art. This spirit linked a people together and separated them from others. Consequently, they believed that the boundaries of the state should follow those of the nation (Damsholt 1999: 33,34). Eric Storm notes that this philosophy of the *Volksgeist* experienced a strong revival during the late nineteenth century, albeit this time mixed with natural sciences and biological ideas, which made the idea of nation as an organism possible (Storm 2003: 254)

Rudolf Kjellén, professor of Political Science and a member of parliament, was undoubtedly the most prominent advocate for the neo-conservative movement and the idea of nation as organism. According to Kjellén, the most important thing for the nation as organism was its territory, its nature and natural assets, which constituted the body of the nation (Lindkvist 2007: 53). In Kjellén's essay, *Nationalitetsidéén*, written in 1898, the same year as Ellen Key advocated for patriotism through participation in *Om Patriotismen*, he describes nation as the higher creature in which we "uppgå och sammansmälta, liksom cellerna smälta samman i vår

egen kropp” [merge and melt together, just like the cells in our own body] (1996: 276). The social classes were parts of the same body, and the duty of politics was to make sure that no part of this body became too powerful or rebelled against another, all for the well-being of the nation (Stråth 2012: 70). Instead of solidarity within the social class, the greatest affinity was the organic and mysterious connection between nation, nature and the individual. Kjellén expresses the organic connection in a most dramatic way:

I denna jord vilar våra fäder, och där skola vi en gång slumra vid dess sida. Denna jord hava de fuktat med sin svett, gött med sitt blod och på sistone närt med sitt stoft. [---]. Vi som äro här församlade, till *svensk jord* skola vi en gång varda. Det är en sällsam tanke detta, att själva det bröd vi äta kan hava spirat i döde fäders mull. (1996: 280 italics in original)

[In this soil rest our fathers, and there we will one day be by their side. This soil have they moistened with their sweat, nourished with their blood and recently fed with their remains. [---]. We, who are gathered here, to *Swedish soil* will we once return. It is a peculiar thought that even the bread we eat can have germinated in the dust of the dead fathers.]

Although Kjellén’s perspective never became influential in Swedish politics, the mysterious connection between nation, nature and its people was a salient feature in turn of the century patriotism, and a cornerstone of the tremendously popular *hembygdsrörelsen*—a national movement dedicated to the *Heimat* (Lagergren 1999: 102 Ljung Svensson 2011: 223).

Regardless of the direction from which the critique came, whether from the liberal or the neo-conservative direction, the underlying question was not the more common “to be or not to be” question of nationalist discourse. Instead, the battle focused on how the nation should be

defined, and the purpose of patriotic sentiment. National overtones could be found as easily among conservatives and neo-conservatives as extreme liberals (Hall 2000: 217). Indeed, it is not even possible to discern a unanimous dissociation towards nationalism among the socialists, although there was a deep internal chasm in the socialist faction on the basis of the question of nationalism, especially during the 1910s (Berggren 1999: 13; Edquist 1999). Romanticization of the rural, nature and the life of the farmer was a salient feature in the socialist critique of capitalism, which had a moderating effect on radicalism, and ensured that the new nationalism successively gained ground in the workers' movement (Edquist 1999: 99). Consequently, it is not particularly fruitful to connect this nationalist ideology to any political faction. Rather, it is more accurate, as Patrik Hall argues, to recognize that “de politiska lägren hör alla hemma inom nationalismen” [the political factions all belong within nationalism] (Hall 2000: 218,226). Instead of being an ideology tied to a particular political faction, Swedish nationalism of the time can be defined as a “political religion,” permeating politics, intellectual debate, art, and popular culture (Lindkvist 2007: 53; Edling 1996: 369)

Liberals and neo-conservatives alike advocated for a modern nationalism that grew from the love of the *fosterland* [native country], rather than through retrospection and a pompous celebration of the “good old days.” This new nationalism mythologized the future rather than the past, and idealized the “people,” especially the youth, as the source from which the new nationalism should arise (Fransson 2002: 44). The idealization of the “people” was indeed not missing in the older version of nationalism. In both nationalisms, the concept of the “ideal people” was synonymous with the concept of the farmer, but it was two competing myths about this farmer that were emphasized. In the conservative nationalism, the farmers were a loyal people that fought side by side with the king, for the nation. By way of contrast, this royalist

farmer was not idealized in the liberal myth. Instead, the myth presented a strong and free farmer-class that fought against domestic and international oppression. The free farmer was something that, according to this version of history, separated Sweden from other nations. Here, universal suffrage, engagement in societal matters and democracy were in the nature of the Swede (Berggren 1999: 12). In *Om Patriotismen*, first published in 1897, Key goes so far as to prophesy that a new Swede, an *übermensch* of Nietzschean proportions, would develop in the “rödmålade stugor och vindskamrar” [red-painted cottages and attic rooms], referring implicitly to the working classes and small farmers (1996: 254).

The passion for the rural, and the singling out of the rural home as the “authentic” home paradoxically took place at the same time as the increasing urbanization. In *The Country and the City* (1975), Raymond Williams suggests that in times of rapid capitalist development, English novelists have depicted rural life as the ideal way of living, in sharp contrast to life in the cities. Along the same lines, Michael Bunce argues that the idealization of the countryside is “intricately bound up in the development of modern urban civilization” (1994: 2). The idea of an idyllic countryside in contrast to cramped cities helps explain why the red cottage emerged as a national symbol. The description of the unhealthy city as a sharp contrast to the sound and healthy countryside was a salient feature in the ideology of home during the early twentieth century. The city led to both physical and moral decay, alcoholism and promiscuity, while the countryside was said to have had an edifying effect on body and soul, and also promoted national values such as honesty, independence and contentment (Edling 1996: 302). Architects, intellectuals and politicians unanimously argued that a true home could not be situated in a city. The architect Ragnar Östberg, for example, claimed that it was an unfortunate byproduct of destiny that city dwellers had to live in small boxes (1905: 12). In the best-selling novel

Storgården, En bok om ett hem (1900), Karl-Erik Forsslund describes the apartments in the cities as, “stenvidunder. [---]. De stå utefter gatorna stela och livlösa, i räta led som soldater. De stirra med sina många ögon, det är en ond girig blick (1900: 61). [monsters of stone [---] . They sit along the streets, stiff and lifeless, in straight lines like soldiers. They stare with their many eyes; it is an evil, greedy look]. In the same manner, the architect Lars Israel Wahlman argued that an apartment in the city was nothing more than a place where one barricaded oneself against one’s neighbors (Edling 1996: 301).

In contrast to the cramped, dirty cities stood a small farming idyll, which relied on an idea that country living in the *hembygd* was the happiest, most ideal, way of living. *Hembygd* is commonly translated as “home community” or, as in SAOL, “trakt som omger hemmet” [area surrounding the home]. Yet it can also be used in metaphorical speech. In his dissertation, *Landskapet som lärobok: Regionalitet och medborgarfostran i Jämtland kring sekelskiftet 1900*, Per Fransson characterizes *hembygd* by plasticity. The term can be applied to large spectra of territorial categories, ranging from villages and communities to provinces and, indeed, the entire nation (2010: 348). *Hembygd* was at once national, regional and local (Miller Lane 2000: 79). Consequently, nation should be regarded through the eyes of the local, and the local through the eyes of the nation (Björkroth 2000: 42; Lindkvist 2007: 188). It was only by being true to the characteristics of the region that the nation would prosper. The idea of love for the *hembygd* as a foundation for patriotism was nourished by the idea of a mysterious connection between nature, nation and the individual. Based on this connection between the local and the national, Rudolf Kjellén argues in *Nationalitetsidén* that “nationalkänslan växer ut från kärleken till hembygden,” [national feeling grows from the love for the *hembygd*] (1996: 279). This was not an idea limited to the conservative take on patriotism. Ellen Key claimed that it was the

“jordbundna skogsdoftande hembygdskänslan” [earthbound forest scented sentiment of *hembygd*] that was at the core of the modern patriotism (Key 1996: 239 [1897]). All Swedes were members of a *hembygd* and by linking this local community to the idea of the nation, the local villager could become a Swede, and member of the extended *hembygd*.

The great focus on *hembygd* became apparent concurrent with a shift in art. During the 1890s, a group of artists who referred to themselves as “The Opponents” turned against the dominant trend of grandiose historical paintings. According to them, it was not the great history, or magnificent views that should be representative of Sweden, but rather small intimate landscapes. This perspective was of course influenced by increasingly popular critiques of pompous nationalism, and of the consequences of industrialization. Richard Berg, prominent National Romanticist and one of the founding members of *Sveriges konstärsförbund* (Sweden’s Artist Association), writes lyrically in *Svenskt Konstnärskynne* originally published in 1899 as a request to artists residing in Paris, to go back to Sweden and depict the Swedish landscape, “Kom, jag längtar. Jag längtar efter den röda stugan. Jag längtar efter den vita björken. Jag längtar efter den mörka skogen och det stilla vattnet.” [Come, I long. I long for the red cottage. I long for the white birch tree. I long for the dark forest and the calm water.] (1996: 330) In reality, it was probably the deteriorating conditions for foreign artists in France during the end of the 1880s that precipitated the artists’ return to Sweden, but the urge could be incorporated in the escalating request for a new nationalism (Edquist 1999: 71). According to Bergh, the goal for the artist was to, “liksom fordom prästen stå utanför klassgränserna” [like the clergyman of bygone days, exist outside of class boundaries], and paint for the “Swedish people”. (1996: 324). During the first decade of the 1900s, descriptions like Bergh’s of the rural *hembygd* overflow in magazines, books and pictures. In particular, the carefree life of Carl Larsson’s family in Lilla

Hyttnäs, Dalarna, depicted in light watercolors were admired both during the world exhibition in 1897, and in the popular book *Ett hem* (1899, fig. 7).



Figure 7: Cover of Carl Larsson's *Ett hem, 24 målningar*. 1899. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag.
[Public domain]. Wikimedia Commons.
<http://bit.ly/1XvHieH>

The deep-rooted farmer as ideal and the countryside as the place for community, individualism and homeliness, is also a reoccurring theme in romantic literature about the *hembygd* (Ljung Svensson 2011: 223). Karl-Erik Forsslund describes the red-painted house *Storgården* in *Storgården. En bok om ett hem* as resting “lugnt och stadigt på ryggen av en gräsbevåkst och med en rad höga björkar kantad udde i Wässman” [calm and steady on the ridge of a grassy, birch tree-bordered cape on Lake Wässman], surrounded by a garden, lush, leafy trees and the mountains in the distance (1900: 11, fig. 8). The main, whose name fittingly is Karl-Herman Bondesson (Farmer’s son) flees the city for his place of birth in the countryside of Dalarna, marries his cousin and creates an idyllic home in an old, red-painted house (just as Forsslund did). Here the couple lives in close contact with nature through work, walks in nature, and dances around the Maypole (1900: 128).



Figure 8: Cover of Karl-Erik Forslund's *Storgården: En bok om ett hem*. 1900.
In Margareta Kjellin, and Nina Ericson ed. *Den röda färgen*. Falun and Stockholm: Stora
Kopparbergs Bergslags AB/Prisma, 2004: 97

The Larsson and Forsslund families were not the only intellectuals to settle in Dalarna. The region had an elevated conceptual position during the early twentieth century that attracted the Swedish intellectual elite and became the natural place to study vernacular architecture. John Åkerlund, the most engaged architect in *egnahemsprojektet*, lived in Dalarna for several years and also spent time in the home of Karl-Erik Forsslund, socializing with intellectual leaders in art and participating in organization dedicated to preservation of local culture, which would have tremendous impact on his work as an architect (Eriksson Hultén 2004: 24).

In Dalarna, traditions, old village structures, and ways of living were said to have resisted industrialization. At the same time, the region was regarded as threatened and in need of protection. Arthur Hazelius offered this protection largely through the construction of the open-air museum *Skansen* in Stockholm. The houses at Skansen, in particular the cottage from Mora, Dalarna, were frequently referenced in texts about the ideal home, and regarded as a model for the construction of the modern Swedish home. Ellen Key encouraged her readers to study the cottage from Mora as an example of a *true* home, although Carl Larsson's Lilla Hyttånäs is also held up as an even greater example because of its modernity (Key 1899: 10,14). The cottages at *Skansen* were not only used as examples of the authentic, they were also presented as *Swedish*. In the article "Byggnadsstilar" published in June 1910 in *Sveriges villa och egnahemstidning*, one reads that a stroll at Skansen, open-air museum, leads to positive thoughts such as:

“Får jag någon gång ett eget hem skall det se ut just som den eller den stugan; det skall bli en levande och verklig protest mot dessa utsägligt ledsamma och fula hyreskaserner, där jag måst söka mig tak öfver hufvudet, - det skall bli ett *svenskt hem*”
(1910: 9 italics in original)

[If I ever have my own home, it should look like this or that cottage; it should be a living and real protest against the inexpressibly sad and ugly tenement, where I must seek a roof over my head—it will be a Swedish home”]

During the early twentieth century, the passion for *hembygd* was organized in *hembygdsrörelsen* of which Forsslund was a prominent figure. The sources of inspiration came partly from the Norwegian youth-organization, and partly from the German *Heimat* movement, where the term *heimat* referred to a democratization of the idea of nation on a more down-to-earth and contemporary level. The intention of *hembygdsrörelsen* was to be a religiously and politically independent organization and spread love for *hembygd* on a broad basis. Class conflict was to be toned down in favor of a feeling of unity evoked by the love for the local community (Applegate 1990; Sundin 1994: 19)

Although *hembygdsrörelsen* had the protection of traditions and artifacts as one of its cornerstones, and had developed from archeological societies, it was not solely focused on mere preservation. As Michelle Facos argues, considering Swedish turn of the last century art, National Romanticism in Sweden distinguished itself from the rest of Europe. Rather than a theme for nostalgic dwelling, the past was conceptualized as a springboard towards the future. Michelle Facos explains this special position in Swedish National Romanticism by stating that it “promulgated a modernist worldview, not a static pastoral/agrarian vision” (1998: 3). This was also the case for the *hembygd* movement.

There was a close interplay between more or less radical ideas regarding small farming, architecture, home decoration, preservation of rural tradition and the *hembygd* associations. Some of the most ardent advocates and frequently appearing speakers within the *hembygd* movement, such as Ellen Key, the teacher of agriculture Per Jönson Rösiö, and Karl Erik

Forsslund were, at the same time, the most radical intellectuals of the time. In their opinions, the rural *hembygd* was a stepping-stone for a radically different future (Edquist 1999: 96).

Organizations and leading spokespersons devoted to *hembygd* thus had a double function, gazing backwards and aiming forward (Alzén 2007: 47). This “double-gazing” is particularly salient in the dovetailing of nationalism and housing policy in the context of *egnahemsprojektet* (Edling 1996; Björkroth 2000: 170,181).

As has been thoroughly described by Tomas Germundsson (1993) and Nils Edling, (1996), and touched upon in the previous chapter, the reasons for the development of the own home project were many. Besides the altruistic goal of managing the inferior living conditions of agricultural and industrial workers and preventing more people from moving to the already cramped cities, the project had political motivations that varied depending on the faction using it as an argument. Besides being the finest tool to fight both socialism and emigration, the project suited the conservative quest to persuade agricultural workers to remain in the countryside, thus securing a consistent labor pool for the large estates. According to Elisabet Stavenow-Hidemark, the aim to persuade agricultural workers to remain in the countryside was also in the interest of industrial workers, especially during the great strike in 1909, when access to labor was uncertain. It was also during this time that the socialists, who earlier had rejected a privatization of state-owned land, changed their opinion, and their political ambitions aligned with the workers’ goal of becoming “*egnahemmare*” [home-owners] (Stavenow-Hidemark 1967: 65). Simultaneously, liberals used the project as part of their quest for social reform, as well as a tool in the fight for universal suffrage, since private ownership was said to increase the inclination to engage in societal matters (Germundsson 1993; Edling 1996).

Indeed, the own home project could be incorporated into the agenda of all political factions. That all factions embraced the project was, together with the great public interest among the workers, the main reason for the own home's project explosive force.

Besides accommodating specific political interests, a common idea was that the own home project would ultimately create a sound and strong nation. In governmental reports and popular texts, it is clear that the own home was not only intended to benefit the home's inhabitants, but also the nation as a whole. According to *Egnahemskommitténs* report, the own home would "stärka känslan för hembygd och fosterland" [strengthen the feeling for the local community and native country], which in turn would also stem the rising tide of people leaving for North America (1901: 14). A popular idea was that the individual who loved his *hembygd* and nation would neither leave nor become a socialist. Indeed, the own home became both the ultimate solution to these threats to the nation, and the ideal way to create the new Swedish citizen. In her dissertation, *En bostad för hemmet: Studier i den bostadspolitiska frågan 1889-1929*, Kerstin Thörn (1997) explores how the home functioned as a hub around which social questions revolved. According to Thörn, it was not a goal in itself to provide the working class with sufficient dwellings. A sound and clean home was said to have an edifying effect on its inhabitants and was a tool through which the family and modern society could be created (1997: 26, 33). Indeed, it was not just any worker who could be considered for a Governmental loan. To be eligible, the borrower had to be a manual laborer, man or woman, between twenty-five and fifty years old with Swedish citizenship and be known for economical living, sobriety, and high morals (1901: 20). In this way, as Kirsi Saarikangas argues, the home became both a measure of "civic fitness" and a vehicle for social education (1993: 75). *Nordisk Familjebok* summarizes the educating effect of the own home by explaining that "Det egna hemmet verkar i hög grad

uppfostrande, ökar hemtrefnaden och skapar en god medborgaranda.” [The own home is greatly edifying, increasing a person’s connection to home and creating a fruitful spirit of citizenship] (1907: 1454). The own home was thus intended not only to improve the living conditions for workers, but also to create a clean-cut, nation-loving Swede, firmly rooted in the peasant tradition, but based on a bourgeois family ideal. In this home, aesthetics, morals and politics meet (Saarikangas 1993: 30).

A pre-requisite to create this Swede was a home that was Swedish in its appearance. As Bjarne Stoklund shows, architecture as a marker of national identity played an important role at the Great Exhibitions as early as 1867 and onward. The “pavilions” were copies of vernacular architecture, aiming to “strike a national note” (Stoklund 1999: 7). In the same manner, private homes were to be national in their appearance. Especially after the dissolution of the union with Norway, architecture became a means to separate Sweden from its neighbor. Barbara Miller Lane argues that a new domestic architecture was a necessary component of the new idea of the nation (2000: 79). According to Elisabet Stavenow-Hidemark, the villas and own home would never have been so inspired of “allmoge” architecture without widespread nationalism, enforced by the separation from Norway. “Den är helt enkelt förutsättningen för den faluröda trävillans utbredning” (1971: 74) [It is simply a prerequisite for the spread of the Falu-red house]

The greatest source of inspiration for the generation of young Swedish architects and home-ideologists during the early twentieth century came from the British Arts and Crafts movement. The critic and moral philosopher John Ruskin, whose ideas were the foundation for the movement, argued that houses are products of the climate, the characteristics of the region and the mentality of the people in an organic interplay with nature. The German architect and politician Hermann Muthesius presented a development of Ruskins’ idea and argued that true art

was on a par with national art, and by developing an architecture based on national characteristics, an authentic architecture would emerge. These ideas about the connection between architecture and nation became quite influential in Sweden (Stavenow-Hidemark 1971: 34,56,71).

The need for a national architecture is most fiercely argued in *Svenska Allmogehem* (1909), a book published by *Nationalföreningen mot Emigrationen* [National Society Against Emigration]. This tome quickly came to be considered the “bible” for small farmers during time of the own home project. Besides instructions on how to build a small house in the countryside, the book also contained articles on farming and gardening. It was eventually published in several editions, with the first edition of 60,000 copies given as prizes to schoolchildren in the countryside (Edling 1996: 298).

The book included fifteen plans for small farms drawn by some of the most prominent architects of the time such as Jacob J Gate, Torben Grut and John Åkerlund along with illustrations by Nils Kreuger. In line with Muthesius’s idea of an architecture based on national characteristics, and with Ruskin’s idea of the house as a product of different climate and regional characteristics, the fifteen suggestions for “own homes” presented in *Svenska Allmogehem*, were based on rural dwellings that could be found in different regions of Sweden.

In the article “Hur allmogehem skola byggas” published in *Svenska Allmogehem*, John Åkerlund refers to early twentieth century buildings as “vulgar imitations of foreign villas”. He writes that a consequence of increasing accessibility to travel within Europe was the influence of continental, especially Swiss, building traditions. The Swiss-inspired houses were beautiful and functional in their own milieu, he states, but had no function in the Swedish climate (Åkerlund 1909: 173). This fashion had also started to be adopted in the countryside, starting in the 1890s,

with farmers adorning their houses with gingerbread latticework and painting their homes with linseed-oil paint in pale colors (Rentzhog 1971: 17,18). According to Åkerlund, the gingerbread latticework and the overhanging roofs and balconies had “torn the character and beauty of the old Swedish farms to pieces”. His aim, he proclaims, was to “heal the wounds” that had ensued from the “uncritical admiration for the foreign,” and “lead the development on a sound national path” (1909: 157,174). The national home was to be a modern Swedish home, but with firm roots in a Swedish building tradition.

Instead of worshipping Swiss building tradition, Åkerlund encouraged the builder of an own home to closely study the characteristics of vernacular buildings in his region and adapt his new home in line with this. Doing so would result in a building with a Swedish character (1909: 174). Along with the fashionable idea of a connection between nature and architecture, Åkerlund’s focus on the importance of regional building traditions for the construction of a Swedish home depended on his deep involvement in *hembygdsrörelsen*. The idea of an organic connection between region and nation was a cornerstone in the *hembygd* movement, and the preservation of regional characteristics were said to be fundamental for the well-being of the nation (Björkroth 2010; Storm 2003). To create a new building ideal based on regional rural architecture was thus a project for the good of the nation.

The buildings presented in connection with the own home project are probably the most striking examples of how Swedish identity could be defined and manifested through architecture. The great interest in the own home project led to the publication of several magazines on the topic. *Sveriges Villa- och Egnahemstidning* and *Hem i Sverige*, published by *Nationalföreningen mot Emigrationen*, for example, devoted themselves exclusively to the establishment of small farms and single-family homes. There was also a great interest in books on the topic, and an

abundance of pattern books of varying quality with house plans for homes for the working class families were published (Stavenow-Hidemark 1971: 177). Edling even defines this literature as a genre of its own (1996: 297). In addition, *egnahemsföreningar*, such as *Hem på Landet* sold postcards and made their voices heard through newspaper advertising.

The movement was not limited to publication projects, however. Project exhibitions were held, and prototypes were built, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and University of Agriculture. The most successful exhibition was held in 1911, when *Nationalföreningen mot Emigrationen* opened a permanent exhibit, with Åkerlund as the architect in charge. The exhibit showed miniature models of farms, with removable roofs that showed the interior of the houses. It was a success and gained a great deal of attention, not least because of its aim to protect “den kärva gammalsvenska trevnaden” [the rugged old-fashioned Swedish love of home], as the architect August Brunius wrote in the magazine *Arkitektur* (1911: 74 citation from Stavenow-Hidemark 1967: 75). Parts of the exhibition were also shown at the Baltic Exhibition in *Malmö* 1914, and at the Great Fair in San Francisco in 1915, this time in order to “väcka och stimulera kärleken [---] till Sverige” [awaken and stimulate the love [---] for Sweden] in order to convince emigrants to return to Sweden (Lindkvist 2007: 97,98).

In the end, not many houses were built according to the plans of the houses presented in *Svenska Allmogehem*, nor in the exhibitions created by *Nationalföreningen mot Emigrationen*. The models functioned, instead, as sources of inspiration (Stavenow-Hidemark 1967: 77). To judge from photographs of farms built during the last decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, it appears that many local builders were inspired by the same sources, perhaps at the expense of local building tradition. To some degree, the new houses also bear witness to a new phase within agriculture, while the new building mode offers evidence of

this new age through the carpenters' design inspirations which can be traced directly to the pictorial industry (Johannesson 1997: 126, 127). Without a doubt, the great distribution of the plans, commercial advertisements, and popular postcards helped nourish the idea of the idyllic countryside and an ideal life in a red-painted house.

Although Åkerlund and several of his fellow architects placed great emphasis on the regional as a foundation for a national architecture, the “authentic” home presented in the material published in connection to *egnahemsprojektet*, more or less followed a single pattern. With few exceptions, the plans presented in magazines, in commercial advertisements, and at exhibitions resembled each other, and are simple variations on the central theme of a rural house.

One example of this home is presented in Ragnar Östberg's *Ett hem, dess byggnad och inredning*, published in five editions between 1905 and 1921. In the book, Östberg presents suggestions for houses of one to four rooms and a kitchen, and also presents drawings of matching furniture. All houses presented have paneled walls, broad corner boards, a saddle or mansard roof covered with roofing-tiles, and a small veranda (fig. 9).

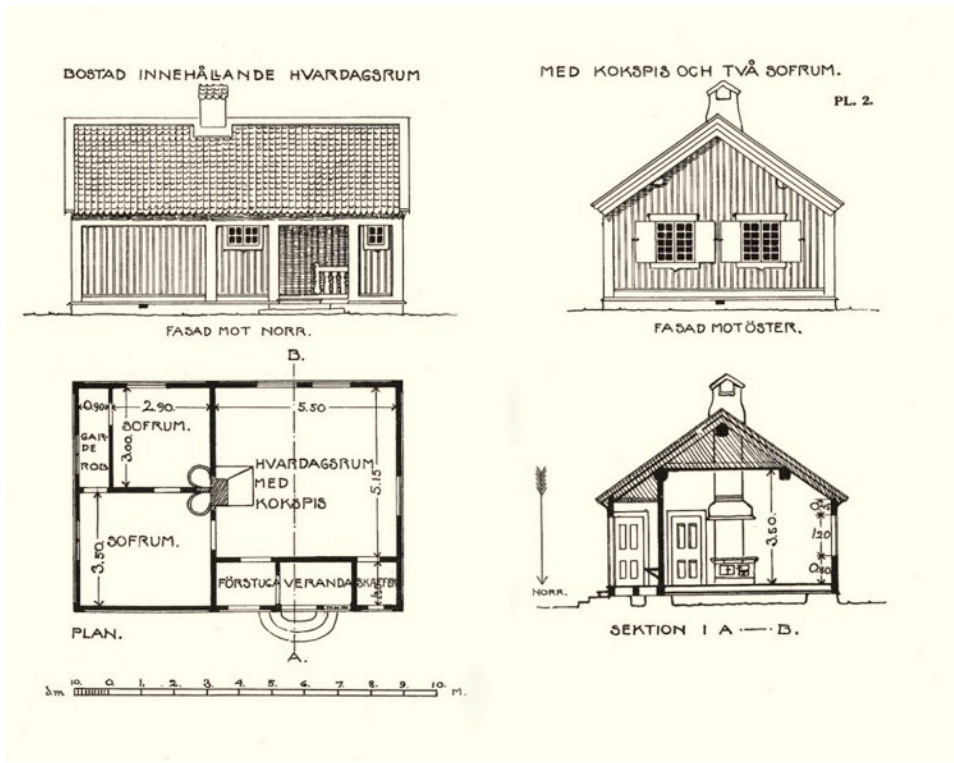
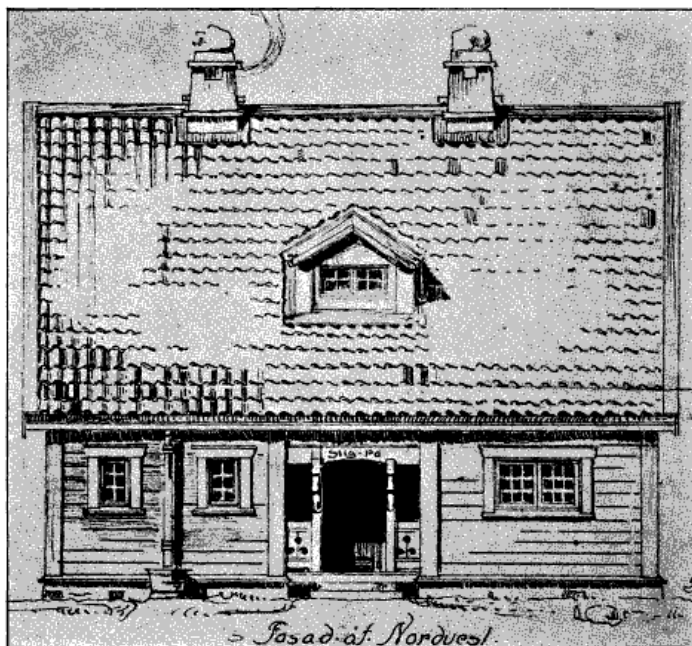


Figure 9: Ragnar Östberg's drawing of a home with a livingroom and two bedrooms. In *Ett hem, dess byggnad och inredning*. Studentföreningen Verdandis Småskrifter 131. Stockholm: Bonnier. 1905: 22-23.

Another example is the houses presented at exhibitions and in architectural competitions. *Svenska Slöjdföreningen* [the Swedish Craft Association] announced one such competition in 1902, and a second one in connection with 1909's *Konstindustriutställning* [Exhibition of Arts and Crafts] in Stockholm. According to an article published in *Hvar 8:e dag* on June 26, 1902, the theme for 1902's competition was "En enklare träbyggnad på landet" [A simple wooden house in the countryside]. The rules stated that the houses should "ansluta sig till äldre kända byggnadsformer" [reflect older, well-known building types] and have a rectangular or square plan in order to "komma ifrån den ofta fula och 'brackiga' villastilen" [dissociate from the, in most cases ugly and 'smug' villa style] (1902: 616). The winner of *Svenska Slöjdföreningen's* competition both in 1902 and 1909 was Carl Güettler who presented a small cottage with a curbed roof, a small veranda and a frontispiece. The cottage was painted in Falu-red color without white details (fig. 10). According to Stavenow-Hidemark, the cottage was a miniature of a manor house of the well to do, with its veranda and frontispiece placed between two windows on the long side of the house (Stavenow-Hidemark 1967: 74; 1971: 175).



FÖRSLAG TILL BYGGNAD Å LANDET:
FÖRSTA PRISET: Arkitekten Karl Guettler, Stockholm.

Figure 10: Carl Güttler's winning contribution in Svenska Slöjdföreningen's competition. "En enklare träbyggnad på landet"
Ord och Bild 29, June 1902: 617.

The idea of the 1909 competition was to draw a house of one room and a kitchen for the working class. One hundred and seventy-seven entries were submitted. Besides Güettler's winning contribution, the most memorable cottage was perhaps *Enskedestugan*, by Axel Herman Forsberg and CA Andersson, who presented a two-roomed cottage with red-painted walls, white corners and a white-painted veranda (fig. 11). Twenty identical copies of the cottage, presented by *Stockholm Stads Lantegendomsnämnd* were eventually built in the garden-suburb *Enskede* (Eriksson 2000: 395). To create a home for the working class that imitated the homes of the more well-situated stratum is an example of how the bourgeois villa could be adapted to suit the working class, and how the home could transform the worker to fit a bourgeois way of living.

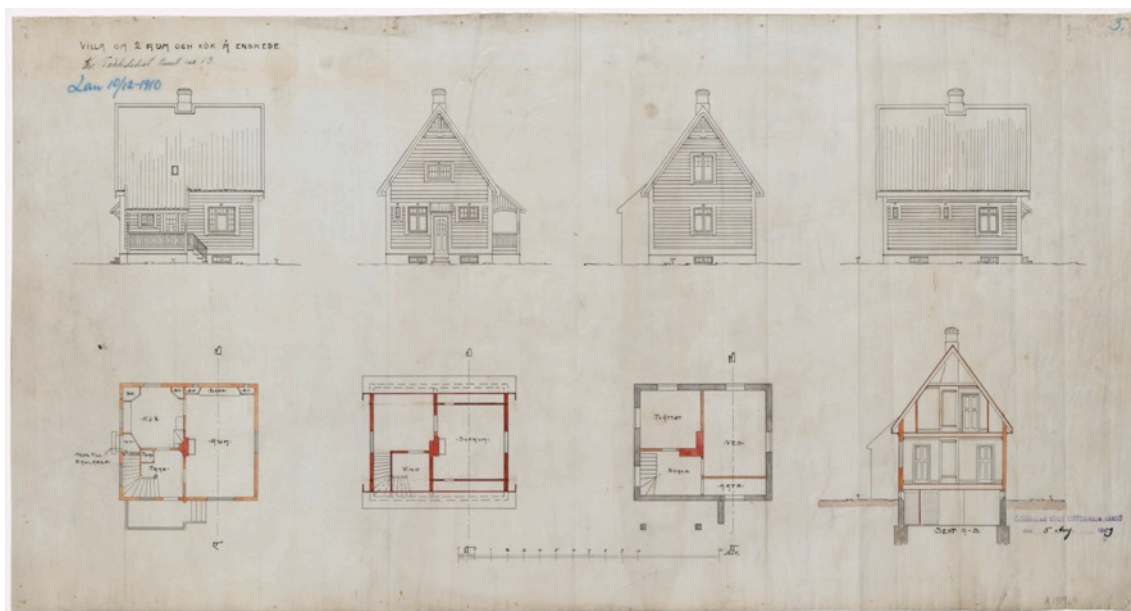


Figure 11: Axel H Forsberg and CA Andersson. *Enskedestugan*, 1908. Byggnadsnämndens expedition och stadsarkitektkontor, NS 37:A131969:3
Stockholmsbyggnadsritningar.se
<http://www.stockholmsbyggnadsritningar.se/enskedestugan/>

Even the houses presented at *Nationalföreningen mot Emigrationens* exhibition 1911 are quite similar. Almost without exception, the houses were paneled, red-painted, surrounded by picturesque gardens and arbors with the Swedish flag hoisted out front on a flagpole (Stavenow-Hidemark 1967: 76). Occasionally, there were even calls for a standardized home. In *Folkbildningsarbetet* (1906), Ellen Key defines the modern and Swiss-inspired villas as the core of the degeneration of Swedish taste and states that:

“Intet vore ett värdigare mål för våra arkitekter än att dana en ny stugutyp som liksom den röda stugan kunde återupprepas århundraden efter århundraden och i hundratusendental, utan att det dock blefve för mycket av den” (1906: 172)

[Nothing would be a more worthy goal for our architects than the creation of a new cottage, which, like the red cottage, could be repeated century after century and in hundreds of thousands of examples, and yet there would still not be too many.]

