

Scandinavia – A Peripheral Centre

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Framing Scandinavia

This article is an attempt to create a postcolonial Scandinavian response to the ‘decolonial turn’ (or ‘decolonial option’) as it has evolved through the collaborative efforts of Catherine Walsh, Ramon Grosfoguel, Walter D. Mignolo and Edgardo Lander, among others. I draw attention to this impetus because – in contrast to other articles published in this edition of *Kult*, – this essay explores epistemological questions stemming from the work on the ‘decolonial turn’ within the Scandinavian context. I begin with a brief discussion of what took place in the course of the visit by these four scholars, in May 2008, where they participated in a series of seminars held in Copenhagen and at Roskilde University. During these seminars bureaucratic (and to an extent academic) protests – against the premise of the decolonial turn – were raised. The counterargument against the critique of the decolonial turn was based on the premise that Eurocentrism, far from being an anachronistic remnant, survives. And that much of what has been coined as a new paradigm for, for example, Danish-Latin American collaboration in contemporary development practice, represents a continuity of past currency in the perceptions of the roles of donor and reception societies. The four scholars argued that development thinking, at government and at

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NGO levels, as presented in the seminars, continues to be founded on the idea of an unproblematised dissemination of Western knowledge and practices to a passive and flawed recipient.

This is a fundamental critique. To summarily dismiss it is both an unnecessary and an arrogant response to vital questions directed at the foundations of contemporary development practices as understood by the West. My analysis also questions development practices's innate ability to transform themselves in the wake of a widely accepted earlier Eurocentrism, or perhaps more appropriately here, their Occidentality, or their specific Transatlantic concepts of modernity. No scholar would dispute the Occidentalist premise of early development discourse, the crucial discussion focuses instead on whether that discourse has been replaced by a self reflective, and self critical, Western development practice, capable of accommodating (or, as it purports, even basing itself on) local perspectives and locally defined needs.

The development of a deconstructed Eurocentric perspective is the focus of my endeavour to understand under what conditions development discourse can be seen to have transformed itself. During the seminars it became obvious that part of the answer on the epistemological level lies in the ability and preparedness to listen to the (very different) perspectives, and use that listening as a platform for asking where these perspectives might create problems for current ways of producing development practice principles in the West. Unfortunately the Danish representatives showed a lack of willingness to address these perspectives, the greatest part perceiving them instead as poorly disguised attacks on Western (in this case Danish) development practices. Evidently it was felt that the decolonial turn represented an attack on current Danish development practises, seeing them as a neo-colonial master attitude masquerading as benevolence and impartiality.

Questions of epistemology remain unexplored as a result in this failure in receptivity. They include: what kind of knowledge is produced for whom, by whom,

for what purposes and in what contexts? Also, what kinds of knowledge are applicable under what conditions? For Scandinavia these concerns entail – if we recognise that development practices in their earlier forms lacked recognition of local knowledge produced at the site of development practice – the question, how come this wasn't discovered at the time? And if we accept the idea of transformation, subsequent to an altered development practice, in what ways can we be sure that the new development practice actually produced localised recognition at the moment of the execution of development aid? Furthermore, what consequences did the lack of earlier recognition of the other as a producer of knowledge have for the ways in which Scandinavians perceive their engagement in development aid? This is a crucial question because of its ramifications for Scandinavian self-perceptions, not least because of the region's traditional high profile in development aid.

Of course, most of these concerns cannot be addressed in this essay, nor do I suggest how they can be recontextualised from a 'de-Eurocentricised' perspective. But I offer trajectories, which can be adopted by others. These trajectories, would, in my view, lead to the inevitability of a critique of Eurocentricism within a Scandinavian context. Within the Danish (and to up the pre-development Norwegian) frame of reference, I examine colonialism and its legacy, because it is colonialism as an engagement – as well as a thought system, about the non-European world – that governs Scandinavian attitudes until the eve of development. I discuss the most likely candidate for a Scandinavian Enlightenment figure, the Swede Carl von Linné (Linnaeus), who drew the attention of his contemporary European scholars, precisely because he engaged in developing a way of dealing epistemologically with the non-European other.

