

# An Arctic Eden: Alexander Hutchinson's *Try Lapland* and the Hospitable North

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**Abstract:** As tourism boomed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, depictions of the Scandinavian North as a testing place for heroes gave way to representations where the region emerges as accessible and hospitable. Travel narratives like Alexander Hutchinson's *Try Lapland: A Fresh Field for Summer Tourists* (1870) played an important role in modifying the previously dominant paradigm. This article discusses Hutchinson's travel book as a transitional text where the North is transformed from a place of danger to a place of leisure. The redefinition of the region includes, among other things, a female gendering of the area compared to the masculine image of the Arctic conveyed in exploration narratives and a projection of the author as visitor and consumer rather than conqueror and explorer. The representation of place is inextricably bound up with the representation of self in the text, and by presenting himself as a middle-class tourist, Hutchinson presents Swedish Lapland as closer to English suburbia than to the North Pole. In this way, he contributes to the place-making that designs Lapland as a tourist destination in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In nineteenth-century Anglophone travel writing, the Scandinavian North is commonly depicted as harsh and inhospitable, a testing place for heroes. The region is associated with unpredictable climate conditions, distance from the comforts of civilization, barrenness, and exposure to natural forces. The Sami lifestyle is generally presented as incomprehensibly foreign, which adds to the sense that Lapland and the northern parts of Sweden, Norway, and Finland are incredibly far from the European centre, culturally as well as geographically. Representations depend on an imaginative geography where the boundary between north and south, or perhaps north and centre, is located fairly close to metropolitan Europe so that even regions considerably south of the Arctic Circle are conceived of as close to the North Pole. Imaginative geography is the "universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs'" (Said 54). Constructing northern Scandinavia as

a place of excitement and peril, writers imaginatively locate it as a space far removed from the familiar. Notions of the North as the frozen frontier are continuously circulated and correlate with a conception of masculinity characterized by physical superiority. As Renée Hulan notes in relation to Canada, the history of northern experience is shaped by “ideas about what it is to be a ‘man’” (98), and the notion that the North requires and brings out true manliness informs, for example, Arthur Dillon’s *A Winter in Iceland and Lapland* (1849) and Bayard Taylor’s *Northern Travel: Summer and Winter Pictures of Sweden, Lapland and Norway* (1858) where images of the tough and demanding landscape interrelate with the authors’ projection of themselves as explorers and adventurers.<sup>1</sup> The male-coded adventure discourse of the first half of the nineteenth century disqualifies the North—Canadian or Scandinavian—as a tourist destination and defines it as inaccessible to women.

Lord Dufferin’s popular account of his sea voyage to Spitsbergen, *Letters from High Latitudes* (1856), begins to change this dominant discourse, primarily through the mocking self-projection of the author as a gentleman out on a leisurely sailing trip rather than as a polar adventurer. At the same time, it is abundantly clear from both the text and the illustrations that the reality of the venture was far more challenging. The narrative exploits a tension between the traveller and the destination, with Spitsbergen emerging as foreign and dangerous while Lord Dufferin persistently presents himself as a tourist, travelling with his valet and with all the comforts of civilization in his cabin. Thus, the work can be regarded as a transitional text where the perilous, demanding image of the North is intertextually present as a background at the same time as Dufferin distances himself from the hero-ideal and so gentrifies and feminizes both the North and his own relationship with the region.<sup>2</sup>

The discursive change, or the way of thinking and talking about the North, that began with Dufferin’s book continued through the latter half of the nineteenth century and, gradually, the idea of the dangerous North was more likely to appear in connection with reports from polar expeditions than narratives of the Nordic countries. As tourism boomed in the latter half of the century, well-known locations in Italy, Greece, and the Alps began to lose their attraction and the Scandinavian North became a new tourist goal for seasoned travellers. This process required an imaginative relocation of the border so that northern Sweden, for example, was contrasted with emblems of the ultimate North like Siberia and the North Pole rather than with continental or British Europe. The adventure discourse of the first half of the century was modified by a tourist discourse which presented the

northern landscape as accessible and accommodating and the Sami people as hospitable and picturesque rather than disturbingly alien. Travel narratives like Alexander Hadden Hutchinson's *Try Lapland: A Fresh Field for Summer Tourists* (1870) played an important role in changing the paradigm.