The construction of a modern cottage on par with the red cottage would be the most important part of a rejuvenation of Swedish taste, Key continues, and mentions both Östberg's *Ett hem* and architectural competitions by *AB Hem på Landet* and *Svenska Slöjdföreningen* as optimistic tendencies in the construction of a beautiful Swedish home (1906: 173). Versions of this “standardized” national home, based on rural tradition, can be seen in plans from the early 1900s well into the late 1920s, when a functionalistic ideal started to become more common.

In articles and texts published in connection to house plans, some features were singled out as particularly national, suiting either the Swedish nature or the Swedish mentality. The oft-occurring veranda is explained in *Sveriges Villa- och egnahemstidning* by stating, “ett svenskt hem är inget hem utan en veranda.” [a Swedish home is not a home without a veranda] (1910: 10). In the same article, it is argued that “Svensken vill gärna ha ingången mot vägen, eftersom

det ger huset en karaktär av gästvänlighet som passar dess invånare” [the Swede prefers to have the entrance towards the road, since this gives the house a character of hospitality, which suits its inhabitants] (ibid).

Besides the correspondence between the house and its inhabitants, an organic interplay with nature, red paneled walls and white corners appear to be the most salient features of Swedishness (Edling 1996: 298). In line with the idea of the building’s organic connection to nature, building material and color were to be chosen depending on the surroundings of the house both in terms of nature and other buildings. Lars Israel Wahlman was one of the first Swedish architects to argue that a house should be the link between nature and the individual, even stating that such house is “en intelligent människas bostad” [the dwelling of an intelligent person] (1902: 26). In *Ett hem*, Ragnar Östberg argues that the new houses should be colored with regards to the surrounding old buildings, which were either unpainted and greyish with white window frames, or painted Falu-red with white window frames and white door casings (1905: 14). In the article “Hur allmogehem skola byggas” John Åkerlund is somewhat more generous than Östberg in his suggestions of suitable colors. Åkerlund argues that white walls are the most beautiful if the surrounding is leafy trees, umber if the nature is meager, and Falu-red if the house is built in a place dominated by pine-trees. However, Falu-red appears to be the most all-around color. Åkerlund continues by suggesting that if the builder finds it difficult to decide, he is encouraged to paint the whole farm in the color Falu-red. In an almost euphoric manner, he describes the superiority of the Falu-red color in *Svenska Allmogehem*:

“Tag den i en pyts och pensla på hela väggarna därmed. Måla som nämndt gärna knutar och foder hvita liksom även fönstrens spröjsverk. Det är en gammal hederlig svensk målning, och det har den blifvit därför att just rödfärgen går innerligt väl ihop med

grönskan i alla våra backar, det må vara i norr eller söder, [---]. Det är nätt upp det bästa vi i den vägen äga.” (1909: 204)

[Take it in a bucket and paint all the walls with it. As mentioned, do not hesitate to paint the trims and door cases white, as well as the window bars. This is an old, honest Swedish way to paint, and it is so because the red color so heartily fits the verdure of our hills, no matter if it is north or south. --- It is by far the best we have in that line.]

The following year, the presumed house-builder is not even given the option to adapt the choice of color to nature. In connection to a house plan published in *Hem i Sverige*—the quarterly publication of *Nationalföreningen mot Emigrationen*—Åkerlund simply states that the whole farm should be painted Falu-red, and only the door casings and gables should be painted white. The reasons are the same as argued the year before. Red paint is cheap, honorable, beautiful and “framför allt svenskt” [above all, Swedish] (1910: 18).

The art historian Sten Rentzhog claims that architects and advocates for the *hembygd* movement (who, as with Åkerlund, could indeed be the same person) argued in favor of all houses following the rural ideal and presumed that the houses, especially the “own homes,” were painted red. Besides Åkerlund’s euphoric celebration of Falu-red paint mentioned above, the hegemonic position of the red paint is evidenced in the exclusively red-painted houses at exhibitions, the frequent appearance of it in commercial advertisements for “own home companies,” and the descriptions of the own home in articles. Schools, train stations, vacation homes and hotels were also painted red, in addition to the own homes for the urban working class. Even temporary dwellings that were built prior to the First World War were painted red in order to look “home-like” (Rentzhog 1971: 18). Key, in *Folkbildningsarbetet* (1906), praised the fashion of building schools and train stations in a rural style and painting them with Falu-red

color as a fortunate fact (1906: 173; Eriksson Hultén 2004). Not surprisingly, Åkerlund was the architect behind several such rurally inspired institutional buildings.

The organic connection to nature did not end with the argument that the red color suited the colors of Swedish nature. It was also part of nature. Karl-Erik Forsslund describes his red-painted house in Dalarna in *Storgården*:

“Se på bygningen, hur den växer upp ur jorden [---]. Av barrskogens stammar äro väggarna sammansatta; med rödfärg äro de målade—med jordens blod kan man säga, ty rödfärgen är gjord av järn, och järn finns i bärgens ådror, liksom i växternas och djurens.” (1900: 129)

[Look at the building, how it grows from the earth [---]. From the trunks of the pine trees the walls are made, with red paint are they painted—, with the blood of the soil one can say, because the red paint is made of iron, and iron is in the veins of the mountains, as well as in the plants and animals.]

Because of its status as a traditional rural paint and its organic origin—extracted from the copper mine in Falun, Dalarna—Falun-red paint could easily be incorporated into the idea of *jordmystik*—the mysterious connection between nature, nation and individual that was a cornerstone of the emerging nationalism, and an important aspect in architecture and in the *hembygd* movement. This *jordmystik*, and also references connecting the paint to blood, were common themes in texts concerning the Falun-red color. In *En bok om rödfärg*, which can be regarded as the culmination of the “red-paint propaganda” period, even the prominent professor of Ethnology, Sigurd Erixon, makes this connection. Erixon argues that the red color has always been loved by people who live in close contact with nature in part because its similarity to blood forged a mythical link to life itself during a primitive stage in human history (1932: 15).

Even in recent literature, the color is presented as the “blood of the soil,” surrounding the national home in an almost ritual manner. The highly acclaimed art historian Sten Rentzhog uses almost the same wording as late as 2004, when he begins the article “Drömmen om den röda stugan” [The Dream of a Red Cottage] with the statement that the reason that Falu-red paint has become the symbol of Swedish houses depends on a long development. He mentions prehistoric graves, the painting of rock carvings, and the magical connotations it used to evoke due to its similarity to blood (2004: 21). Again and again, the red color is presented not only as a symbol for Sweden, but as deeply connected to the nation in a most concrete way. Through that it is incorporated into the mysterious connection between nature, nation and the individual since the turn of the last century.

Hem [home] was a buzzword that permeated politics and popular culture, as well as being the point of focus in the rejuvenation of nation during the early twentieth century. *Hembygdsrörelsen* flourished, and home exhibitions were recurring events. Poets wrote about the home with nostalgia, and artists such as Carl Larsson let his red-painted home in Dalarna be a focal point of his art. Furthermore, home (or rather the lack of it) had an absolute concrete dimension among the growing proletariat. To bourgeois intellectuals focused on social engagement, the inferior living-situation among the workers was considered an important underlying cause of social problems. This, paired with a lack of patriotism, was also regarded as the cause of crippling emigration and the uprisings of the socialist movement. Accordingly, many politicians and contributors to the public debate felt that a good, well-ordered, and hygienic home could be the “ultimate solution”. But it was not just any dwelling that could have this soothing and unifying effect on a nation that was on the verge of revolution—it had to be a *Swedish* home.

In the quest for this Swedish home, the stereotypical picture of the farmer's red-painted home picturesquely situated in the *hembygd* emerged as the most outstanding sign of Swedishness. Not only did the red rural house perfectly fit the craze for *hembygd* and the "folksiness" of the new nationalism; the paint itself was a "perfect match" during this process of the redefinition of nation. Swedish nationalism was partly based on the idea of an organic connection between nature, nation and its people. The red paint literally came from the Swedish soil, extracted from the copper mine in Falun, Dalarna, the region often regarded as the cradle of Swedish folk culture. Besides this, the mine was a crown jewel in the history of Swedish industry dating back to the seventeenth century and Sweden's period of great power. This industrial history reinforced the position of Falu-red paint as a national treasure that tied nation and people together even more. That it was also cheap and durable, as noted by Åkerlund, probably helped it fit with the image of the working class, the social group that needed to be infused with patriotism as a vaccine against emigration and a creeping devotion to socialism. The new Swede, the democratic participant citizen firmly rooted in Swedish peasant tradition, would of course live in a Swedish house. And what could be more suitable than the red cottage, painted with the "blood" of the nation?

CHAPTER THREE

The Cottage in Education

Sörgården (1912) a primary school reader written by Anna Maria Roos and intended for the first year students, has been singled out as one of the most influential Swedish books of the twentieth century (Wahlstedt 2008: 27). On the first page of this book is an illustration of a farm, painted by Brita Ellström. The home is painted red with bright white trim and has two whitewashed chimneys that stand out against the summer-blue sky. On either side of the pair house is an out building, also painted red. The farm sits behind a stone wall, and is embedded in lush summer greenery. A man and a woman sit on the porch, while another woman stands in the doorway. Their gazes are turned towards the gravel road, where four neatly dressed children stand. According to the story in the book, they are on their way to the first day of school. One of the girls is facing a younger boy and leans forward to tell him that he is too young to go with them. The caption tells us that this is the farm *Sörgården* (Roos 1913: 5; fig. 12).



Figure 12: Illustration of *Sörgården* by Brita Ellström, 1912. In Anna Maria Roos. *Hem och Hembygd. Sörgården*. Stockholm: Bonnier. 1913: 5

Despite the previously described plasticity of *hembygd*, the types of nature that were singled out as worthy to represent the nation grew stereotypical with time. The scenery that had been ascribed status as national landscapes changed from grandiose views of the mountains and waterfalls of Northern Sweden, which Fransson defines as “nationalism of the view,” to a “*hembygdification* of nation”—the intimate rural landscape, at the turn of the last century (Miller Lane 2000: 79; Fransson 2010: 71,98). The depictions of this national *hembygd* involved signs in art and literature that had been singled out as more “national” than others. In *Blonde and Blue-Eyed: Whiteness, Swedishness and Visual Culture* (2013), art historians Jeff Werner and Tomas Björk discuss how whiteness has been constructed, and remains the norm in visual representations of Sweden. In their exploration of the construction of “white landscapes,” Werner and Björk claim that beyond certain sceneries, even animals, trees and individuals were identified as more national than others during the early twentieth century. Cows were, for example, more national than reindeer, moose more national than bears, birch trees more national than any other trees, and blonde and blue-eyed individuals more Swedish than people with darker features (Werner and Björk 2013: 140). In the same way, the red painted home of the farmer was decidedly more national than any other type of house. Through this process of inclusion and exclusion, a national landscape emerged. It was a fair, melancholic landscape that should signify Sweden, and the idyllic scenery with a red cottage and birch trees by a forest lake became the ideological landscape—the national *hembygd* (Löfgren 1993b, 52). During the first decade of the 1900s, descriptions of the rural *hembygd* were abundant in magazines, art and, as will be shown in this chapter, in the education of children.

Although the idea of the rural is based on personal experiences of the countryside, Michael Bunce notes that the most “durable and stereotypical images of the countryside come

from the literature of our childhood” (1994: 63). Besides adventure-stories, where nature has to be conquered, children’s literature often presents a sentimentalized countryside and a home for anthropomorphized animals. At the turn of the last century, at the same time as Swedes were encouraged to hike in Swedish nature, artists to “paint Swedish,” and architects to construct the national home, literature aimed at children became increasingly popular. Besides fantasy adventures in the forest, authors and illustrators of children’s books, such as Jenny Nyström and Elsa Beskow, depicted small towns, country villages, and a smiling rural landscape in a vein similar to Beatrix Potter’s English pastorals.

It is, however, difficult to determine to what extent this literature was available to the younger generation. Socio-economic status and availability most likely influenced whether the books were read or bought. Illustrated children’s books were not likely to be a prioritized expense among the poorer classes, but were primarily read in middle-class families. For the general public, illustrated children books became more common after the Second World War (Hallberg 1985: 11).

Rather than the non-institutional distribution and consumption of illustrated children’s books, the introduction of a common elementary school can be regarded as one of the most influential institutions for the construction and spread of the rural idyll with the red cottage in its center as national landscape during the first half of the twentieth century. As part of the redefinition of nation, the education of children became more homogenized and standardized. Not least of which was a standardized language which enabled the massive spread of national consciousness (Elenius 2001: 22; Nordblad 2013). However, it was not only the printed *word* that contributed to the imagined community of national identity, but also the increasing influence of pictures in the education of children (Löfgren 1993b, 105; Sundin 2007: 16). For many

children, these illustrations were their first encounter with printed pictures and thus left a lasting impression. In the same way as standardized written and spoken language contribute to a reading community's model of "national language," pictures in mass produced educational material became "national pictures" that "all Swedes have seen". Through the process of developing a common visual language, these pictures also functioned as a tool for developing a "community of sentiment" (Appadurai 1996: 8). In this way, the stereotypical depiction of the rural idyll became an ideological landscape, summing up what it meant to be Swedish (Löfgren 1993b, 105; Short 1991; Bell 2006: 150).

As will be the focus of this chapter, depictions of the national *hembygd* became a pervasive theme in the education of children during the first half of the twentieth century, referred to in illustrated readers, educational posters and teaching material in the required school subject *hembygdsundervisning med arbetsövningar* [*hembygd* education with exercises]. Per Fransson claims that it was primarily the introduction of universal male suffrage that turned the tide towards incorporating *hembygdsundervisning* in the education of children. Universal male suffrage called for a "fosterländsk demokratisk pedagogik" [patriotic, democratic pedagogy], which could educate the young generation to shoulder the responsibility that came with these new rights. Citizenship, in turn, had to be packaged in a way that was understandable for the masses. *Hembygd* became regarded as the finest tool to conceptualize what citizenship meant. Besides teaching the students about the nature, history and social structure of the *hembygd*, the subject intended to provide the students with basic education in citizenship, and in a perspicuous way to introduce them to what it meant to be a member of a democratic society (Fransson 2010: 61,65). Although *hembygd* education had a local focus, the goal was to evoke love of the nation, where nation is conceived of as an extended *hembygd*. This feeling of community was primarily

communicated through stereotypical depictions of the national *hembygd*. In text and pictures describing this ideal *hembygd*, a red painted house is frequently recurring, given the position as the core of *hembygd*, from which the love to the nation should grow.

Although *hembygd* as individual subject and point of focus has, to a large degree, disappeared from education today, the national prototype of *hembygd* still prevails in education. It appears frequently in the education of immigrants and international students, which is significant as it points to the rural idyll's established position as ideological landscape and as key-symbol in the communication of Sweden as nation.

Connected to the institution of common elementary schooling in 1842, the discussion regarding teaching materials and pedagogy escalated. Based on new pedagogic ideas developed in Europe, the strong rooting of education in Christianity and formalistic instruction were increasingly criticized (Rantatalo 2002: 46). Visuality as part of the entire education of children was foundational to the new pedagogy. Visual-experience based teaching was not a new idea, but was a method that had been used since classical antiquity. The new, progressive pedagogy of the late nineteenth century infused new life into visual-experience based teaching methods. Of course, it was also connected to the explosion of printed images during the second part of the nineteenth century (Johannesson 1997; Jonsson 2006). In this view of education, reality was to be the foremost source of knowledge, and studies based on reading were to be supplemented with studies of the local surroundings. Other visually based learning materials, such as taxidermy, herbaria and educational posters, should round out the experience. Starting in 1878, exercises in observation became part of the national curriculum, and were included in science, religion, history and drawing. In 1888, teaching by object lessons became its own subject, taught

during the first two years of primary school, until 1919, when it was replaced by *hembygdsundervisning med arbetsövningar* (Jonsson 2006: 94-97).

Although *hembygd* education was not put on the curriculum until 1919, there was a marked interest in the subject among teachers before it found its way into classrooms. Per Fransson claims that the introduction of *hembygdsundervisning* in children's education emerged as a topic of discussion after the dissolution of the union with Norway, and was presented in the same progressive spirit that surrounded the reformist pedagogic discussions of the early twentieth century (Fransson 2001: 65; Bäckström 2010: 9). Teachers' workshops on how to teach *hembygd* took place a few years prior to the establishment of the subject, and several teachers' manuals were published beginning in 1910 (Fransson 2001: 68,69). Furthermore, *hembygd* appeared in readers and educational material published during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

In 1868, the first illustrated reader, *Läsebok för folkskolan*, was introduced (Furuland 1991: 66). The book was to function as a textbook in all subjects except mathematics, and it mixed moralizing stories, excerpts from Old Norse mythology, stories of the heroic deeds of Kings Gustav Vasa and Gustav II Adolf, and grandiose patriotic poems. The illustrations showed animals, inventions, splendid vistas of nature with mountains and water and the occasional important person, primarily kings. The book went through several revisions, and in the newer editions, the number of illustrations increased.

Despite its popularity, *Läsebok för folkskolan* was criticized, both by teachers and intellectuals, among them Ellen Key. Literary historian Lars Furuland (1991) claims that it was not necessarily the nationalistic tendencies that were criticized, since nationalism was legion among most intellectuals at this time. The foremost aspect that was criticized, according to

Furuland, was that the texts lacked coherence, and that they were not written for children (Furuland 1991: 78). Although it was not nationalism *as such* that was criticized, it is clear that the critics opposed that it was, as Key puts it, “militäriskt-patriotisk” [military-patriotic] nationalism that was predominant in the reader. The pedagogue and radical Anna Sandström argued that *Läsebok för folkskolan* was not only boring, but also tendentiously patriotic (Andersson 1986: 96). In the article “Patriotism och Läseböcker” (1898), Ellen Key even claims that *Läsebok för Folkskolan* counteracted a national revival, through its military-orthodox patriotism (1898: 144). Key also criticized the illustrations for “utbreda en stilla tråkighet” [spread[ing] a quiet dullness]. Indeed, she looked forward to the new edition, which should include more illustrations by famous painters, such as Bruno Liljefors and Carl Larsson, but regretted that this work should be wasted on a reader that was a “nationalolycka” [national misfortune] (Key 1898: 138).

This critique led to several revisions of *Läsebok för folkskolan* and new texts aimed at a younger audience were added. In the added texts, the influence of the new nationalism, where nature, *hembygd* and the home were key, became more prominent, although grandiose patriotism remained in the poems (Andersson 1986: 111). That nature and home was of great symbolic importance could also be seen on the cover of the edition from 1907, which featured an illustration of a small cottage under a spruce tree with blue anemones bordering its foundation. The caption encourages rootedness, which was a value connected to the idea of *hembygd*, and also a value enlisted as a way to stem emigration. The caption says, “Lyssna till den granens susning vid vars rot ditt bo är fäst” [Listen to the whisper of the spruce, the root of which is attached to your home] (fig. 13). The choice of a spruce instead of any other tree on the cover has been discussed in several scholarly works (Hettne, Sörlin, and Østergård 1998: 334;

Furuland 1996; Facos 2010). The choice of a cottage to illustrate the home has, however, not gained any attention in these texts. If mentioned at all, it is simply referred to as the Swedish home (Furuland 1996: 81).

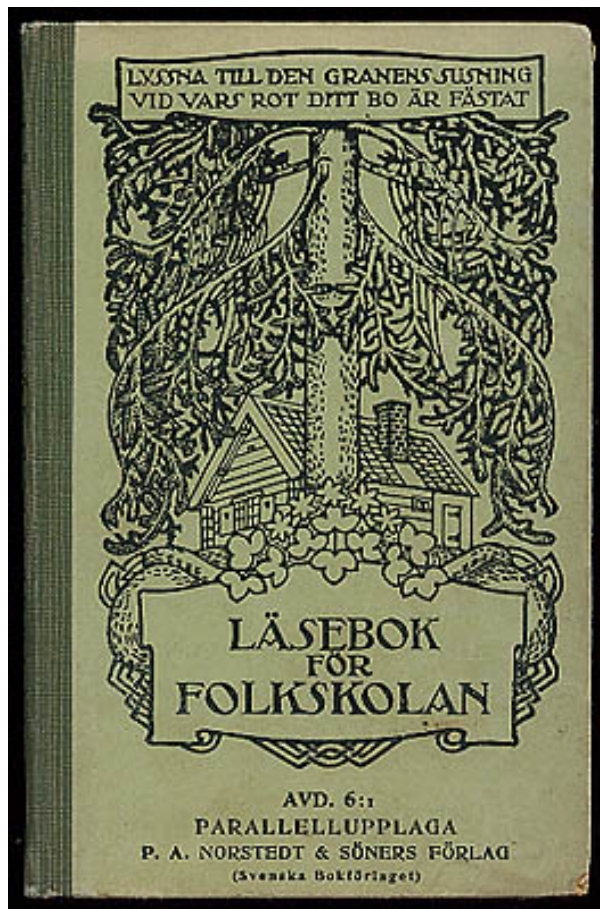


Figure 13: Cover of *Läsebok för folkskolan*, by Olle Hjortzberg. 1911. Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt och Söner.

One of the introductory texts in the 1911 edition of *Läsebok för folkskolan* expresses the central position of the home and the *hembygd* in the concept of nation. In this story titled “Svens Fosterland” [Sven’s Fatherland], a young boy named Sven has pointed out all the important places in Sweden on a map during geography class. After having pointed out the largest cities and the lakes, he wonders if *Björkebo* [Birchhome] was on the map, whereupon the other boys laugh at him, “För dem var Björkebo bara ett vanligt litet rött hus med trädgård omkring, men för Sven var det den viktigaste plats i världen. Det var ju hans hem.” (1920: 3) [To them, Björkebo was only an ordinary small red house with a garden surrounding it, but to Sven it was the most important place in the world. It was his home]. In the continuing story, Sven’s love for his home is transferred to the nation. The teacher tells him to love the nation, and poor Sven does not understand how to do this. His mother asks him if he does not love the surrounding nature, the birch trees, the lake and “den här lilla röda stugan där, far och mor och du och Lisa bor?” (1920: 5) [this little red cottage, where father and mother and you and Lisa live?]. Of course, Sven loves these very much. His mother explains that all these things are part of his nation, and that the more he gets to know it, the more he will love the nation. The small red house that is Sven’s home, appropriately named *Björkebo* [Birch home] as the birch tree is another often-occurring item in the visual representation of Sweden, holds a central position in the narrative about the nation. It is defined as the most important place in the world, and the starting point for Sven’s love of the nation. In this way, the ideal home, the national landscape of *hembygd*, and the nation are joined together.

Despite significant revisions to the original edition, pedagogues’ and radical intellectuals’ critique of *Läsebok för folkskolan* continued, and attempts to produce a new, more suitable government-funded textbook continued. In 1901, a committee was appointed by *Sveriges*

allmänna folkskolläraryörening [Sweden's Association for Elementary School Teachers] to compile new teaching material. The committee included two of the most radical reformers, Alfred Dalin and Fridtjuf Berg, the latter of whom would later become Minister of Ecclesiastics. The committee assembled the series, "Läseböcker för Sveriges barndomsskolor" [Readers for Sweden's Elementary School], which consisted of new books in reading, geography, history and singing. Sweden's territory was described in Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* (1906, 1907), which presented ideal pictures of the various Swedish regions and joined them together in a national whole. Verner von Heidenstam was the author of the new history textbook, *Svenskarna och deras hövdingar* (1908, 1910). The readers *Sörgården* and *Önnemo* in the series *Hem och Hembygd* (1912, 1913) by Anna Maria Roos were the readers for the first and second grades well into the 1930's. Besides being the books that would teach generations of Swedish children how to read, *Sörgården* and *Önnemo* were also used as teaching material in science and *hembygdsundervisning* for the first and second years. Roos' books became a major success and were published in several editions and sold over two million copies between 1912 and 1946 (Wahlstedt 2008: 27). It is worth noting that editions of *Läsebok för folkskolan* from as early as 1907, continued to be used well into the 1920s. Even though the new readers included important updates to the teaching materials, it is still not possible to claim that it was an abrupt shift, but rather a process that likely differed from school to school and between urban and rural districts.

In *Hem och Hembygd*, the reader follows the life of the children on the well-maintained farm *Sörgården*, in the village *Önnemo*. As described in the introduction to this chapter, the very first picture in the reader for the first year shows the farm *Sörgården*, the red-painted home of the children. *Önnemo*, the book intended for the second year, also begins with a picture of a house,

although it is not a color print. In the text, the home is described as *Sörgården*, which is “rödfärgad med vita knutar” [red-painted with white trim], having a “förstukvist med tak över” [porch with a roof over it] (1913: 5). After this introduction, a detailed description of the furnishing of the rooms follows. Hand-woven covers, white curtains and flower pots with impatiens teaches the children of a home-decorating ideal that was in line with Key, Forsslund and Larsson’s ideas, and in opposition to odious bourgeois knick-knacks.

Others also confirm that *Sörgården* is an ideal home. The children who live there are told by passers-by that the house looks cozy, the farm well-kept and that the cows show that the inhabitants take good care of the animals, which makes the children very proud of their capable parents (Roos 1913: 5-9). If one continues to read, a description of the parish *Önnemo* follows. The village *Önnemo* is small and consists of only four farms. All the houses are “byggda av liggande timmer och äro rödfärgade med vita knutar och vita fönster-bågar. Och var sin förstukvist ha de, förstås” [built of horizontal timber and are painted red with white window frames. Each of them, of course, has a porch]. In addition, each house is surrounded by a well-kept garden where vegetables, fruit-trees and flowers grow. Besides the farms, the village is also home to a castle, two crofts, a red-painted vicarage and parsonage, a school, situated on a birch-clad hill, and a yellow-painted manor. A stream runs through the village (1913: 58-61). Given that the readers also were meant to be the material for lessons in *hembygd*, in which the home and its interior played an important part, the detailed descriptions of building modes and the interiors of the farms in *Önnemo* are understandable. Still, the description of the rural home and the surroundings was hardly a representative *hembygd* for all schoolchildren. It is rather a shining example of the ‘hembygdification’ of the rural landscape that permeated popular culture during the early twentieth century.

With this *hembygd* as starting point, the reader gets to know the animals on the farm, is taken on excursions, and follows the seasonal work. Unlike *Läsebok för folkskolan*, nation is not in an explicit position, and the patriotic poems and celebrations of a distant heroic past are gone. The Swedish flag is not the object of jingoistic poems, but stands off to the side in the yard of the manor and in the schoolyard, and is thus part of the everyday lives of the children.

The idyllic life on prosperous farms was of course not a reality for the majority of children in the early twentieth century, but was more in line with the ideal life in the countryside as presented by the bourgeois. Michael Bunce claims that the attraction of the countryside was a “social ideal forged by the historical processes of a metropolitan-dominated society,” and was linked to the rise of an urban industrial elite (1994: 2,11). As previously described, it was within this urban nobility that the reaction to urbanization and the glorification of the countryside had its foothold. In *Herrgårdsromantik och statarelände* ethnologists explore the role of manor houses as symbol and metaphor in twentieth century Sweden (Hellspong et al. 2004). Angela Rundquist focuses on the depictions of manors in novels and describes the idealization of manor life in early twentieth century children books. During the early twentieth century, the manor stood as a sign of stability and tradition, presenting well-kept houses, neat interiors, and parks as the locus for a carefree life in a perpetual summer (2004). It is not possible to disregard that some of the authors behind the new reader package had their roots within the bourgeoisie or nobility, and were raised on — or at least spent time at — manor farms. It was the childhood memories of Selma Lagerlöf’s *Mårbacka*, and Anna Maria Roos’s summers at *Blekhem* castle that were presented to the children. Consequently, this idea of harmonious life at the manor house functioned largely as a model for descriptions of the ideal life of the farmer in the idyllic *hembygd*, painting a happy picture of a land of childhood.

Besides descriptions of the ideal home in *Sörgården* and literary wanderings in the beautiful surroundings of *Önnemo*, the idyllic rural landscape appeared on educational posters and art that adorned schools. In *Inledning till skolarkitekturen*, Per Adam Siljeström had already in 1856 pointed out the benefits of using posters in the education of children. Pictures, he argued, not only visualize what was being taught, "såsom taflor tala till lärljungens öga" [as paintings speak to the pupil's eye], but through that have a refining effect (ibid 1856: 1,101-106). Besides being shown in connection to the teaching of a particular theme, the poster should hang in the classroom for one or two weeks in order to "omärkbart nötas in i sinnet" [unnoticeably be drilled into the mind] (ibid 1856: 105).

The same aim can be ascribed to the inauguration of "Föreningen för skolornas prydnad med konstverk" [Society for the Decoration of Schools with Art] later called "Konsten i skolan" [Art in Schools] in 1897. Art was said to ennoble the individual and to create distaste for the ugly and immoral. In this way, aesthetics and ethics were connected. The artworks that were represented in schools often presented idealized pictures of children and youth in Swedish nature scenes (Hedström 2010). Thus, Swedish art should create Swedish citizens. Particularly well represented were the pictures of Carl Larsson's *Ett hem* series, which hung on the walls of countless Swedish schools (Stavenow-Hidemark 1971: 81).

As in the art that adorned the schools, the emphasis on Swedish nature scenes was a salient feature in educational posters. Indeed, educational posters covered a broad range of topics, from plants and animals, to biblical stories, and foreign places. It is not possible to claim that the rural landscape was a dominant motif, but it was a motif that reoccurred during the years that educational posters were produced. The educational posters that depicted rural life of the 1890s can be described as detailed and relatively realistic depictions of seasonal work on a farm.

After the turn of the last century, however, the depictions of the life in the countryside became more "poetic romantic" (Johannesson 1997: 153; Jonsson 2006: 172).

One conspicuous example of this poetic turn is Nils Kreuger's poster, *Brunte hämtas på söndagsmorgonen* [Brunte is brought on Sunday morning] (1910, fig. 14). The setting is a summery rural landscape. The sky is light blue and the landscape is covered by lush greenery. In the distance, a church tower rises, and several horse carriages can be seen on the gravel road leading towards it. In the center for the picture is a young man holding a workhorse while a young boy gives it something to eat. Behind the field sits a red painted house with white trim, and a white painted porch. Just as Brita Ellström's illustration on the first page of *Sörgården*, it is a rather large pair house with two chimneys, with wings on either side of the main house. As in Ellström's picture, a man sits on the white painted porch and a woman stands in the doorway. In fact, the only thing that differentiates Kreuger's house from Ellström's famous illustration of the home on the first page of *Sörgården* is that in Ellström's illustration, a woman sits across from the man, and another man stands in the yard, whereas in Kreuger's painting, there is a horse drawn carriage. It has been discussed to what degree Ellström was inspired by Kreuger's painting in her own illustration of *Sörgården*, or if it was the other way around (Wahlstedt 2008: 27). Regardless of who inspired whom, the repetition of the red painted house in a summery rural setting in texts, illustrations and posters has promoted this rural idyll, and this idyll is still referred to as "Sörgårdsidyll" in rural magazines and real estate advertisements. The reoccurring descriptions and illustrations of the *hembygd* during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as a rural, red-painted home in a smiling, summery landscape indicate that there already was an established idea of what a *hembygd* looked like when *hembygd* education made its way into the national curricula in 1919.

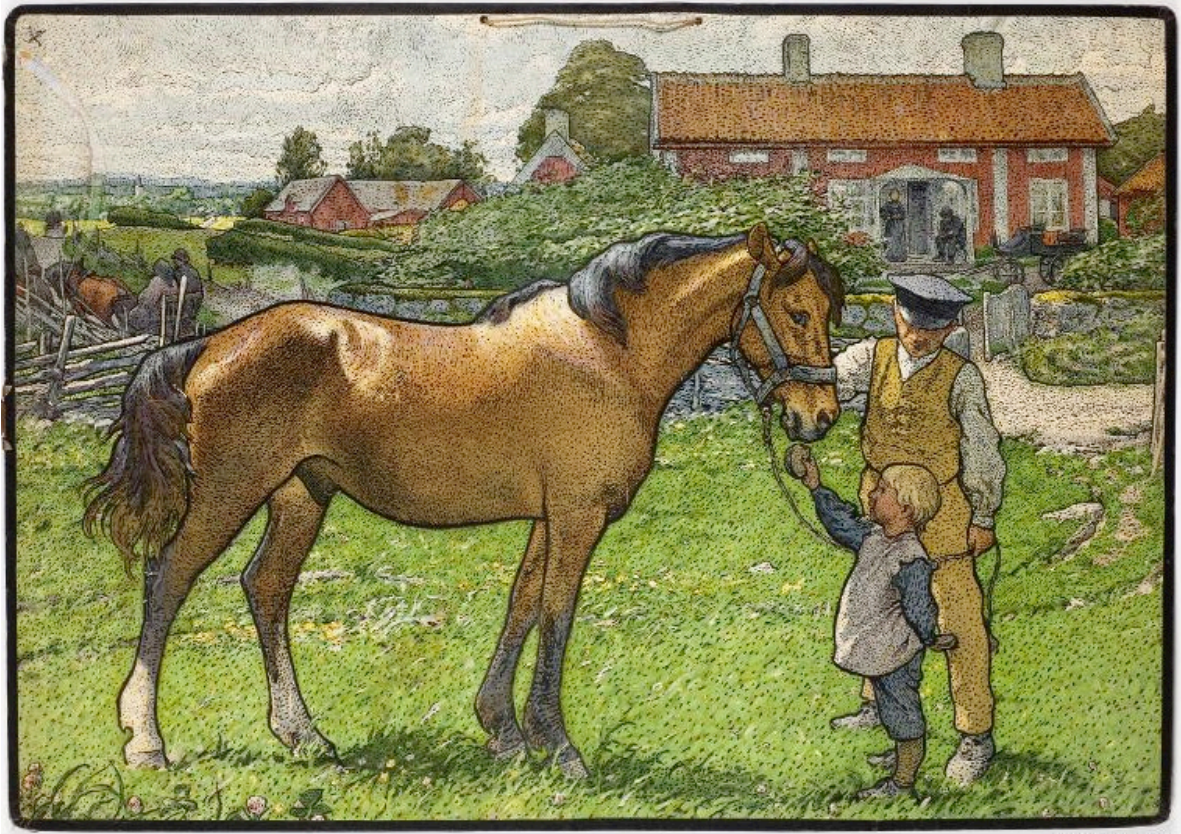


Figure 14: Nils Kreuger. *Brunte hämtas på söndagsmorgonen*, 1910. Educational poster. Malmö Skolmuseum. SKM 001116.