I do not investigate this aspect of European Enlightenment to direct focus to the important questioning of a geopolitical oversight in the customary preference of German, British and French scholars over the rest of European scholarship. I examine it to demonstrate how, if we are to take seriously the argument that European

Enlightenment philosophy is culturally inscribed – not only within a European frame, but also within a national paradigm – we also need ask what this means for the cultural production of Enlightenment philosophy in other parts of Europe, including Scandinavia. To date no general work has been written concerning the relationship between Scandinavian and European Enlightenment philosophy and nor has the question of Eurocentrism been examined in association with the Scandinavian context.¹

In the power relations between the European and the non-European produced through colonialism, the centre-periphery model risks reproducing the power relation it seeks to displace; it also obfuscates the many and various forms decolonisation took, placing a distinct pressure on explanations of colonialism, since they must be general and particular at the same time. In turn, this creates a tension which, at times, can be extremely productive. The important overlap between the ways in which decolonisation has, in recent decades, been considered in Latin America and South Asia is one example. However, it is exactly the need to consider particularities, which has led to reservations concerning the extent of the applicability of, for example, Subaltern Studies in Latin America. This constitutes a broader tension between the ways in which modernity is regarded in South Asia and Latin America. The same kind of differentiation needs to be acknowledged within Europe. If Scandinavians can trace an Orientalism, or a Eurocentrism, back through the ages, it is nonetheless at least produced under different circumstances with less direct colonial involvement at stake than an Orientalism, or a Eurocentrism traced in Britain, France or Portugal.²

¹ With regards to Southern Europe, and its marginalisation in the wake of the shifting power balance from South to Northwest Europe, during the Enlightenment, Roberto M. Dainotto's, *Europe (in Theory)* (2007), is a very useful text, as is clear from the following quotation: "Eurocentrism, in short, is one category through which I am trying to explain the dialectical inclusion and exclusion of the south – its historical necessity for the formation of a parochial universalism and its liminality in any modern theory of European identity." (4-5)

² It is of course one of the more productive criticisms launched against Edward Said's, *Orientalism*, that he focused almost exclusively on France and Britain in the imperial phase, and left out, for example, German Orientalism. The inclusion of German Orientalism in his work would have been interesting, because Germany had a strong Orientalist scholarship

Conceptual beginnings

Inspired by the work of Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo has convincingly argued for the urgent need to problematise the idea of modernity as a monolithic, Enlightenment driven epistemology, which has moved across the world as a juggernaut crushing all other epistemological/cosmological ideologies in its path. Even if its intention has been to do so, the Enlightenment driven epistemology has met with all kinds of resistance strategies in the colonial and, later on, the postcolonial world. It is generally accepted that colonial resistance is as old as colonialism itself. That many of these resistances only exist in extremely fragmented or contestable document form is a different matter. Postcolonial studies and many related fields premised on their groundedness in the colonial/postcolonial world have contested the Enlightenment legacy as the sole legitimate way of thinking academically about the world.

What has attracted less attention in Mignolo's work is his argument concerning the need to question the idea of a singular tradition of thought in Europe. He has primarily introduced this argument through his distinguishing between a first and second modernity, the first emerging out of Spanish/Portuguese/Italian Renaissance cosmology, the second out of French/English Enlightenment cosmology.³ In both cases, however, the cosmologies were linked to particular formations of colonialism, which in turn produced specific colonial modernities, both in the colony and in the metropole. Mignolo's signalling of a first and second modernity constitutes a general first step in the process of recognising the heterogeneity of the European experience of modernity. To find out what this means

tradition, but lacked the same direct colonial involvement. Hence the distinction opens for the question concerning the relationship between Orientalism and direct colonial control.

³ I prefer the term 'cosmology' to 'philosophy' here, because I wish to draw attention to how European philosophy, regarded as a collected body of texts, gives expression to a whole way of life, which became a premise for European thinking in the colonial world.

for the Scandinavian experience, one needs to ask where Scandinavian modernity is located between the first European Mediterranean modernity and the second North West European based modernity, since it was peripheral to both.