Like Dufferin's account of Iceland and Spitsbergen, Hutchinson's travel book is a transitional text where the North is discursively transformed from a place of danger and adventure to a place of middle-class comfort and leisure. Danger is of course not incompatible with leisure activity and Elaine Freedgood shows that an important attraction of mountaineering in the Victorian period was the element of risk it entailed (120). At the same time, activities that are viewed as hazardous as long as they are unusual often lose this aura when they become common pursuits, as Ann C. Colley's study of nineteenth-century climbing clubs and Alpine tourism demonstrates (1–2). Although descriptions of risky endeavours supported a nineteenth-century ideal of muscular manliness, exposure to danger was generally constituted as unfeminine and in relation to the more adventure-oriented travel narratives of the first half of the century, the redefinition of the North in the latter half includes a female gendering of the landscape and a projection of the author as visitor and consumer rather than as conqueror and explorer. As a result, risk and danger are much less prominent features in the works. The representation of place is inextricably bound up with the representation of self, and by presenting himself as a middle-class tourist in *Try Lapland*, Hutchinson moves Swedish Lapland closer to English suburbia or the rural English past than to the North Pole. That places are constructed through narrative is abundantly clear in travel literature, and Hutchinson takes part in the place-making that designs Lapland as a tourist destination suitable for British professionals and their families towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Alexander Hadden Hutchinson was born in Nottingham, England in 1833. His father, Richard Scholes Hutchinson, was a medical doctor (*London Gazette* 24923) and the family belonged to the professional middle class. In his late teens, Hutchinson was admitted to the Royal Military Academy as a Gentleman Cadet, which means that his family was able to pay for his tuition, equipment, room and board ("The History of RMA Sandhurst"), and on passing his exams ("Royal Military Academy") he received a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery on 23 July 1852 (*London Gazette* 21336). He had a solid, although unremarkable career in the army and was promoted to First Lieutenant on 17 February 1854 (*London Gazette* 21522), to Second Captain on 1 April 1859 (*London Gazette* 22247), to Captain on 24 July 1867 (*London Gazette* 23280) and to Major on 5 July 1872 (*London Gazette*

23876). He seems not to have been engaged in active warfare, but served as a Subaltern Officer at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, Garrison Instructor at Aldershot ("Naval and Military News"), and Commander of the Artillery at Pembroke Dock, South Wales ("Ross"). In 1861 he was removed to the Supernumerary List (*London Gazette* 22613) and the same year he married Mary Elizabeth Johnston who later accompanied him on the trip to Lapland ("Births, Marriages, and Deaths"). After serving as Regimental Lieutenant-Colonel for five years, he was placed on half-pay 1 October 1882 (*London Gazette* 25150) and retired with the rank of Major-General the following month (*London Gazette* 25171). Sometime between 1870 and 1872 when his second travel book, *Try Cracow and the Carpathians*, was published, he became a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and a Fellow of the Geological Society of London. He is listed as a botanic collector in the Harvard University Herbaria database, and the book about Carpathia includes a list of the region's flora (*Try Cracow* 252). He addressed world politics and the situation in Galicia, Austria, and Russia in *The Next Battle-Field* (1871) and after his retirement he took an interest in local politics and was nominated to the Board of Improvement in Bournemouth ("Bournemouth April 3"). Although his own political inclinations cannot be determined, his brother was a Liberal MP ("Ross"). He was financially comfortable throughout his life as suggested by the fact that he was able to donate £5 in 1862 to the Lancashire Distress Fund, which was set up to aid victims of the economic depression caused by the cessation of cotton imports to Lancashire during the American Civil War ("The Lancashire Distress Fund"). Later in life, he possessed a considerable collection of art, antique books, china, and furniture, which was sold when he moved from his Bournemouth residence Owthorpe to Bath in 1899 ("Sale of the 'Owthorpe' Art Collection"). From Bath he moved to Ross-on-Wye, Wales, where he died in 1903 ("Ross"), leaving a comfortable fortune of more than £10,000 ("Here and There"). The facts about his life that can be gleaned from brief newspaper references indicate that he was a well-educated, upper-middle-class gentleman with the social and scientific interests typical of the Victorian bourgeoisie, and sufficiently well off to pursue them.

In 1861, Hutchinson published a *Guide to the Army Competitive Examinations* with supplementary information material for applicants to Woolwich or Sandhurst. At least in his capacity as military instructor, he advocated moderation and religious observance, stating that "the age is now gone by when it was supposed that officers in the army lived only for pleasure and amusement, forgetting alike the God who made them and the Saviour who died for them" (*Guide* 8). He supported mission work and was engaged in religious and philanthropic activities ("Bournemouth Nov. 20";

“Ross”), and given these interests and attitudes, it seems logical that, as a tourist, he should avoid the European pleasure spots and look for quieter and more wholesome places to visit.