<http://carlotta.malmo.se/carlotta-mmus/web/object/1005515>

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As Per Fransson notes, due to its formal and official status, curricula play a key role in the development of society. They point out national goals, and give directions for what a good citizen should be like and are thus strongly normative (2010: 63). The 1919 curriculum was one of the most radical changes to the Swedish school system during the twentieth century and no new curriculum was published until 1955. The 1919 curriculum was a definitive break with the previous ecclesiastical dominance in the education of children. Luther's small catechism was removed as a textbook and the hours dedicated to instruction in Christianity was reduced from twenty-eight hours to twelve hours per week, in favor for physical education, mathematics, and education in the new subject *hembygdsundervisning med arbetsövningar*, which was taught three hours per week during the first two years, and four hours per week during the third year (1920: 8; Fransson 2001: 66,249; Hartman 2012: 65).

By the introduction of *hembygd* education at the expense of education in Christianity, Christianity had now definitely become subordinated as an overarching ideology in favor of the "civic religion" of nationalism (Hobsbawm 1990: 113; Anderson 1991: 19). The focus on *hembygd* in the education of children was a tool used to deliver the youth to this faith. This almost religious dimension of *hembygd* is expressed in Teodor Hellman's *Hembygdsundervisningen i folkskolan: Ett försök till ämnets metodiska planläggning* (1922), which claims that *hembygden* should be not only the home of our childhood and ancestors, but also the spiritual center of our lives. Increasing knowledge and love of the *hembygd* would also increase the sense of rootedness, which would protect the Swedish people. The rootedness in *hembygd* would connect the Swede to the native soil with the consequence that, "Den gamla furan lik, kan så en gång vårt folk stå trygg för alla stormar, dess rötter gå fast och djupt i den trogna hembygdsjorden" [As the old pine tree, our people will stand safe from storms, its roots

run firm and deep in the faithful soil of *hembygd*] (1922: 75)

Inspired by the ideas of John Dewey, *hembygd* education was to be an action-oriented and experience-based pedagogy. A main idea in the new progressive pedagogy, reflected both in the teaching by object lessons and the *hembygd* education, was that the exercises should go from the simple to the complex, preferably taking as a starting point the immediate surroundings of the children. This idea was reflected in the 1919 curriculum which stated that *hembygd* education should begin in the school, and successively be widened to include the home, the road to the school and the village or neighborhood. During the second and third year, the themes should be deepened to include clothes, tools, food, history and legends and to teach the children to understand, and to use a map (1920: 70). It is also pointed out that this education should not be limited to “*hembygden* i inskränktaste mening” [the *hembygd* in its narrowest sense], but should also include surrounding areas and other landscapes, as a way to provide the student with a correct understanding of the map, and to help them form an idea of places to which they had not been (1920: 74). Through this, children would develop the capacity for abstract thought, and be able to understand complex ideas such as nation (Fransson 2001: 69; Nordblad 2013: 208).

Nature was the primary tool used to reach this level of abstraction. Orvar Löfgren claims that the Swedish national project was primarily aimed at integrating the different regions into a national whole, and was based on a quest for a theme that bridged the gulf between classes. In this quest, nature and nation was a successful combination (1997: 4). Geography and the physical characteristics of the landscape also hold a salient position in the curriculum, as do animals, plants and types of rocks. A list of suggestions concerning which animals and plants were suitable to teach the children about is presented in the curriculum (1920: 73). Excursions were encouraged, and preferably, these should include a belvedere or a hill where the teacher could

point out connections to the students. During these excursions, the teacher should “öppna barnens blick för det vackra och ändamålsenliga i naturen” [open the children’s eyes to the beautiful and suitable in nature] (1920: 75).

In her dissertation, *Jämlikhetens villkor* (2013), Julia Nordblad gives examples of how the landscape was incorporated in the language of the integration of Finnish speaking children in the region of Tornedalen on the northeast border to Finland, by framing excursions in nature with Swedish national symbols, patriotic songs and words in Swedish (2013: 209). Using the region of Jämtland as an example, Per Fransson shows how the emphasis on distinctive characteristics of the region’s nature sceneries and flora functioned as a way to anchor ideas of democracy and participation, and stress the importance of the part for the greater whole. To bring out individuality rather than homogeneity gave room for the interpretation of *hembygd*, but only on the condition that the local *hembygd* was subordinated the nation (Fransson 2001: 213). In this way, *hembygd* offered a spatialization of the concept of citizenship (ibid 2010: 365).

In connection to the observations, exercises, such as paper cutting, modeling, drawing, “stickläggning” (using sticks to create patterns and pictures), and folding of items observed during the excursion, should be done. Besides excursions, teaching aids such as herbaria, taxidermy, and maps could be used. In *Undervisningsplan för folkskolan*, (1920) it is also stated that posters are an important aid in *hembygd* education, partly as a means of clarification, partly as a substitute for what may not have been shown during excursions, and partly as a tool to arouse the children’s sense of beauty (1920: 76). Since the surrounding nature was to be the primary teaching material, there was no official demand for a schoolbook. However, several teachers’ manuals were published (Fransson 2001: 67-69). In the manuals, it is frequently mentioned that the objects have to change depending on where the school is situated; in some

cases, suggestions are given as to what can be observed if the school is in a city. Nevertheless, the manuals are rather uniform in their descriptions on what ought to be seen. Nature, agrarian industry and the home constitute the majority, and in the exercises that follow the excursions, students were asked to draw a given item from the lesson, such as a particular tree, a house, an animal or the Swedish flag. In Gottfrid Sjöholm and Axel Goës's manual, *Handledning vid undervisningen i hembygdeskunskap* for the third year, one exercise in the section "våra bostäder" [our dwellings], asks students to draw "utvecklingsformerna av svenska stugor" [the development of Swedish cottages] from the hut to the own home cottage (Björkroth 2000: 185). Not only does the manual state that such thing as a particular *Swedish* cottage exists, but it also identifies the own home project as a natural development of this tradition. Furthermore, the "own home" is seen as the grand finale of this evolution of cottages. Another exercise presented in the manual intended for the second year is to cut out and assemble a cottage from paper. The color of the cottage is not given in the text, but the pictures that are used as inspiration show red painted cottages with white trim and a small porch—a stylized version of the own home (Sjöholm and Goës 1920: 81; fig. 15). In the 1928 edition of the second grade manual, Lessons 36 to 42 deal with the home. Besides drawing and cutting out cottages, the children are to furnish their cottages. This is done in the lesson "Vi göra hemtrevligt i vår stuga" [We Make Our Cottage Cozy] (Sjöholm and Goës 1928: 34). The manual suggests that the teacher talk about curtains, carpets, flowers in the windows, and how to clean the home. Suggested reading is Zacharias Topelius' story, "Den röda stugan" [The red cottage] (ibid).



Figure 15: Poster 10 in *Handledning vid undervisningen i Hembygdkunskap Andra skolåret*. Gottfrid L Sjöholm and Axel Goës. Stockholm: Svenska Bokförlaget Norstedt. 1920: 81.

When the term *hembygd* is discussed, the cottage is given a natural position as the prototype of a home. In the 1921 edition of *Plan för hembygdsundervisningen för de tre första skolåren* for second graders, Lesson 35 covers the term *hembygd*. The lesson should, if possible, be given from a hill and the class should discuss what makes the *hembygd* beautiful, and why the children love it. As an exercise, the children are to draw a painting of "en liten stuga i skogsbrynet" [a small cottage on the edge of a forest] (Lindholm and Thurén 1921: 40).

Although the nation is not explicitly described as a theme for study in the curriculum, the link between the private home and the national home occasionally becomes overt in the teacher's manuals. The lesson following *hembygd* in *Plan för hembygdsundervisningen* covers *fädernesland* [fatherland] och *fosterland* [native land] and ends with the statement, "Älska det; vårt stora hem. Mer än dig själv" [Love it; our great home. More than yourself]. As an exercise, the children are asked to draw or cut out the Swedish flag (ibid). In the same manual, it is suggested that the first lesson of the third grade should be an introductory discussion about the home, what it means to own a home of one's own, and what *hembygd* means. The lesson should also cover the terms, "hemlös, hemlängtan, hemsjuka, hemresa, hemfärd, hemstad, hemsocken, fädernesland, fosterbygd, and fosterland" [homeless, homesick, home journey, hometown, home parish, fatherland, native soil, native land] (ibid 1921: 43).

Without a doubt, creative and engaged teachers were able to keep the discussion going, which was one of the purposes of education about *hembygd*. It is equally as doubtless that what was pointed out during excursions was, to a great degree, directed by the manuals and ideas presented in teachers' seminars. That there was a need for a principle of selection in the education of *hembygd* is also pointed out by Hellman, who claims that the variety of things one was able to see in the local *hembygd* demanded only that "värdiga och viktiga" [worthy and

important] items and phenomena were used in education (1922: 48). In that way, the type of houses, landscapes and sceneries that were singled out as representative, and worthy to depict and be pointed out to the children, were standardized regardless of where in Sweden the lesson took place. The excursions, drawing-exercises and posters could thus be used to draw the students' attention in a certain, desired direction. Through this, the children were taught to see and depict the world in a "correct way" (Jonsson 2006; Nordblad 2009).

Given the connection made between home, *hembygd* and nation, it is also possible to claim that the correct way was the "national way". In the same way as the tourist industry creates a "tourist gaze" that shapes the idea of what is worth seeing, the process of singling out landscapes and houses, animals, trees and so on that are more "Swedish" than others created a "national gaze" that contributed to a differentiation that distinguished "Swedish" sceneries from others. The teachers' manuals were thus essential to defining which objects should represent *hembygd*, and the stereotypicization of what the national landscape looked like.

Despite the occasionally revolutionary curriculum of 1919, the traditional form and content in education was strengthened during the 1930s due to economic crisis, high levels of unemployment, and the increasing threat of war. The time of military preparedness required that schools put more emphasis on conservative themes such as national community and character, and the spirit of self-sacrifice (Englund 1992: 103). After a period of significantly less attention in pedagogical magazines and discussions during the early 1930s, *hembygd* education again increased in popularity, as did the engagement in *hembygd* associations. This increasing interest in *hembygd* was also connected to the far-reaching structural transformation of the agricultural industry.

Agriculture continued to be the primary industry until the mid-1930s, when the number

of people occupied in industrial work exceeded, for the first time, those employed in agriculture (Morell 2001: 14). In particular, the formerly idealized small farms struggled with problems of profitability. The rationalization of agriculture led to the dissolution of many small farms and, in turn, small farmers turned their hopes to industrial work instead. What would be referred to as the “flight from the countryside” hit with full force during the postwar period. The younger generation left the agricultural industry in favor of urban areas, leaving the countryside essentially depopulated without enough inhabitants to sustain schools, grocery stores, public transportation and other essential services. Consequently, the depopulation of the countryside became a downward spiral (ibid 2001: 81).

At the same time as the consequences of this flight from the countryside began to be noticed, and agriculture lost its role as a dominant industry, the romanticization of the rural landscape grew. In particular, this could be seen in expressions of popular culture. Songs and films that expressed a summery rural idyll were popular, and as Jonas Frykman notes, never before had so many paper hangings with the idyllic rural landscapes adorned Swedish homes, in particular in the cities, as between the 1930s and 1950s (1993: 187).

The pictures of the rural idyll, as presented both in popular culture and educational materials, were heavily stylized, and the red cottage, the birch trees, lake or sea became self-evident elements. Furthermore, the connection between the rural idyll and the nation becomes more overtly expressed through the incorporation of the Swedish flag in the idyllic scenery. In *Sörgården*, Sven is asked by his teacher to hoist the schoolyard flag to celebrate the king’s birthday (1913: 21). This event is to be compared to an episode in *Vill du läsa?* (1935). In a section about the Swedish flag, the flag is not raised to celebrate the king, but to celebrate the

wedding day of the children's parents, which is spent in a red painted cottage by the lake, to judge from the picture (Beskow and Siegvold 1935: 116; fig. 16).



Figure 16: Illustration of “Fars och Mors dag”, by Elsa Beskow. In Elsa Beskow and Herman Siegvold *Vill du läsa? Första skolåret*, Stockholm: Svenska Bokförlaget Norstedt. 1935: 116

It has been argued that the nationalistic chords in schools were toned down after the Second World War (Hultén 2011: 241; Englund 1992: 104). Indeed, the 1940s brought several reforms and demands for a revision of the school system and curriculum. Regarding the *hembygd* education, critical voices were raised against the exercises, which were regarded as stereotypical and not encouraging of creativity (Marklund 2000: 119).

Despite the progressive spirit, the strongly stereotypical depictions of the Swedish rural landscape continues to be found in educational posters even after this point. In these posters, more or less routine variations on the theme of the “Swedish rural landscape” are constructed through different combinations of the signs of summer, children, birch trees, the Swedish flag, and the red cottage in a signifying system intended solely to communicate “Swedishness”. One example is Maj Lindman’s poster depicting the letter F, published in 1946. In the foreground, a boy and a girl watch a man hoisting the Swedish flag, which flutters against a summer blue sky. Another girl and a small dog run towards them on a gravel path leading from a red painted house on a birch-clad hill. The house has a white-painted porch facing a blue lake (fig. 17). The same motif with the cottage, birch trees, the flag, and children, now occupied with picking wild flowers and making midsummer wreaths, is used to depict the month “Juni” [June] from Lindman’s series of posters depicting the months.

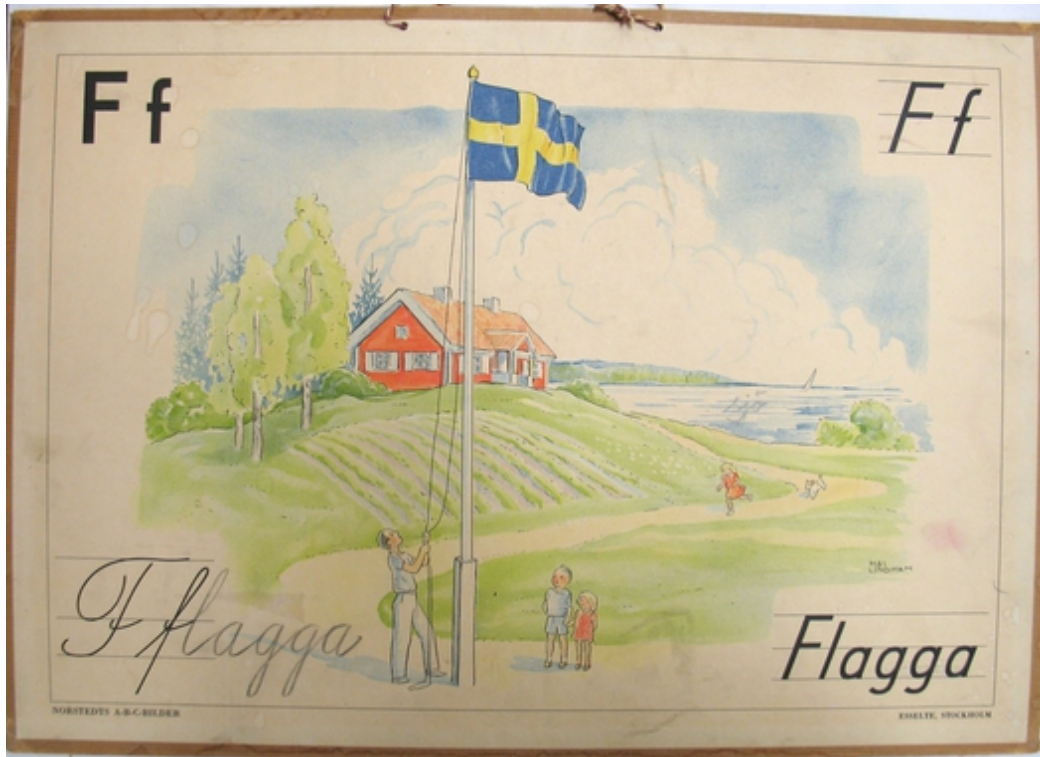


Figure 17: Maj Lindman, *F*. Educational poster. 1946.
Kulturlagret/Vänersborgs museum: KLVM_23708_04. digitaltmuseum.se.
<http://bit.ly/1IdZAz7>
[cc by 4.0]

Strongly simplified pictures characterized the posters published beginning in the late 1940s (Jonsson 2006: 172). One example is found on the 1950s rhythm poster, with the text, "Jag är så glad att jag är svensk" [I am so happy to be Swedish] supposed to be recited to a given rhythm. The poster looks more like a crayon painting made by a child than a professional artist's rendering. Next to the text is the Swedish flag. Besides this explicit national chord, there is a picture of a small red cottage accompanied by a birch tree, and fields with bluebells. Yellow buttercups on the bottom of the poster link the colors of nature to the color of the Swedish flag (fig 18).



Figure 18. Elisabeth Schwerin, *Jag är så glad att jag är svensk* [I am so happy to be Swedish]. Educational poster 1950s. Photo unknown.

The more or less obligatory use of the Swedish flag in combination with the red cottage in a rural landscape is striking in the pictures published from the 1930s onwards. The Swedish flag, which in *Sörgården* had its place in the schoolyard, or in the courtyard of the manor, now has a self-evident position in the rural landscape. The Swedish flag was not a uniting symbol until the end of the 1930s, but was, to a great extent, linked to the conservative faction. The incorporation of the flag in Social Democratic rhetoric in 1922, and the handing out of Swedish flags for free, in particular to the rural population during the 1930s, are important factors in the spread of the Swedish flag as national symbol (Törnquist 2008). As it was accepted by the broad masses, and also as it became a more common sight in the countryside, the Swedish flag could easily be incorporated into the stereotypical picture of *hembygd*. In the same way, as the red painted cottage could be the ideological national home for all Swedes, the flag could be the gathering symbol for the Swedish territory, to be used just as easily to celebrate the king as to celebrate the wedding days of commoners. Planting the Swedish flag in the soil of the rural idyll implied that the stereotypical *hembygd* was given official status as a national landscape. Rather than being phased out of the schools, it can be argued that the references to nation became “banal,” or naturalized in the romantic idyllic pictures of *hembygd*.

Hembygd education continued to be part of the curriculum published in 1955, and the suggested themes were largely similar to those found in the 1919 curriculum. One novelty was that education in traffic rules would emerge as a recurrent theme during all three years, and cooperation and public functions were emphasized. Another addition was basic sexual education which became part of *hembygdsundervisning*, and taught as early as first grade (1955: 91). In the 1962 and 1969 curricula, *hembygd* as subject was still present, but now subordinated to the general subjects. By 1980, *hembygd* education was no longer part of the mandatory education

(Marklund 1982: 15). That *hembygd* disappeared as an independent subject did not, however, imply that it disappeared in the education of children altogether. Rather, it was incorporated into geography, history and social studies, in the same way as *hembygd* was an integrated part of the education of children two decades before it became part of the curriculum.

Over the years, the term *hembygd* has disappeared from curricula and teachers' manuals in favor of studies in "närsamhälle", "lokalsamhälle", "närområde" and "närmiljö", (all translating into local community) which are popular fields of study in the social sciences. Of course, there are many differences between teachers' manuals in studies of *hembygd*, and manuals in studies of *närområde*, both regarding content and methods. Urban areas are given more space and new technologies such as geocaching, video cameras and tourist brochures are suggested as didactic tools (Sanderoth, Werner, and Båth 2009: 137). Still, there are many similarities with what was studied in *hembygdsundervisning* in the early twentieth century. In the early texts and manuals, it is made clear that the lesson should have the immediate surrounding of the student as a starting point. The classroom, the schoolyard, the home should successively be widened to include the road to school, and the neighborhood. Besides the fact that the students' home, for some reason, is no longer part of the studied sphere, the themes and areas suggested are identical in the suggested themes presented in teachers' manuals on *närområde*. Furthermore, excursions to hills that can offer a view of the landscape are described as a fruitful way to make connections between phenomena in the surroundings, which is said to lead to a feeling of coherence and meaning, in the same way as excursion to hills and belvederes should help the early twentieth century student to link the small *hembygd* with the region, and nation (ibid 2009: 162; Fransson 2010).

An important difference is that while it was an overt goal in the teachers' manuals in

hembygdsundervisning to evoke love for the nation, the nation has no prominent position in the study of *närområde*, even if terms as *rum* [space] and *samhälle* [society] are frequently used in teachers' manuals. What is now emphasized is the importance that studies in *närområde* have for the individual. The subject gives students the opportunity to “utveckla en känsla av sammanhang, att skapa trygghet och tillhörighet och att förstå sig själva i förhållande till sin omvärld i tid och rum.” [develop a feeling of coherence, create confidence and a feeling of belonging, and to understand oneself in connection to his or her surrounding in time and space] (Sanderoth, Werner, and Båth 2009: 38). This approach is said to be of particular benefit to students that experience alienation, either for ethnical or personal reasons:

villrådighet, vilshenhet --- kan avhjälpas. Tillit och självkänsla kan stärkas genom närområdesstudier, genom att de utvecklar förståelse för sin plats i rummet, i historien, i samhället och i existentiella frågor! (ibid)

[irresolution, and a feeling of being lost --- can be remedied. Trust and confidence can be strengthened through studies of the local community, since they (the students) develop an understanding of their place in space, in history, in society and in existential questions!].

In this way, the study of the local community is said to be the way to personal and societal rootedness in the same way as *hembygdsundervisning* would lead to a feeling of rootedness in the nation.

Interestingly, the emphasis on history is greater in the teachers' manuals produced from the 1970s onwards than it is in the manuals published during the early twentieth century. In the manuals, ancient monuments, legends and traditions, churches and rural buildings are mentioned as important objects of study, and collaboration with museums and archives are suggested as

crucial (Jonason 1977; Collmo 1980; Sanderoth, Werner, and Båth 2009). The meaning of *hembygd* appears to have a more historical connotation. History is also the only subject where the term *hembygd* is still used. *Kursplaner och betygskriterier* (2008), the book in which the National Agency for Education presents all curricula for the mandatory subjects in school, states that a common frame of reference for education in history should be “kunskaper om den egna historien, hembygdens historia och grunderna i den svenska och nordiska historien” (2008: 79) [knowledge about own personal history, the history of the *hembygd*, and the foundations of Swedish and Nordic history]. Finishing the fifth year, the student shall ”känna till hembygdens historia och hur denna har format kulturen” (2008: 80) [know the history of the *hembygd*, and how it has shaped the culture]. Teaching in the subject should have its starting point in the, ”företeelser som eleven möter i skolan, närmiljön och samhället” [phenomena that the student encounter in school, the local environment and in society] which should be given a “historisk bakgrund och sätts in i ett övergripande sammanhang” [historical background and be placed within a larger whole] (2008: 80). Furthermore, it is stated that since the amount of historical facts are “oändlig” [infinite], the subject needs a well-considered selection. There are no guidelines, however, for how this selection is to be made. In this way, it is reminiscent of Hellman’s request to single out of what type of history and artifacts were “worthy and important” to hand down to the children (Hellman 1922: 48).

It is not likely that the students in *närmiljö* studies today look at educational posters with red cottages in idyllic rural settings as a means of education, or a way to learn about the development of Swedish cottages. Still, the authentic Swedish home in a national *hembygd* has not been fully eliminated. Similarly, tourist brochures that are suggested as educational materials most certainly contain red cottages, and old educational posters are used as decorations in

classrooms. In a teacher's manual in local environment studies, the students are encouraged to read the stories by Astrid Lindgren, which to a great degree take place in and around red-painted farms in the countryside during the early twentieth century (Mårtensson 2006). Furthermore, in language education for immigrants to Sweden, and for international students taking Swedish language courses all over the world, the red rural home in the Swedish idyll is presented in textbooks. Younger children can color pictures and at the same time learn about Sweden in the book *Sverige! En fakta- och målarbok* [Sweden! A fact- and Coloring Book] (fig 19; Bang-Melchior 2013). For language students, the cottage adorns covers, and is used as illustrations for texts with headlines such as "Härliga Sverige" [Lovely Sweden], or "En inbjudan" [An invitation] (fig 20; Göransson and Parada 2002; Levy Scherrer and Lindemalm 2007: 134; 2008: 75). Interestingly, in these texts which are intended for non-native Swedish speakers, the non-Swedish character in the texts do not own or live in a red painted house in the countryside, but have to be content with being guests or tourists in the Swedish idyll. In this way, the rural idyll, with the red cottage inhabited by blonde and blue-eyed ethnic Swedes, remains as a surprisingly seldom-contested motif in educational material.



Figure 19: Cover of *Sverige! En fakta- och målarbok*. Sara Bang Melchior and Kenneth Hamberg. 2013. Courtesy of Tukan Förlag.

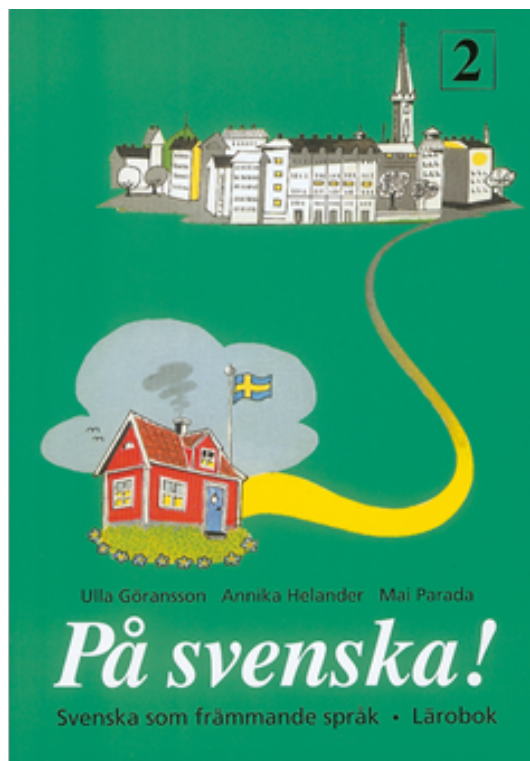


Figure 20: Cover of *På svenska! Svenska som främmande språk. Lärobok*. Ulla Göransson, Annika Helander and Mai Parada. 2002. Courtesy of Folkuniversitetets Förlag.

As Björn Hettne claims, the "Swedish landscape" is thus not only an objective phenomena, but also the mental picture of what Sweden, and the Swedish people should look like (Hettne, Sörlin, and Østergård 1998: 337). Since these pictures of *hembygd* are further charged with affective and symbolic meanings related to national virtue, such as naturalness, soundness, rootedness, and even whiteness, this national landscape also became an ideological landscape, shoring up what it means to be Swedish (Short 1991; Bell 2006: 150). Due to their banal position in popular culture and educational material, these stereotypical pictures of "Swedishness" can still "omärkbart nötas in i sinnet" [unnoticeably be drilled into the mind] in the same way that Per Arvid Siljeström advocated in 1856.

The prominent role of the red cottage in a rural idyll presented in the school readers, educational posters, and teachers' manuals in *hembygd* education mirrors the conspicuous position that the ideal private home had in the discourse of nation. The sound red-painted home in an idyllic rural setting was the symbolic home for the masses. It symbolized peace and order and was the means by which to master societal commotion and emigration. The goal of early twentieth century education focused on raising the new citizen, who would be a deep-rooted, patriotic and democratic inhabitant of this sound national *hembygd*. The putting together of "national signs" in stylized pictures showing a rural setting with a red cottage, birch tree, lake and forest, the Swedish flag and also "Swedish-looking" individuals, created a "rather fixed signifying system" that summed up what the Swedish countryside looked like (Edensor 2001: 41). This "hembygdification of nation" resulted in a mass production of pictures, lacking in information, but saturated with ideology. Nation became less associated with real social and political processes, and more with the landscape, and the ideal home (Fransson 2001: 76; 2010: 36). In this way, the idyllic rural home and the harmonious village was placed in opposition to

the social and political disturbances that characterized the first part of the twentieth century, and offered a different community than a class-bound one. No trace remains of the harshly criticized *statare* system, social injustice, emigration, class struggle and war. In the ideal *hembygd Önnemo*, peace, harmony, and order prevail, in the same way that Sweden was to be a harmonious extended *hembygd*.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lilla Sverigebyn, Little Sweden Village, Das Kleine Schwedendorf

“Hjärtligt välkomna till Lilla Sverigebyns unika miljö! Njut av tillfället att uppleva hur det känns att människor, djur och natur lever med varandra fredsamt och i frihet - helt i Astrid Lindgrens ande.” (<http://bit.ly/1SYHan9⁵>)

[Hearty welcome to the unique milieu of *Lilla Sverigebyn*! Enjoy the opportunity to experience what it feels like when humans, animals and nature live together in peace and freedom—in the spirit of Astrid Lindgren]

Germans rank third among foreign cottage owners in Sweden, close behind Norwegians and Danes. In the province of *Kalmar, Småland*, 1969 (67%) of the 2,920 foreign-owned cottages were owned by Germans in 2013, according to *Statistiska Centralbyrån's* website (Statistics Sweden) (<http://bit.ly/1WQj2Zs⁶>). For those who do not have the good fortune of owning a summer cottage, the possibilities to rent a summer home for a shorter period are endless. On several web pages, cottage owners offer thousands of private cottages for rent for a week or two. Another option is to rent a small cottage in a vacation village. One such village is *Lilla Sverigebyn* [Little Sweden Village] situated in the countryside outside the small town of Vimmerby in the Kalmar region (fig 21.).

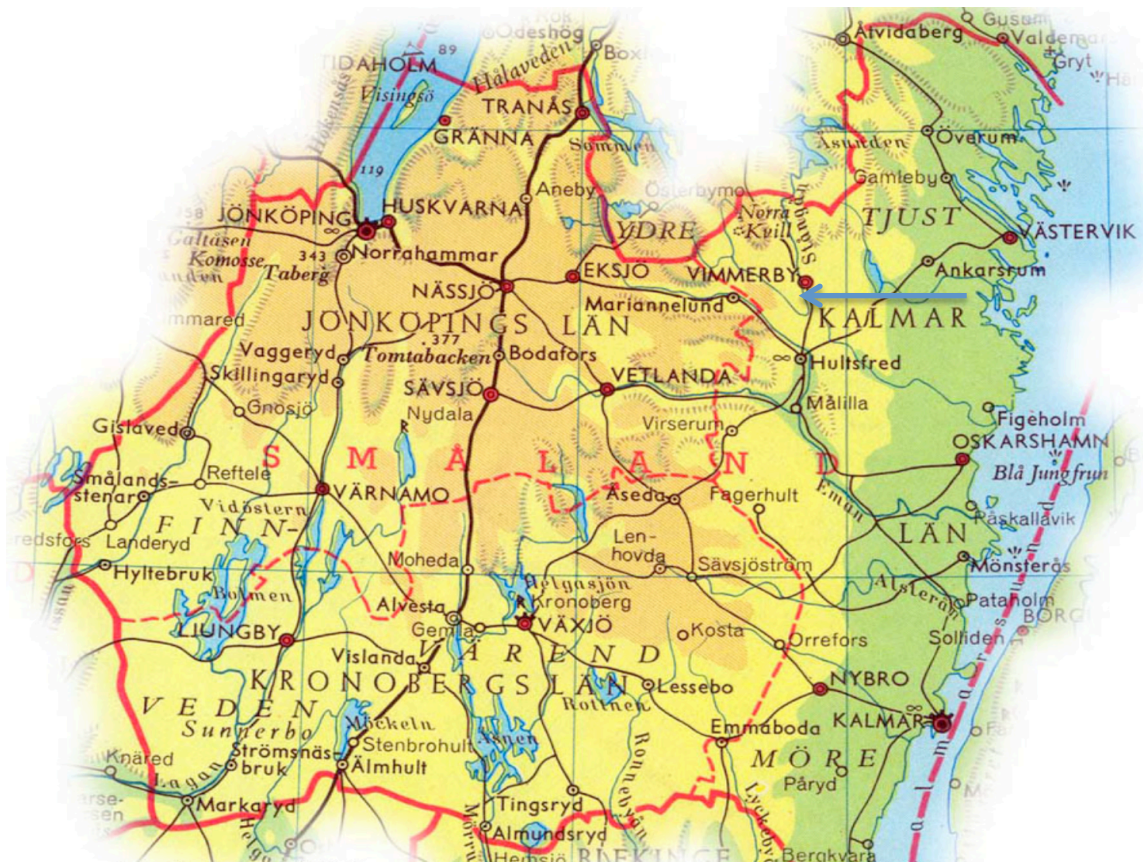


Figure 21. Map of Småland. *Grundskolans kartbok*. Stockholm: Esselte Studium. 1981.

The village is owned by a German family and, according to Renate Endres, one of the owners of the village, a great number of the guests are German. In this idyllic setting, guests can find accommodation in one of the three old red houses, or rent a newly built vacation cabin, also painted red with white trim. On booking.com, a website for hotel accommodations, one reads that the village offers “boende i traditionella svenska stugor” [accommodation in traditional Swedish cottages] (<http://bit.ly/1N18wtK>⁷). On the website for Hultsfred Tourist Agency, *Lilla Sverigebyn* is pitched as follows: “En riktig svensk sommarsemester betyder att man bor i en röd stuga!” [An authentic Swedish summer vacation means that you live in a red cottage!] (<http://bit.ly/1O6FmXx>⁸). The statements raise questions about how the concepts of “authenticity” and “tradition” are used in the “cottage industry,” and how “authentic Swedish” is presented to international guests. This chapter explores how the idea of authenticity is used in the marketing of *Lilla Sverigebyn*, and how nostalgia, conceptualized in the term *Bullerbykänsla* [the feeling of Bullerbyn], is used to sell the experience of an authentic Swedish summer to German tourists.

Authenticity and *Nostalgia* are two equally complex and contested terms. That tourists are in search for authenticity is a common claim (MacCannell 1973; Wang 1999; Hanefors and Mossberg 2007: 212). Yet scholarly opinions differ about how this authenticity should be defined. Without dwelling too much on the complex and complicated discussion of the nature of authenticity, three dominant positions can be discerned (Wang 1999). Ning Wang defines these authenticities as *objective*, *constructive* and *existential* authenticity. *Objective* authenticity is a museum-linked authenticity, concerned first and foremost with trace and origin. An authentic experience is achieved through “the recognition of the toured objects as authentic,” which presupposes an objective and measurable definition of authenticity (1999: 351). *Constructive*, or

symbolic, authenticity is less concerned with whether an object or site is authentic or inauthentic. Rather, the same object contains several aspects of authenticity, and what is defined as authentic is a result of social construction, ideology and authority. In the same way as tradition, authenticity is constantly invented and reinvented (Bruner 1994: 397). As several scholars note, constructive authenticity is a *symbolic* authenticity since objects and sites appear “authentic not because they are originals [...] but because they are perceived as the signs or symbols of authenticity” (Wang 1999: 356; see also Culler 1981; Jansson 2002).