Setting the Scandinavian scene

To classify a historical experience as a form of colonial modernity is to invite the question what does this entail. The answer must address the concern how one defines colonial modernity and its relationship with both modernity and coloniality. Scandinavian colonial experience has been produced (within and outside Scandinavia) as peripheral in relation to the formation of a Scandinavian national identity and as such, outside the formation of at least a contemporary Scandinavian modernity. This point seems initially to be borne out through historical experience. Sweden had few overseas colonial possessions, the Kingdom of Denmark-Norway had more, but they remained small in terms of population – albeit with regards to Greenland territorially sizeable.

If one connects the question of (national modernity) to capitalism and colonial modernity the situation, however, is very different.⁴ Denmark-Norway had one of its most enduring prosperous periods in the second half of the 18th century, an affluence that was not built primarily on its colonies, but more generally on its position within the larger global system of colonial exploitation, most notably the slave trade. Hence Denmark-Norway was the seventh largest slave trading nation in the world, and, due to inter-European wars which were also partly fought in and over the colonies,

⁴ Although a fair amount of research has been carried out in the Danish archives, which incidentally is the best preserved colonial archive of all former European colonial powers, no scholarship has produced a postcolonial history of Denmark. The various books on Danish colonial history remain compartmentalized studies of various parts of colonial history, but to produce a postcolonial history is to tie up this archival work, or readings of various books on the colonies, to the broader issue of how it has impacted on and continues to influence identity formation in Denmark.

Copenhagen became a major European trade port for colonial goods. The legacy of this period can be seen in the magnificent architecture that still dominates Copenhagen's skyline. The period came to a close with the British bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807, after the Danish king refused to hand over the Danish fleet. The loss of the fleet signalled the end of Denmark-Norway's status as a major naval power in Europe. At the end of the Napoleonic wars Denmark-Norway was broken up as a kingdom, Norway became part of Sweden, while Denmark managed to hold on to the colonies in the North Atlantic (Iceland, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands) and in 'the tropics' (Tranquebar on the Indian East Coast, the Coast of Guinea (in present-day Ghana) and the Danish West Indies (now the US Virgin Islands)).

This brief account does not amount to a historical record, but it signals a different way of understanding Scandinavia from the customary reading of the Scandinavian countries as minor powers on the outskirts of Europe, whose peripheral status exonerates them from the association with the violence perpetrated by the larger European driven colonial modernity. Scandinavia participated in this and its political manoeuvres were driven by an eagerness to get its share of the riches from the colonies. Once Scandinavian involvement became manifestly peripheral economic anxiety set in. This happened in Sweden (ca. 1720) and in Denmark-Norway (in the wake of the Napoleonic wars). Large-scale emigration in the second half of the nineteenth century was one consequence of Scandinavia's loss of status, the loss of the remaining Danish tropical colonies another. It was not until the immediate post-war years that a new Scandinavian interventionist internationalism emerged through the establishment of development aid.

Denmark-Norway, from development aid and back to colonial administrator

Development aid emerged in the era of decolonisation, which followed from Europe's inability to take repossession of their overseas colonies after World War 2 due to local resistance. It is widely recognised that development aid owes much to the American interventionist foreign policy after World War 2 (Escobar, 1995), even if development aid also has its own localised histories and motivations. In Denmark it began with aid to the impoverished Dutch people after the war, and to the Danish minority in Northern Germany, where it was partially linked to Danish territorial ambitions. From there it was gradually redirected to health issues in the 'Third World'.

Many development theorists have read aid as a neo-colonial strategy, drawing attention to the link between the loss of colonies and development aid as a tactic to preserve the empire's local interests after the end of colonialism. In this respect, Scandinavia represents an odd example, because Sweden had had no colonies since its loss of influence as a major player in 18th century Europe. And Norway had, until the end of the Napoleonic wars, been the junior partner in the Danish colonial expansion – mainly in relation to the North Atlantic colonies. Hence, when the Norwegian missionary, Hans Egede, went to Greenland in 1721 (for overtly religious purposes), his journey was sponsored by merchants in Bergen. By contrast, Denmark, and particularly Copenhagen, remained the centre of Denmark-Norway's imperial ambitions. In the second half of the 1700s Denmark-Norway thrived partly on its colonial possessions, partly on the ability to attract overseas trade in colonial goods to Copenhagen. With the loss of its status as a midsized player in Europe in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, Denmark gradually gave up its overseas tropical possessions (in the 1840s Tranquebar and the Gold Coast were sold to the British, the Virgin Islands remained Danish colonies until 1917, but already in the 1860s negotiations for a sale had begun with the US government).