Hutchinson was one of many Victorian amateur travel writers and the literary quality of his work is average, “without the least pretence to literary adornment,” according to one reviewer (“Current Literature”). Publishers were sensitive to changes in public taste, and whereas readers might have preferred romantic and exciting accounts before tourism became more widespread, there was a market for useful and usable travel accounts toward the end of the nineteenth century. Hutchinson’s objective is thus not to provide an exciting or aesthetic reading experience, but to give practical information to future travellers. In the first chapter of *Try Lapland* he reproduces warnings from friends like “you’ll be frozen to death in the Arctic Circle” (2), which indicates that the polar paradigm was still dominant in popular perceptions of northern Scandinavia. His depiction of Lapland as friendly and accommodating goes against such preconceptions and aims to dispel mental pictures that discourage prospective travellers. He was by no means alone in modifying the dangerous and exotic images of the North, and constructions of the area as an Arcadian alternative to industrialized centres in Europe are characteristic of travel writing about Scandinavia from the last decades of the nineteenth century. An increasing desire for nostalgic access to the disappearing past is of great importance for this discursive shift. In late-Victorian Britain, the rural cottage emerged as a symbol of vanishing rural origins (Austin 126–127) and, in a parallel development, the Scandinavian North began to be constructed as a place where this pastoral past could be retrieved by European city dwellers (Hansson 268). Travellers projected such nostalgic expectations onto destinations in Sweden and Norway and generally found what they wanted. However, as the examples in H. Arnold Barton’s book about foreign travel to Scandinavia 1765–1815 suggests, the rural utopias are more likely to be located in the south of the countries while the northern parts remain uncivilized and remote. Similarly, as Peter Fjågesund and Ruth Symes show in their study of British representations of Norway in the nineteenth century, the southern parts of the country are commonly conceived of as picturesque whereas the Far North is often presented as awe-inspiring and sublime. In contrast to this general pattern, Hutchinson includes Lapland in his Arcadian construction, so that the old Sami settlement Kvikkjokk in northern Norrbotten, which is his ultimate destination, emerges as a nostalgically familiar rural village rather than as culturally alien.

The idea of what constitutes a comfortable—as opposed to a challenging—vacation spot has not changed remarkably from the beginning of tourism, and the middle-class, nineteenth-century leisure traveller hoped for more or less the same things that present-day charter tourists expect. The location should be new and fresh and offer either grandiose natural vistas or interesting cultural events. It should be relatively easy to reach so not too much valuable time has to be spent on transportation. The place should be exotic enough to justify a visit but not so foreign that it becomes threatening. There should be opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and new discoveries. It should preferably be inexpensive. It should be safe. The locals should be kind, hospitable, and service-minded. All these criteria are met by Swedish Lapland, according to Alexander Hutchinson's description of his and his wife's vacation in the summer of 1869:

The difficulty of finding new ground for travel is increasing every year for those who, with but a limited time at their disposal, are yet tired of the beaten paths of Ramsgate or Scarborough, Switzerland or the Rhine, and pant after lands fresh and fair, of which they have never seen a photograph, where the gorgeous hotel with its elongated bills, and the pertinacious touter with his cringing greasy manners, are alike unknown. ... Some must have mountain air and scenery; some fishing; others shooting. Some must sketch, catch butterflies, or botanize; others collect eggs, or gather ferns. Besides, ladies may wish to be of the party! Well, you may add these together—plus the economy and cleanliness so dear to the English heart—and find the sum total in the land visited by the writer and his wife, during the months of June and July in 1869. (v–vi)

It is clear that foreign tourism is well-established at the time of the Hutchinsons' Lapland trip. Not only the English resorts, but also Switzerland and the Rhine valley have lost their attraction and are characterized by outrageous prices and salesmen attempting to fleece the tourists. "We prefer the clear, bracing air of the North with its absence of night, to the short days and Swiss extortion of the South," Hutchinson states (2). Just like present-day travel agents introduce new destinations in their yearly catalogues, Hutchinson wishes to launch the as yet unspoiled region of Swedish Lapland and *Try Lapland: A Fresh Field for Summer Tourists* (1870) is a public relations piece as much as it is an account of the journey. Lapland, he argues, offers beautiful scenery, clean air, and low prices and is particularly suitable for women tourists. A contemporary review of the book summarizes its message:

“Absolute novelty without danger, and economy without discomfort” (“Seeing Lapland” 426).<sup>4</sup>

“Novelty without danger” is the key idea behind Hutchinson’s place-making, as opposed to the place created in Dillon’s and Taylor’s narratives, which is defined by danger and exoticism in spite of the fact that the reality of their experiences sometimes belied this image. Part of the difference between the Laplands depicted can of course be explained by the fact that Dillon and Taylor travelled in winter whereas Hutchinson visited the area in summer. Aside from being instances of place-making, the travelogues are, however, also “acts of self-making” (O’Neill 44), with the former writers projecting themselves as adventurers and heroes and the latter as a middle-class tourist. In Bayard Taylor’s *Northern Travel* (1858), the initial picture of northern Sweden is consequently that it is an Arctic wilderness and after enduring the cold and the ice storms, he concludes that the region in winter is “the limbo of Death” (121). Rural idylls and provincial town life contradict this description and so the small towns along the Baltic coast are ignored in his account:

There is nothing to say about these towns; they are mere villages, with less than a thousand inhabitants each, and no peculiar interest, either local or historical, attaching to any of them. We have slept in Luleå and Piteå and dined in Umeå—and further my journal saith not. (156)

Hutchinson pays considerably more attention to the small towns in the North. In his text, Luleå becomes a symbol of northern honesty, as a place where there is no need for a prison or a local police force since crime is virtually non-existent: “Thieving is an offence unheard of; and, on leaving your house, the door-key is hung on a peg outside, to show all comers that you are not at home. – I pause, to allow this wonderful fact to sink into the minds of my readers” (71). The description was quoted in several reviews of *Try Lapland* as one of the factors that made the region Edenic (“An Arctic Eden”).

In contrast to Taylor who ignores the mundane, Hutchinson gives extensive coverage to the arts of eating and sleeping. Instead of focusing on the extraordinary, he makes the ordinary exotic by highlighting the differences between Swedish and English practices. Discussing Amelia B. Edwards’ two volumes of travel writing about the Dolomites and the Nile, Patricia O’Neill notes that “travellers by definition do not identify with people of foreign lands, no matter how much pleasure or pain they experience by



temporarily adopting the dress, food, language, even customs and manners of the place they visit" (66). Identification would remove the difference that is the *raison d'être* of a travel narrative. The resistance to establish a sense of sameness not only appears in meetings with indigenous peoples, but also informs encounters with people and habits closer to the traveller's own class and culture. In Hutchinson's case, this principle seems to be at work when he devotes several pages to the custom of ruining the guests' appetites, as he sees it, by serving a smorgasbord before the main meal. In line with late-Victorian ideas of proper gendered behaviour, he finds it particularly strange to see women fetching their own buffet food instead of waiting to be served at table:

It certainly does look odd to see a lady take a piece of bread with her fingers, lay it in the palm of the left hand, spread it with butter, and plaster on the top of this a raw split herring, and then away to the large table and sit down to breakfast or dinner, as the case may be. (43–44)

A similar distance characterizes his description of the extending sofa-bed, which, like most foreign beds "reaches the proper size in *width*, though considerably wanting in *length*" (41). The definition of what is proper, in the case of the bed as well as the meals, emanates from English norms, but Hutchinson's tone is neither as arrogant nor as condescending as in some more imperialist travel narratives. His objective in the text is not primarily to emphasize British superiority, although his belief in the latter remains unshaken throughout the narrative. Instead, his aim is to transform everyday experiences like eating and sleeping in Swedish inns into something foreign and exotic.

The theory of travel literature is to a great extent informed by Anglo-American investigations into writing about the former British colonies. As a result, it has become axiomatic that the travel text is an imperialist narrative that expresses the traveller's right to claim the travel destination as a provisional colony. According to Helen Gilbert and Anna Johnston it has become impossible to discuss the history of travel without including the history of the various colonizing projects of the Western modern era (1). A problem with the focus on British historical experience is that the concept of imperialism has become synonymous with the kind of exploitation, oppression, and cultural domination that took place in Victoria's empire. There is no doubt that many nineteenth-century travellers show profound contempt for the local inhabitants of the places they visit and bolster



imperialist attitudes by creating and maintaining stereotypical notions of other cultures. Touristic consumption of sights and souvenirs, moreover, can in many ways be compared to the ruthless exploitation of natural and cultural resources that took place around the British Empire. Even so, an interpretation paradigm based on colonial conditions is not automatically applicable to travel writing generally. An English tourist in Africa or India could find support for his or her complacency in the colonial administration, but would not have a comparable position of power in one of the sovereign states of Europe. An important argument in Susan Morgan's study of Victorian women's writing about Southeast Asia is that the political relationships between the travel destination and the traveller's country of origin may be as important as gender, class, nationality, or other features of the writer's identity in shaping the final work (Morgan 1–30). Against this background, Hutchinson's positive representation of Swedish Lapland may be traced to the fact that Great Britain and Sweden were sovereign states with a relationship based on neither power nor dependence, as well as to Hutchinson's middle-class background and the objectives he intends to achieve.

Hutchinson's annoyed comments on hawking and extortionate price levels in Switzerland indicate that not only the tourist destination but also the tourist is, to some extent, the target of exploitation. One of the most positive aspects of Lapland, in his view, is therefore that the people of the area have not yet learned how to cash in on the visitors' needs. Mary Louise Pratt uses the concept "contact zone" to describe the real or imagined area where visitors and locals, colonizers and colonized, interact and establish some kind of—usually unequal—relationship (6). The character of the contact zone is chaotic, however, and the power structure is not static. Although the travellers make use of and exploit human, natural, and cultural resources in the places they visit, they are themselves exploited for the benefit of the local economy, as Hutchinson's complaints about Swiss street vendors demonstrate.