Common to the *objective* and *constructive* approaches is, according to Wang, that they are “object-related.” Wang, along with several other scholars in tourism research, criticizes the dominant concepts for neglecting individual experience of authenticity. Instead, Wang and her cohort argue in favor of a “subject-related” authenticity, which focuses on bodily experiences and self-making, the feeling of being “true to oneself” (1999: 358). Wang defines this as “existential authenticity.” Naturally, authenticity is not a measurable objective reality, and the tourist cannot be reduced to a passive receiver, fed with “authentic” tourist experiences. When it comes to exploring the individual experience of authenticity, the idea of existential authenticity is fruitful. Of course it is not possible to predict how the visitors of *Lilla Sverigebyn* will experience their stay, nor is it the focus of this study. Rather, it is a question of which signs of authenticity are emphasized in tourism marketing. Consequently, a symbolic approach is more suitable to this analytical endeavor.

In the “cottage industry”—the selling and leasing of summer vacation homes—the ambition is to sell “authentic” experiences to the customer by playing on the idea of an idyllic rural past (Wang 1999: 360; Aronsson 2007: 27). According to Wang, authenticity is a Western ideal, in which nostalgia is a cornerstone because it idealizes a way of life that is supposed to be

more free, more spontaneous and natural than typical everyday life (1999: 360). The notion of nostalgia is as complex and multi-faceted as authenticity. From an eighteenth century pathological term used to describe a painful, and possibly mortal longing, for home, nostalgia has developed into a “social disease” or even an “epidemic,” afflicting most aspects of society. This nostalgia is not a longing for a particular place, but paradoxically a utopian dream for a stylized *Heimat*. In the words of the German philosopher Ernst Bloch, it is a longing for both a home and a childhood where no one yet has been (Bloch 1995: 1376; Franke 2007). The home that is longed for is thus no longer defined by geography, but by a state of mind (Lowenthal 1985: 11).

This irretrievable yearning for an imagined home is constantly exploited in the marketing of goods and services. Christina Goulding claims that nostalgia is an “epidemic that has hit most of the sectors in leisure and entertainment industries” (Goulding 2001: 565). Commodified nostalgia is a wide field, as Elizabeth Outka notes, and includes both national projects of commemoration, the selling of souvenirs and promotion of an idealized domestic interior (Outka 2003: 332). Selling real estate and renting summer cottages by referring to a rural past and authentic Swedish summers must be added to this list.

In Sweden, Bloch’s utopian, imaginary home is captured in the term *Bullerbykänsla* [feeling of Bullerby]. The feeling is based on children author Astrid Lindgren’s stories about *Barnen i Bullerbyn* [The children of Bullerbyn], set in the early twentieth century in the vicinity of Vimmerby, the birthplace and childhood town of Lindgren. It symbolizes the idea of idyllic rural Sweden as a time and place more natural and family-oriented and when *gemeinschaft* [community] reigned. Besides being frequently used in real estate advertisements for various houses, the idea of Sweden as *Bullerby* is widespread in Northern Europe. Particularly in

Germany, the idea of the idyllic Sweden has gained a foothold due to Lindgren's books and the popular films about *Inga Lindström*, romantic stories set in the summery Swedish landscape (Källström 2010; Franke 2007). Indeed, *Lilla Sverigebyn* uses key symbols such as the red cottage, refers to the national icon Astrid Lindgren, and reminds the potential renter that by staying in one of their red cottages, the guest will experience an authentic Swedish summer. However, the familiarity with the term and the common feature of rural nostalgia as longing for childhood, *gemeinschaft*, and closeness to nature, suggests that it is not necessarily an authentic Swedish summer that is being sold. What really is being sold is a "village in the mind," a village that might as well be German, but happens to be set in the Swedish countryside (Urry and Larsen 2011: 109).

On *Lilla Sverigebyn's* webpage, which is translated into English and German, one could in October 2014 read a brief introduction to the history of the vacation village (site modified by June 2015). In 2006, a German family who had fallen in love with Sweden after numerous summers spent touring the country bought the abandoned old village *Målen*, which is the original name of the vacation village. After a thorough renovation and restoration of the houses in the deserted village, the family started the company *Renates Roliga Resor* (Renate's fun travels), opening up the village for tourists⁹.

The village consists of four dwelling houses built between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries. One house serves as a tourist office, a café and a souvenir shop (fig. 22). The other three houses are used as accommodation (fig. 23-25). Besides the old dwelling houses, there are eleven *friggebodar*, prefabricated one-room cabins without facilities refurbished into simplified versions of "traditional" cottages, painted red with white trim, simple gingerbread work around the windows, and small porches. The same model can be found in several campsites

around Sweden, as playhouses for children, and as garden sheds. Just as the old houses, the cabins are painted red with white trim, and each one has a small porch (fig. 26). Visitors can also stay in their own tent, or even in a Sapmi-cot¹⁰. Besides dwelling houses, the village consists of a barn, which is used for cultural events and to practice music. The barn also hosts a small village museum. On the village grounds, goats, dogs and even horses roam freely.



Figure 22: *Reception*. Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://sverigebyn.se/galleri/>



Figure 23: *Mormors stuga* (Grandma's cottage). Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://sverigebyn.se/produkt/mormors-hus/>



Figure 24: *Hus Norrland*. Lilla Sverigebyn
<http://sverigebyn.se/galleri/>



Figure 25: *Hus Götaland*. Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://sverigebyn.se/galleri/>



Figure 26: *Friggebodar*. Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://sverigebyn.se/kategori/stuga/>

Besides offering accommodations in red cottages, the company arranges family holiday- and youth camps—particularly for youth orchestras from German music schools—and team-building exercises for companies where the aim is to create a feeling of community through historic games and campfire cooking. The main attractions are sites connected to Astrid Lindgren, in particular, the Lindgren theme park, *Astrid Lindgrens värld* (Astrid Lindgren World). Other suggested activities are a moose-safari, guided tours in the footsteps of Lindgren, visits to Lindgren’s childhood home, visits to the village Sevedstorp, where the films about the children in Bullerbyn were shot, and the farm Katthult, the setting for the “Emil in Lönneberga” films.¹¹ Indeed, the “spirit” of Astrid Lindgren permeates the district of Vimmerby, and the majority of the companies in the surrounding area aim to attract tourists travelling the world of Lindgren’s life and stories.

The transformation of the countryside into “vacationscape” had its major breakthrough with the rationalization of agriculture. As described in the previous chapter, the countryside did not cease to be of importance despite the catastrophic decline in agriculture. Besides adorning educational posters in schools, it transformed into the ideal place for vacation and a locus of tourism (Frykman 1993; Hansen 1999: 91). Along with the introduction of statutory vacation¹², the countryside as the ideal place for leisure and recreation became a common good. Old crofts and dwelling houses were bought and turned into vacation homes, and new ones were built. According to Orvar Löfgren, the new summer cottages were often built “in the style that symbolized the perfect Swedish vacation, a little red painted cottage, with a flagpole firmly planted in the middle of the lawn” (Löfgren 1999: 124). As Löfgren shows in *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing*, the “cottage culture” that developed through the statutory vacation emphasized a family-centered vacation, and followed a back-to-nature tradition (1999: 132).

Besides the transformation of crofts into summer homes, a transformation thoroughly explored by Maja Lagerkvist in her dissertation *Torpets transformationer* (2011), and the building of private summer cottages, vacation villages appeared along the coast and in close vicinity to lakes. Between the 1940s and 1960s, large companies, working in a mode of paternalistic care, built vacation villages in close connection to the sea or lakes. Here their employees could enjoy their vacation. In a similar manner, small cabins became more common at the campgrounds that were arranged in close vicinity to “tourist spots,” which had become far more accessible with the improved transportation infrastructure that accompanied industrialization. Domestic interest in renting cottages in vacation villages or at campgrounds increased during the late 1990s (Strömberg 2004: 116). This increasing interest was not limited solely to domestic vacationers, with international interest in visiting the Swedish countryside growing rapidly as well. These international visitors were predominantly Danish and German tourists eager to buy or rent summer cottages or visit campgrounds in rural southern Sweden (Müller 1999: 3). According to *Statistiska Centralbyrån*’s webpage (Sweden Statistics), Germans were the first group that bought summerhouses in Sweden in large numbers during the early 2000s. However, recently they have been surpassed by the Norwegians, who owned ninety percent of the foreign owned summerhouses in 2013 (<http://bit.ly/1WQj2Zs>¹³). Naturally, the nationality of the cottage owners depends on the convenience of the cottage’s location. While Norwegians primarily buy cottages in the western parts of Sweden, Danes and Germans prefer to buy their cottages in the southern parts of the country. Besides cottage owners, international guests spending their vacation in trailers and caravans, and as guests in vacation villages such as *Lilla Sverigebyn*, are a common sight in the Swedish countryside during summer. In particular, German guests appear to have embraced spending their summer holidays in Sweden. On June 30,

2014, Swedish National Television reported that forty percent of the campground guests in the region of *Småland* came from Germany, demonstrating just how important Germans are to the Swedish tourism economy (<http://bit.ly/1WQmDqA>¹⁴).

Lilla Sverigebyn is part of this expanding tourism industry, and a result of the campaign *Hela Sverige ska leva!* [All of Sweden must thrive!] during the 1990s that aimed at ensuring the survival and development of the sparsely populated areas of Sweden (Hansen 1999: 89). Besides handicrafts, music, and food, rural building traditions were singled out as being particularly interesting for stimulating tourism (ibid 1999: 93). To a great extent, rural tourism was incorporated in the “experience economy” that gained prominence during the 1990s. In this “new cultural economy,” products and services were packaged and sold as experiences based on the authenticity and originality of the experience. Considerable effort is put into the production of atmosphere (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Urry and Larsen 2011: 54). Rather than paying for a commodity or service, a customer buys an experience and pays for memorable events, often staged by a company (Pine and Gilmore 2011: 2,6).

The focus on selling experiences is, as Orvar Löfgren states, an essential part of two hundred years of tourist history (Löfgren 2005). What is “new” is the tremendous upswing the selling of authentic experiences has gained during the last decades. Authenticity is what the consumer wants (Gilmore and Pine 2007). In the countryside, tourism organizers offer authentic experiences through romantic weekends in old manor houses, and let visitors experience the life on a farm through the organizations “Bo på Lantgård” [Stay at a farm] and *Lantbrukarnas Riksförbunds* (LRF) (Federation of Swedish Farmers) tourism campaign *Upplev Landet* [Experience the countryside] (Andersson Cederholm 2007: 239). More primitive accommodation is offered through rental sites where crofts with no facilities are marketed as “genuine” or at

Kolarbyn where the guest can spend the night in a replica of an old charcoal-burner's hut.

According to a report published by *Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences*, rural tourism is the tourist trade that at the moment is expanding the most rapidly (Emanuelsson 2009: 5). Rather than arguing that the countryside has ceased to be a place for production, one can now argue that the real change is in what is being produced. Instead of a locus for the production of agricultural goods, the countryside has become a place for the production of tourist experiences, or perhaps even a locus for the production of cultural authenticity.

Kjell Hansen argues that the craving for authentic experiences is at the center for tourism in the countryside, and that the “magical aura” of authenticity is conjured through the documentation of local history, and the restoration of both vernacular buildings and ancient relics. Hansen claims that the past is seldom presented as a concrete and distinct narrative in the rural tourist industry, but rather as a constellation of signs that can be combined by the visitor (1999: 97). In *Lilla Sverigebyn*, the signs that are used to create this “objective” authenticity are primarily gathered from the images and ideas of traditional life on the Swedish countryside. Effort is put into making the link to the past visible by pointing to the old origin of the village and houses. On the webpage, one reads that the oldest building, the cottage called “grandma’s cottage,” dates back to the sixteenth century. In a picture, the owner holds up an aerial photograph showing the three red painted dwelling houses and the barns. The caption reads that this is the village Målen, as it looked during the early twentieth century.

Furthermore the barn hosts a village museum with items found during the renovation of the village. According to the webpage, the items in the museum “berättar om gångna tider i den gamla Smålandsbyn Målen” [tell about bygone days in the small Småland village Målen]. According to Hansen, it is not the history of the items that creates the authenticity, but the

visitor's longing for authenticity that creates it (1999: 97). Historical accuracy is therefore not of crucial importance. Rather it is the patina and the aura of having been part of a historic past that gives them status as signifiers of authenticity. It is enough that they are old so that the visitors can use them to dwell on the past, fantasize about the people of Målen and ruminate on what life must have been like during the turn of the last century.

Besides the barn, the office building, and the playhouse—which is housed in an old raised shed—only three of the dwellings are “authentic” in the historical sense. It is also these three buildings that are emphasized in marketing materials and photographs on the website. Despite this, the majority of the cottages in *Lilla Sverigebyn* are the previously mentioned *friggebodar*.

Despite often referring to its location in Småland, *Lilla Sverigebyn* does not limit itself to being solely a representation of the region. Rather, it suggests a representational indexicality for all of Sweden, signaled in the name change from Målen to *Lilla Sverigebyn*. The reason for the choice of name is, according to the website, that the village “med sina faluröda träbyggnader och vita detaljer återspeglar den traditionella svenska byggstilen som är så typiskt för Sverige.” [with its Falu-red wooden houses and white details reflects the traditional Swedish building mode, which is so typically Swedish] (<http://bit.ly/1S4EEL1>¹⁵). Despite the fact that the sheds are not “authentic” in the objective sense, and despite the fact that the majority of the Swedish population never have—and never will—spend their summer in a red painted cottage in the countryside, to live in one of the red painted cottages in *Lilla Sverigebyn* is defined as the quintessential way in which to experience an “authentic Swedish summer.”

Naturally, to claim that the red cottage is typically Swedish is not a statement exclusive to *Lilla Sverigebyn*. The cottage is, as Löfgren notes a “scenographic classic” within the tourist

industry (1999: 79). In German guidebooks, Sweden is often described in a stereotypical manner as “De röda stugornas kungarrike” [The kingdom of the red cottages] (Zillinger 2005: 3). The idea that the Swede spends the summer in a red painted cottage is even confirmed by the governmental organization *Sveriges- Rese och Turistråd* [Sweden’s Travel and Tourist Board] brochure from 1996 intended for German tourists where one reads:

“If one would wonder about the things that are particularly typical for Sweden, then the red wooden cottage with white window frames would be mentioned directly after midnight sun, midsummer celebrations, moose and the royal family - fortunately located at a lake right in the middle of the woods. A *stuga*, so they are called in Swedish, is owned by almost all Swedish families. And as often as possible they spend their leisure in their small, comfortable cottages outside the cities in the nature.“ (Müller 1999: 75 translated from German by Müller)

“All” families, however, requires qualification. Approximately 25% of Swedish households owned a summer cottage in the 1990s, which indeed can be regarded as a high percentage, although far from “all” Swedish families (Löfgren 1999: 131). As Löfgren claims, the universal owning of cottages points more to its “central position in the symbolic vacation universe” than the frequency of owning a cottage (ibid 1999: 148). In this way *Sveriges Rese- och Turistråd* [Sweden’s Travel- and Tourist Agency] confirms the idea of the countryside as “vacationscape,” and reinforces the feedback loop between what is seen and what ought to be seen (Löfgren 1999: 98; Koshar 2008: 327). The red cottage is officially put on the “must-see-list” for tourists visiting Sweden. Through the assertion that almost all Swedish families own a cottage, *Sveriges Rese- och Turistråd* furthermore confirms that it is an authentic Swedish experience to spend the

summer in a red cottage in the countryside. What is regarded as an authentic experience then becomes a question of politics and ideology.

In terms of symbolic authenticity, whether the cottages are authentic in the objective sense or not is of secondary importance. Jonathan Culler takes a semiotic approach to tourism research and argues that tourists are semioticians in search of signs—an “instance of typical cultural practice.” When looking at a French restaurant, a tourist sees a sign for “Frenchness” and so on (1981: 129). In line with Culler’s ideas, André Jansson discusses the relationship between media consumption and tourist consumption (2002). The tourist gaze is intertwined with the consumption of media images, Jansson argues, and the tourist experience is measured against mediated images created by the culture industry. Symbolic authenticity is experienced when the tourist site (the signifier) agrees with the visitor’s pre-conceptions of the destination (the signified) (Jansson 2002: 431).

Using Culler’s, and Jansson’s line of argument, when looking at a red-painted house in the Swedish countryside, the tourist sees the Swedish rural house signifying rural Swedishness. In this way, the red buildings in *Lilla Sverigebyn* become a sign for all rural buildings in Sweden. Therefore it is not surprising that Målen, a deserted village in the forests of Småland can be generalized as the “Swedish village.” Then it becomes logical to market the red painted garden sheds as the key to the experience of an authentic Swedish summer. The red painted cottage has become a “signifier of authenticity” to the degree that “authentic Swedish” has been reduced to the red-painted house (Wait 2000).

Naturally, “tourist” is not a homogenous mass of “no bodies and no brains” (Löfgren 1999: 9). Tourists are capable of looking in other directions, and see both the concrete farmhouses that host thousands of pigs and the run-down farms that did not make the transition

to large scale agriculture. Nonetheless, what is put on display and in focus within the tourist industry become “normative suggestions,” not only in the minds of tourists, but also in the minds of policy makers engaged in shaping politics of heritage (Johansson 2009). Such normative suggestions are also made when it comes to defining “Swedish vacation.”

Even if the old items in the museum and the old houses function as signifiers of objective authenticity, the material aspect of the village stands as more properties for the creation of authentic experiences. The past that is the setting for this authentic experience is in most cases referred to as a diffuse idyllic time. That the past is set in a time “that took place before the audience was born” is the most important temporal element in what Barbara Stern defines as “historical nostalgia.” Stern argues that historical nostalgia expresses a longing to return to a “golden age” regarded as superior to the present (1992: 13). When this time took place is not necessarily of importance. *Lilla Sverigebyn* is embedded in an aura of this “golden age.” Målen is described as “en i många år övergivenby” [for many years, an abandoned village], situated “mitt i en sagolik skog” [in the midst of a fairytale-like forest]. Reading through the information on the webpage one learns that *Lilla Sverigebyn* gives “tillfället att drömma sig tillbaka till det traditionella Sverige” [the opportunity to imagine oneself back to the traditional Sweden]. In this serene and picturesque place, guests can dwell upon the past Sweden and “njuta av charmen från gångna tider” [enjoy the charm of bygone times] (<http://bit.ly/1S4EEL1>¹⁶ (site modified by June 2015)). In the descriptions of the village, words including “unique,” “traditional,” and “typical” are used to accentuate the authenticity of the village. How something can be both unique and typical, and when this traditional time took place is food for thought.

Far from the majority of the people living or touring Sweden have experienced summers in red cottages in person, and almost no living person has experienced the early twentieth century

world of Astrid Lindgren; yet these are referred to incessantly in the marketing material (Lindgren herself died in 2002 at the age of 94). As other sites that draw symbolic power from common ideas of a romantic past, *Lilla Sverigebyn* derives its power from nostalgic ideas about the imagined rural Swedish past and cultural heritage presented in popular film, art and literature (Gyimóthy 2005). As Löfgren notes, nostalgia is a cornerstone in the cottage culture, and the bittersweet longing for childhood, endless summers, family togetherness, and a return to a time and place more in tune with nature shapes ideas about the ideal summer in a red cottage (1999: 132). The authenticity that the marketing of *Lilla Sverigebyn*, as well as several other vacation villages in Sweden emphasize, are these nostalgic ideas about an idyllic Swedish rural past as more natural, harmonious and characterized by *gemeinschaft* (Edensor 2002: 40).

In the cottage industry, the nostalgic idea of a rural past is captured in the term *Bullerbykänsla* [Bullerby feeling]. The Astrid Lindgren stories, which the feeling is based on, are set in the fictional village of *Bullerbyn*. In the surroundings of the village, which consists of three red-painted farms, the children live secure but free farm-lives during the early twentieth century. Their days are spent swimming in forest lakes, celebrating seasonal festivals such as Christmas, midsummer and crawfish fishing, and playing fantasy games in the beautiful nature of Småland. Even helping on the farm is described joyously, since they are doing it together.

During the 1970s, the nature of rural Småland emerged as the “most Swedish” place to be, and the center of true Swedish heritage. Important for the construction of this national landscape was the creation of a mass-mediated childhood, in particular through the film adaptations of the books by Astrid Lindgren (Löfgren 2000: 240). Lindgren’s books and the adaptations for screen have contributed to the process of nationalization of Småland as a typical Swedish place to visit along with elementary reading textbooks such as *Sörgården* and *I Önnemo*

(Strömberg 1999: 216). The historian of literature Vivi Edström describes the nostalgic descriptions of the countryside as a cult of the rural, and argues that the stories about the children in *Bullerbyn* are the foremost modern exponent of this cult (1980: 161). Through the descriptions of the countryside, with references to Lindgren's story, the imaginary village of *Bullerbyn* emerged as the iconic Swedish place.

Due to the tremendous popularity of Lindgren's books and their translation into ninety-eight languages, the idea of the Swedish countryside as a rural idyll is not limited to Sweden, but is spread all over the world (Källström 2010: 48). Indeed, this "sanitized representation of rural life" is even sanctioned by the Swedish state (Urry, Larsen 2011: 112). Dieter Müller quotes an earlier tourist brochure than the one mentioned above, this one from 1995, but also published by the semi-governmental organization *Sveriges Rese- och Turistråd* (from 2006 *VisitSweden*). The brochure is meant to attract German tourists to Sweden and emphasizes this new role for *Småland* in the Swedish tourist industry:

"In *Småland*, Sweden is particularly Swedish. Endless forests, where sometimes moose appear, calm lakes, archipelagos along the shoreline and in-between red wooden cottages with white edges - that is what many visitors associate with Sweden. To that villages like *Bullerby*, where children can do what they want to do during the entire year. This Sweden still exists. You need only come to *Småland*. If you spend your vacation in one of these red-white cottages, you will really feel like in one of Astrid Lindgren's books." (Müller 1999: 74; translation from German by Müller)

Judging from the number of German cottage owners in *Småland*, the campaign was successful. In particular, the region of Kalmar, where *Lilla Sverigebyn* is situated, is especially popular with

German tourists. Part of the explanation for the popularity of Kalmar is its location in southern Sweden, which, in combination with low prices on houses, makes it affordable and easily accessible to Germans. However, the popularity of the region among Germans greatly exceeds the number of German cottage owners in nearby areas, or even closer to Germany than Kalmar. As Müller notes, a possible explanation is that cottagers with friends who already own a cottage choose to buy a cottage in the same area. Furthermore, potential buyers look for cottages in “authentic rural environments” (1999: 94, 96). Kalmar is also the location for Lönneberga, the home of Lindgren’s character Emil; Sevedstorp the place where the films about *Barnen i Bullerbyn* were shot; and Vimmerby, the childhood town of Astrid Lindgren. Due to the popular and widespread depictions of Astrid Lindgren’s idyllic Småland, the rural part of the region of Kalmar lives up to the expectations of an “authentic rural environment.” If the imaginary world of *Bullerbyn* is to be found, this is where to look for it.

The visual material on the webpage of *Lilla Sverigebyn* overflows with photographs depicting this nostalgic rural idyll. Of course, modern conveniences are not completely disregarded. Pictures of the interior of the cottages show both bathroom and modern kitchens. At the same time, pictures of the exteriors show a more traditional setting of old-fashioned houses that have gone through little or no alterations. Except for some plastic chairs and modern toys in the garden and a satellite dish on the village office, few signs of modern life can be seen. Although the village is situated in the middle of a forest and is not accessible by other means of transportation, no cars are shown in the pictures. However, several pictures show farm animals roaming freely in the village together with the guests. In a picture from the website promoting *Lilla Sverigebyn*’s family holiday camp, a group of children can be seen taking a walk on a winding gravel road together with a goat, a sheep and a dog (a scene reminiscent of an episode in

Barnen i Bullerbyn when Lisa's lamb followed her to school) (fig 27). In another picture, a curious goat visits a jumping sack race in the lush garden (fig. 28). A third picture shows a group of people celebrating Swedish midsummer, participating in a traditional ring dance around a maypole (fig 29). Yet another picture shows some children playing in the garden. In the background the walls of the red cottages gleam against the lush greenery with an almost unnatural light. One girl is even dressed in an old fashioned dress with a white apron, similar to the style of dress that can be seen in the film adaptation of Lindgren's books about of *Emil i Lönneberga* and *Madicken* (fig. 30).



Figure 27: Children and animals on the road. Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://naturkollo.se/bilder/>



Figure 28. Jumping sack race and goat at Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://sverigebyn.se/galleri/#djur>



Figure 29. Midsummer celebration at Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://naturkollo.se/bilder/>



Figure 30. Children playing at Lilla Sverigebyn.
<http://sverigebyn.se/galleri/#i-byn>

Scrolling through the information and the pictures, the idyllic aura is enhanced by audio. The visitor to the website is transported from the computer screen to an imaginary landscape by the murmuring sound of a stream and bird song which play automatically when the site is first accessed.

It would be reasonable to think that since the majority of *Lilla Sverigebyn*'s guests are German, it would be economically favorable to explicitly explain and refer to *Bullerbykänsla*. Through their location in Småland, being a small village with red-painted farms, *Lilla Sverigebyn* has an obvious similarity with *Bullerbyn*. The clear focus on family togetherness, community, and harmony between animals and humans furthermore increases the intertextuality to the fictional village. In contrast to several other vacation villages however, *Lilla Sverigebyn* does not use the term *Bullerbykänsla* in their marketing¹⁷. One obvious explanation is that in Germany, Lindgren and the stories of *Bullerbyn*, are well known. Germany is the place outside of Sweden where the books by Lindgren sell the most—the books about the children in *Bullerbyn* have sold over four million copies (Källström 2011: 48). The films, dubbed into German language are also popular and well known. In “Tyskarna har hittat sin Bullerbü” published in *Svenska Dagbladet* on December 9, 2007, Berthold Franke argues that the stories by Astrid Lindgren have coined the German idea of Sweden as an “imaginärt Storbullerby” [imaginary Grand-Bullerby] (Franke 2007, see also Müller 1999). In fact, in similarity with nostalgia during the eighteenth century, the concept of *Bullerby* is even described as pathological in the term *Das Bullerbü Syndrom*, in fact, *Svenska Språkrådet* (Language Council of Sweden) writes that “Astrid Lindgrens böcker till absurditet präglar den tyska bilden av Sverige” [Astrid Lindgren's books characterize the German perception of Sweden to the verge of absurdity] (<http://bit.ly/1RTdlN8>)¹⁸.

The most obvious example of this nostalgic syndrome is, according to Franke, the *Inga Lindström* films (2007). The films, which all have innocent titles such as *Im Sommerhaus* [In the summer cottage] and *Wind in den Schären* [Wind in the archipelago] are soaked in an aura of “Swedishness.” Lisa Källström, who writes about the films in her licentiate dissertation, notes that the films can be regarded as a grown up version of *Barnen i Bullerbyn* (2010: 93). In a summer landscape of perpetual sunshine, blonde Swedes live in red painted summerhouses by a lake or in the archipelago. Everybody knows everybody. The intrigues are not too dramatic and always have a happy ending.

The setting of the films reminds one of the pictures posted on the webpage of *Lilla Sverigebyn*. Both contain key symbols that can be found in guidebooks about Sweden. Red cottages, forest lakes, archipelagos, summery pasturelands and deep forests where moose can be seen are recurrent features in the films. In *Nacka Värmdö Posten* on August 5, 2014, the production manager claims that:

“Den svenska sagolika idyllen är en perfekt plats för den här typen av film. Sverige är längtans land, med sjöar, röda trähus, stora herrgårdar. Det typiska sagolandskapet.” (<http://bit.ly/1kRJYqn>)¹⁹.

[The fantastic Swedish idyll is a perfect spot for this kind of film. Sweden is the land of longing, with lakes, red wooden houses, great manor houses. It is the typical land of the fairytale].

Indeed, as the location manager claims, an *Inga Lindström* film serves as a ninety-minute long commercial for Sweden (ibid).

Besides the use of stereotypical Swedish symbols, the series claims to be an authentic Swedish production, written by the Swedish author Inga Lindström. In fact, Inga Lindström is a

pseudonym for the German scriptwriter and journalist Christiane Sadlo (Källström 2010: 100). All actors are German, and besides the cheerful “hej” greetings in Swedish, the dialog is in German language.

The films are not particularly known or broadcast in Sweden, except for two films that were shown by Swedish National Television during a “German theme night” on October 20, 2008. On the other hand, they are remarkably popular in Germany. Every summer since 2003, five films are shot on different locations in Sweden. So far fifty-five films have been made. They are broadcast on German national television and every film has an audience of approximately 7 million people. According to Lisa Källström, the films are not only unreflexively consumed, but are also read with an ironic distance (2010). Still the popularity of the films and the fact that they correspond with ideas that are presented in German guidebooks about Sweden, and reproduced in vacation villages such as *Lilla Sverigebyn* points to the fact that the idea of Sweden as *Bullerby* is well established in Germany, and thus becomes a profitable theme in the Swedish tourist industry.

Due to the familiarity with the idea of Sweden as an idyllic Bullerby, or “Inga Lindström-land”, Sweden’s ideological rural landscape is well known to a large slice of the German population. There is simply no need for *Lilla Sverigebyn* to explicitly refer to *Bullerbykänsla*. Both the setting and the nostalgic feeling it evokes are well known through Lindgren’s books and the films by Inga Lindström. Rather than refer directly to the feeling, *Lilla Sverigebyn* instead provides the images, sounds, and descriptions to evoke the nostalgia through implicit references to it.

Besides the supposed pre-conceptions many Germans might have when deciding to spend time at *Lilla Sverigebyn*, the nostalgia captured in the term *Bullerbykänsla*, and offered at

Lilla Sverigebyn is of a more common sort. Drawing from marketers within the tourist industry, real estate managers and writers of lifestyle magazines who use the term, the experience of *Bullerbykänslan* can be experienced regardless of geography. Indeed, it is not necessarily a red painted house in the countryside that is being sold as having *Bullerbykänsla*. Some marketing materials even claim that suburban villas, exclusive beach houses in the Stockholm archipelago and even apartments have the quality. The wide use of the term shows that rather than a specific location, or type of house, what is referred to is the ideological landscape of rural Sweden, and the values of community, stability and continuity found in that rural landscape. Szilvia Gyimóthy argues that symbols used in rural “nostalgiascapes” go beyond national identity and are comprised of a “coherent collection of signs for tradition, continuity and gemeinschaft” (2005: 124). The rural nostalgia that is the basis for *Bullerbykänsla* is not specific to the red cottage, but instead more general, and can thus be understood regardless of national belonging. Rather than something explicitly Swedish, *Bullerbykänslan* sells the “village in the mind” or the feeling of being at “home” (Urry and Larsen 2011: 109; Gyimóthy 2005: 124).

Lilla Sverigebyn offers this general sense of homecoming. Berthold Franke argues that *Bullerbyn* conceptualizes the longing for unspoiled nature, genuine social community and is a counterweight to the inevitable alienation that is a result of industrialization (2007). Franke holds that the picture of Sweden as a great *Bullerby* not only is an idyllic idea of Sweden, but a nostalgic longing for the “old Germany” before it was destroyed by war, far-reaching industrialization and high-technology agriculture (2007). The fact that the Swedes in the Inga Lindström films speak German gives a second twist to the idea of Sweden as *Bullerby*. It is true that the majority of films, including the films about the children in *Bullerbyn*, broadcast in Germany are dubbed, however, according to Källström, this does not imply that the claim of

being authentically Swedish is removed (Källström 2010; 59). Still, that the actors speak German makes the setting in another country less exotic. Furthermore, the Inga Lindström also display similarities with German *heimat*-films that were popular in Germany during the 1950s, but since the 1970s have been regarded as politically incorrect (Källström 2010: 126). Both genre and language are thus well known and it is likely that the familiarity erases the differences that otherwise can function as a barrier. The story takes place in Sweden, but it could just as well be happening in Germany.

Bullerbyn, regarded as an iconic Swedish landscape, paradoxically realizes the nostalgic dream of Germany. As Franke suggests, it is a longing for the nation per se, but a longing for values that are said to have reigned in a time and place lost in the noise of modern life. The *Bullerby*-landscape with the red painted houses, forest lakes and gravel roads has been condensed into a “cultural matrix” well known in Sweden as well as in several northern European countries (Löfgren 1999: 99). One detail is all it takes—a red cottage, for example—to create a mental shortcut to mythological images of a carefree rural childhood in early twentieth century Swedish *Bullerby*, or perhaps in a German *Bullerbü* (Gyimóthy 2005: 113; Löfgren 1999: 99).

Whether or not *Lilla Sverigebyn*'s guests feel “at home” or if they experience the feeling of an “authentic Swedish summer” by living in one of the red-painted houses in *Lilla Sverigebyn* is material for further research. The reviews that can be found on the Internet say nothing about the authenticity or “Swedishness” of the village, but emphasize the beautiful nature, the child-friendly atmosphere and the free roaming animals (which are described in both a positive and negative light). However, one Swedish visitor writes about her stay at *Lilla Sverigebyn* in her blog *Familjen Wigsten* on September 5, 2013. She says nothing about the old houses, the

museum or the beautiful nature. Neither does she mention *Bullerbykänsla* or the experience of an authentic Swedish summer vacation. What she emphasizes is that during her stay all other guests were Germans and claims: “Alla som bodde där var tyskar och överallt man hörde prat var det tyska“ --- “Man kände sig nästan som turister!” [Everyone who stayed there were Germans and everywhere one could hear talking, it was in German. --- We almost felt like tourists!] (<http://bit.ly/20QNpP4>)²⁰.