The situation was different for the Danes in the North Atlantic. Despite resistance in Iceland, it took the Nazi occupation of Denmark, to provide an opportunity for Iceland to opt out of the union with Denmark in 1944. The Faeroes voted themselves out of Denmark in 1946 by a very narrow margin, but when the referendum was annulled, they received a circumscribed degree of autonomy through the 1948 Home Rule. Greenland had to wait for its Home Rule until 1979, when the Danish government yielded to Greenlandic pressure. Greenland and the Faeroe Islands had in theory become equal partners in the Danish Commonwealth in 1953. In theory, because it was part of the manoeuvre to make Greenland a Danish shire (*amt*), since Danish shires have no independent status in any significant areas. Subsequent Danish governments have remained recalcitrant, when it comes to the transfer of important policy areas to local governments, whose interests were quite often opposed to Denmark's commitment to the NATO alliance. A deeply ingrained Danish distrust of the two local governments' ability to govern is revealed by the need to preserve Danish sovereignty over defence policy in Greenland – especially given the presence of the strategically important American Thule Air Base in Greenland.⁵

One question emanating from the above account is: how does the policy of curbing local North Atlantic desires for real equal status, influence on their own local lives and/or autonomy connect to the simultaneous authoritarian political strategies in development practice? One way of connecting them is to discuss the prevailing idea at the time of delivering Scandinavian modernity to development countries in the 1950s and 1960s – an idea which is remarkably similar to the great modernising plans for Greenland – the G50 and G60 plans.⁶ The Danish government responded to a Greenlandic desire for less imperial control over Greenlandic affairs with these plans.

⁵ The Thule Air Base and how it has shaped Denmark's relationship with the U.S. (and NATO) and the Danish-Greenlandic relationship has been the subject of a number of studies, also because of the court case brought by the Thule people against the Danish government, when they were forced to relocate in 1953. See, also because it is in English, Lyng (2000), and Brøsted & Fægteborg (1985) which laid the foundation of the later claims by the Inughuit.

⁶ See for example Jens Dahl (1986) and Henning Bro (1993).

The modernisation blueprints created a building boom in Greenland and transformed the entire economy. They also brought thousands of Danish builders to Greenland, and resulted both in Greenlandic alienation, which re-spawned the political movement for self-determination. Yet, the primary motivating factor behind the Danish government's ambitious plans was a keen awareness that Danish dominance over Greenland had declined during the Nazi occupation. This is most keenly brought home in the American offer to buy Greenland after the end of the war. Nonetheless in subsequent accounts, that included the public record, this part of the power-relationship was not openly acknowledged.

This manoeuvring is interesting in the way in which it shows how Danish discursive power over the Greenlandic future cannot be spoken, but has to remain an implicit premise, which somehow also has to be isolated from the good intentions, that is, the benevolence of the Danish government towards the Greenlanders. This chorography proves compelling precisely because it reveals how discursive authority cannot afford to declare itself openly, and in this sense suggests that a deconstruction of the undeclared all-powerful position invites a Gramscian approach to understanding hegemony as a dynamic, rather than static form of power. The dynamics were altered to such an extent, that imperial rule could be substituted by the Danish Commonwealth.⁷ The sweeping claim that Greenland was now an equal partner in the arrangement was made as part of the substitution. In short, the Danish government's attitude continued unaffected, and the government was convinced by its own rhetoric of benevolence. Regardless of the convenient imperial facts that spoke in favour of this change (for example, having Greenland as part of Denmark meant the Americans could not repeat their offer to buy what was now technically part of Denmark proper). It is beyond the article's scope here to chart what happened during the same period with the plans for development aid to the 'Third World'. It is,

⁷ See Frederik Harhoff (1994), Skaale (2004) and Lidegaard (1973) regarding the shortcomings of the Danish Commonwealth in terms of providing a framework for a decolonised relationship.

however, curious that no historians, development aid scholars, or scholars whose focus is Greenland, have examined this fascinating parallel history.