Travel literature contains numerous examples of visitors' patronizing and contemptuous attitudes towards local inhabitants, but the tourist also entirely depends on the goodwill and knowledge of, for example, local guides and interpreters. A further example of the instability of the power relationship is when local inhabitants transform visitors' interest in their lifestyle to a source of income. In a study of nineteenth-century Niagara Falls tourism, Karen Dubinsky relates how Native North Americans presented themselves as a kind of spectacle for white, middle-class sightseers through the staging of various "Indian events" in the 1870s and 1880s (256). A parallel

in northern Scandinavia was the marketing of Kautokeino as a village where the tourist might come across “real Sami” people.

The conflict between the assimilationist ideals that lie behind the travellers’ expressions of condescension and their wish to meet “genuine” indigenous people can frequently be seen in travel literature. Bayard Taylor’s description of the no-longer-pagan Sami he meets in Kautokeino is a particularly clear example of this clash as well as of the paradigm that places indigenous people somewhere on the scale between human beings and objects of curiosity:

Their conversion has destroyed what little of barbaric poetry there might have been in their composition, and, instead of chanting to the spirits of the winds, and clouds, and mountains, they have become furious ranters, who frequently claim to be possessed by the Holy Ghost. As human beings, the change, incomplete as it is, is nevertheless to their endless profit; but as objects of interest to the traveller, it has been to their detriment. It would be far more picturesque to describe a sabaoth of Lapland witches than a prayer-meeting of shouting converts, yet no friend of his race could help rejoicing to see the latter substituted for the former. In proportion, therefore, as the Lapps have become enlightened (like all other savage tribes), they have become less interesting. (115–16)

It is no question that such actual or wished-for transformations of a living culture to a commodity is a variety of colonial oppression. At the same time, the Sami, like the Native American tribes around Niagara Falls, could profit from the tourists’ desire for “authentic” experiences by offering them fake displays. Susanna Henrietta Kent’s travelogue *Within the Arctic Circle* (1877), for example, contains a description of how the Sami people in a nomad village near Tromsø, in northern Norway, turn the tourists’ curiosity into profit by showing their reindeer and admitting visitors into their camp for payment. Although Kent is sublimely uninterested in the fact that the camp is a home, not a tourist attraction, the Sami are not solely innocent victims of the colonialist attitude she represents, but also active developers of a local tourist business that exploits such attitudes.<sup>5</sup>

Despite professed desires for authentic experiences, however, insufficient adaptation to the demands of the tourist industry is sometimes cause for annoyance, as when Cutcliffe Hyne expresses his irritation that important landmarks like the Arctic Circle are not signposted:

On this stage we were due to recross that imaginary boundary, the Arctic Circle, and come once more into that Temperate Zone which was our more native atmosphere, and we were on the keen look-out for some official recognition of its whereabouts. I do not quite know what we expected to see—a cairn or a wooden notice would have satisfied us—but the absence of any mark whatever jarred upon us. That a country which could mark off the kilometres on its roads with fine red posts, should ignore a geographical acquisition like the Arctic Circle, seemed a piece of unappreciative barbarism. (271)

Although the comment is slightly tongue-in-cheek, the comparison of the milestones, which were of practical use to people who lived and worked in the area, with the equivalent of an Arctic Circle Visitor Centre reveals the same expectations as when Kent fails to realize that the Tromsø Sami campsite is primarily a home place: the visitors' desires are paramount and the everyday needs of local inhabitants go unnoticed. Yet these patronizing demands form the basis for businesses catering to the visitors' requirements. Even though travel writers often express contempt or compassion for local people who offer various services, and fail to see them as human beings with their own lives to lead, the travellers' very visit to the place is what enables the development of a service industry. The widely accepted notion that travel writing is an imperialistically marked genre does not necessarily mean that the trip described was an unambiguous instance of imperialism in practice. The service and experience industry constitutes an area where power relations fluctuate. Further, although travel literature is to a great extent a genre describing exotic otherness, Hutchinson acknowledges that he and his wife also constitute a spectacle for the local inhabitants: the Sami people in Kvikkjokk are "as much astonished and amused" with the Hutchinsons as the English visitors are with them (134).<sup>6</sup> En route to Jokkmokk, the main talking point as soon as their boat approaches another is the Englishman and all his equipment (86). The settlers in Naivi are so determined not to miss a single aspect of the English couple's visit that they even attend Mrs. Hutchinson when she brushes her teeth (160).<sup>7</sup> Before setting out on his homeward journey, Hutchinson auctions off some of his equipment in Luleå and thus becomes a supplier of English souvenirs to the northerners (171). The local inhabitants may lack a voice in the text, but examples like these reveal that the English couple do not only consume what Lapland has to offer but are themselves objects of consumption.