To “feel like a tourist” can be regarded as a disqualification of the entrepreneurs’ attempts to create an “authentic Swedish experience” if Swedes themselves write that they feel like tourists in their own country in a village that attempts to create a Swedish idyll. Building on ideas presented by David Sibley, Tim Edensor argues that the ideological rural landscape reproduced in magazines, tourist industry and popular culture is depicted as “purified space” through the focus on items that can be defined as “national,” and the absence of “un-national” features. Everything that does not “fit in” in the rural idyll, ranging from “foreign” architecture and gardens to people, is thus un-national and not belonging to the ideological rural landscape (Edensor 2002: 43). In the statement of the Swedish guest, the presence of German language becomes a sign of otherness and thus takes the weight out of the “authenticity” of the experience. Perhaps the alienating effect of hearing German would be less striking if the setting was not the out-and-out Swedish red-painted village in the forest of Småland? However, if one considers that the setting is well-known in Germany, and that *Lilla Sverigebyn* through the use of common rural nostalgia encapsulates a dream about a utopian Germany, it is also possible to state that for a Swede to “feel like a tourist” points to the “Germanness” of the vacation village. Indeed, the dilemma of directing the gaze and prepackaging experiences is that it is hard to predict the result. Two people cannot have the same experience, and the attempt to sell the “experience of an

authentic Swedish summer” might, for a Swedish family, turn out to be an experience of a German summer. Perhaps the Swedish guests are in fact tourists in *Das Kleine Schwedendorf*—a small piece of the utopian Germany.

The productions of authentic experiences are central to the rural tourism industry. The vacation village *Lilla Sverigebyn* claims that the experience of an authentic Swedish summer vacation can be achieved by renting one of their red painted cabins. The authenticity is partly constructed by referring to the village’s old history by emphasizing the age of the houses in their marketing material, and by displaying old items found during the renovation of the village. However, the authenticity is not primarily constructed through this objective authenticity, but is paradoxically founded on a nostalgic idea about Sweden as a rural idyll. It is paradoxical since nostalgia as such is imagined and describes a longing for a time and place that has never existed. This longing for a utopian place is encapsulated in the idea of *Bullerbykänsla*. The feeling does not describe a particular Swedish phenomenon, but a more generic nostalgic longing for a return to nature, family-centered values, *gemeinschaft* and stability. Besides being the sales point in the selling of real estate and vacation homes and in the marketing of vacation villages, it is expressed in films such as *Bullerbybarnen* and *Inga Lindström*, where the nostalgia gets a Swedish setting.

Besides the obvious location of *Lilla Sverigebyn* in Sweden, the Swedishness is thus a matter of definition. It is Swedish because the owners label it as Swedish and through the use of key symbols for Swedishness, such as the red cottages, the Swedish flag, the intertextual references to *Bullerbyn*, and the Swedish iconic author Astrid Lindgren. By connecting these national symbols to the common idea of nostalgia, the experience of an “authentic Swedish summer” is created. In this way, *Lilla Sverigebyn* functions as a “metaphorical place” offering a sense of belonging, or as a “utopian territory” a container for daydreams and longing for a more

authentic past (Gyimóthy 2005: 111; Löfgren 1999: 137). The pictures on *Lilla Sverigebyn's* webpage showing items belonging to the pre-industrial agriculture era, red cottages, a girl in a *Madicken* dress playing in nature or children patting a goat function as a crumb of madeleine, evoking memories of an idyllic childhood in *Bullerbyn*—the “village in the mind.” The guests cannot literally return to this childhood land, but they can “recreate it through nostalgic consumption activities” (Stern 1992: 11). To stay in a red-painted cottage in *Lilla Sverigebyn* becomes a way to, at least symbolically, relive a more “authentic” life.

CHAPTER FIVE

Selling Sausage and Swedish Values: Cottage in Advertising

Ever since the red cottage was singled out as the “authentic national home,” it has appeared in advertising. It has been used to sell everything from cleaning agents to condoms. It appears on packages of industrial-made sausage, and boxed wine, and appears in TV-commercials for laundry detergent as well as on advertisements for potatoes and toilets. In none of these cases does the advertised product have anything to do with red cottages. As will be argued in this chapter, instead, the red cottage functions as a way to communicate qualities connected to ideas of national identity, and to “flag the nation” in its most banal manner (Billig 1995).

Unlike consumer research in the fields of economics and psychology, *Consumer Culture Theory* (CCT) is largely founded on anthropological research and illuminates the socio-cultural, symbolic and ideological aspects of consumption (Arnould and Thompson 2005: 868). One of the fields of special interest in the vast area of CCT is the formation of personal and collective identity through consumption (ibid 2005: 870-871). A cornerstone of the approach is the notion that, in contemporary society, identity, both personal and national, is defined in terms of consumption (Kravets and Öрге 2010: 207). By buying a product you signal that you are a certain kind of person, or belong to a certain group, a subculture or nationality (Williamson 2010: 12). Through this merging of consumption and identity, commodities “assume value beyond their use or exchange value” (Kravets and Öрге 2010: 207). The anthropologist John F. Sherry Jr. summarizes the core of the CCT-perspective of consumption in *Notre Dame Magazine*, 2009, by stating that:

products are not simply tools or benefits or practical utilitarian kinds of things, but they're really more about meaning. They're the way people create meaning and transform meaning and so forth. (<http://ntrda.me/1WQr054>²¹)

While consumers are active in the formation of personal and collective identity, context and marketplace ideology set the frames for these actions and make some interpretations more likely than others. Consumer culture is thus shaped by broader historical forces such as myths, narratives and ideologies (Arnauld and Thompson 2005: 869-871). In the same way as arrangers of tourist experiences direct the “tourist gaze,” companies direct the “consumer gaze” through advertising, package design and “storytelling.”

The questions of how normative messages are transmitted through consumption and how cultural ideals or popular narratives are transformed into material realities is also an established field in CCT research. Here, symbolic meaning, cultural ideals and ideology in advertising and popular culture texts are analyzed with influence from semiotics and literary critical theory (Arnauld and Thompson 2005: 875). One example is Linda Scott's article “Images in Advertising” (1994), where she criticizes scholars for neglecting the socio-cultural context in which the advertising image is produced. Commercial pictures have either been analyzed psychologically as sensory stimuli, or as representations of reality that carry meaning irrespective of time and place, class, gender or ethnicity. Pictures that do not fulfill either of these criteria have simply been regarded as irrelevant to the product. Instead she argues, images in advertising should be regarded as “symbolic artifacts constructed from the conventions of a particular culture” (1994: 252). The “non-commercial” values encapsulated in the use of the red cottage are of course not given but are, as Roland Barthes claims, “heavily cultural” (1978: 35). To be able to be decoded, they demand knowledge about the “referent system”—the systems

outside marketing where the cottage has a meaning (Williamson 2010: 19). Ideas of shared knowledge and common experiences, i.e. ideology, are a cornerstone in the construction of advertisements, and consumers use this shared knowledge in their interpretation and evaluation of the advertisement. Shared cultural knowledge is thus the foundation for persuasion. This observation also means that those who do not share the common knowledge are excluded from accessing the meaning of the advertisement or, at best, interpret it differently (Scott 1994: 253, 259).

Scott holds that one way to get beyond the psychological and realistic interpretation of advertisements is to explain the use of particular images in connection to previously learned images and cultural trends by using archival material (1994: 271). To a great degree, commercial images make their meanings by borrowing visuals, or referring to other texts, altering them to create new meanings. As such, they can only derive meaning as part of prior discourses and must be considered as intertextually related to other images and texts both in a diachronic and synchronic perspective, rather than as isolated phenomena (Hutcheon 1988: 126; Scott 1992; Rose 2007: 142).

The idea of the importance of socio-historical context in the interpretation of advertisements stands as an inspiration for this chapter. As Anne Mager (2005) argues, to take the historical context of the production of commercial material into consideration can provide further insights to the field of market and consumer research. Mager suggests that the use of the historical method helps to “find out how value system[s] are made and negotiated in consumer societies” (2005: 168). One way is to explore which signs have been adopted and abandoned as marketing tools over time (ibid). Another approach is to explore how the same sign has been used over time and adapted to fit different aspects of nation. By providing examples of how the

red cottage has been used in advertising material and placed in connection to the socio-historical context where the advertisement was produced, this chapter will show how the red cottage has been used to “flag the nation” over more than a century. Although the discussions referred to by the commercial material have changed, the red cottage has continued to be the icon to which the aspect of nation is attached.

To incorporate a product or company in the larger narrative of nation or as a bearer of national values and thus use national identity as a sales pitch in media advertising is neither a dramatic nor uncommon thing to do (Kristoffersson 2014: 1). The media and the advertising industry play an important role in the process of conceptualizing the nation. Robert J. Foster shows in *Materializing the Nation: Commodities, Consumption, and Media in Papua New Guinea* (2002) how commodities and media play a crucial function in the formation of Papua New Guinean identity. In the article “Consuming Icons: Nationalism and Advertising in Australia,” (2009) Jillian Pridaux suggests a typology for usage of nationalism in company advertising and illustrates how these types have been used in Australian advertising, depending on the company’s position in the national discourse (2009). Olga Kravets and Örsan Öрге (2010) pursue a social-material analysis of how a particular brand of cheese gained iconic status in Soviet Union national identity. Anne Mager (2005) explores how South African beer commercials changed between 1960 and 1999 in the context of the fall of apartheid and the construction of a new South African identity. In a Swedish context, one of the most salient examples of the use of Swedish national identity in cultural branding is, as Sara Kristoffersson shows in *Design by IKEA: A Cultural History* (2014), the Swedish furniture company IKEA, selling not only Swedish design, but also “Swedish values.”

Marketing materials come in all shapes and sizes. Labels, posters, catalogues,

brochures, billboards, signs, TV-commercials and so on constitute a large portion of the visual material that surrounds us and are therefore an important part of our frame of values (Johannesson 1997: 171). Due to the enormous scale of the material, it is obviously difficult to develop a complete overview. In addition, archives do not necessarily organize their collections of marketing material and “everyday printing” with visual content in mind but rather according to company or brand. This implies that many pictures that would be of importance for this research remain hidden in the archives. It would of course be possible to limit the study by choosing one type of material. However, since marketing material comes in all forms, and as a way to reflect the multifaceted use of the red cottage I have instead chosen to use different types of material where the red cottage appears. The examples that will be used derive from brochures, catalogues, posters, TV-commercials, and packaging.

In the early nineteenth century, text advertisements were the most common type of marketing material in Swedish newspapers, and it was not until the mid-1850s that pictures started to become more common. Partly, this depended on improvements of the printing press, and partly due to increased mass-production of goods that called for more refined ways to separate one brand from the other. In this initial phase, pictures were rather simple. The text continued to dominate and a hand or arrow pointing to the item for sale called for the reader’s attention (Johannesson 1997: 176; Qvarsell 2004: 18). Furthermore, a new regulation on brands that was promulgated in Sweden in 1884 had a major impact on the new design of advertisements. With the new law, it was decided that companies had to design a logotype that could be used across their entire marketing, from signs to labels on packages and so a commercial symbolism particular to the late nineteenth-century developed (Johannesson 1997: 205).

These logotypes often drew on national icons (ibid). Names and pictures of members of the Royal Family decorated chocolate bars, cigars and matches, and Mother Svea and the Swedish flag adorned advertisements for all kinds of items together with the request to buy Swedish goods. Although some of these examples of commercial nationalism are still in use, the majority of these more highfaluting symbols for the nation have disappeared.

Alongside the royal emblems and images of royalty, topographic pictures were common in commercial material from the late nineteenth century. Besides pictures of the factory where the product was made, national romantic, pastoral milieus dominated (Johannesson 1997: 199). The paradoxical fusion of the use of the idea of a rural, idyllic past to sell industrial made goods is part of what Elizabeth Outka defines as *commodified authentic*. In *Consuming Traditions: Modernity, Modernism, and the Commodified Authentic* (2009), Outka explores how new marketing strategies created a “particular kind of commercial hybrid that fused artifice and authenticity” in turn-of-the-nineteenth-century England (2009: 3). Industrial made products were sold as “minirepresentations of supposedly noncommercial values,” preferably by “nostalgic evocations to an English rural past” and it was the aura of non-commercialism that made them appealing (2009: 4). This was, of course, also the case in Sweden. In particular, a scene from Dalarna, at the time the most Swedish of the Swedish landscapes, adorned mail order catalogues, boxes of safety matches and chocolate bars during the early twentieth century. In these pictures, women clad in folk costumes in pastoral landscapes are frequent eye-catchers (Johannesson 1997: 204).

Although the national romantic ideals were strong at the turn of the last century, so was the idea of the modern, clean Swedish home. Already in 1906 the “educational” brochure for the cleaning agent *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver*, was published (fig. 31). On the front cover of the

brochure, which has the title *Några ord i egna-hems-saken* [A few words in the matter of one's own home], a red painted cottage with white trim sits at the edge of a forest. Judging from the blue sky and the lush greenery, it is a fine summer's day. Smoke comes from the chimney, suggesting that the house has the warmth and coziness of a home. A gravel path leads from the house and ends in the front of the picture, connecting the audience with the house and suggesting that the consumer is on the way to visit, or perhaps going home. A girl, dressed in a neat red dress, a blue apron, blue tights and a summer hat walks on the gravel path. The color of the girl's dress matches the red paint of the home. She carries a basket in one hand and a large yellow flower, probably a sunflower in the other. Her cheeks are rosy and she smiles towards the viewer, whom she apparently has come to meet. The matching colors, the smile towards the viewer makes the happy rosy-cheeked girl a second link between the audience and the happy home. We can take her by the hand and walk home to our red-painted villa.

On the back of the cover is a picture of a *tomte*. In Scandinavian legends, *tomten* is a character involved in agricultural work. This short bearded man is as strong and helpful as he is unreliable. As well as helping with gathering hay, milling and taking extra care of the horses, he was also known to hit the animals, leave the farm, or even kill someone in the farmer's family if his treatment displeased him. In the picture on the brochure, this grumpy, strong and unreliable creature carries a package of *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver*. Amusingly, the package the tomte carries is also *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver* creating an infinite series of tomte carrying scouring powder packages with tomte.



Figure 31: Cover of *Några ord i egna-hems-saken*. Alex Lagerman. 1906. Gothenburg: Göteborgs Litografiska. National Library of Sweden. Reproduced from *Vardagstryck*. vardagstryck.blogg.kb.se <http://bit.ly/1NsnDgi> (Accessed November 30, 2015)

Although the idea of the red cottage as national home is based on the notion of an idyllic rural past, the red cottage on the brochure cover for *Tomtens Kraft-skurpulver* refers to how the *modern* Swedish home can be acquired through consumption. Intertextually, the picture on the cover, and the text in the brochure arrange itself in the massive publishing of texts connected to the own home project, which, as Edling states, comprised its own genre (1996: 297). Although the own home project was rather new, it had been a topic of discussion for several years, and was probably a familiar topic to the majority of the Swedish population. As has been shown in previous chapters, the red painted house in the countryside emerged as the emblematic true home in these texts, pictures and handbooks on how to build an own home.

Besides the red-painted house, the girl and the sunflower also refer to images that were popular during the early twentieth century. In particular Carl Larsson's painting *Brita, en katt och en smörgås* (1898), where a girl is depicted in front of a red-painted wall with sunflowers in the flowerbed contains the same motifs as the cover of *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver*. By using the picture of the red painted house and the girl on the path on the cover, the potential buyer carries the scene of the cottage, the girl and the flower and all other pictures of similar scenes in mind while reading. Focusing on the red cottage as the national home and disseminating it as such was a rather new idea in 1906, so it is possible that the red cottage had not yet had established itself as a naturalized symbol. However, it was surely a well-known motif, and a national symbol in the making.

The text in the brochure plays on several ideals that were part of the ideology of the home at the turn of the last century, and position *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver* in the center. Interestingly, *Tomten*, who in the legends was involved in agricultural work, has moved to urban apartments. His unreliable and even dangerous characteristics are erased, and he is placed there

to help the housewife—who is described as “nätt, proper and renlig” [neat, proper and cleanly]—create a happy home through good housekeeping (Lagerman 1906: 8,11). The housewives are the brochure’s target market. The text emphasizes that the ideal home in all times has been regarded as a home surrounded by a garden, but with a little help from *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver*, a good housewife can “äfven i de mörka gatorna i storstaden skapa små idyller av hemtrafnad och husligt behag“ [even in the dark streets in the large city create small idylls of hominess and domestic delight] (ibid 1906: 7). Indeed, the early twentieth century was turbulent and characterized by high unemployment and conflicts between workers and employers. A considerably greater deal of the Swedish population lived in poverty in cramped apartments in the dirty cities than in red-painted villas. Despite this, and despite *Tomten’s* ability to give even the poorer homes an aura of hominess, it is not an apartment in a city that adorns the cover of the brochure, but a red painted, rurally situated villa.

The sound, clean and orderly home is referred to as “samhällets säkraste grundvalar” [the most stable foundation of society] (ibid 1906: 3). A passage in the text connects *Tomtens Kraft-skurpulver* to the own home project, which had been initiated two years earlier, and the new nationalism that was its foundation:

“Egna hemsfrågan är stadd på en äkta svensk nationell rörelse, ty den syftar ju att binda Sveriges barn till den fosterländska jorden. Må vi då också när vi ordna vårt hem och njuta dess fördelar anlägga *svenska* synpunkter. Gynna det svenska arbetet och dess produkter. [---] Tänk på Tomten och ge ett äkta svenskt svar!” (1906: 3)

The question of the own home is founded on a true Swedish national movement, since it aims to tie Sweden’s children to the native soil. When we order our home and enjoy its benefits, may we too adopt a *Swedish* perspective. Support the Swedish work and its

products ---. Think of Tomten and give a true Swedish response!]

The brochure for *Tomtens Kraft-skurpulver* is an early example of how companies use a burning question to market a product. By referring to the own home project they associate themselves with the nation, and position themselves as legitimate actors in the nationalist project. Accordingly, the brochure is an example on what Pridaux refers to as “activist marketing” (Pridaux 2009: 629). The red cottage is not a depiction of just any home where *Tomtens Kraft-skurpulver* can be used to clean. It is the emblem of the national home, a red-painted single-family villa, surrounded by nature and with happy, healthy and rosy-cheeked children picking flowers. By using *Tomtens Kraft-skurpulver* which is as Swedish as the own home project, you too can become an ideal woman, and get the experience of the clean, sound and Swedish home—a red-painted villa at the edge of a forest.

The 1920s is considered as the starting point for the breakthrough of the modern advertising market in Sweden. During the First World War, the advertising business came to a standstill, but regained traction in the 1920s and new technologies were soon available. After the First World War, advertising was strongly influenced by American ideals. Mother Svea, members of the royal family and references to the nation were replaced by American movie stars to sell soap and luxury items that became available after the war (Ekdahl, Wigstrand and Müller 1999: 57). Commercials aired during intermission at movie theatres and slogans became a popular novelty (Eriksson 2003: 15,17). As Sut Jhally suggests, initially commercial material had primarily been text-based. In the transition to an image-based mode of communication, which according to Jhally was completed in the post-war period, written text explained the visual based material, educating the consumers in how to read visual commercial messages (Jhally 1990: 78). The increasing importance of the visual component is also shown through artists’

engagement in the production of commercial art. One example is that the prestigious Swedish Academy of Art arranged an exhibition on advertisements in 1919 (Qvarsell 2004: 21).

Mail-order catalogs became a popular mode of marketing during the first decade of the twentieth century (Eriksson 2003: 15). With the abundance of commodities available after the war, mail order increased in popularity and made it possible for the rural population to take part in the newest urban fashion. The company as the link between the rural and the urban, and traditional and modern ways of living is illustrated in the colorful catalogs for *Svenska Varuhuset* in Stockholm. The winter edition from 1923 shows a woman skiing in a dark wintery landscape. At the edge of a forest, smoke comes from a chimney and lights gleam from the windows of a red painted cottage. Encircled in the sky is a picture of *Svenska Varuhuset* with its bright lights shining through the large windows. Horses, cars and trams rush by on the busy street (fig. 32). On the cover of the summer edition from 1924, a postman salutes the reader, ready to do his duty and deliver a package to a home in the countryside, perhaps the red painted cottage that can be seen through the window (fig. 33).



Figure 32: Cover of *Svenska Varuhuset's* catalog. Fall/Winter 1923-24. National Library of Sweden. Vardagstryck.



Figure 33: Cover of *Svenska Varuhuset's* catalog. Summer 1924. National Library of Sweden. Vardagstryck.

Even if national symbols, including the red cottage, were overshadowed to some extent by expressions of “the American dream,” the cottage frequently occurs in marketing material published by banks. In *Sparbanken*’s poster from 1927, a couple clad in a folk costume stand with their backs turned to the audience, holding hands and gazing towards a red painted cottage that sits on the other side of a picket fence, embedded in lush greenery and sunflowers. The sky is yellow as if the sun is rising (or perhaps setting) behind it. In the picture on the cover of *Tomtens Kraft-skurpulver*, the viewer has access to the cottage through the path that leads to it, and through the girl who has come to greet us. In *Sparbanken*’s poster however, the fence between the cottage on the one side, and the couple and the viewer who look at it on the other separates the viewer from the desired object. It is clear that they (we) do not live in the cottage, yet. However, the dream is within reach. The caption reads “Så ska vi ha’t. Och pengar har vi på sparbanken” [This is how we want it! And the money is at Sparbanken] (fig 34).



Figure 34: *Så ska vi ha't*, 1927.
Sparbankshistoriskt arkiv
<http://bit.ly/1kTfSn4> (Accessed November 30, 2015)
[cc by 3.0]

As Michael Billig argues, the use of inclusive words such as “we” is a way to “flag the nation” (1995: 70). In the poster, “we” refers both to the couple in their folk costume, and to the viewer looking at the poster. The fact that the couple is two blonde “Swedish-looking” people, who, for some incomprehensible reason, are wearing folk costumes, makes it possible to argue that the “we” that ultimately is referred to is “we—the Swedish people”, marked off from other national “we-s.” The red cottage is the Swedish home for the Swedish people.

Seen in the perspective of the craze for American movie stars and desire for novelty after First World War, *Sparbanken*'s poster appears to be outdated. The poster clearly alludes to the idea of a bygone past and tradition as foundation for the future, and plays on the commodified nostalgia as marketing tool. The Swedes in folk costume, the cottage and the sunflowers follows a visual rhetoric that refers to the pastoral milieus that were common in marketing material during the early twentieth century, and intertextually refers to the same texts and pictures that *Tomtens Kraft-skurpulver* did in 1906. The most apparent reason for this is that the own home project expanded during the 1920s. Several new development areas were planned, and the increasing production of prefabricated houses kept costs low. Saving money to buy a single-family home was an attractive opportunity for many workers in the cramped cities. Besides an established symbol for the own home project, the red cottage was celebrated in popular music and as previously shown, an image fixed in the minds of the children growing up during the first decades of the twentieth century. Although luxuries and modern household appliances developed during the inter-war period were desirable, the red cottage was still the symbol of a true, Swedish home.

The poster was the first to be published in a larger campaign for saving money in *Sparbanken* that continued through the 1920s and 1930s. Several posters were published, all of

which encouraged people to save money to buy a home (Körberg 2011: 155). The goal of the bank was to educate the Swedish people to the wonders of thrift, and they collaborated on these brochures with several governmental institutions. As Ingvar Körberg shows, *Sparbanken* had far-reaching cooperation with the Board of Education in efforts to educate children to practice thrift. They were regarded as largely benevolent by the parliament although they did reject a motion that asked for governmental support for the bank's department of propaganda, which had been established in 1925 (2011: 127-138). Rather than installing itself in the realm of modernity, the poster for *Sparbanken* connects itself to the national rhetoric of heritage that was common in government advertising (Jönsson 2011). Given that *Sparbanken* cooperated with governmental institutions one can consider the posters to some extent to be propaganda. Research on poster art often neglects the fact that propaganda posters and commercial posters spring from different traditions (Johannesson 1997: 213).

After the economic upswing in the 1920s, the depression in the early 1930s led to a decline in spending power and strategic advertising became of importance. The breakthrough of functionalism furthermore affected architecture, interior design and advertising art. Commercial imagery changed and companies remade their logotypes to cleaner versions (Ekdahl et al 1999: 76,97). During the Second World War and the continuation of the 1940s, there was a general decline in advertising. The rationing of paper in 1946 led to the disappearance of image advertising, the size of advertisements was strictly limited, and direct advertising more or less stopped (Eriksson, Bengtsson and Falk 2002: 16, 20). During the war, the government kept meticulous control over the production of all media through *Statens Informationsstyrelse* (SIS) [Government board of information] in order to promote patriotic marketing and protect Sweden's neutral position (Larsson 2005: 56-59; Jönsson 2011: 13). Instead of advertising commercial

goods, many advertising companies were engaged in community advertising, of which the poster for *Sparbanken* can be regarded as an early example. The established firms produced campaigns to encourage Swedes to lend money to the defense, and to remind them of the importance of neutrality²² (Eriksson, Bengtsson and Falk 2002: 17).

Due to the focus on patriotism and national community during the war, it would be reasonable to think that the red cottage should be a frequent symbol in advertising and propaganda. Judging from the material presented by Mats Jönsson in *Visuell fostran. Film- och bildverksamhet i Sverige under andra världskriget* (2011), this was not the case. The past that was the focus in posters and campaign films was a distant one, and as in the days of conservative nationalism, the dominant cultural heritage was old kings, national heroes and rune stones. However, Jönsson also notes that the visual material produced during the Second World War is an astonishingly neglected material (2011: 10). It is thus possible that a closer look at the material produced during the period would lead to interesting findings regarding the use of the cottage.

The ideals of functionalism and rationalism, and the popularity of industrial made goods are the probably contributing factors to the disappearance of the red painted cottage in commercial material for several decades after the war. In line with these new ideals and the Social-Democratic housing project, general consensus held that dwellings should be rational and functional. The government sanitary inspection would guarantee that apartments met sufficient standards and focused on educating the modern Swede to live in modern apartments. Rather than the red rural cottage, it was the interior of modern apartments, modern functional villas, and apartments in high-rise buildings that dominated marketing material from the 1940s well into the 1970s (fig 35-37).



Figure 35: Advertisement for shoe polish “Viking Special,” with a high rise building in the background. 1948.

In Joel Stolpe Montan and Jan Cederquist, *Köp! Folkhemmets reklam*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Max Ström. 2005: 30



Figure 36: Advertisement for the garden fence, with villas in the background. 1959.

In Joel Stolpe Montan and Jan Cederquist, *Köp! Folkhemmets reklam*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Max Ström. 2005: 156



Figure 37: Advertisement for “Jör” laundry detergent, with a high rise in the background. 1965. In Joel Stolpe Montan and Jan Cederquist, *Köp! Folkhemmets reklam*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Max Ström. 2005: 275.

Advertising in the 1980s was marked by individualism and focused on creating a certain lifestyle, while at the same time emphasizing groups and community. “Group-individualism” became a catchword. Brands became symbols for common values rather than symbols of a commodity (Eriksson, Bengtsson and Falk 2002: 36). Alongside advertisements creating a community of joggers, milk drinkers and Volvo-drivers, notions of Swedishness and national community again appeared in commercial material during this decade (Löfgren 2000: 243). This revival of the national seems somewhat paradoxical considering that there concurrently was an idea that the importance of nation was erased in favor of a globalized world. However, the threat to the idea of nation caused a backlash in its defense (Kristoffersson 2014: 79-80). The reappearance of the national in marketing during the 1980s and 1990s was not an isolated phenomenon, but connected to the increased interest in “national heritage” that could be discerned from the 1970s and onwards. This interest took on different expressions, ranging from traditional folk costumes to open support for aggressive right-wing nationalism, especially during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Centergran 1996: 134-144; Johannesson 1999: 17).

The most striking example on the national revival in marketing is, as Sara Kristoffersson shows in *Design by IKEA: A Cultural History* (2014), how IKEA strengthened their national identity during the 1980s, both by inscribing itself in the narrative of Sweden as a democratic welfare state, offering “democratic design,” and in injecting itself into the narrative of rural tradition. From a start with a few national markers as moose and Vikings in some international stores, a profound “Swedishness” became the core of the brand’s narrative. Regardless of where in the world the department store was situated, a “filtered Swedishness” was applied. This was done both through concrete markers, such as the change of colors on the logo and indeed on the whole building from red and white to blue and yellow in 1984, and through the

use of Swedishness on a Barthesian “mythical” level, as through the awarded advertisement “Ikeas själ” [The soul of Ikea] from 1981. This advertisement pictured a dry-stone wall in verdant landscape, referring to the stereotype of the assiduous, ingenious and thrifty people of Småland, the region where Ingvar Kamprad grew up (2014: 54-56). As has been shown, Småland also emerged as the ideological landscape of Sweden through the film adaptation of Astrid Lindgren’s books during the 1970s and 1980s, which probably helped the construction of the narrative of IKEA as a Swedish icon.

Although IKEA may have most thoroughly adopted the national revival of the 1980s and 1990s, it was definitely not the only company emphasizing national identity by using national myths in their marketing. Elizabeth Outka states that during the course of the twentieth century, the “commodified authentic,” with its nostalgic evocations of rural nationalism went from a marketing tool to a marketing climate (2009: 155). One example of this is how the narrative of Sweden as a smiling pastoral country in perpetual summer became a feature in commercial material. From the 1980s and onward, the red cottage could be seen in advertisements for potatoes, as well as AIDS/HIV-campaigns (fig. 38-39)

Av potatis blir man varken tjock eller fattig.



Fråga potatisen. Den tillhör ditt land, dess historia och dess framtid.
Glöm inte potatisen för polerat ris, spaghetti och annan utbakt deg.
Kom ihåg att potatisen, sida vid sida med sillen och knäckebrödet, byggde vårt land och folk. Gavs styrka och kultur.
Måns dina älsklingar: Janssons frestelse, smörsås, raggmunk och kroppkakor.

Enira dig synen av en potatis i blom. Av den jordnära lyckokärlan vid oppningen.
Låt inte matmodets snabba växlingar förringa din egen matkultur. Håll kvar vid din tradition, men utveckla den.
Potatis tillhör framtiden. Den möter dina krav på godare mat. Bara du får dig att laga den rätt. Den ger dig billigare mat eftersom den är nästan gratis jämfört med annat godt.
Den uppfyller dina ökande krav på näringsrik kost. Faktum är att du skulle kunna leva på bara potatis. Så nyttig och allsidig är den.
Dessutom håller potatis dig smal.
Man blir inte tjock av potatis.
Tjock blir man av det man oftast bakt i oändan tillför potatisen.
Köp hem en påse kväll. Välj ut en fin kvalitet. Tillred den skål ängående mjölkpotatis. Sill och knäckebröd passar bra till.
Potatis är ärlig mat.

Figure 38: Advertisement for potatoes. "Av potatis blir man varken tjock eller fattig" [Potatoes does neither make you fat nor poor] 1982. Falk and Pihl DDB Reklamarkivet, Landskrona 1782:1. Courtesy of Falk and Pihl/DDB, and Reklamarkivet, Landskrona.

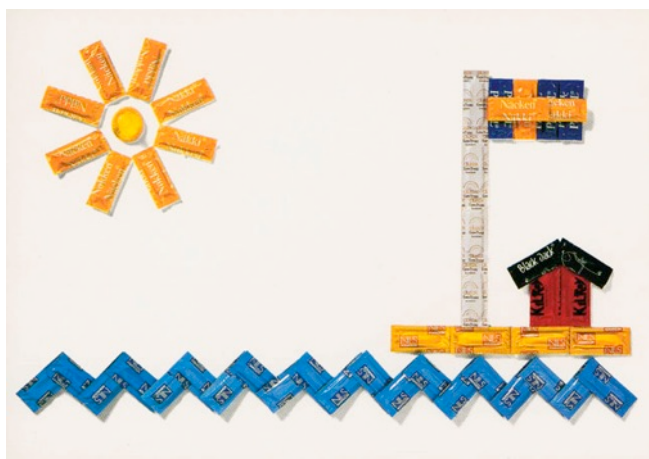


Figure 39: Campaign picture for condoms/AIDS-delegation. 1990. B.R.O Annonbyrå. Reklamarkivet, Landskrona 3839:14. Courtesy of Reklamarkivet, Landskrona.

One of the best-known commercials in Sweden is the television commercial for the laundry detergent *Grumme Tvättsåpa*. Between 1993 and 1998, the company broadcast three similar commercials, all filmed near a red cottage in the Stockholm archipelago with a girl or a young woman as the main character. In the first, and most remembered commercial from 1993, a young girl dressed in a loose white shirt and dungarees stands in front of a red-painted wall. To her left is a green-painted wooden bench, known as a liars' bench in Swedish, and to the right is an open door with white doorframe.

In her hands, the girl holds a pair of pink socks, comparing the result of *Grumme Tvättsåpa* and another laundry detergent. To the tones of Edvard Griegs' *Morning Mood* and the chirping of birds, she tells us about the superior washing power as well as the environmental advantages of the laundry detergent. She ends by stating that: "Nu kan vi äntligen tvätta rent utan att skada vår natur. Det tycker jag verkar bra för framtiden" [finally, we can do laundry without harming our nature. I think that is good for the future.]—a line that is still referred to and remembered. The "we" is the same we as in the advertisement for *Sparbanken*, although this time it is not the thrifty Swedish people that is the common "we," but to the responsible Swedish people, a Swede who takes responsibility for her nation, its future people and the environment (fig. 40).



Figure 40: Commercial for *Grumme Tvättsåpa*. 1993. Video. Arbmans.
Screenshot from <http://bit.ly/1kF5dw1>
Courtesy of Arbmans.

As she speaks, the camera zooms out to a bird's-eye view. While zooming out we see that the small red cottage is the only house on the tiny island. It is framed by a few pine trees, protecting it from the wind, laundry has been hung to dry in the summer breeze, a small boat is moored to a wooden bridge and the Swedish flag flies in the wind, as a statement that the setting as well as the product is Swedish. While the music comes to a crescendo, and a seagull caws, the camera zooms out and the small island gets smaller. It is surrounded by even smaller islets in what appears to be the outskirts of the archipelago showing that the girl, the tiny red cottage and the island is part of a greater whole that needs to be protected. Eventually it disappears and the bottle of laundry detergent covers the entire picture, with the text "Ren Tvätt. Ren Natur" [Clean Laundry. Clean Nature] on either side of it. In the right corner sits the eco-label "Bra miljöval" [Good environmental choice]. A man says in a peremptory voice "Grumme Tvättsåpa. Ren Tvätt. Ren natur." [Grumme Tvättsåpa. Clean Laundry, Clean Nature] (<http://bit.ly/1kF5dw1>)²³.