Sweden: From political to botanical empire

Sweden opted for a different historical trajectory to Denmark's. In the main, this was an outcome of, from a power perspective, catastrophic Swedish policies pursued in the early 1700s, which led to the loss of that country's continental European empire. While Denmark-Norway was about to enter into a phase of unsurpassed wealth because of profits in colonial trade, including those made in the slave market, Sweden was coming to terms with the end of its status as a major European power. Economic Historian, Lars Magnusson, provides the following brief account of Sweden's altered priorities, after its defeat to Russia:

There was broad agreement that a return to the status of a great power would require rapid population growth. As in Holland, this could only happen if industry and manufacturing expanded. Sweden, like the other Western European countries, had to become more self-sufficient and replace the import of industrial goods (such as textiles) with domestic products. But it was widely agreed that agriculture could only expand if helped by growing demand from an expanding urban industrial sector. (Magnusson 2000, 60-61).

Magnusson's account is compelling as it shows how international (that is very much colonial) trade played an enormous role in the definition of what tools were at the disposal of the state in 18th century Europe. To consider the impact of colonialism on domestic Europe entails more than addressing the question how colonial powers dealt with their possessions. Those who like Sweden were not in a position to compete for colonies or for trade in colonial goods had to lower their economic expectations and

adjust, directing their concerns towards the survival of the state and its citizens.⁸ Sweden decided to compensate domestically for the loss of a share in colonial trade:

A number of regulations were introduced in the Age of Freedom aimed at securing growth in domestic industrial production. The Riksdag of 1723 issued an Instruction with the following wording: ‘The Estates of the Realm have found that the prosperity, welfare and improvement of the country requires the import of foreign goods to be reduced by means of a sound domestic economy and, by founding plantations and other good establishments, the increase and expansion of domestic production and manufacture to maintain balance.’ The situation was, in fact, serious, according to Emanuel Swedenborg, a prominent metallurgist and debater. The accounts he submitted to the Diet of the Estates in 1723 showed that imports were substantially higher than exports, ‘smuggling not included’. To eliminate the ‘deficit’, the Diet swiftly decided to examine the matter of extending religious freedom with a view to attracting skilled and experienced labour to Sweden. The possibility of starting more garment factories in Stockholm was also discussed. Since yarn was in short supply it was also suggested that a spinning and carding-mill should be set up on the island of Långholmen, where beggars, ‘loose women’ and the lawless were to carry out forced labour. (Magnusson, 61)

Domestic labour, under slave-like conditions, was seen as part of the rescue plan, alongside technological innovation, and a bizarre strategy for replacing imported goods by cultivating colonial crops within Sweden. Somebody needed to be put in charge of this plan and that man was the Swedish proto-Enlightenment figure of Carl von Linné. Linné has remained a towering figure both in Swedish intellectual history, but also in popular culture, through the romanticised cult that grew around him in the 1800s.⁹ The cult of Linné continues to cloud assessments of his contribution to

⁸ One of the more paradoxical examples of the threatened state, is a Faeroese reluctance in some circles to ‘abandon’ Denmark after 1864, because it was feared Denmark might not survive the loss of further territory after the loss of Southern Jutland and the northern German duchies. See Hans Jacob Debes (2001), 186.

⁹ See the introduction to *Linnaeus, The Man and his Work*, (edited by Tore Frängsmyr, 1983), and also Sten Lindroth’s article, ‘The Two Faces of Linnaeus’, in the same book.

European intellectual history, as is clear from Sten Lindroth's far from radical (let alone critical) assessment of Linné's status: "We must have the right to invite Linnaeus to step down from his pedestal and to put some searching questions to him; his limitations and failures cast a clearer light over the incomparable quality of his genius" (Frängsmyr 1983, 2).

Irrespective of Linné's merits as a scholar, he occupied a central position in the Swedish attempts to become self-sufficient through his promise to deliver what his country desired. As Patricia Fara writes:

He wanted to make his country self-sufficient by cultivating foreign plants at home. Sweden had lost much of its empire and – unlike Britain – had little prospect of acquiring further territories overseas. Europeans, argued Linnaeus, were spending money on importing goods from Asia, yet had little to sell in return (apart from guns): far better, he claimed, to cease being forced to rely on far-flung lands. Linnaeus's success in growing Europe's first banana plant helped to win support, and he convinced the government to invest in his projects for taming colonial crops so that they would grow in Scandinavia. Linnaeus dreamed of transforming the national economy. Rice paddies in Finland, cinnamon groves in Lapland, tea plantations in the Baltic: in Linnaeus's futuristic visions, Sweden would enjoy the same luxuries that Britain and Holland obtained from their foreign empires. (2003, 28).