The way foreign peoples are depicted is influenced by the fact that travel literature is a genre on the border between fact and fiction. The authors'

intentions, as well as the authorial positions they adopt, greatly determine their descriptions of local inhabitants. Some writers position themselves as ethnologists or anthropologists and make scientific or semi-scientific claims, not infrequently based on thoughts derived from nineteenth-century racial biology. Writers who project an image of themselves as nature lovers are more aesthetically inclined and rarely interested in the living conditions of local people. The same is true for many works by scientifically oriented travellers like geologists or biologists, or for accounts by hunting and fishing visitors where the reader is frequently left with the impression that there are no indigenous people at all in the area. The informative writer may focus on history or current social affairs, but refrain from portraying actual people. The enthusiast, on the other hand, will often emphasize positive features like honesty, helpfulness, and approachability in the locals. All these writing positions can sometimes appear in the same work and a mix of attitudes is common. In Hutchinson's case, favourable depictions of the inhabitants of northern Sweden dominate. The myth about friendly northern people is a vital element of the place he constructs and the PR discourse to which his text contributes.

Hutchinson's sympathetic approach does not mean that he is non-judgmental or more broad-minded than his countrymen, however. Like many middle-class travellers, he is convinced of the superiority of his own culture, and even though he takes note of the striking lack of fog and coal dust on the other side of the English Channel, he persists in the opinion that the English climate is more conducive to work:

our climate is the best for work; and though it may be asked whether we are really the happier for all our energy and labour under the sun, and whether the people abroad do not appear more tractable, better-behaved, better clothed and fed, than the same class in England, no one would wish our English youths to give up their spirit and activity for the idle lounging-about pleasures of the continent. (8–9)

The advantages of life on the continent fall short in comparison with the English work ethic and Hutchinson shows no inclination to broaden his outlook. His positive evaluation of the people in northern Sweden is consequently based on his belief that they can be made to fit the English norms he applies.

Nevertheless, the North is not expected to live up to English standards culturally or socially and the Hutchinson couple do not anticipate any features of advanced civilization. Before setting out on their trip, they buy a

stock of cheap trinkets and rubber toys “with which to amuse the natives” (5) and they also include a travelling bath in their luggage. On arrival in the capital city Stockholm, they plan to purchase a number of Sami-language Bibles to give to people in Lapland: “English travellers little know how much God’s word is valued in those lands where there is no facility of purchasing it, or how few of the people whom they meet with every day have ever had a copy in their hands!” Hutchinson explains (52). The Bible may not have been found in every household in nineteenth-century Sweden, but several religious revivals spread through the country around the middle of the century, and Bible reading was by no means as rare as he imagined. Knowing little about the actual situation, however, the couple expect to find undeveloped culture and naïve, albeit kindly, savages in the North. Spotting bricks, machinery, velvet-covered furniture, perambulators, and a bicycle in the cargo of the steamship they board in Stockholm, they react with disappointment and hope the goods will be unloaded before they reach their destination: “We did hope to have left such civilisation behind us when we neared the Arctic circle” (57). A similar reaction is recounted in Bayard Taylor’s travelogue about northern Norway: “Pianos in Lapland, Parisian dresses among the Lofodens, billiard-tables in Hammerfest—whither shall we turn to find the romance of the North!” (249). Contempt for the perceived lack of civilization, combined with a lament for the advance of civilization, is commonly found in travel literature. Whereas the condescending attitudes have nothing to recommend them, the desire for unspoiled environments may seem quite positive in the light of present-day ambitions concerning nature preservation and eco-friendly development strategies. Hutchinson’s and other travellers’ construction of a northern Arcadia, however, allows the region no potential for progress, and as an unspoiled tourist destination, the North primarily becomes a commodity for metropolitan benefit.

The conflict between the tourists’ wish for authenticity and their service requirements sometimes becomes blatant. On the one hand, Hutchinson wants a primitive Lapland free from bicycles and fine furniture, on the other hand he wants to be able to travel north by steamship and stay in comfortable hotels. One way to solve this conflict is to imagine separate spheres for visitors and local inhabitants. In Hutchinson’s text, people are placed into three different groups: his own group, that is, the generally superior tourist/consumer; the group offering services; and the group mainly functioning as tourist attraction. The middle, service-providing group can then have access to and offer modern comforts whereas the indigenous population is expected to be free of such signs of civilization. Problems occur when the categories

cannot be kept separate and people Hutchinson has consigned to one group appear in another.