The composition of the picture has many similarities with the brochure for *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver* from 1906 (and the educational posters from the 1940s). In both cases, a young girl stands in front of a red painted cottage. In the brochure for *Tomtens Kraft-Skurpulver*, the gravel road leads to the house, and in *Grumme Tvättsåpa*, the door is open which gives the house an air of openness, accessibility and even honesty, suggesting that the woman, the home, the Swedes have nothing hide. To choose a young girl as the link between the product and the audience signifies innocence and the future. Regardless of whether it is 1906 or 1993, cleaning agents appear to be in the sphere of girls and women. The commercial's aim is not to provoke gender norms, but to communicate stability and predictability. The same values are communicated by the choice of a red painted cottage in a summer landscape. Indeed, it is most unlikely that the cottage has access to water and drainage, which makes it impossible to use a

laundry machine in the tiny cottage on the island. The cottage thus has nothing to do with the laundry detergent, but is a sign for the values that *Grumme* wants to communicate.

The use of a red cottage in the archipelago refers to the idea of how the ideal Swedish summer is to be spent. This iconic scenery, and the narrative of the “authentic Swedish summer” is linked to a newer narrative of Sweden as a leading nation in protecting the environment. Environmental engagement was a topic of great interest during the late 1980s when eutrophication of the Baltic Sea, where the Stockholm archipelago is situated, became acute and was much written about. Explosive growth of poisonous algae made the water unsuitable for swimming and was ruining the experience of thousands of summer guests. Increasing awareness of environmental threats in Sweden resulted in the environmental party gaining seat in the parliament in 1988, the eco-label “the Swan” was launched in 1989, followed by the label “Bra miljöval” in 1992.

Grumme Tvättsåpa uses this new concern for the environment in their commercial and links it to the idea of the authentic Swedish summer, or rather to the idea that the authentic Swedish summer is threatened. To choose a different laundry detergent would not only destroy the Baltic Sea, the Stockholm archipelago, and the future symbolized by the girl, but also the iconic Swedish summer. To not use *Grumme Tvättsåpa* would thus lead to the destruction of a substantial part of the national identity.

Transferring the meaning from the “referent system,” the cultural system where the picture in the advertisement has a meaning, to the product that is for sale is one of the most powerful mechanisms of advertising (Cova 1996: 19; Williamson 2010). The values embedded in the things, faces or music in the advertisement spills over to the item that is for sale, and the product acquires the meaning from the referent system. Bernard Cova suggests that advertising is

such a powerful tool for transferring meaning that any product can be made to take on any meaning (1996: 19). Compared to the advertisement for laundry detergent from 1965, which uses a high-rise building, a square gravel pitch and trees in a straight line to communicate that the laundry detergent is as modern, efficient and rational as the items shown in the picture, *Grumme Tvättsåpa* takes on the meaning communicated by the items in the commercial and suggests that the laundry detergent is as innocent as the girl, and as safe, stable, secure and Swedish as the flag and the red tiny cottage where she spends her summer.

In 2011, about a decade after the broadcasting of the commercial, the island, called *Alkläpparna*, and the cottage where the commercial was filmed was for sale. Although quite some time had passed since the production of the commercial, the sale of the island caused some attention. In *Svenska Dagbladet*, as in other of the largest newspapers in Sweden, headlines read that “Grumme-ön” [Grumme-island] was for sale suggesting that the values from the pictures in the advertisement had spilled over from the product onto the actual island (<http://bit.ly/1NPkN3o>)²⁴. The island and the cottage had been connected to the product to such a degree that the product came to mean the island, and the island meant the product.

That an island naturally became synonymous with a brand of laundry detergent reveals the blurring of borders between reality and media that postmodern theorists argue is a fundamental trait in postmodern culture. Frederic Jameson reminds us that postmodern culture, which he regards as a “dominant cultural logic” or a “hegemonic norm” in the era of late capitalism rather than a style is thoroughly commercial and that the borders between culture and economy, has collapsed (Jameson 1991: 6). In this condition of hyper reality, the simulation seems more real than reality, and it is impossible to know the difference between the two. Cova argues that in the field of marketing this implies that the functional dimension of a product

disappears behind the esthetic one, and it is the image presented in marketing campaigns that is being sold rather than the product (Cova 1996: 17). The commercial for *Grumme Tvättsåpa* and the sequel to it where a physical place became synonymous with a commercial product can be regarded as an example of such blurring of borders and how the image becomes “the essence the consumer seeks” (Cova 1996: 17).

Lena Johannesson argues that the label and package design of a product is a particularly effective advertising media, since every item becomes an advertisement for itself. The choice of a product becomes a personal statement, which in turn makes the consumer exceptionally open to the arguments used in the marketing of the commodity (1997: 186). That consumers not only consume a product, but as Cova suggests, perhaps primarily consume the symbolic meaning of the product, becomes particularly apparent in the marketing of food products (1996: 17).

In the early 2010s, *Scan*, a company in the food industry owned by a Finnish multinational corporation, launched a series of semi-manufactured meat products with the name *Svenska Gårdar* [Swedish Farms]. Recipes for meatballs, different kinds of sausages, and liver paste had, according to the company, been developed in close cooperation with a few farms that provided *Scan* with meat. The labels on the products all pictured a house from the farm where the recipe was said to have its origin. This is also the case for *Isterband*—a coarsely grounded sausage, which is regarded as a traditional dish from the region of Småland.

Besides the ingredients, all information the potential buyer needs to know about the sausage is presented on the left side of the label, printed in a typeface that makes the text look like it has been written on an old-fashioned typewriter. Under the company logo is the text “Välkommen hem till Svenska Gårdar” [Welcome home to Swedish farms], followed by the information that the package contains *isterband*, which is said to have a mild and sour taste. The

consumer is further informed that the recipe has been developed together with *Bäck* farm in Småland. On the bottom of the label is a picture of a Swedish flag and the text “Alltid svenskt kött” [Always Swedish meat], and the official logotype for Swedish meat, the weight and finally information about the percent of meat in the product.

To the right of the text is a picture that, according to the caption, is “Gamla boninghuset Bäck lantbruk 2011” [old dwelling house of *Bäck* farm 2011]. The photograph depicts the front of a red-painted house with white-painted window frames and a veranda decorated with gingerbread work. As in the commercial for *Grumme Tvättsåpa*, the front door is slightly open and invites the consumer to step inside. A green-painted bench is placed on the veranda. Potted plants hang from the veranda ceiling, and another pot sits by the doorsteps. A tree with green leaves stands to the right of the house, and in the distance one sees the edge of a forest. In the sky above the roof of the cottage is the text “Nyhet!” [Novelty!] (fig. 41)

On the one hand, the red cottage functions as an illustration to the text on the left side of the label, stating that the recipe of the sausages is developed in cooperation with *Bäck* farm in Småland. The statement is verified, or given pictorial evidence through the cottage. As if not enough, it is again made clear that the house on the picture is *Bäck* farm through the caption on the bottom of the picture. Text and picture thus reaffirm each other in a feedback loop.

While functioning as illustration of the linguistic message, the picture of the cottage also increases the credibility of the assertion of the cooperation between the sausage factory and the farmer. Judging from the focus on the local origin of the sausage and the image of small-scale production, it is easy to get the idea that the meat comes from the actual farm and that the sausages are stuffed by the farmer, rather than being produced in a factory. Rather than an experimental kitchen, which most likely is the place where the sausage has been developed, the consumer is encouraged to picture a representative for the factory together with a member of the farming family. Perhaps they sit in the kitchen, socializing over a cup of coffee and exchange recipes, far from the animal industry and sausage factory. Indeed it is not only the meat manufacturer who is welcome in the kitchen. The door is open, and even the consumer could step in and join the sausage stuffing. As the text states, we are “Välkomna hem till svenska gårdar” [Welcome home to Swedish farms]. Unfortunately, we would most likely find the kitchen empty. The red painted house that we are welcomed to enter is in actual fact leased to tourists, and probably stands empty during most of the fall and winter season (<http://www.backlantbruk.se>)²⁵. Judging from pictures from the actual farm, the new dwelling house is neither red nor old. That the marketing company still chooses a picture of the old red-painted manor house shows that the decision to let a house from the farm adorn the label is not necessarily meant to represent the farm. Rather, the cottage is a sign for the non-commercial

values of small-scale and rural Swedish tradition that *Scan* wants to attach itself and its products to. For this aim, not just any house would do on the label: it has to be the Swedish house.

The open door and the hearty welcome not only function as an invitation to enter *Bäck* farm, but is also a suggestion of *Scan*'s openness to its customers. The "welcome home," the picture of the farm and the assertion of the cooperation between the farm and *Scan* is an attempt to close the gap between producer and consumer. Instead of being a multinational capitalist company, *Scan* positions itself as merely being the middleman between the farmer and the consumer in a way that Jameson would regard as fundamental to the era of late capitalism.

Through the references to old rural Sweden, *Scan* positions itself as a tradition bearer and the transmitter of national values and suggests that it is as Swedish as the cottage and *isterband* from Småland. Building on Cova's ideas of the consumption of meaning as overshadowing the importance of the consumption of products, it is furthermore possible to suggest that the consumption of *Scan*'s *isterband* is a way to confirm or attain Swedish identity. In *Materializing the Nation: Commodities, Consumption, and Media in Papua New Guinea*, Robert Foster shows how advertisements qualify commodities as embodiments of the nation. The argument in these advertisements is that the consumption of these "national commodities" nationalizes the person (2002: 66). The same idea can be applied to the label on *Scan*'s *isterband*. The flag, the official "Swedish meat" mark, the welcoming to Swedish farms and references to Sweden through the picture of the red painted old dwelling house of *Bäck* farm reinforce the claim that the sausage is Swedish, that *Scan* is a Swedish company and that eating *isterband* is a Swedish thing to do. Eat *isterband*, become Swedish is the statement made on the label.

As in the commercial for *Grumme Tvättsåpa*, the label on *Scan Isterband* blurs the

borders between reality and fiction, and also the borders of past and present. *Bäck* farm is a real place, but the connotation the label evokes is of a fictive past presented in several different intertexts. Besides the wealth of texts and pictures of rural red cottages in films, books, postcards, and magazines, the label intertextually refers to Astrid Lindgren's nostalgic descriptions of Småland, set on a red-painted farm in the early twentieth century, perhaps above all to the stories about *Emil in Lönneberga* and the episodes where Emil arranges a Christmas feast for the poor or eats all of the sausages in the storehouse. Furthermore, the text on the package is printed in a typeface that refers to a time before the computer-age. This way of referring to a nostalgic idea of the past through the choice of the house on the label as well as the typeface is similar to Jameson's idea of nostalgia film. Jameson holds that the aestheticization of culture and the glorification of surface above content also applies to references to history in novels, films and commercials. For example "nostalgia films" do not represent the past, but "approaches the past through stylistic connotations, conveying pastness by the glossy qualities of the image" (1991: 19). Rather than a representation of the past, postmodern culture production represents our ideas and stereotypes about that past (1991: 25).

The red cottage is indeed a stereotype, and judging from the insistent use of it in marketing material during the last decades, Jameson might be right in claiming that it stands as a representation of the stereotypical ideas of the past. At the same time, the connotative rather than representative use of the past is not particular to our time. The cottages that were celebrated during the early twentieth century were also based on stereotypical and utopian ideas of rural history, a fact that Elizabeth Outka has observed. Perhaps rather than being a typical trait for postmodern culture, what appears to be an increasing trend in connotative references to the past in marketing is an expression for a society "anxious both to preserve traditions and to be fully

modern” (Outka 2009: 19).

Although the label for *Isterband* does refer to the popular and fictive idea of the rural past in Småland, it does not edit out signs of the present in order to blur its contemporaneity, as Jameson argues is the case in nostalgia films (1991: 21). At the same time as the cottage refers to tradition, “old-fashioned” food and the idyllic past of rural *Småland*, the picture suggests that this idyllic scenery is not a since long gone past, but a present reality. The caption asserts that this is the *old* dwelling house of *Bäck* farm, as it looked like in 2011. Furthermore, the text “Nyhet” [Novelty] that paradoxically is printed in the sky above the cottage puts the traditional dish *isterband* and the rural past in the realm of modernity. The old is “reinserted in the world of image and given meaning as simultaneously old and new” (McRobbie 1994: 3). The references to the past, both through the design of the label and through the connotations of an idyllic rural past, homemade food and small-scale production paired with the remark of the novelty of the product and the newly taken picture of the old house, creates the “affectionate allusion” that Linda Scott claims is a means for building the mutual confidence that is the basis for persuasion (1992). The nostalgic allusions mask the fact that the production of the sausage involves large-scale meat industry, and rational factory manufacturing behind an aura of nostalgia. At the same time, it points out that this rural idyll is not a since long gone past that only can be remembered through the stories of Astrid Lindgren, but can be acquired through the consumption of *Scan Isterband*. Just as Elizabeth Outka shows how nostalgic evocations of the past was used to sell industrial-made goods in the early twentieth century, *Scan* brings selected parts of the past to the modern man through the hybridization of fast food and rural slow living.

As Anne Mager suggests, to put advertisements in their socio-historical context opens up for the possibility to examine how the aspiration for consumption was constructed and gives

insights in how societies looked upon themselves during different eras (2005: 168). Following Mager's idea, I have demonstrated how the red cottage has been used in a century of Swedish marketing, and how commodities ranging from cleaning agent to sausage have been sold by using the red painted cottage as a reference to Sweden.

Regardless of whether the picture was published during the first decades of the 1900s or a century later, the compositions of the pictures are astonishingly similar. With few exceptions, the picture show the entrance of a red cottage, preferably with the front door open or ajar, surrounded by some kind of greenery, either by a lush garden or on the edge of a forest. The never-ending repetition of the red cottage in a summery rural setting shows how the red cottage comprises a remarkably strong symbol in the narrative of Swedish identity, and is part of a shared visual vocabulary that appears consistently over time.

By looking at the use of the cottage over time (and perhaps the non-use of it during the interwar period and post-war years), and the intertextual references made to art, literature and tourism, it becomes possible to discern how this almost identical cottage is attached to different aspects of the narrative of nation depending on time, political discussions and current trends. The intertextual and interdiscursive use of the red cottage thus shows the flexibility of the cottage as national symbol. Whether the narrative of nation is about the construction of the clean, modern and national home of the early twentieth century, the dream of the authentic Swedish vacation, or a modern nation retaining strong links to rural tradition, this narrative can be told with the aid of a red painted cottage in a rural setting.

CHAPTER SIX

Vote for Sweden! The Cottage in Political Campaigns

In the run up to the Swedish general elections of 2006, *Sverigedemokraterna* released a campaign film consisting entirely of nature and farming landscapes. In the film, which was shown in an episode of the television show “Insider” in the commercial channel TV 3 (July 31, 2006), stills of idyllic summer scenes scrolled by on the screen to the strains of the Christian hymn *Den blomstertid nu kommer* [The Blooming Time is Now Arriving], a song traditionally sung by children on the last day of school before summer break. The film opens with a picture of the archipelago on a sunny summer day. The next image shifts to an old grass-covered stone bridge leading over a creek. In the next frame, a yellow rape field billows against a clear blue summer sky. Once back in the archipelago we see a silhouette of a person sitting by the shore, while a sailboat bobs on the calm sea. We are brought back to the farming landscape. In the distance, behind a lake, we see distant blue mountains, snow still clinging to their tops. In the foreground of the picture, a cat perches on a stone fence, which borders a verdant meadow. At the bottom of the meadow lies a little red cottage with its white corners (fig. 42). We then return to the sea and a sandy beach. The picture dissolves and we see a forest lake where a rowboat is moored to a wooden bridge. An expansive mountain landscape follows and then another red cottage. An old-fashioned, low, dark-red house built of horizontal timbers with a grass roof sits behind a wooden fence (fig. 43). Of course, this type of house would be hard to find outside the boundaries of open-air museums in modern Sweden. Finally the Swedish flag flaps against the summer sky. The film ends with the text, “Sverige är värt att försvara. Låt Sverige förbli Sverige” [Sweden is worth defending. Let Sweden stay Sweden]. Finally the party symbol, the blue anemone, appears along with the name of the party and their slogan, “Trygghet och

Tradition” [safety²⁶ and tradition] (<http://bit.ly/1Iv7Dme>)²⁷.



Figure 42: Cat and cottage.
Sverigedemokraterna’s campaign film 2006.
Broadcasted in *Insider* TV3, July 31, 2006.
Screenshot from <http://bit.ly/1Iv7Dme>



Figure 43: Old red cottage.
Sverigedemokraterna’s campaign film 2006.
Broadcasted in *Insider* TV3, July 31, 2006.
Screenshot from <http://bit.ly/1Iv7Dme>

It would be easy to misunderstand, and think that the campaign film is actually an advertisement for Sweden, or perhaps a commercial promoting environmental protection. However, *Sverigedemokraterna* party has no particular environmental policy central to their platform. Instead, the party's primary goal is to reduce immigration to Sweden to an absolute minimum. Presenting this ideology solely through the use of idyllic pictures from the rural landscape seems somewhat strange.

Connected to the idea of the ideological landscape is the idea of order. In the ideological place (or landscape), certain things are defined as belonging or in-place. This, of course, implies that other things are regarded as out-of-place or not belonging (Sibley 1997; Cresswell 1996). In the introduction to *Geographies of Exclusion* (1997), David Sibley notes that "The human landscape can be read as a landscape of exclusion," and that "spatial purification" is key in the understanding of the organization of social space, irrespective of whether this space is the home, the region or the entire nation (1997, ix, 77, 90). "Purified spaces" can be defined as those that are "strongly circumscribed and framed" with little room for difference. In these places, contradictory phenomena are easily identified as out of place, and threatening. The opposite is the "weakly classified, heterogeneous spaces" with blurred boundaries (Edensor 1998: 44; Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield 2000: 731). These spaces can be both physical as well as mental landscapes, such as the rural idyll.

The ideological rural landscape is a "stereotyped pure space" (Sibley 1997: 108). As David Bell notes, the entire history of rural preservationism circles around the aim of keeping the rural pure (2006: 150). Drawing from comic strips, commercial advertising, and films, Sibley shows how visual media confirm stereotypes of places and people and thus create and maintain the purified space. Germs, homeless people, or immigrants threaten the home, region and/or

nation. Although the “pure rural landscape” does not exist in reality and rather is, as Michael Bunce puts it, an “armchair countryside” upon which to dwell, it nonetheless shapes our understandings of us and them, and what and who belongs to a certain landscape, and who does not (Bunce 1994: 37). Indeed the nourishment of the idea of the purified rural space can even lead to political and legislative consequences, such as the attempt to exclude “New age travellers” from the British countryside, or the non-coupling of the rural landscape with homelessness and poverty, which leads to the neglect or denial of these problems (Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield. 2000; Sibley 1997: 106-108). Struggles over the countryside thus both concern the shaping of the “real” landscape and representations of the ideological landscape (Du Puis 2006: 126).

The consensus regarding the definition of “the rural landscape” transforms it into a powerful tool in the realm of political advertising. Tim Edensor argues that pictures of the ideological rural landscape of England have been used, primarily by conservative parties and interests, to stop housing projects and in pro-hunting campaigns. Edensor claims that, by using symbols derived from the ideological rural landscape, these groups aim to maintain the idea of a “purified space,” (2002: 44). In these pictures, what is regarded as not belonging is either hidden or demonized, and thus defined as a threat against the “imagined countryside” (Edensor 2002: 44; Du Puis 2006).

Indeed, right-wing conservative groups are not the only political parties making use of the red cottage, and the connotations it evokes in their campaign material. Rather, the red cottage has appeared in political campaigns from both sides of the political spectrum for almost a century, promoting electoral pledges ranging from the defense against socialism, to an increase in the amount of guaranteed vacation. Naturally, and as will be shown in this chapter, the cottage

can be seen on posters for the Farmers' party *Bondeförbundet* (1924: 1938), as well as on posters for the conservative *Allmänna Valmansförbundet* (1920), on posters for the *Socialdemokraterna* (1960), and also for the socialist *Vänsterpartiet* (1991). With particular attention to posters that suggest that Sweden is threatened, this chapter shows how the red cottage, a key-symbol of the purified rural landscape, has been used in political campaign material. On the one hand the cottage functions as a unifying symbol representing the national, ideological home, and in the prolongation of Sweden. On the other hand, it is used as an invisible fence, marking off Sweden, or what is defined as "Swedish," from implicit outside threats.

While the use of "official" national symbols in political advertising has briefly been touched upon in several books, the use of the ideological landscape, or "unofficial" symbols has not gained greater attention (Nittve, Lindahl 1979; Håkansson, Johansson, and Vigsø 2014). In the empirically well-grounded book, *Politik i det offentliga rummet. Svenska valaffischer 1911-2010* (Håkansson, Johansson, and Vigsø 2014), based on the largest extant collection of Swedish election posters, scholars in the field of journalism and communication analyzed 1400 political campaign posters published between 1911 and 2010. One section is dedicated to national symbols. They note that national symbols and the use of Sweden's historical gallery of characters were rather common up until the Second World War. These consisted mainly of the three crowns from the national coat of arms, the Swedish flag and Mother *Svea* and these most commonly used symbols were deployed particularly by the conservatives, even though other factions also used these emblems. The same development is true for references to Sweden, or Swedes in the captions. Because of the Second World War, national symbols disappeared, not to be seen again until the 1970's (2014: 64). Thus, the use of national symbols in political campaigns to a large degree follows the pattern discovered in commercial materials

In the discussion of national symbols, Håkansson et al. mention the use of the red painted cottage in the idyllic rural landscape in political campaigns, but question the degree to which it can be regarded as a symbol for Sweden (Håkansson, Johansson and Vigsø 2014:65). The authors claim that it is easy to draw the conclusion that the red cottage in a rural summer landscape is a national symbol. However, they argue that the symbol is not unambiguous and might to the same degree be a way to distinguish between urban and rural. This is, of course, true since the rural/urban dichotomy both in regards to looks and values is a recurrent theme in Western society (Williams 1973; Bunce 1994; Short 2006). The red cottage is indeed the most obvious and frequently used symbol for the Swedish rural landscape. Yet it is far from the only type of house that can be seen in the countryside, and to dismiss its status as a national symbol is not reasonable considering the intertextual references to the red cottage in connection to Sweden, or Swedishness. The red cottage is part of the “fixed signifying system” of the ideological national landscape of Sweden, and encapsulates the positive values of closeness to nature, tradition and family values that have been attached to rural living, as well as to a Swedish way of living (Edensor 2002: 41). The choice of a red painted cottage in political campaign material points to the underlying recognition that the rural landscape is not just any landscape but the ideological *Swedish* rural landscape. Consequently, the ruralness of the red painted cottage in political campaign material does not contradict its simultaneous use as a symbol for Sweden. In fact, it is precisely this overdetermined and sometimes ambiguous use of the red cottage that makes it a particularly strong symbol, or even a key-symbol in representations of Sweden (Ortner 1973, Firth 1973: 427).

The predecessor to the election poster was the poster announcing political meetings that could be seen on horse carriages during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The picture

based election poster can be dated to 1911, although it would take until the late 1920s and 1930s before it was used nationwide (Nittve and Lindahl 1979: 12; Esaiasson 1990: 117, 366). Besides the increased capacity to produce printed material at a reasonable cost, the breakthrough of the political campaign poster greatly depended on the successive extension of the right to vote to increasingly larger portions of the Swedish population. This enlarged electorate together with increasing class conflicts implied greater ideological differentiation between the parties. Indeed, several secessionist parties were founded during the first decades of the twentieth century (Esaiasson; 1990: 106). Prior to universal male suffrage, political campaigning had primarily been based on establishing a personal relationship between the voter and the candidate. Due to the increasing group of potential voters, there was a need for a mode of communication that quickly attracted attention, and sententiously communicated the message. Inspiration came from commercial advertising (Håkansson, Johansson, and Vigsø 2014: 11-12).

Although the campaign poster continues to be an important part of political campaigning in Sweden, its status has changed over time. From being the most important mode of communication, it has become part of a greater “package,” in which it does not need to occupy the most prominent position (Vigsø 2004: 14). Instead, Internet and television advertisements have become the primary modes of communication with potential voters.

Although televised political commercials are a new phenomenon in Sweden, it was possible to watch political advertisement films in the cinemas already in the late 1920s. Between the 1930s and 1950s these films starred some of Sweden’s greatest stars and attracted large audiences (Ilshammar 2009: 143). As with all commercial advertising, political advertising has been prohibited on Swedish public television. In 2006, however, the commercial channel TV4 allowed political commercials in their niche digital broadcasting. Due to the general transition to

digital transmission in 2008, the prohibition against opinion advertising was removed for the commercial channel TV4. It is worth noting, however, that not all parties were allowed to buy commercial time on TV4. Both *Sverigedemokraterna* and the feminist party, *Feministiskt Initiativ*, which support at the time were just below the percent limit to enter the government, were excluded. For these parties, the Internet emerged as the best way to reach the electorate (Johansson and Grusell 2013: 64-75).

The political discussion during the first decades of the twentieth century primarily concerned the question of nationalization, defense, unemployment and agricultural crises (Esaiasson 1990: 106-131). Through the extension of the right to vote, a battle developed between the socialist factions, the newly established *Bondeförbundet* [The Farmers' party], and the conservative faction over the rural vote, not least the votes of the less-well-off agricultural workers (Edquist 1999). As Håkansson et al. show, several political parties used the rural landscape as backgrounds for their messages (2014: 15). One example is the 1924 campaign poster for *Bondeförbundet* [The Farmer's party]. The poster simply depicts a red cottage with white trim sitting among birch trees behind a wooden fence. The caption says "Rösta med Bondeförbundet!" [Vote for the Farmer's party!] (fig. 44).



Figure 44: Campaign poster for *Bondeförbundet* 1924. “Rösta med bondeförbundet!” [Vote for the farmers party!], 1924.

Centerpartiet. Available from Flickr. <http://bit.ly/1NhSBRH>

[cc by 2.0]

To use a rural setting is hardly startling for a political party aimed at the rural population. After the union of the political parties that claimed that they safeguarded the interests of the farmers in 1920, *Bondeförbundet* argued that they not only represented the landed farmers, but also were the best alternative for everyone else in the countryside (Korsfeldt 2010: 62). For the purpose of attracting both the landed farmers and the poor agricultural workers with no home of their own, the ideological rural home was an easily understood symbol that appealed to a diverse and heterogeneous crowd. The idea that a home of one's own was the ultimate goal for the agricultural workers and landless peasants alike had been proclaimed in marketing of the own home organizations, handbooks for small farmers and in popular literature. This notion had furthermore been drummed into the pictorial mind of most Swedes through books, educational posters and popular art since the early twentieth century, and had become connected to values such as order, health, family happiness and national rootedness—a “purified” Swedish home.

If *Bondeförbundet's* poster presents the notion that the idyllic authentic home can be realized by voting for the party, a poster published by the conservative *Allmänna Valmansförbundet* in 1920, suggests that the ideological home is threatened in a most explicit way. In the run-up to the election in 1920, *Allmänna Valmansförbundet* published a campaign poster depicting a red cottage about to be crushed by a tank. Under the headline, “Socialisering” [Nationalization], the tank, which fills almost half the picture, looms large against a dark cloud set against a threatening black background. Labeled “Socialiseringsmaskineriet” [The Machinery of Nationalization], the tank is piloted by Hjalmar Branting, Per Albin Hansson and Zeth Höglund—the three most prominent Social Democrats of the time. With their tank, the three politicians, with Per Albin wearing a Napoleon hat, are in the process of crushing a small red cottage. Already, they've destroyed a birch tree, and the cottage, marked “Det svenska

bondehemmet” [The Swedish farmer home] is already halfway under the treads of the machine. A farmer, his wife, their cow and pig are in full stride, running from the cottage. To judge by their facial expressions, they are running for their lives. Finally, the caption under the picture reads “Främja ett fritt näringsliv och allmänt välstånd!” [Support a free economy and universal prosperity!] (fig. 45).



Figure 45: Campaign poster for Allmänna Valmansförbundet 1920. “Främja ett fritt näringsliv och allmänt välstånd”. [Support a free economy and universal prosperity] In Nicklas Håkansson, Bengt Johansson, and Orla Vigsø *Politik i det offentliga rummet: Svenska valaffischer 1911-2010*. Stockholm: Carlssons. 2014: 92. Original available at National Library of Sweden, B1_Oc_1920_31.

This campaign poster refers directly to the discussion of nationalization that was on the political agenda of the 1920 election. Indeed, the main question prior to the 1920 election was “Yes or No” to socialism. In 1920, the Social Democratic government appointed a committee to investigate which institutions and to what extent Sweden’s resources could be nationalized. Growing unemployment and a declining economy were regarded as direct consequences of capitalism, motivating a reorganization of production towards socialism. Together with capitalistic run large-scale farms, mines, forests and waterfalls, some industries and financial institutions were mentioned as ready for nationalization, according to the commission (Sandler 1936: 153-54). This drive toward nationalization was the basis for the election campaign of the opposition (Esaiasson 1990: 122; Möller 2011: 98). The conservatives were against any form of nationalization. Instead, they spoke warmly about the benefits of private ownership, which had been included as one of the main points besides nationalism in their party program in 1919 (Hylén 1991: 35). The election went under the name *Socialiseringsvalet* [The nationalization election], highlighting the prominent position the question had in the ideological battle (Esaiasson 1990: 124). Although the committee on nationalization was appointed for seventeen years, it was however early on considered a fiasco, and no ideas were put in realization (Isaksson 2000: 70).

The black tank is a sharp contrast to the bright red cottage, the green birch-trees and the lush grass. What comprises the threat, and what is threatened is self-evident. The threat of nationalization is of course symbolized through the tank labeled “nationaliseringsmaskineriet” [machinery of nationalization]. Using a tank to symbolize the threat and having it steered by leading representatives of the Social Democrats was a further reference to the Russian revolution and an attempt by the conservative faction to depict the Social Democrats as Bolsheviks. The

advances of the Red army infused fresh life into popular fears of a Russian invasion, which from time to time had blossomed in Swedish discussion of national defense, and were expressed in the widespread and much read text, *Ett varningsord* (1912). In that text, the famous explorer Sven Hedin pointed out that a Russian invasion would imply that: “I de röda stugorna under tallar och björkar äro soldater inkvarterade, och mor måste utan att mucka hålla kaffepannan puttrande hela dygnet om.” [In the red cottages under birches and pine trees, soldiers are lodged, and the mistress has to keep the coffee pot warm day and night without a murmur] (Hedin 1912: 22). In the poster, the threat does not come from Russia; instead, it has been transferred to the Social Democrats who, besides being supporters of Bolshevism, also are suggested as suffering from megalomania—hence the Napoleon hat on Per-Albin Hansson’s head.

Yet the motif of the small farmer and the red cottage is by no means an obvious choice. The farmer with his only cow and pig and his small cottage can hardly be defined as capitalistic large-scale farming, the type of farming that the nationalization programs were aimed at. The fact that the Commission on Nationalization also mentioned other businesses opens up the arena for the use of other possible motifs. It is likely, however, that neither a picture of a large-scale farm crushed by a socialist tank nor the picture of a tank crushing the poor dwelling of an agricultural worker would be considered efficacious in reaching voters: the first picture would not attract the majority of the electorate as it would depict something far outside their daily lives, and the second would have the potential to be interpreted as a Social Democratic wish to crush the oppression of the agricultural workers. Considering that a red cottage nestled among birch-trees was a widely recognized picture with decidedly positive connotations, the motif can be considered efficient, as it is easily understood by a heterogeneous group. The label on the cottage claiming that it is “Det svenska bondehemmet” [The Swedish farmer home] emphasizes that the

motif is used as a rallying symbol for the national rural home rather than as an illustration of what would be threatened if the Social Democrats carried through with their plans. The notion of the ideal, pure farmer in his ideal, pure home—the representative of the “Swedish farmer home”—receives further reinforcement as the farmer running from the home is well-dressed and wet-combed. What is ultimately crushed in this poster is the dream of a safe and sound Sweden, where the healthy, well-fed and clean farmer stands as the national icon. The “authentic Swede,” runs for his life not only from his cottage, but also from Sweden—or at least what Sweden will become under the Bolshevik rule of the Social Democrats.

The inter- and post-war periods were characterized by increasing industrialization and urbanization. Towards the end of the 1950s, more than half of the Swedish population lived in urban areas. The process of urbanization could also be seen in political campaign posters. The former intense focus on the rural landscape disappeared, while pictures with urban, and industrial motifs became more common (Håkansson, Johansson, and Vigsø 2014: 15). During the expansive years in the early 1960s, no greater ideological issues were expressed, and it was a common understanding that the ideological differences between the parties had been erased. This tranquility was mirrored in campaign posters published during the 1960s, which were characterized by being less polemic and with decreased focus on class struggle (Esaiasson 1990: 220,367).

Although the importance of the rural landscape became less important as a tool to connect with voters, the red cottage did not disappear. Instead, it was transformed in line with the developing welfare society. As in the case of advertising, it was incorporated into the dream of a perfect vacation, which preferably should be spent in a red cottage by the water. The poster for *Socialdemokraterna* [the Social Democrats], who were agitating for four weeks of statutory

vacation, is an example of such a transformation of the red cottage, as well as a comment on the prevailing political state of peace. In this poster from 1960, the red cottage, the boat and the water appear to be a crayon drawing made by a child. Besides connotations of the ideal Swedish summer, the use of a childish painting may also implicitly refer to spending happy carefree time with children, as Nittve and Lindahl observe in their analysis of the poster (1979: 46). Perhaps it is possible to draw the suggestion further and argue that the use of a childish painting of a red cottage connotes childhood, and evokes memories of past summers in the “vacationscape” or “cottage utopia” (Löfgren 1999: 152). These idyllic past summers are implicitly possible to be retrieved or passed on to the next generation if only one votes for *Socialdemokraterna* (fig. 46).