It is inevitable then to see Linné as a nationalist, yet even the nationalist had to accept that before domestication of the world's culture plants, they needed to be collected, and for this purpose he created his own personal

scientific empire whose tentacles stretched around the globe. While he retained control of the central hub, he sent out his best students – his disciples, he called them – on botanical pilgrimages. They had two complementary missions. Fully

trained in his methods, they were instructed to search for unusual plants and bring them back to be acclimatised and so help make Sweden self-sufficient; conversely, they were to spread the Linnaean gospel amongst the international botanical community. In the long run, they proved far less successful at persuading plants than botanists. Linnaeus's transplanted crops mostly withered away, whereas his classification system thrived internationally because of its simplicity. Linnaeus's briefs for his apostles resembled trading manifestos rather than botanical descriptions. He wanted to collect plants not for their interest as rarities, but for their value as commercial commodities. (Fara 2003, 28).

Linné represents not only the Swedish natural scientist, or rather taxonomist, whose system is still in use, he also epitomises a Swedish intellectual figure at a time, when intellectuals in Europe were inevitably French, British or German. Swedish efforts to raise Linné's profile as an intellectual figure in Europe of his time failed on three accounts. Firstly, his botanical system was pedestrian rather than ingenious.¹⁰ Secondly, his thoughts on humanity were deemed peculiar. Thirdly, his belief in folk mythologies as scientific facts – the most famous example being his belief that swallows wintered at the bottom of lakes – barred his way into the pantheon of Enlightenment thinkers. It is important, however, to remember that other recognised Enlightenment thinkers laboured under similar misconceptions. Hence Kant in his texts on Geography speaks of the existence of people with tails between their legs, an embarrassment of an order that has prompted the exclusion of these texts from the assessment of Kant's Enlightenment oeuvre. Whereas, Kant may indeed have garnered this idea from Linné's taxonomic system of the categories of humans, Linné in turn took his idea from a Swedish captain. The narrative of the idea's entrance into Eurocentric Enlightenment thought throws some light on how knowledge production took place during the Enlightenment:

¹⁰ Lisbeth Koerner reaches the same conclusion in her biography on Linné: 'Linnaeus' reputation, then, his place within the pantheon of Enlightenment naturalists, rests upon plain sorting devices, and not upon a single, towering achievement that sets him apart from other men and makes him into a glorified genius.' (Koerner 1999, 16).

In the year 1647, a Swedish naval lieutenant by the name of Nicolas Köping was serving aboard a Dutch East-Indiaman in the Bay of Bengal. One day the ship approached an island whose naked inhabitants, according to Köping's account, had tails like those of cats, and a similarly feline comportment. Coming alongside in their canoes, these natives - evidently bent on trade - threatened to swarm the ship and had to be frightened off with a round of cannon-shot. The ship's pilot subsequently took ashore a landing party of five of the Dutch crew, to scour the island for provisions. They never returned, and a search mounted on the following morning revealed only their bones discarded beside a still smouldering fire, and their boat systematically stripped of its iron bolts. Köping's story was later revived in a treatise of Linnaeus, recited by his pupil, Hoppius, in 1760. The tailed men were classed as a species of ape, appropriately named Lucifer, and illustrated by a picture that Linnaeus had gleaned from another source. (Ingold 1994, 15-16.)

The account is an apt illustration of how knowledge travels, and of cultural translation of the more unfortunate variety. It indicates how science's dependence on discovery in the Enlightenment also produced shortcomings. Linné's claim to fame is paradoxical. On the one hand his work suggests that man is closer to the animals than he is to God – in this sense he started work Darwin completed. On the other hand, he also instigated a system of thinking about humans in the plural biological sense, which paved the way for later biological racism that proved indispensable to the colonial system.

