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Film and the Welfare State: Three Informational Films about Healthcare

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The decade following the Second World War was a period of consolidation of the Scandinavian welfare states. While the notion of *folkhemmet* or 'The People's Home' was popularised by Swedish Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson in 1928, the occupation of Denmark and Norway by Nazi Germany from 1940 to 1945 slowed progress in the social sphere. From the late 1940s onwards, a decade of new legislation, social organisation and increasing productivity and prosperity paved the way for the 'Golden Age' of the welfare state in the 1960s (see Hilson 2008 and chapter 5 in this volume). This period coincided with an international 'golden age' of informational cinema: film in the service of the state, industries and non-governmental organisations. Such films were made to educate, inform and persuade rather than primarily to entertain, and in Scandinavia they were a crucial tool for government efforts to explain social, technological and legislative change to domestic and foreign audiences.

This chapter examines three examples of short informational films made between 1947 and 1963 for a range of audiences, all of which focus on a specific aspect of the welfare state: healthcare and sickness insurance. The first film, *Health for Denmark* (Torben Anton Svendsen, Denmark, 1947) was produced as part of a series of short films presenting aspects of Danish social policy to the English-speaking world in the immediate post-war period. The second, *Marianne på sykehus* (Marianne in Hospital, Titus Vibe Müller, Norway, 1950), was primarily intended to reassure Norwegian children about potential hospital treatment, but also promoted Norway's sickness insurance scheme to parents. Finally, *The Riddle of Sweden* (Gösta Werner, Sweden, 1963) was made to inform international viewers about what was often referred to as 'the Swedish Model' of a welfare state underpinned by industrial productivity.

Before considering these films in detail, however, the chapter first provides an overview of lines of enquiry into the relationship between cinema, the state and national identity. It then introduces the particular kind of cinema of which our case studies are examples: informational film, or 'useful cinema', and suggests various points of focus for the analysis of such films.

Cinema and the State

From its earliest days in the mid-1890s, moving image technology was developed for the purposes of commercial entertainment (see for example Grieveson and Krämer 2004). However, precisely because of cinema's potential to generate revenue, and its perceived power to affect collective and individual behaviours and beliefs, governments and other institutions have sought to intervene in or harness the influence of cinema in different ways at different times. The relations between cinema and the state thus present a wide range of potential perspectives for analysis.

In the Nordic context, film scholars have investigated a number of distinctive features of the national cinema industries. For example, the decade up to 1916 is generally regarded as a 'golden age' for Danish cinema, when genre films such as mysteries, science fiction and erotic melodrama were exported worldwide (see for example Schepelern 2010). From the late 1910s, Swedish cinema blossomed, with emphasis on sophisticated literary adaptations (see for example Larsson and Marklund 2010). In both cases, national censorship bureaux were established early on, and cinema tickets were subject to an entertainment tax (Hedling 2016; Schepelern 2010). Through the mechanism of film censorship, governments intervene to police social and moral norms, such as gender roles, sexual behaviours and depiction of violence. The entertainment tax functioned to re-route income from commercial entertainment into other policy areas, such as enlightening public information films. Similarly, in newly-independent Norway, the government enacted legislation in 1913 which would mitigate the potentially corrupting effects of cinema through censorship and through the provision of enlightening films, and also generate income for the public purse to support cultural life more broadly. A distinctive feature of the Norwegian system was its organisation at municipal level: film distribution and programming, ownership of cinemas, and, later, filmmaking, fell under the aegis of local authorities (see Solum 2016). The monopoly of municipal authorities over cinema in Norway lasted until the 2010s.

A key concept in the study of Nordic film cultures has been 'small-nation cinema' (Hjort 2005; Thomson 2018). This approach to film history posits that countries around the size of the Nordic states display a range of distinctive tendencies in film policy, filmmaker education, film production and distribution which can be attributed to their scale. In recent decades, Denmark and Iceland in particular can be seen to have leveraged the notion of 'small-nation' cinema, in two distinct ways. On the one hand, the Danish government, especially under the auspices of the Danish Film Institute, has sought to use cinema as an element in nation branding, and has operated a range of subsidy schemes for filmmakers producing films in both Danish and English (Hjort 2005, 9). On the other hand, Iceland has adopted the strategy of attracting international film productions to the country, promoting its spectacular scenery as a shooting location, offering tax breaks to filmmakers and fostering a national talent pool by ensuring a regular stream of overseas cinema practitioners to work in Iceland (Norðfjörð 2007). Overall, a wide variety of state support strategies for cinema can be observed across the Nordic region, encompassing, for example, subsidies for national productions and international co-productions, language-specific subsidies, publicly-funded filmmaker education, investment in technologies and expertise to ensure the preservation, restoration and digitisation of national film heritage, and inventive modes of mediating that heritage to domestic and overseas audiences (for a range of case studies, see Hjort and Lindqvist 2016).