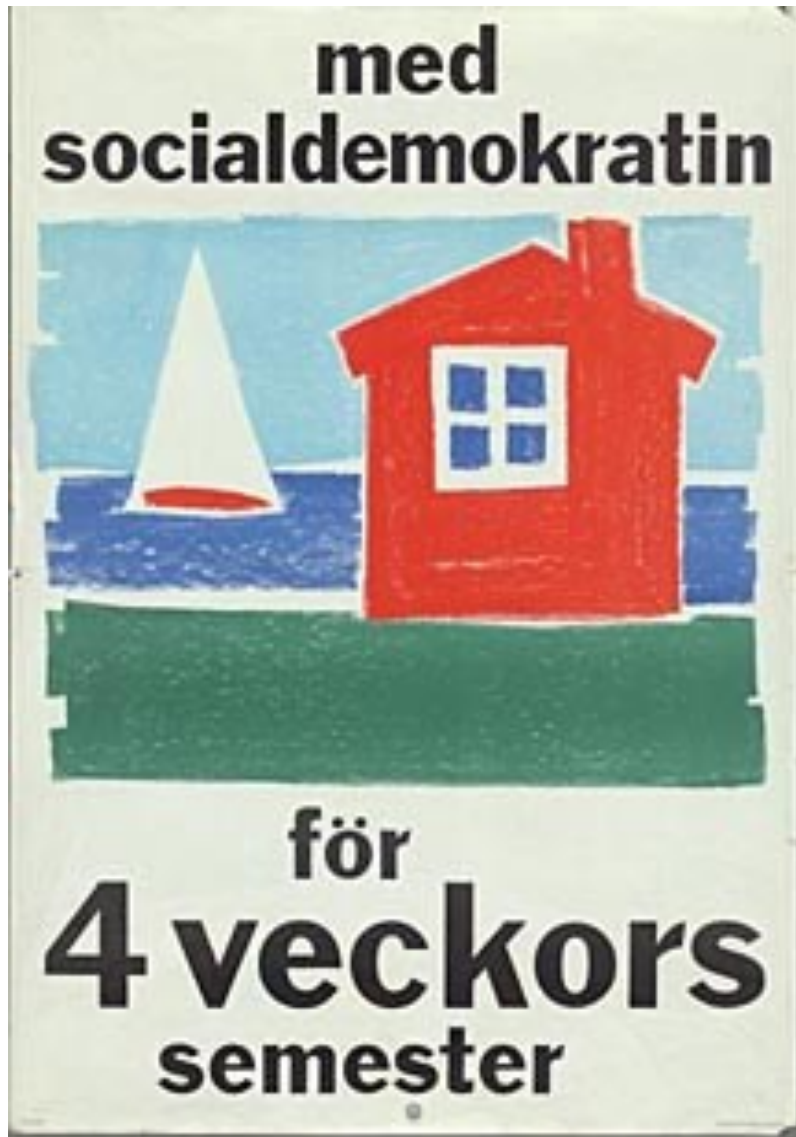


Figure 46. Campaign poster for Socialdemokratern 1960. “med socialdemokratin för 4 veckors semester” [With Socialdemocracy. For 4 Weeks of Vacation]. In Nicklas Håkansson, Bengt Johansson, and Orla Vigsø *Politik i det offentliga rummet: Svenska valaffischer 1911-2010*. Stockholm: Carlssons. 2014: 62. Original available at Arbetarrörelsens arkiv 1889/B/10/S-1960-002.

Besides being incorporated in the Swedish “vacationscape,” the red cottage was incorporated in a more vaguely determined “semi-urban” environment (fig. 47-48). In the liberal poster from 1973, two children play in front of a blurred red-painted wall. The caption reads “Mänskligare miljö” [A more humane milieu]. In the conservative *Moderata Samlingspartiet*’s poster from the same year, the red cottage is used to symbolize freedom of choice in terms of housing. The caption reads “Höghus eller småhus. Det går att öka valfriheten—om bara viljan finns” [High rise or villa? Freedom of choice can be increased—if the willpower is there].



Figure 47: Campaign poster for Folkpartiet 1973. “Mänskligare Miljö” [A more humane milieu]. Riksarkivet. Folkpartiets Riksorganisation, 0037: 00003.



Figure 48: Campaign poster for *Moderata Samlingspartiet* 1973. “Höghus eller småhus? Det går att öka valfriheten – om bara viljan finns” [High rise or villa? Freedom of choice can be increased—if the willpower is there].

As in the case with advertising, the revival of the national and increasing nationalism during the 1980s and 1990s also influenced the political landscape and the visual communication of political parties. During the 1980s, the Swedish flag reappeared in campaign posters for both *Socialdemokraterna* and the conservative *Moderaterna* (Håkansson, Johansson, and Vigsø 2014: 17,64). In a campaign poster for the socialist *Vänsterpartiet* [The Left party], published in 1991, the Swedish flag is accompanied by red cottages behind wooden fences. Unlike the harmonious posters presented from the 1960s and 1970s, *Vänsterpartiet* presents a more disquieting scenery: in their poster, the cottages are seen through a bomb sight. Gathered around their red cottages, a group of (white) people gazes round-eyed with surprise towards the sky. Judging from the angle, and the sight it is seen through, we understand that they are looking up at a fighter aircraft. In the

cross-hairs of the sight is a man on the steps of his red cottage, either coming out to see the plane, or on his way inside in a futile attempt to take cover. The caption reads. “För fred. Mot militarism” [For peace. Against militarism] (fig. 49).



Figure 49: Campaign poster for *Vänsterpartiet* 1991. [For peace. Against Militarism]. In Nicklas Håkansson, Bengt Johansson, and Orla Vigsø *Politik i det offentliga rummet: Svenska valaffischer 1911-2010*. Stockholm: Carlssons. 2014: 71.

If not for the caption, the poster would easily be read as a proposal for increased defense against foreign aggression. The gun site that threateningly targets the unsuspecting “ordinary people” in their red cottages indeed proposes that Sweden, and the Swedish people are threatened. Unlike *Allmänna Valmansförbundet’s* poster, where the threat came from the socialists, the socialist description of the threat is not determined as coming from any particular direction. Drawing on the caption, one can conclude that the threat comes from militarization in general, and that militarization strikes back at its own population. In this way, the poster suggests that the threat to the nation is the consequence of a vote for a competing party that favors increased militarism. Thus the image functions in the same way as the previous image of the tank crushing of the Swedish farmer’s home, where the destruction was a consequence of a vote for the Socialist faction. Consequently, the threat presented here is also domestic, but can be avoided by voting for the socialist *Vänsterpartiet*.

Using a motif of a military vehicle threatening to destroy a red cottage is reminiscent of *Allmänna Valmansförbundet’s* poster published in 1920. Judging from the distance between the cottages in this later poster, however, the “Svenska bondehemmet” [The Swedish farmer home] has been transformed into the “Svenska villaområdet” [The Swedish villa suburb], or perhaps the “Svenska sommarstugeområdet” [Swedish summer home area]. In the same way as the “Swedish farmer” was generalized and assumed the role of the small farmer, *Vänsterpartiet* chose to depict “the Swede” as white, presumably middle class in a private home.

Given that *Vänsterpartiet* is a socialist party in favor of immigration and claims to represent the less well-off, it might be misleading to use a picture that depicts the Swedish middle-class in villa- or summer homes. A military threat would most likely not only threaten the villa owners, but also the working class, unemployed and immigrants in housing projects. A

possible reading is that, as in the case with *Allmänna valmansförbundet*, the connotation of the red cottage in a garden as “safe and secure” is self-evident and makes the dichotomy between the threat and the threatened strong and easy to grasp. By using the cottage idyll as a gathering symbol for Sweden, the poster proposes that no specific group is threatened, but rather Sweden as a peaceful nation. While the 1920s Swedish farmer and his family ran for their life from their cottage to get away from the crushing advance of Socialism, the Swedish villa- or cottage owners are taken utterly by surprise by the sudden appearance of the militarism that threatens to blast their summer idyll to smithereens. By alluding to Swedish neutrality, long-term peace and perhaps even to the naïveté of Swedes when it comes to military preparedness, the poster suggests that a vote for *Vänsterpartiet* will not only protect the Swedish people from attack, but also protect an important part of the national identity.

Besides infusing new life into the use of national symbols in the visual rhetoric of political parties, the revival of the national also resulted in the founding of several ultra-nationalist, racist factions, which have received increasing popular support. Primarily, these parties and organizations use bellicose references to “nation”. *Sverigedemokraterna* (SD), founded in 1988, is one of the parties with ideological roots in ultra nationalist movements. Prior to the early 2000s, SD primarily used texts with racist messages, mixed with pictures of Vikings and Old Norse symbols. Until 2006, their symbol was a torch with the Swedish flag as the flame. As Orla Vigsø notes, the torch is used by extreme factions on both sides of the left/right spectra, and can be a symbol for either education or threat, depending on the spectator’s perspective (2004: 190). At the start of the 2000s, the party made an effort to adapt to prevalent political conventions, including the use of new symbols and visual rhetoric. A blue anemone replaced the torch in 2006, in line with the established parties that, except for the conservative *Moderaterna*,

all use a flower as their symbol. In the same way, *Sverigedemokraterna* changed their visual rhetoric from references to Vikings and explicit xenophobic attacks to a more positively charged argumentation. In his exposé of political campaign posters from the campaign in 2002, Vigsø shows how *Sverigedemokraterna* exclusively used words that have strong positive connotations, such as *omtanke* [care], *trygghet* [security] and tradition. The same words “trygghet och tradition [security and tradition]” are used in their campaign film from 2006. Besides the words’ connotations, the positive tone is also echoed with the aforementioned cavalcade of idyllic pictures that flash by in their campaign film, with an emphasis on summer, childhood and vacation.

Sverigedemokraterna is neither the first nor the only nationalistic party using references to the ideological landscape in their visual argumentation. Orvar Löfgren notes that a picture of red cottages and fluttering Swedish flags similar to those adorning postcards appeared on a poster for an ultra-nationalist faction during the early 1990s with the caption *Bevara Sverige Svenskt* [Keep Sweden Swedish] (2000: 249). The same trend has been observed in other European countries. In Britain, as well as in France, images of the idyllic rural landscape as “free from invading aliens” have been used by xenophobic factions on the extreme right, who have also singled out rural areas as their main recruiting grounds (Agyeman and Spooner 1997: 201). Echoing the pictures and rhetoric used in the calls for a “heartfelt nationalism” during the early twentieth century, Swedish nationalistic parties use the ideological rural landscape to communicate their message of Sweden as “purified space”. Although the nationalistic notes remain, the xenophobic exclamations have disappeared, or at least become hidden.

As Edensor claims, whatever threatens the purified space becomes either demonized or hidden (2002: 44). In the posters from both *Allmänna Valmansförbundet* and *Vänsterpartiet*, what

is defined as threat is pointed out and easy to understand. But if one considers the pictures presented in the campaign film for *Sverigedemokraterna* the threat is non-existent. Instead, their film relies on images with an exclusive focus on the idyllic countryside: traditional cottages, summer landscapes, lakes, and mountain sceneries. Yet the pictures do not end with this simple lack of threat. Indeed, there are no signs of rural life as it is lived today: No motorboats sputter through the archipelago, no combine harvesters rumble over the rape fields, and no modern houses dot the landscape. In fact, besides the solitary person gazing out towards a sailboat, Sweden does not appear to be inhabited at all. The red cottages, and other pictures used by *Sverigedemokraterna*, which include images such as those of gently swaying fields, old handmade stone bridges, and the peaceful archipelago are unoccupied memories of a Swedish rural summer landscape erased by development at the turn of the last century. This uninhabited picture of an idyllic past time and place instantiates the idea of the Swedish rural landscape as purified space. So pure, in fact, that there are no people to sully it. Importantly, this rural idyll is presented as a representation of the nation as a whole since, according to the text that accompanies the film, this is Sweden.

Jonathan Rose shows how the Canadian government during the early twentieth century attempted to convince immigrants to settle in Canada by marketing it as an ideal country through pictures of the vast landscape and expansive farmland (2003: 157). The campaign film for *Sverigedemokraterna* could indeed have the same aim. The wide-stretches of undeveloped land and empty houses lay wide open for immigrants and settlement. In a legal sense, the Swedish “*Allemansrätten*” (i.e the legal right to access to private land) opens up the countryside for everyone who wishes to explore nature. The countryside is thus a possible heterogeneous space with room for everyone. That it is not *Sverigedemokraterna*'s intention to open up the

countryside to any and all is made abundantly clear by the statement “Sverige är värt att försvara. Låt Sverige förbli Sverige” [Sweden is worth defending. Let Sweden remain Sweden]. Although the last sentence of the slogan suggests that the presented images are those of Sweden today, the first sentence proposes that this idyll is threatened, and worth defending. “Defended from whom?” one might ask.

In the article “Variations on the rural idyll” David Bell asks whom the rural idyll is for and finds, unsurprisingly, that the rural idyll is an exclusive and exclusionary place, both in a material and symbolic sense (2006: 151). As purified space, the boundaries are fixed and transgressors (or trespassers) are easily defined. Sibley shows how the attempt to ban “New Age Travellers” from the English countryside was based solely on the stereotypical idea of the rural landscape as purified space, following a nationalist tradition of the countryside as consisting of “thatched-roofed cottages and red-coated huntsmen,” and further notes that this vision is by definition exclusionary (1997: 107). Sibley maintains that the countryside, as described by those who hold a privileged position in it, is the “essence of Englishness,” and those who are excluded are therefore defined as “un-English” (ibid 1997: 108).

The rural idyll, presented by *Sverigedemokraterna*, is indeed a monoculture, the production of which relies on processes of denial and expulsion (Bell 2006: 151). Although the campaign film does not make any explicit statements as to what is threatening Sweden, it can be read implicitly through *Sverigedemokraterna*'s clearly expressed nationalistic and anti-immigration policy. The purified landscape and, by extension, the Swedish nation as a whole, has to be defended from being “polluted” by foreign encroachment. What is considered “foreign” ranges, as Edensor argues, from foreign building styles to the influence of the European Union to the influx of immigrants (2002: 39-45). It is not necessary to delineate those who are insiders and

those who are outsiders. As the interiors in the rural houses at *Skansen* (another example on a purified space) around the turn of the last century were characterized by “the missing person” (Sandberg 2003), it is up to the spectator to imagine the inhabitants of Sweden and populate its cottages with suitable inhabitants. The audience has to “fill in the blanks,” and although no people can be seen in the film, it is not hard to imagine the people who, by *Sverigedemokraterna*’s definition, are Swedish. It is then the un-Swedish who threaten the purified landscape and must be excluded. In this way, the rural landscape, with its red cottage as a key-symbol, functions as an invisible fence against the imagined threat of foreign invasion or, more correctly, invasion by foreigners.

The red cottage is a key symbol that runs through all of the visual rhetoric of Swedish political campaigns. Ever changing, the cottage is endlessly transformed to fit specific political questions. Not only does the continuous appearance of the red cottage in the campaign material of various parties point to its importance as a meaningful and powerful trope for policies from both the left and the right, but it also points to its role as a unifying symbol in the ideology of the “national home.” The ever present implication is that a vote for the party that deploys the cottage is, ultimately, a vote for Sweden.

Since the red cottage is closely linked to ideas of the rural as a “purified space”—and perhaps functions metonymically as a “purified space” itself—it is of course possible to claim that use of the red cottage in political campaigns is by definition exclusionary. At the same time the red cottage is an easily understood symbol. To be able to understand that the idyllic rural landscape is the ideological landscape, and the red cottage the ideological home, only requires a rudimentary knowledge of Sweden, in the same way as Roland Barthes claims that the “Italianness” of the Panzani-commercial only demands “tourist-knowledge” of Italian

stereotypes (1977: 34).

The use of pictures from a cultural reservoir is thus not exclusionary and a problem in itself. It first becomes problematic when explicit nationalistic groups such as *Sverigedemokraterna* use them as political propaganda in an ideological framework based on the idea of an exclusionary nationalism. *Sverigedemokraterna* does not let their idea of homogeneity end with an idyllized picture of the Swedish landscape. Cloke et al. claim that iconographic representations of rurality have spread through powerful advertising media, and that what is said to be characteristic of “rurality” is also to be found in commodities and ideologies attached to it or ones that try to annex it (Cloke, Milbourne, and Widdowfield 2000:728). Through their slogan “trygghet och tradition,” *Sverigedemokraterna* annex values that have been connected to the ideological rural landscape. In so doing, they position themselves as part of this idyll. If the connotation of the rural idyll is security and tradition, the connotation of *Sverigedemokraterna* is also “trygghet och tradition” [security and tradition]. With their exclusionary opinions on immigration and their fear of foreign influences, the purified space of the Swedish rural idyll and the homogeneity that characterizes it, the *Sverigedemokraterna* propose a cultural homogeneity for Sweden. Consequently, depictions of the rural idyll become a vehicle not for the idea of a visually homogeneous Sweden, but rather for the idea of a homogeneous “Swedishness”.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Det nya landet—Negotiating the Rural Idyll

The television series *Det nya landet* [The New Country] (Hansteen Jörgensen 2000) was broadcast for the first time on Swedish National Television in November 2000, its broadcast coinciding with vigorous discussions regarding Sweden's reception of refugees in the media. Violent deportations and an increasing number of racist incidents garnered great attention, creating antagonism between different political factions. *Det nya landet* contributed to that discussion.

The road-movie, consisting of four one-hour episodes, follows two illegal immigrants, Ali and Massoud, on a trip through the Swedish summer landscape. Their guide is the blonde, blue-eyed former Miss Sweden and faded pornography star Louise. Ali and Massoud are on the run after having witnessed a brutal deportation at their immigrant asylum in Skåne, while Louise has given up her job at a hot dog stand and been evicted from her apartment. Having no place to go, the three new friends decide to go to Louise's parents' house in Dalarna in hopes of finding shelter.

During the trip through Sweden, *Det nya landet* offers up a spectacular feast of imagery from the “national landscapes” of Sweden. Extensive views over the archipelago, billowing fields of grain in Skåne, idyllic community gardens, forest lakes glinting behind birch trees, and red cottages embedded in the summer verdure all make cameo appearances. In this postcard version of Swedish summer, the three unlikely travelling companions get acquainted with “Swedish culture”—from folkdance at festivals and skinny-dipping in forest lakes to excessive drinking and a *surströmmingssskiva*, a traditional feast where fermented herring is served. Their road trip, their encounters with “Swedish culture,” and, at first glance, with stereotypical Swedes,

all form a backdrop for their developing friendship as well as their differing opinions about Sweden and Swedes.

Landscape is a point of focus in film studies. Primarily, it has been regarded as enhancing the mood of a scene, as “background for the story to unfold,” or of some importance for the narrative structure (Gustafsson 2007: 19 Picken 1999; Ward 2012). In most cases however, the consideration of landscape is diminished, and is considered simply a setting for the story. Although the use of stereotypical national scenery and symbols in *Det nya landet* is quite noticeable, this use of landscape has not received any critical attention in scholarly work. In the few cases where *Det nya landet* has been discussed, the focus has been on the use of ethnic stereotypes in the film. In her dissertation, *Folkhemsk film: Med invandraren som den sympatiske andre* (2005), sociologist Carina Tigervall explores how ethnic outsiders have been portrayed in Swedish film, noting that these presentations either reproduce the dominant order or rely on subversive practices. As she shows, *Det nya landet* relies on stereotypical ethnic outsiders, the stereotypical “backwardness” of country people, and prejudice about the stupid blonde to create its critique of Swedishness (Tigervall 2005: 103-106). But unlike several of the other films to which Tigervall refers, *Det nya landet* challenges these stereotypical ideas by standing these preconceived notions on their head (2005: 105-106).

While Tigervall’s observations are both accurate and interesting, she does not discuss at any length the director’s decision to situate the road-movie in a stereotypical, purified rural idyllic space, nor does she consider the excessive use of national symbols, noting only that the film employs scenes of “vidunderligt vacker natur” [marvelously beautiful nature] (2005: 109-114). This despite the fact that the road movie as genre is, as Emma Widdis notes “structured around a relationship between the viewing and experiencing subject (the traveller) and the

landscape” (2014: 65). Of course, the idyllic countryside does indeed constitute a beautiful setting for the film. Yet it is the dichotomy between the rural idyll as purified space and the position of other(s) in this purified landscape that makes it possible to consider the necessary question of outside/inside.

Stuart Hall argues that it is only through the outside that the inside can be defined, and that identities function as points of identification only because of their capacity to exclude (1996). In this way, outside/inside exist in a dialectic tension, wholly dependent on one another. To position a representative for the “other” in the rural idyll not only opens up for reflections of the exclusion of certain groups from the purified space, but also opens up for reflections of the constructedness of the rural idyll as national and ideological landscape. Rather than focus on the position of the “outsider” in the purified space, the focus in this chapter will be on the rural idyll. In this chapter, I wish to turn the “background into foreground” and let the choice of stereotypical landscape in *Det nya landet* be the point of focus (Gustafsson 2007: 25). Through a close reading of three scenes from *Det nya landet*, I look at how the over-explicit, almost ridiculous, use of national symbols and stereotypical landscape(s) challenge the rural idyll as ideological landscape and the values it is set to represent. Since the rural idyll is what “conjures up what it means to be Swedish”, the “parodic” use of the stereotypical rural idyll enables the reshaping of the representation of nation. At the same time as the dichotomy between inside and outside functions as a motor for the exposition and questioning of stereotypes, the stereotype itself can be used as a way to question dominant ideas.

The use of landscape in cinema as means to represent nation, and nationhood is a well-explored area of study. In the introduction to *Cinema and Landscape*, Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner state that it is an “inescapable truth that cinema itself has contributed to the

imagining and definition of national landscapes” (2010: 11). Besides manifesting national sceneries, Harper and Rayner point out that this landscape also is metonymic and “indicate[s] further and larger concepts”. A skyscraper indicates not only a tall building, but also, a city, business, capitalism and so forth (2010: 8). In similar way, a red cottage can be used to index rurality, summer, childhood, and, due to its intertextual relation to “national” pictures, eventually sum up ideas and values connected to a Swedish national identity. Thus, the stereotypical national scenery is not only used as background or beautiful setting for the story to unfold, but it is the ideological landscape that is put on display.

Henrik Gustafsson points out, in his dissertation *Out of Site*, that landscape is an “expression in its own right” and can be understood as “consisting of a number of interacting ideas, conventions and traditions” (2007: 12). In “Danskhetens landskap. Landskap, återuppbyggnad och nationell identitet i dansk efterkrigsfilm” (2014), Andreas Marklund analyzes how the rural idyll in Danish pastoral films based on the novels by Morten Korch from the 1950s was used as a way to maintain and deepen a national identity based on a imagined fusion between Danishness and the rural landscape. In a Swedish setting, the rural as the core of national identity can be seen already in Victor Sjöström’s adaptations of the books by Selma Lagerlöf during the 1910s (Harper, Rayner 2010: 10; Marklund 2014: 43). The golden days for the rural landscape as national scenery on screen is however to be found in films produced during the 1940s and 1950s (Qvist 1995: 451; Marklund 2014: 43). Film scholar Per Olov Qvist claims that one of the important aspects of older Swedish films as an expression for self-understanding can be found in the manner in which the scenery is presented, evoking a highly emotional response in viewers and connecting them to a community of values (1995: 451).

Besides confirming national iconography, landscape in cinema can also be used as a means to question nation (Harper, Rayner 2010: 10; Gustafsson 2007). Gustafsson argues that since landscape has been turned into the “iconography of nationalism,” it can also be used as a way to contest this nation (2007: 39). He supports this assertion by analyzing how American national landscapes have been deployed in a number of New Hollywood films from the late 1960s and 1970s (ibid). He connects the use of American national imagery in *Easy Rider*, for example, to Pop Art and that art movement’s reverse use of stock iconography (2007: 71). In this way, Gustafsson’s idea resonates with Raymond Firth’s claim that the same symbol can be used as contra movement to communicate opinions opposite to the prevalent ones (1973: 427).

In “The Spectacle of the Other” (1997), Stuart Hall presents a similar idea, suggesting that stereotypes can be used as counter-strategies. By exposing and then paying attention to the stereotype, it becomes possible to “make [the stereotype] strange” “de-familiariz[ing] it,” and thus, ultimately “contest[ing] it from within” (1997: 274). Hall’s idea links directly to Linda Hutcheon’s interpretation of the postmodern use of history, and the role of parody in the postmodern.

In *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), Hutcheon turns against Frederic Jameson’s notion that the use of history in postmodern culture is reduced to an expression of nostalgia or decoration. Postmodern references to the past do not offer “genuine historicity,” she argues, but rather question if it is even possible to know the past other than through earlier representations of it. Rather than describing the past, references to the past in postmodern literature and art questions the Barthesian “myth” from the inside (1988, xiii). Through this, postmodernism “takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement” (1988: 1). Even if Hutcheon’s focus primarily is the use of history, or the past in postmodern art and

architecture, it is possible to use the same approach for the consideration of the use of national symbols in popular culture. In the same manner that Hutcheon claims the postmodern deploys the past, expressions of national identity are not abandoned, but rather incorporated and modified. Through that process, these expressions are both questioned and given new meaning (1988: 24-25) With this critical distance, the postmodern acknowledges that, “all cultural forms of representation [---] are ideologically grounded” (Hutcheon 2002: 3).

The challenge of the myth of history occurs primarily through parody (1998: 2000). Hutcheon uses parody in a broad sense and claims that parodic art comes in many shapes, “from respectful to playful to scathingly critical”. In her discussion of parody, the borders between intertextuality, satire and parody are somewhat fluid; occasionally the genres overlap (2000). In short, Hutcheon defines parody as “a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity” (2000: 6). Parody links the modern with the postmodern. It is an “inscription of the past in the present,” and therefore it embodies and brings life to historical tensions (Hutcheon 2000, xii). Paradoxically, then, the postmodern use of the established, taken-for-granted, and its simultaneous play with it, means that the postmodern “incorporates and challenges that which it parodies” (1988: 11). To install a myth or a stereotype, and then subvert it, “sets up a dialogical relation between identification and distance” and offers a perspective that allows the artist to “speak to a discourse from within it, but without being totally recuperated by it” (1988: 35-39). Consequently, it becomes possible to question the naturalized and taken-for-granted and thus become “aware of both the limits and the powers of representation” (2002: 94)

Hutcheon’s idea of parody as a potential tool for social critique connects to Victor Turner’s take on liminality, which also is a central term in the study of road movies (Picken 1999; Ward 2012) Liminal, a term with linguistic roots in the Latin *limen*, meaning threshold,

was first introduced as a cultural analytical concept by Arnold van Gennep (1909) in his studies of *rites de passage*. Rites of passage mark transitions from one state to another (girl/woman, child/adult etc.), and are always fraught. Here, the limen was used to describe the ambiguous state a person passes through between separation from, and eventual reincorporation into their community.

Victor Turner further developed this idea of liminality into a general theory of rituals. He broadened the interpretive stance to include considerations of phenomena in post-industrial societies, substituting the concept of *liminoid*²⁸ for the earlier liminal (1974). The liminal state is characterized by transgression of borders. In the liminal phase, the subjects are outcast from society but at the same time enjoy freedom from cultural constraints and social classifications. Through the breaking of boundaries that are made in the liminal phase, it also becomes a way for self-reflection about the society (1970: 105-106; 1974). According to Bjørn Thomassen, liminality is in Turners view “a way for society to reveal itself, to open up its essential codes of behavior and values to either play with these and re-assemble them in novel ways, or to confirm their existence. Liminality is a rejuvenating force as well as a force by which traditions are confirmed, solidified and socially transmitted” (2014: 185). Seen from this perspective, Turner’s idea of liminality connects with Hutcheon’s postmodern notion of parody as a way to express social critique and at the same time confirm or validate established rules. *Det nya landet* is an example of the paradoxical feature of liminality that both questions and confirms the “myth” of the ideological landscape.

In film studies (as well as in folklore), certain landscapes are defined as “liminal”. Film scholar Simon Ward defines the liminal landscape in road movies as the spaces that become places for play or threat, and that “open up for experiences beyond the boundaries normally set

by society, to confrontations with what that society has placed *beyond* its boundaries” (2012: 186). Besides the road being a common liminal space, different landscapes take on this function in different countries of production. In American films, the desert functions as such a place of play or threat, while in British films, the woods and the seaside perform the same function as “in-between” spaces (Picken 1999: 222; Ward 2012: 186). In Swedish film, the deep forests and seaside often holds the position of liminal landscapes.

In *Det nya landet* there are several sceneries where the rural idyll holds this liminal function, the first taking place in a picturesque allotment garden. At the start of Ali and Massoud’s journey, soon after having left the immigrant asylum in Massoud’s wrecked car, the friends find shelter in the apartment of an old lady, who then suddenly dies. According to her wish, and to avoid being discovered and deported, they bury her in her allotment garden. Under the cover of darkness, and surrounded by fruit trees, flowers and miniature red, white-trimmed cottages—a common sight in the idyllic Swedish allotment gardens—they dig her grave, while Massoud tells Ali about having experienced a fake execution in Iran. After having said goodbye to the old lady, they find two buckets of red paint in her garden shed, which they take with them. This entire act—the death, the clandestine burial, and the theft of the red paint—all of which break with what can be expected to happen in an idyllic allotment garden, becomes the starting point for the road trip, a journey beyond the boundaries of society.

The next day, Massoud and Ali decide to forge the numbers on the license plates of the car. As a way to further mask their identity, they paint the car with the stolen paint. Parked at an abandoned lot, Massoud, who despises everything Swedish, looks at the bucket with the label *Falu-röd* and scornfully says: “Falu-röd, falu-korv. Allting i Sverige är Falu.” [Falu-red, falu-sausage. Everything in Sweden is Falu.]²⁹. Ali who, on the other hand, loves Sweden, and is

convinced that if he presents himself as “Swedish enough,” would be allowed to stay, remains silent. Early on, we discover that Ali indulges in everything Swedish: the wall by his bed at the immigration shelter is adorned with pictures of the Swedish national soccer team, and Swedish *schlager* music bawls from his radio; he wears a blue and yellow training suit, and a t-shirt with tourist prints of the midsummer celebration; he insists that he loves both pickled herring and boiled potatoes. To counter Massoud’s critical stance on “Falu,” Ali playfully continues this enumeration of things “Falu-” with: “Falu-häst, falu-stuga och falu-bil. Falu-bil” [Falu-horse, Falu-cottage and falu-car. Falu-car]³⁰. Discovering that Ali has painted white around the car’s windows, Massoud gets upset. Yet Ali insists that this is the right color for the car, pointing towards a barred up and uninhabited red-painted and white-trimmed cottage. Massoud sees the likeness, and the discussion that follows now regards how the white and red is to be combined, to make the car look as much as possible as the red cottage (fig. 50).



Figure 50: Abandoned cottage. Screenshot.
Hansteen, Jörgensen, Geir. 2000. *Det nya landet*. Video. SVT
Broadcasted March 13, 2000.
Oppetarkiv.se.
<http://bit.ly/1NpO06r> (Accessed November 24, 2015)

If the allotment garden where Ali and Massoud buried the old lady was taken straight from the index of Swedish idylls, the setting for this car painting scene is anything but idyllic. Besides a low shrubbery next to the cottage, the lush greenery, birch trees, and well-kept garden that usually frame popular images of red cottages are replaced by yellowing dry grass. It is a hot day, and the low shrubbery offers no shelter from the sun. Nor is it an idyllic red cottage that is the role model for Massoud and Ali's car, but rather an abandoned and uninhabited one, as wrecked as their car. Both car and cottage face onto a bleak, industrial landscape. A paved path overrun by weeds leads away from the cottage, on which a child's pedal car sits abandoned, and garbage litters the open desolate field. The scene is clearly not the postcard version of the Swedish rural idyll, but rather its polar opposite. This industrial wasteland scenery is either absent from or overlooked by the tourist gaze, and in no way approximates the "purified space" that Sibley discusses (Sibley 1995). Here, the rural idyll has given way to industry and garbage, emerging as the locus for crimes such as illegal immigrants forging license plates. Judging from the incongruous little toy car that sits forlornly on the gravelly path, it appears as if the countryside has been abandoned in a hurry. Rather than a place for summer leisure and family togetherness, the rural stands as an anti-idyllic post-apocalyptic wasteland.

In this scene, then, the rural scenery contains what David Bell defines as the "rural abject" - all things that do not fit into the representation of the rural idyll - industry, garbage, boarded-up cottages in a junk yard. Indeed, it can even be questioned to which degree this landscape is "rural" (Bell 2006: 151). Certainly it is not the "authentic rural" as described in other popular representations of the rural. Yet it is by no means an urban space. Rather it is a "no man's land": a marginal, liminal landscape, betwixt and between the shiny modern city and the lush unspoiled countryside.

While the anti-idyll in this case poses no threat, neither is it a place of play. But in similarity with how other liminal landscapes, such as the desert becomes the place for transgressing of borders and taken for granted roles, the anti-idyll in *Det nya landet* can be regarded as a place that opens up for transgressing of societal borders, and the decision to paint the car as a cottage can be regarded as an act of transition. Forging the plates and painting the car as if it were a cottage are both acts of symbolic importance. Through these acts, the friends definitively leave their earlier status as official asylum seekers, and move into a transitional state, that of insecure, but apparently more free, illegal immigrants, operating outside the boundaries of society.

Once the car is “ready,” Massoud and Ali drive away through the billowing fields of Skåne in their car-disguised-as-a-cottage, into what can be defined as a “liminal-,” or perhaps “liminoid” situation, illegal immigrants characterized by their transgression of boundaries, and their illegal activities (fig 51; Turner 1974: 60). Throughout their journey, their liminoid state is strengthened by the fact that they shoplift at the gas station, sell bricks masked as radios, sneak in and spend the night at IKEA, and, in a desperate attempt to be allowed to stay in Sweden, kidnap a drunk man whom they mistakenly think is the king of Sweden. All this happens without them getting caught by the police.



Figure 51: Falu-car. Screenshot.
Hansteen, Jörgensen, Geir. 2000. *Det nya landet*. Video. SVT
Broadcasted March 13, 2000.
Oppetarkiv.se.
<http://bit.ly/1NpO06r> (Accessed November 24, 2015)

Hutcheon claims, “in order for parody to be recognized and interpreted, there must be certain codes shared between encoder and decoder” (2000: 27). The setting of the red cottage in the rural milieu is familiar through the abundance of popular depictions of the rural idyll, and is intertextually read in the context of these images (Hall 1997: 232). In this case, we understand the image by what it is not. The anti-idyllic image of the abandoned cottage is based on the idyllic images, and as such, it becomes an ironic counterpart to the rural idyll as the national landscape of Sweden. The image of the boarded-up red cottage in a junkyard uses the image of the rural idyll to describe its opposite.