The goal for the couple's journey is Kvikkjokk, in the mountain range between Sweden and Norway, and Hutchinson stresses that as far as is known, no "foreign lady" had yet attempted the trip (75). His wife's presence on the journey and in the text is a vital contribution to his place-making and qualifies the dominant, masculinized discourse by indicating that it is perfectly possible to achieve reasonable comfort in the North. This partial feminization of the region does not entail any identification with the locals, however, nor is Mrs. Hutchinson's Victorian femininity destabilized. A young girl drives the couple in a cart and, to the astonishment of her passengers, she seems completely unperturbed by the bumps and twists in the road (79–80). Like the princess in H. C. Andersen's story "The Princess and the Pea," whose royal nature is proved when her sensitive skin prevents her from sleeping with a pea under her mattresses, the Hutchinsons demonstrate their higher level of civilization by suffering greatly from the bumpy ride. While earlier travellers like Taylor and Dillon were anxious to show themselves physically equal to or even hardier and stronger than the people they encountered, Hutchinson preserves his and his wife's middle-class respectability by drawing attention to their difference from the coach driver, and emphasizing their difficulty to endure the ordeal. Nevertheless, the description of the Hutchinsons' coach journey falls within the tourist paradigm whereas Taylor's and Dillon's accounts belong to an exploration paradigm which makes the North inaccessible to any but the most adventurous traveller.

The couple stay overnight in the small village of Edefors, roughly 85 kilometres northwest of Luleå, where their hosts give up their own sleeping chamber and produce the best meal they can for their guests (83).<sup>8</sup> Service is excellent in North, Hutchinson proclaims, not least because the tourists pay more than the locals could otherwise earn:

I may as well state here, that your orders are always sure to be punctually attended to—your pay so far exceeding anything they can otherwise earn, that they are only too happy to oblige you. We gave our hospitable land-lady 4s. 4d. for our bed, breakfast, and tea; which is in Lapland the outside charge, and with which they are always more than satisfied; in fact, we received nothing but civility and kindness from all the Swedish settlers of whose services we made use. This is much to their credit, as we were often twenty miles away from any house but their own, and entirely in their power. (85)

Even though the tourists depend completely on the goodwill of the inhabitants, the people in Lapland have not become corrupt. In Norway, which was already well-established as a travel destination at the time, English travellers are termed “wild geese”: they arrive in the summer, are plucked, and then fly away again, Hutchinson comments (76). This mercenary mentality is absent in Swedish Lapland. According to Hutchinson, the bearers who struggled with their heavy luggage on the road to Jokkmokk were grateful for their moderate pay, in contrast to the porter who carried a considerably lighter burden a short way in Dover but considered himself ill-used at receiving the same sum (102). The implied conclusion is that greed is still unknown to the northerners.

In Jokkmokk the couple see their “first real Lapp,” an older man dressed in reindeer garments. There is no interaction, and the Sami man becomes a tourist attraction in the same way as when the Niagara tourists spot their “first Indian” (Dubinsky 255). A later visit to a Sami hut is however depicted far more negatively:

In the dirtiest room we had yet met with, stood a still dirtier old woman, making coffee. Her husband, an old man of seventy, sat on one side, while a hideous deformed little Lapp (whether man or woman it was difficult to say), squatted on the floor on the other, in full costume, consisting of high-peaked, blue cloth cap and reindeer-skin dress, ornamented with beads and spangles. Her face was brown as a berry, long lanky black hair streamed down her cheeks, and, staring at you with the wickedest little bead-black eyes, she begged for “Penge” (money). (118)

Karen Dubinsky characterizes such first meetings with the locals as instances of “racial panic” (256). Whether the travellers react with disgust, compassion, romanticizing admiration, or contempt, the encounter threatens to dissolve the boundaries of the civilized, European self. The most common strategy to contain this threat is to master the foreign by objectifying it. The Sami in Hutchinson’s account is hideous, of indeterminate gender, and filthy habits. He or she becomes a symbol of difference, and proof that the refined lifestyle the tourist will eventually return to is, after all, preferable to life in the unspoiled North.

As neither picturesque nor service-oriented, the people in the hut cannot be placed in either of the categories Hutchinson establishes for locals, and thus there is nothing positive to say about them. The next Sami person Hutchinson encounters, however, is eminently willing to offer her services,



and as a result her otherness and witch-like appearance do not produce the disgust and distancing of the earlier experience:

Our hostess, such a funny, goodnatured creature, was most active in our behalf. Puffing and blowing at every step, she nearly worked her legs off trotting about to prepare us something to eat and otherwise make us comfortable.