This way of collecting information from travellers' accounts was common, and was often the only conceivable way of obtaining data. While the major colonial powers' overseas possessions paved the way for Orientalists, botanists, and proto ethnographers, Sweden's domestication practice augmented these developing fields in interesting ways. Linné's 1732 journey to Lapland became to all intents a colonial expedition inside the state's own territory. It was a trip of which he made much,

dressing himself in Lapp gear even if, as Lisbeth Koerner points out in her comprehensive work on Linné, his ensemble proved a masquerade:

Next to the Sami in their wondrous garments, L in his so-called Lapp costume cut a poor figure. His beret, which a Swedish tax collector had given him, was part of a Ume women's summer clothing. His reindeer fur livery was a Torne man's winter garment bought in Uppsala after the trip. His reindeer boots were of a type the Sami manufactured for export and did not wear themselves. And his Shaman's drum – an artefact illegal to own in Lapland itself – had been presented to him by an Uppsala professor as he packed for Holland. (1999, 66)

Yet, Linné's charade existed alongside his desire to present himself an expert ethnographer. As Koerner notes:

In *Flora Lapponica* (1737), in his dietary manuscripts, and in other writings, he fashioned the Lapland indigenes – the Sami – as a moral and medical microcosm complementing his economic macrocosm, the ideal of a self-sufficient principality. To this end, he presented his Lapland travels of 1732 in the light of Ovidian literature, seventeenth-century Gothicism, early modern anthropology, and neo-Hippocratic environmental medicine. Arctic reindeer herders may seem unlikely candidates for cameralist citizens. Yet Linnaeus thought of these nomads as *exempla* of virtue and health. Their health, he believed, augured the rewards that awaited farming folks if they would only reject imports like coffee, sugar, and salt. The Samis' dietary and medical customs thus lay at the heart of Linnaeus' medical and economic philosophy. On them hinged, in his view, the improvement of both Scandinavia's economy and the health of its inhabitants. (ibid, 56-57)

The irony of Linné's trip to Lapland is apparent not only in his misconceptions about Sami culture, but also in the ludicriouness of his short 18 day stay during which he preferred to reside with the Sweden's representatives in the area. This irony is further enhanced when Linné collapses all discoveries made in the non-European world into his own domestic discovery (within Swedish borders) of the Sami people – as evident

when he states he was “...led into a new world, and when I came up into it, I didn’t know if I was in Asia or Africa, for the soil, the landscape, and all plants were unknown to me.” (ibid., 60) Whereas the terrain Linné explored had been visited by other Swedes, and was indeed firmly under domestic Swedish colonial control in which church and state acted in concert:

The Swedish Lapland mission was made permanent in 1632 with a seminary in Lycksele. Later it was centralized into the Lapland Ecclesiastical Bureau of 1739. It aimed at full-scale assimilation, and it modelled itself on continental efforts to preach to Jews. The missionaries introduced compulsory church attendance (a special problem for nomads), tithes, catechism exams and inspection tours of Sami households. Sami shamans were fined, tortured, imprisoned, and burned at the stake. By the time Rudbeck the Younger arrived in Lapland in 1695, the Sami had become tourist guides of their own culture’s destruction, showing sightseers their former cult places. (Koerner, 58-59)

By way of conclusion

It is difficult to deny the historical Scandinavian contribution to a pan-European colonialism; and to the establishment of European ideologies that relied on conceptions of the human derived (at least partially) from colonial experience. It is equally difficult to deny that Scandinavia’s role has become increasingly peripheral. This last is initially an outcome of both Sweden’s loss of status in the early 1700s and Denmark-Norway’s 1807 loss of maritime power. Scandinavia has remained internationally marginal since then, with a few exceptions, the most notable of these is the Scandinavian contribution to the field of development aid. Beyond this, however, little research has been carried out that seeks to question in what ways the Scandinavian participation in colonialism is connected to development aid – and in particular colonialism’s discursive formations. We need to ask these questions, if we are to start to formulate – from our contribution to the conversation with

representatives of recipient cultures – a genuine new beginning. This inception will allow a conversation in which dialogue is not always already trapped within power frames that cannot even be addressed. In addition, Scandinavia has yet to scrutinise its own processes of reconciling with its indigenous populations. Here it would be interesting to pursue the question of subaltern knowledge produced among Greenlanders, Faeroese and the Sami people in relation to colonial forms of domination within the Scandinavian countries.

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