In the same way, the decision to paint the car Falu-red is a parodic use of Swedes’ alleged love for things “Falu-”. The status of Falu-red paint sometimes reaches almost sacred dimensions. How to boil it, what ingredients should be added, and which nuance is the most authentic Swedish, as well as which houses should--and should not--be painted red, are topics of heated discussion and deeply held opinion, both among enthusiasts within the house preservation movement and among the general public. The choice to paint the car as a cottage is an homage to the ultimate Swedish home, manifesting the red cottage’s position as *the* Swedish home. Yet the use of this national color on a wrecked car as playful parody both demystifies and abuses the “holy cow” of the Swedish colors. It also raises questions of the definition of a home: Is anything that is painted Falu-red and white a Swedish home? If so, the car is as much a Swedish home as it is a wrecked vehicle with forged plates, used as a means of escape for two illegal immigrants running from the Swedish authorities.

The decision to paint the car as a cottage is an amusing, yet futile, attempt on the part of the two men to blend in; implicitly, they wish to become as Swedish as the red cottage. While the Falu-car with its forged plates may be an illegal and uncertain home, it is still the closest Ali and

Massoud will ever get to the Swedish “authentic home”. The only result of their decision to paint the car is that it stands out, offering an even more profound witness to their un-Swedishness. The fundamentally “wrong” use of the color situates the two as decidedly “outside”, and paradoxically settles the correct use of Falu-red. In this double switch, one finds, of course, an example of parody’s tendency towards conservatism (Hutcheon 2000: 68). To parody a given text requires knowledge of the order of the world. In this way, transgressing boundaries is ultimately “authorized by the very norms it seeks to subvert,” in much the same way as liminal acts are authorized, and take place within the borders of society (ibid 2000: 75; Turner 1974: 74). Ultimately, the ambivalence between conservatism and “revolutionary difference” stands as a clear example of the “paradoxical essence of parody” (Hutcheon 2000: 77).

After Ali and Massoud pick up Louise in Gothenburg, the three friends drive north through the vast forests of Sweden. To find a place for the night, they decide to break into a summer cottage. In opposition to the previous, anti-idyllic red cottage, the cottage scenery here is emblematic of a Swedish idyll. The cottage is stereotypical, identical to the motif infinitely reproduced on postcards and tourist brochures. In the pale light of the Swedish summer night it sits, almost luminous, surrounded by leafy trees and a pristine garden. A Swedish flag hangs on the white painted porch. Basking in this epitome of Swedishness, Ali stands in his blue and yellow training suit his back turned towards the cottage, and stares out at the camera and by extension the viewer. The idyll is interrupted--between him and the cottage is the mutant “Falu-car,” while his hair and skin contrast with the fair-haired blue-eyed stereotype of the Swede (fig. 52).



Figure 52: The cottage, the Falu-car, and Ali. Screenshot.
Hansteen, Jörgensen, Geir. 2000. *Det nya landet*. Video. SVT.
Broadcasted March 20, 2000.
Oppetarkiv.se.
<http://bit.ly/1I8d1k4> (Accessed November 24, 2015)

The red and white colors of the cottage, and the blue and yellow Swedish flag on the porch connect Ali in his training suit and the Falu-car to the cottage. Despite this connection, it is clear that Ali and the car occupy the position of rural abject, and do not fit into the rural idyll. They are misplaced in the postcard--their desperate attempt to blend in exaggerates this appearance of not belonging. Indeed, Ali and Massoud never get “true access” to the authentic Swedish home, which is as barred and bolted as the cottage in the anti-idyll. Instead they break into it in the same way as the run-away from the immigrant asylum attempts to break into Sweden, rather than conforming and putting themselves in the hands of the authorities.

Inside the cottage, which is adorned with Swedish icons such as a Dala-horse, a Swedish flag and a framed photograph of the national icon of nature poetic songs, Evert Taube, Massoud tunes in to Persian music on the radio; after dinner, they go to bed. Unfortunately, the cottage owners, who turn out to be a retired couple, show up. In the bright light of the morning sun accompanied by the chirping of birds, the owner wakes his uninvited guests by pointing a gun at them.

The cottage in the countryside, in which unsuspecting travelers take refuge after their car breaks down, is a common scene in both horror films and road movies (Bell 1997: 96). This scene, of course, plays on these well-known types of scenes. The outcome could easily turn into one from a horror film, since the owner sites down the barrel of a gun at them. Yet when they find Ali asleep on the bathroom floor, the potentially lethal drama takes a surprising turn as the owner and his wife invite the three friends for breakfast and lunch. Rather than being chased from the cottage, or slaughtered as in a horror film, another type of horror plays itself out: they spend the day in the stereotypical Swedish summer paradise. Swedishness is everywhere in these

scenes: “Kalles Kaviar,” is served at the breakfast table, while lunch consists of pickled herring and fresh potatoes from the garden.

As in other films that celebrate the Swedish rural landscape, the depiction of the rural idyll is essentialized and banal (Qvist 1986; 1995). At first glance, the use of the “red cottage-idyll” as the setting for the scene, along with the excessive use of “Swedish culture” items could be considered nostalgic or simply decorative, mimicking the cottage-idyll of films from 1940s and thus supporting to Frederic Jameson’s rather gloomy description of postmodern use of history (Qvist 1995: 455; Jameson 1995). As the film progresses however, one moves firmly over into the realm of Hutcheon’s parody. Although the film does indeed celebrate the landscape and the stereotypical rural idyll, the aim is not to manifest some kind of objective Swedishness. Instead, the postcard idyll and the use of items that are particularly connected to “Swedish” culture, such as the Dala-horse, the Swedish flag, the picture and music of Evert Taube and the choice of Swedish “traditional” food for breakfast and lunch, over exaggerate this “Swedishness,” and thus creates a Barthesian “myth”.

The strange detour away from the gun and toward the summer idyll comes with yet another twist. The owner’s friendliness has a disturbing side to it, echoing the horror quality of the rural in *Deliverance*. The old man tells Louise about his and his wife’s love (or lust) for young colored boys. In their younger days, they would visit Gambia to live out their fantasies. He claims that finding Ali has now given them the opportunity to relive this dream one last time. In a twist to the scene that comes uncomfortably close to notions of human trafficking and the slave trade, Louise and Massoud pretend to negotiate with the couple about the price for a night with Ali. Eventually, Massoud gets angry, tells the man he is a “sjuk gubbe” [sick man], and the friends skid off on the gravel road in their Falu-car. The departing scene is filmed from Ali’s

perspective: he has turned his head towards the Swedish idyll, which now has taken on a veneer of David Lynch-like creepiness, and watches it disappear through the rear window of the car (figure 53).



Figure 53. Driving away from the pedophiles. Screenshot.
Hansteen, Jörgensen, Geir. 2000. *Det nya landet*. Video. SVT
Broadcasted March 20, 2000.
Oppetarkiv.se.
<http://bit.ly/1I8d1k4> (Accessed November 24, 2015)

What subverts the myth of the Swedish idyll is the installation of situations and people who radically depart from that idyll as presented in national mythology. Elderly pedophile couples that exoticize “little brown children” are a profound interruption to that narrative. As little as Massoud and Ali fit into the representation of a “white landscape” based on their ethnicity, the rural idyll is not the expected redoubt of a retired pedophile couple. The summer idyll is radically repositioned—now it is a vacation spot for pedophiles rather than a spot for family community and togetherness.

Barbara Klinger offers an interesting take on the use of the national landscape in her analysis of the road movie *Easy Rider*, and claims that it is “caught between two languages” (1997: 199). At the same time as the film uses the language of traditional American patriotism founded in representations of “the grand national scenery” in National Geographic, it tries to “dismantle traditional notions about Americanism by detailing the nightmarishness of its roads, inhabitants and modernized landscapes”(ibid). *Det nya landet* connects both to the discourse of the rural idyll as ideological landscape and counter-cultural discourses in a similar way, ultimately questioning the ideological landscape. What is naturalized and taken for granted is not what it seems to be, and this opens up for interrogation of the myth of Swedishness.

The “pedophiles in the idyll scene” is pivotal to *Det nya landet* as, through it, the rural idyll gains a liminoid, quality. In American road movies, the desert is defined as a symbolic liminal zone in which identity loses its previous boundaries. Through the challenges of heat and the barren landscape, protagonists are tested, emerging at the end as transformed (Sargeant, Watson 1999: 14). For Ali, the Swedish rural idyll can be seen as having the same transformative effect. One can discern early on that Ali’s positive opinion about Sweden is on the verge of cracking. The incident with the elderly pedophiles is a definite turning point in the film. Along

with the vanishing cottage, Ali's naïve and positive attitude toward Sweden disappears. From having praised Sweden and Swedes to the skies, he now finds them "äckliga" [disgusting]. The unwearied optimistic, and seemingly carefree young man cracks and in his place emerges a sad, lost and disappointed boy. Massoud on the other hand is enlivened by what has happened, opining that Swedes are not so boring as he thought them to be, but have "många hemligheter" [many secrets].

For the rest of the film, the "Swedish" is depicted in a far harsher manner. In a feverish scene that takes place at a camping site by a forest lake, and to the tunes of folk music played by a man dressed in a folk costume, Ali witness chaotic drunkenness, fights, and possibly a rape in a camper van. In a later scene, Ali buries his T-shirt with the picture of a Swedish midsummer celebration on it—and with that his idea of Sweden as a land of glory and purity—under a stone in the forests of *Dalarna*. At the same time, he decides to leave Sweden for Canada.

In Simon Ward's discussion of road-movies and liminality, he claims that the usual structure follows that of van Gennep's *rites de passage*. The protagonists leave a secure domestic environment and merge into an uncertain liminal space of testing before confronting, at the end of the journey, the question of a reassimilation within a collective (Ward 2012: 85). Another possible ending is, as Sargeant and Watson claim, that the search for a new place to call home is illusory, with the protagonists never reaching the land of their dreams (1999: 14). *Det nya landet* does not end with a happy reunion nor with Ali and Massoud being accepted into the "Swedish home". Instead, it ends in the same chaotic state with which it began. For Ali's sake, the land of his dreams, or the idyllic Swedish home, which throughout the film is symbolized through a red cottage, turns out to be a chimera. The encounter with the "idyllic" Swedish home rather makes him change his positive attitude towards Sweden and Swedes. Ultimately Massoud helps him

leave for Canada. In this way, landscape is as W.J.T. Mitchell suggests a “process by which social and subjective identities are formed,” rather than an object to be seen (2002: 1). Massoud, who has fallen in love with Louise, is caught by the police while helping Ali onto the escape boat. In one of the closing scenes, the police take him away, most likely to be deported back to Iran. Although the end can be seen as chaotic, it can also be regarded as a reincorporation. Ali’s departure and Massoud’s arrest mark the end of their liminal state as illegal, but free immigrants. They are reaggregated back into society, as powerless refugees, in the hands of the dominant culture.

The use of the ideological landscape in *Det nya landet* provides the story with a beautiful background, and firmly plants the events in a Swedish setting through well-known scenery. To dismiss the use of the landscapes as simple decoration would be to neglect the ideologically explosive force of these national landscapes. Not only does the stereotypical depiction of the national landscape single out a Swedish topography, but it also accesses a highly ideological space, summing up what it means to be Swedish. By using national characteristics in an unexpected, subversive manner as when the car is painted with Falu-red color and thus emerging as the anti-idyll, or by filling the national landscape with the unexpected and grotesque, as when Ali and Massoud buries the old lady in the allotment garden, or in the pedophiles-in-the-cottage scene, *Det nya landet* shares what Turner claims is characteristic for the liminoid in post-industrial society. It “play(s) with the factors of culture, sometimes assembling them in random, grotesque, improbable, surprising, shocking, usually experimental combinations” (Turner 1974: 71). This play on “factors of culture” is precisely what *Det nya landet* enacts. The film mixes the rural idyll with the new Swede: the ethnic Other in Falu-red painted cars. It populates the ideological rural idyll with the seemingly acceptable and expected but shows them to be

monstrous, and it installs the rural idyll as the backdrop for drunkenness, violence, and racism. In doing this, it engages the social critique that Turner claims is often part of the liminoid phenomenon in art (Turner 1974: 86). This position of the unexpected and bizarre turns the rural idyll, with constantly present variations of the red cottage, into a liminal space, which differs from the deep forests, seaside or deserts that usually appear as settings for the unexpected.

In the same way as the use of history does not dismiss history *as such*, the use of the rural idyll does not question rural Sweden *as such*. Rather, it questions the values that it purports to represent, and challenges its hegemonizing power in the definition of belonging, of inclusion and exclusion. Hutcheon aligns this critique with that expressed in postmodern photography. *Det nya landet* engages a similar critique, as it uses images of the rural idyll “precisely because they are loaded with pre-existing meaning” to exploit the power of popular images at the same time as it de-naturalizes them and “makes visible the concealed mechanisms which work to make them seem transparent” or natural (Hutcheon 2002: 42). Through the film’s exaggeration of “Swedishness,” it puts the “essentialized into parody,” and in this way it circumvents the danger of nostalgia, a major force from which nationalism draws its power (Bendix 2000: 88). Rather than mirroring, or imitating the given and the naturalized, *Det nya landet* deploys a “productive-creative approach to tradition” (Hutcheon 2000: 7). As such, it strives to change the “iconography of popular memory” (Hall 2002: 261).

This questioning of the “myth” of nation through parody, emphasizing the productive-creative rather than static manifestation of nation, connects to Homi Bhaba’s idea of nation as a process (1990). Even though nation is reproduced in a “banal” mode, through stereotypical representations of the rural idyll with its red cottages, birch trees, forest lakes and gravel roads, this nation is neither fixed nor static. It cannot be demarcated against a clearly defined outside,

but rather is an ongoing process of “coming into being”. Nation is constantly reformed and reshaped through its ongoing production and use by the people who comprise it. National culture is, therefore, neither unifying nor unified, but rather a “Janus-faced” process, as Bhaba argues (1990: 4). Seen from this perspective, *Det nya landet* is more a negotiation of the borders between “us” and “them” than a definition of inside and outside. Nation has to be seen as a process of cultural production, and nation as space has to be investigated as containing “thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased and translated” (ibid). The Swedish rural idyll, with the red cottage as cornerstone, is one such threshold of meaning. By exposing the stereotypical way in which it is used, *Det nya landet* forces this threshold to be (re)crossed and (re)negotiated.

CONCLUSION

A Cottage to the Moon.

In 2003, the artist Mikael Genberg, whose characteristic motif is alternative dwellings with the red cottage as a starting point, launched the idea to put a red cottage on the surface of the moon. His idea was met by positive reactions and over the course of the following years collaborations were initiated with the Swedish Space Corporation and technological institutes. An advanced technique was developed that would make it possible for the house, which measured 3 meters long, 2.5 meters high and 2 meters wide, to unfold automatically. The house would be made of “space-textile” stretched over a carbon fibre structure. The project slowed down in 2010 due to the financial crisis. In 2014, however, *Falu Rödfärg* initiated a crowdfunding project to kickstart Genberg’s project possible as part of their 250-year anniversary. Furthermore, the American company *Astrobotic Technology* accepted to bring the house on their space journey in October 2015. Unfortunately, the campaign did not succeed, and the red cottage still sits firmly on planet Earth. However, the crowdfunding infused new attention to the moonhouse project and Genberg’s idea received worldwide attention and descriptions of it were published in a number of newspapers and magazines (<http://bit.ly/1MGbZMu>)³¹.



Figure 54: Sara Medina. *The moonhouse*.
The moonhouse.com
<http://bit.ly/111RJL5> (Accessed November 30, 2015)

In the many interviews and texts written in connection to the art project, the artist returned to the symbolism of placing a red cottage on the moon. Well aware of the symbolic importance the red cottage has in the construction of Swedish national identity, Genberg claims in *Dagens Nyheter* on July 9, 2014 that:

“Det finns så mycket romantik i den röda stugan, hela vandringen från bondesamhället till industrisamhället. Månhuset känns så naturligt, det är det ultimata användandet av den symbolen.” (<http://bit.ly/1QISgEc>)³²

There is so much romance in the red cottage, the whole journey from the farmer society to the industrial society. The moonhouse feels so natural, it is the ultimate application of that symbol”

This dissertation has explored how the red cottage in an idyllic rural setting has been produced and reproduced within the national borders of Sweden for over more than a century. This stereotypical picture of a red cottage in a rural idyll emerged from the dovetailing of the urgent housing situation for the working class and the quest for a new, democratic nationalism during the early twentieth century. Over time, the cottage emerged as a key-symbol in the idea of Sweden and Swedishness. By using examples from education, tourism, advertising and politics, I have shown how the red cottage was transformed into a Barthesian “myth,” where all possible meanings has been condensed and naturalized to the “Swedish home,” thus evoking a range of connotations of childhood, nature, summer and home. Through this overdetermination the rural idyll attracts users from a wide spectrum, and has often been used to manifest opposing interests.

Despite the stereotypical representation of the Swedish countryside, the cottage-idyll is part of a dynamic process of becoming rather than being (Damsholt 2009: 17). Although the depiction of the cottage idyll has remained quite static over the century, the question of who is to

inhabit this home is a matter of constant negotiation. During the early twentieth century, a red cottage in the countryside was primarily intended as the means to invoke national sentiment, rootedness and moral in the rural and urban working class. Due to the increasing urbanization and the “flight from the countryside” during the after-war period, the red cottage was turned into a vacation home not only for the urban Swede, but over time also for international guests hosting a longing for childhood, community and closeness to nature, values that had been connected to the cottage-idyll. Marketers within tourism, such as *Lilla Sverigebyn*, as well as governmental organizations did their best to launch the red rural cottage as the materialization of this nostalgic, yet utopian dream. A discussion of who is to inhabit the Swedish home can also be observed in political campaign material, where the red cottage and the ideological landscape of Sweden can be defined as a purified space to varying degrees, from being intended as the home for the national icon of the impeccable Swedish farmer, to an undefined yet, through the political opinions of the sender, exclusive ethnic Swede.

A questioning of the red cottage as purified space can, on the other hand, be observed in the film *Det nya landet* (Hansteen Jörgensen 2000). Although the two illegal immigrant subjects of the film do not gain access to the Swedish home, the films parodic use of the red cottage and other items and phenomena connected to “Swedish culture” and its inhabitants both confirm and question the Swedish home, and who has access to it. The idea of placing a red cottage on the moon as a symbol for mankind can be regarded as the ultimate stretch of this negotiation of who should inhabit the red cottage, as Genberg expands the symbol to reach beyond nationality. In *The Local* on October 11, 2006, Genberg stated that the moonhouse not only would be a symbol for Sweden, “but for mankind, as well as a sort of all-seeing eye looking over us” (<http://bit.ly/1NPk56m>)³³.

The tension between the inclusive and exclusive aspects of the use of the rural idyll calls for deeper studies, as positive imagery can “hide the exercise of power and also discrimination in the Nordic countries” as Peter Aronsson and Lizette Gradén highlights in the introduction to *Performing Nordic heritage. Everyday practices and institutional culture* (2013: 3).

As shown by tourist industry involvement in marketing the Swedish summer to international tourists, and also by Genberg’s moonhouse project, the use of national symbols to communicate the idea of national community is only one side of the construction and communication of national identity. As Orvar Löfgren claims, “the construction of national identity is a task which calls for internal and external communication.” (1989: 12). Besides creating a symbolic material that functions as a point of reference for the feeling of national community, this identity has to be marketed abroad. The external aspect opens up a broad field for further research on the use of the red cottage as a key-symbol for Sweden.

In the seminal *Modernity at Large* (1996), Arjun Appadurai argues that the technological explosion of the past century in terms of communication and information has led to that we have “entered a new condition of neighborliness” (1996: 29). There are many examples of how the cottage idyll has travelled abroad, making this “community of sentiment” cross national borders (Appadurai 1996: 8). As briefly mentioned in the second chapter, part of *Nationalföreningen mot Emigrationen*’s exhibition of miniature small farms was shown at the Great Fair in San Francisco as early as 1915. In 2010, the *Moonhouse* was part of the Swedish pavilion at EXPO in Shanghai. A third example is the exhibition *De röda husen* [The red houses], produced in cooperation with the company *Falu Rödfärg*, shown at the Swedish Institute in Paris in 2007/2008, and at House of Sweden, Washington DC during the summer of 2008, followed by

the *The Red House on the Potomac* that could be seen on the patio of House of Sweden in Washington DC during the fall of 2011. The “myth” of the cottage idyll goes without saying in Sweden, and as suggested in the chapter on the vacation village *Lilla Sverigebyn*, in large parts of Northern Europe, due to its use of a generic nostalgic longing for childhood, community and closeness to nature. A closer look at exhibitions in greater parts of the world would give insight into how the “myth” of the rural idyll is communicated as far from Sweden as Shanghai and Washington D.C.

Another potential avenue of inquiry is the relationship between tradition and innovation in these exhibitions. John Urry claims that themed environments, such as the exhibitions at World Fairs, are “based on national stereotypes, designed to show national pride either in repackaging aspects of each country’s traditions and heritage or in demonstrating modern technologies” (Urry and Larsen 2011: 132). When the red cottage is put on display, it appears that it is used to launch Sweden as a nation of both tradition and new technology, underscoring the chameleonic quality of key-symbols. Besides photos of traditional red painted houses, the exhibition *De röda husen* included pictures of the nominated buildings of the 2008 architectural competition *Rödfärgspriset* [The Red Paint Price], hosted by *Falu Rödfärg*. According to a press release (April 16, 2008), this was done in order to “få en modern och samtida relation till vårt svenska kulturarv” [attain a modern and contemporary relation to our Swedish cultural heritage] (<http://bit.ly/1N13Hkf>)³⁴. Naturally, the *Moonhouse* at EXPO in Shanghai is a clear example of how Sweden has been launched as a land of both tradition and innovation, a point that was emphasized as one of the aims of Sweden’s pavilion by *Arch Daily* on February 2, 2010 (<http://bit.ly/1Mbys2u>)³⁵.

The cottage idyll has been commodified to sell a variety of goods and services, from laundry detergent to sausage. Further questions about the commodification of nation are raised by the use of the red cottage and rural idyll by governmental institutions such as the Swedish Institute and House of Sweden, managed by the National Property Board, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs which, together with a number of large commercial enterprises, are the two state institutions that have the primary responsibility for, including financing, the Swedish contribution to EXPO. Consequently, the cottage-idyll has been incorporated in the official “nation branding” of Sweden. Since Simon Anholt proposed the term “Nation branding” in the late 1990s, suggesting that nations, just like brands, are associated with certain qualities and can be marketed by using marketing strategies, “nation branding” has grown into an area of increasing attention and governmental funding (Anholt 1998: 2003; Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2006: 138). In the case of Sweden, the governmental organization *Nämnden för Sverigefrämjande i utlandet* [Board for the promotion of Sweden abroad] which, among other members, includes the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, the Swedish Institute, and the tourist organization, Visit Sweden, was inaugurated in 1995 (SOU 2007: 32-39). In their platform, presented in *Progressiv kommunikation i praktiken*, they state that a brand is more than a logo. What sums up “Swedish” is not a place but rather values, lifestyle and a way of thinking. Target groups’ understanding of these concepts results in “brand Sweden” (<http://bit.ly/1lmRTfR>)³⁶.

Through its function as key-symbol, the red cottage becomes a fruitful symbol for this abstract Swedishness, as it can be used both as a sign of tradition and authenticity. Through its incorporation in modern architecture and high technology, the cottage can also communicate values such as naturalness, closeness to nature and harmony, core Swedish values according to

the platform (<http://bit.ly/1lmRTfR>)³⁷. The commodification of nation to a great degree is accomplished in cooperation with the company *Falu Rödfärg*, owned by the multinational company *Stora Enso AB*, further pointing to the importance the dovetailing of popular culture, national identity, politics and economy. Governmental institutions efforts to establish “Brand Sweden” and *Falu Rödfärg*’s efforts to sell paint stimulate each other. Through its connection to the idea of the idyllic Swedish cottage, and the values attached to it, *Falu Rödfärg*, helps launch “brand Sweden,” and in the same way the “country image” – the perception of the nation promoted by official institutions, use the values attached to *Falu Rödfärg* to market nation. *Falu Rödfärg* emerges not only as a company, but also as the trustee and intermediary of what can best be described as official cultural heritage. In this way, the red rural idyll moves outside the realm of everyday banal sharing and enters the realm of normative “National Culture” sanctioned by the state (Löfgren 1989: 13). Indeed *Falu Rödfärg*’s slogan is “Kulturhistoria på burk” [Cultural history in a can], suggesting that *Falu Rödfärg* is the authentic—and only choice—if one wishes to have an authentic Swedish home. This presentation is apparently acceptable despite the fact that the red paint that colored Swedish houses in the past came from several different mines, and despite the fact that there are still several other producers of red paint based on pigment derived from copper in Sweden.

A striking example for how the red painted home with white corners has been incorporated in “Brand Sweden” and successfully become part of the external communication of nation is be found in the suburb “Sweden Hills” in the city of Tobetsu, Japan (fig. 55). The idea to build a typical Swedish housing area was launched when the Swedish ambassador visited Tobetsu and was stricken by the area’s resemblance to Swedish nature and landscape. The area was planned in 1979, and started to be built in 1984. In the real estate brokerage *Japan Property*

Central's presentation of the area, it is stated if a new house is to be built in Sweden Hills, the house must be designed by the developer Sweden House, a Tokyo based company with an affiliated company and factory in Insjön, Dalarna (<http://bit.ly/1kRDZ50>)³⁸.



Figure 55: Sweden Hills, Hokkaido, Japan.
Japan Property Central
<http://bit.ly/1kRDZ50> (Accessed November 30, 2015)

Virtually roaming the streets of the area through Google maps, the resemblance to a Swedish suburb is astonishing as red wooden houses with white trim and white porches sit surrounded by lush greenery. Besides the resemblance to the stereotypical depiction of Sweden, the city has the small town of *Leksand* in Dalarna as sister city and the inhabitants take active part in traditional feasts and take classes in Swedish, according to the blogs Sofihultin and Kameratrollet. Pictures and video clips show groups of Japanese people parading in Swedish folk costumes, playing Swedish folk music tunes on fiddles and *nyckelharpa* (key-fiddles), participating in the Yule time Lucia parade and smiling towards the camera wearing silly hats, as done at crawfish parties (<http://bit.ly/1PrfzMN>³⁹; <http://bit.ly/1MrCUrJ>)⁴⁰.

Such performance of nation abroad is of course not unique but can be experienced in various places where Scandinavian heritage is celebrated abroad, particularly in North America communities where Scandinavians settled during emigration in the late nineteenth century and later (Gradén 2003: 2013; Pico Larsen 2006: 2013). In the case of Tobetsu, however, there are no such historical connections to Sweden. Despite that, this Japanese suburb appears “more Swedish than Sweden” (Klein 2003) and can be regarded as the ultimate example of how the “community of sentiment” crosses national borders and how Swedish heritage is materialized and performed in parts of the world with no apparent relation to Sweden. Through this border crossing, and adaptation to new environments, the myth of the red cottage and the Swedish rural idyll continues to be part of the process of (re)negotiating the national landscape of Sweden. It certainly raises the question, “Who is to inhabit the authentic Swedish home?”

Notes

¹ “House of Sweden.” House of Sweden, <http://bit.ly/1iYTy9N> (accessed November 13, 2015).

² The use of red paint made from ferric oxide is known from the 16th century. Initially, the red paint was produced in several locations in Sweden. Today, the pigment used to make the paint is synonymous with the bi-product from the mining of copper in Falun, Dalarna, hence the name “Falun rödfärg” [Falun redpaint]. Other companies also produce red paint made from ferric oxide, but even houses painted in other types of paint are usually referred as Falun-red.

³ “Svensken – Sommarstugan – Statistiken: Tillbakablick på sommaren 2013.” Snabba Svar, <http://bit.ly/1Nb4zzJ> (accessed November 13, 2015).

⁴ Paul O’Mahony. “Swede plans to put little red cottage on the moon.” October 11, 2006. The Local <http://bit.ly/1NPK56m>.

⁵ “Lilla Sverigebyn” Top Local Places, <http://bit.ly/1SYHan9> (accessed November 13, 2015).

⁶ “Utländskt ägande och utlandssvenskars ägande av fritidshus i Sverige 2013.” March 19, 2014. Statistics Sweden. <http://bit.ly/1WQj2Zs>

⁷ “Lilla Sverigebyn.” April 15, 2010. Booking.com <http://bit.ly/1N18wtK>.

⁸ “Lilla Sverigebyn 3-bädds campingstuga all inclusive.” Visit Hultsfred. <http://bit.ly/1O6FmXx> (accessed November 13, 2014).

⁹ “Semesterbyn” Lilla Sverigebyn. Accessed October 2014, <http://bit.ly/1S4EEL1> (Site modified by June 2015)

¹⁰ Circular tent traditionally used by Sapmi-people in Northern Sweden.

¹¹ “Småland, Lilla Sverigebyn and Renates roliga resor” Venture Sweden. <http://bit.ly/1NLjhdX> (accessed December 9, 2015).

¹² Two weeks of vacation was inaugurated in 1938. The statutory vacation gradually increased until 1978, after which Swedes could enjoy five weeks of vacation. However, not everyone had the right to vacation. Farmers, small businessmen and housewives were exempted. The exemption of housewives gave rise to a debate about labor and vacation-time, and for this group “housewife vacation,” organized vacation in special homes for overworked housewives became an alternative during the 1940s.

¹³ “Utländskt ägande och utlandssvenskars ägande av fritidshus i Sverige 2013.” March 19, 2014. Statistics Sweden. <http://bit.ly/1WQj2Zs>

¹⁴ Anna-Karin Hedén. “Småland inväntar tyska turister.” June 30, 2014. Sveriges Television. <http://bit.ly/1WQmDqA>

¹⁵ “Semesterbyn” Lilla Sverigebyn. Accessed October 2014, <http://bit.ly/1S4EELI> (Site modified by June 2015)

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ One example is *Björkhaga by* on the island of Gotland whose slogan is “Björkhaga by—bo med Bullerbykänsla” [Björkhaga village—live with Bullerby feeling].

¹⁸ “Bullerbysyndromet.” Institutet för språk och folkminnen. February 2008. <http://bit.ly/1RTdln8>

¹⁹ Nadia Enedal. “Tysk Sverigebild skapas i Nacka.” August 5, 2014, Nacka Värmdö Posten. <http://bit.ly/1kRJYqn>

²⁰ Emelie Wigsten. “Lilla Sverigebyn.” *Familjen Wigsten* (blog), September 5, 2013. <http://bit.ly/20QNpP4>

²¹ Kerry Temple. “Having coffee with John Sherry” Spring 2006, www.magazine.nd.edu. <http://ntrda.me/1WQr054> (Accessed November 13, 2015).

²² The most well remembered campaign picture from the Second World War is a picture of a yellow- and blue striped tiger, with the caption *En svensk tiger*, which can be translated both to “A Swedish tiger,” or to “A Swede keeps silent,” *tiger* being both the substantive *tiger*, and the present form of *to keep silent*. The poster was created in 1941 by Esselte, the advertising company behind *Sparbanken's* poster.

²³ Filialen i Malmö: Arbmans 2. “Grumme Tvättsåpa.” Youtube, video, 0,32. August 27, 2010. <http://bit.ly/1kF5dw1>

²⁴ Josefin Pehrson. “Grummeön ute till försäljning” Svenska Dagbladet, June 16, 2011. <http://bit.ly/1NPkN3o>

²⁵ “Välkommen till Bäck” Bäck Lantbruk. <http://bit.ly/1Mbn1b5> (accessed November 13, 2015)

²⁶ In Swedish, *trygghet* can mean both safety and security. A proper translation would be “safe and secure”.

²⁷ Sverigedemokraterna 2010. "Sverigedemokraternas valfilm 2006" Youtube, video, 1,03. January 14, 2010. <http://bit.ly/1Iv7Dme>

²⁸ While the liminal was developed for rites of passage in small-scale, agrarian societies, Turner suggests that the liminoid should be applied on post-industrial society in the setting of leisure. The liminoid resembles liminal, but is not identical with it (Turner 1974: 64). The most important difference is that while liminality is obligatory, the liminoid is optional (ibid 1974: 74). For sure, the ways that rules and society are parodied and exaggerated during the rites of initiation within "traditional" society are innumerable, but what happens in the stage of liminality is expected, and even obliged by society (Turner 1974: 73). Liminoidality however, is an optional break from society, associated with marginality, social critique and radical experimentation (St John 2008: 9). Turner's distinction has been criticized to be speculative and suggests an "oversimplified dichotomy between symbolic systems of a 'traditional' and 'modern' type" (Thomassen 2014: 84-86). It is of course not possible to draw a sharp dividing line between liminal and liminoid, and the terms have been used simultaneously. However, that there is a distinction between what happens inside and outside the boundaries of society is important to note.

²⁹ *Falu-korv* is a sausage, protected as trade name, that is said to have been developed as a way to make use of the meat of the oxen that were slaughtered to make ropes for the copper mine in Falun, Dalarna.

³⁰ *Falu-horse* refers to a red painted and decorated wooden horse made in *Dalarna*, which is a popular souvenir among tourists.

³¹ "Månhuset: Det första konstprojektet på månen." The moonhouse. <http://bit.ly/1MGbZMu> (accessed December 9, 2015)

³² Sara Ullberg. "Vill placera röd stuga på månen." Dagens Nyheter, July 9, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1QISgEc>

³³ Paul O'Mahony. "Swede plans to put little red cottage on the moon." October 11, 2006. The Local. <http://bit.ly/1NPK56m>

³⁴ "Vårt svenska kulturarv på export. Nu gör rödfärgen succé i Washington!" April 16, 2008. My Newsdesk. <http://bit.ly/1N13Hkf>

³⁵ Sebastian Jordana. "Sweden Pavilion for Shanghai World Expo 2010." ArchDaily, February 2, 2010. <http://bit.ly/1Mbys2u>

³⁶ "Nämnden för Sverigefrämjande i utlandet (NSU). "Progressiv kommunikation i praktiken: Framgångsrika projekt, engagerande berättelser och tydliga budskap." Docplayer, <http://bit.ly/1lmRTfR> (accessed December 9, 2015).

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ “Sweden Hills Hokkaido.” Japan Property Central. July 28, 2011. <http://bit.ly/1kRDZ50>

³⁹ Sofi Yuuna Hultin. “Check this out!” *Sofi Yuuna Hultin* (blog), February 17, 2014
<http://bit.ly/1PrfzMN>.

⁴⁰ Kameratrollet. “Sweden Hills. Midsommar i Japan” *Kameratrollet* (blog), June 19, 2012.
<http://bit.ly/1MrCUrJ>.

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