She was not more than four feet high, and looked like a little witch as she bustled about the room, hunting up all her possessions for our use. ... The little Lapp succeeded in giving us quite an excellent repast. (122–23)

There is no suggestion that Hutchinson is interested in the culture or living conditions of the Sami. His evaluations are based on the level of service they can provide, and the Sami people he can see from a distance who have nothing to offer except as spectacle are described in either racist or romantic terms: as “the ugly, pigmy” people he can see from his window in Kvikkjokk (131), as the zoomorphized “brace of little Lapps” watching his fishing expeditions (153), or as the “nice little couple” he meets in the village (135). The romantic descriptions make the strongest impressions on most of the reviewers of *Try Lapland*, and one of them comments that Kvikkjokk has to be the original setting of “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”: “Here is no savage human life, to fill one with a mournful disgust, no strife, no cruelty, but a mild and gentle people—civil, harmless, laborious—to whom crime and violence are unknown—innocent and primitive, friendly and respectful” (“Seeing Lapland” 429). Continuing in a similar vein, the reviewer interprets Hutchinson’s Lapland as an enchanting Lilliput, where potatoes are the size of walnuts, lamb steaks are no bigger than larks, and a calf is the size of a cat, focusing on the charming fairytale-like qualities of the miniature vegetables and animals instead of the challenges faced by northern agriculture (429). The reduction of Lapland to a fairyland has the same effect as Hutchinson’s construction of an unspoiled Arcadia in that it resists and denies the idea of modern development in the region.

Hutchinson and his wife stay in Kvikkjokk for two weeks and declare themselves pleased with everything they have experienced—their hospitable host and his family, the kindly Sami people, and the settlers in the area. The book is concluded by an extended repetition of the title’s slogan:

Never had we spent a more thoroughly enjoyable time. Health and spirits were recruited and invigorated; and though our pockets were lighter by £100, we shall always look back with satisfaction and delight on our Arctic trip, and remember with gratitude the advice given to us (which we now give to others), "Try Lapland for your summer holiday!" (228)

A common feature of travelogues is that the traveller represents him- or herself as alone in the landscape, in accordance with the exploration paradigm. This is true, for example, of a great deal of Bayard Taylor's account of northern Sweden. It is, after all, an important sales point that the text describes something new and unknown. Hutchinson shows some awareness of this need for newsworthiness when he emphasizes that few travellers and no foreign woman have visited Kvikkjokk or when he refers to the northern forest as a sensation no Murray or Bædeker have described and no photographer captured (98).<sup>9</sup> More than many other travel writers, however, he places his account in the contact zone. In his Lapland there are people who can fulfill roles both as exotic attractions and well-behaved servants. It is definitely no equal relationship, and his interest in the everyday life of the people is non-existent. The access to decent comforts and the willingness of the locals to accept his superiority as a consumer of goods and services lie behind his favourable depiction of the people in the region. It is worth going to Lapland because there, the people generally act in accordance with the principle that the customer is always right. Hutchinson's travelogue is good PR and succeeds in persuading at least one other visitor to go North: "the reading of a book called 'Try Lapland'" convinced W. D. Knight in 1873 to undertake the journey he later described in his book *The Mosquito Country* (Knight 2). A complex, balanced, and realistic account of Lapland and its people may not have achieved the same result. The place Hutchinson constructs has the necessary features to make a foreign visitor feel welcome, but really has very little content in its own right. Unlike representations of foreign otherness that maintain a European metropolitan identity by serving as its ugly opposite, Hutchinson's place-making functions as a nostalgic reflection of his middle-class self. The new experience he recommends to his readers is the opportunity to go abroad without being threatened by the unfamiliar.

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## Notes

1. See Heidi Hansson, "Bayard Taylor and the Genders of the North," *Edda* 1 (2006): 18–33 for a discussion of northern Scandinavia as masculinized space.
2. See Heidi Hansson, "The Gentleman's North: Lord Dufferin and the Beginnings of Arctic Tourism," *Studies in Travel Writing* 13.1 (2009): 61–73 for a discussion of *Letters from High Latitudes* and gendered images of the North.
3. "Place-making" is here used in its architectural sense of creating attractive public places that people will want to visit.
4. Part of the argument about Hutchinson's travelogue has previously appeared in Swedish, as "Turisten och det vänliga folket i norr," *Oknytt* 3-4 (2005): 55–68.
5. See Heidi Hansson, "Henrietta Kent and the Feminised North," *Nordlit* 22 (2007): 71–96 for a fuller discussion of Kent's travelogue.
6. Travel literature is also to a great extent a matter of self-writing, and a simple genre definition does not exist.
7. The place-name Naivi appears as "Niavi" in Hutchinson's text.
8. The place-name Edefors appears as "Edenfors" in Hutchinson's text.
9. The most widely used guidebooks in Europe in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century were produced by the companies founded by the English publisher John Murray III and the German publisher Karl Baedeker. Their guidebooks provided practical, objective information and identified places worth visiting. They set the standard for the genre and the word Baedeker, in particular, soon became synonymous with "guidebook."

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