Cinema and National Identity

Although films have always been produced, funded and circulated on an international scale, questions of national identity haunt cinema, in comparable ways to national literature or painting. Three factors in particular make the relationship between cinema and nation rather complex. First, filmmaking is an expensive and collective enterprise, so cast, crew and funding are often drawn from a number of countries. Second, as cinema has been an audio-visual technology since the advent of sound film around 1927, the language(s) spoken in a film imbue it with a cultural identity and can necessitate the use of subtitles, complicating its reception abroad. A third aspect of the relationship between cinema and nation is that films both tell stories about, and share images of, defined places. While novels, for example, have an important role in shaping how people understand themselves as belonging to 'imagined communities'

(Anderson 1991), by its very nature as an audio-visual medium, cinema photographically 'images' communities. As they travel, films are thus often understood to both document and represent the nation from which they emanate. And some films become emblematic of a national identity for the domestic population. Films are just one thread in the broader tapestry of the ever-shifting cultural identity of a nation or region (for a range of case studies and approaches, see Hjort and MacKenzie 2000).

Such networks of images have been a focus for research in Scandinavian cultural history over the last decade. One influential model that can be used as a tool to identify and analyse meaning-making about national identity was proposed by Kazimierz Musiał (2002). The key concepts are xenostereotypes and autostereotypes: ideas about a country that originate outside and inside the nation respectively (see also chapters 11 and 14 in this volume). For example, the idea that modern-day Scandinavians are descended from Vikings found expression in the marketing of the then newly-established Scandinavian Airline Systems (SAS) in the 1940s. The aircraft were given call names such as Dan Viking, and notepaper on board was emblazoned with 'On board the flying Viking ships'; the (fictional) voice of Dan Viking was used to narrate an English-language informational film called *They Guide You Across* (Ingolf Boisen 1949), which detailed the safety systems and navigation technologies which undergirded the then new route across the Atlantic to New York (Thomson 2018, 88–100). Such imagery was calculated to appeal both to Scandinavian and international passengers, and leveraged associations such as hardiness, navigational skill and regional (as opposed to national) cultural specificities. An important point is that both kinds of stereotype can be seen to interact and can be hard to disentangle.

State-Sponsored Informational Film

The example of *They Guide You Across* brings us to a very specific kind of state-sponsored filmmaking: the informational short. While film was used in educational settings from very early on in its history, and documentary film began to blossom from the late 1920s onwards (see Nichols 2017), it was in the two decades after the Second World War that short informational films proliferated worldwide as a means of informing and persuading populations about any number of subjects, from agriculture to sculpture, and from medicine to sport. Before television sets became common in European and North American homes from around 1960, and more than half a century before the advent of YouTube, short films were

produced by governments, businesses, charities, trade unions and many other kinds of organisations, and circulated to audiences on the national and international scales. Such films were mobile thanks to the development of narrow-gauge film (especially the 16 mm format), and portable projectors which could be borrowed and set up anywhere: schools, libraries, churches, community halls, cafes. The films themselves were exchanged via networks of local and national film libraries, embassies, film festivals and trade fairs. This kind of filmmaking has been dubbed 'useful cinema', because its primary purpose is not to entertain (though the most impactful films were often the entertaining ones), but to inform, to educate and to persuade (for a range of case studies, see Acland and Wasson 2011).

The Scandinavian countries were prolific producers of this kind of film. In Denmark, the agency Dansk Kulturfilm was established in 1932 to act as a clearing-house for film projects requested by associations and ministries. From the early 1940s (that is, during the German occupation of Denmark) to the mid-1960s, Dansk Kulturfilm worked in tandem with Ministeriernes Filmudvalg, the Danish Government Film Committee. The twin committees oversaw the production, by various companies, of a stream of films for domestic and international consumption on topics ranging from home economics to traffic safety, and from architecture to science. The distribution of the films to schools, libraries and associations at home and abroad was coordinated by Statens Filmcentral (the State Film Centre), which later took on a production role as well (Thomson 2018, 47–63). In Norway, Statens Filmsentral (the State Film Centre) was established in 1948 by government statute to oversee the production of informational films required to support the work of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Diesen 1998, 48). In Sweden, the bulk of informational filmmaking was undertaken under the auspices of film studios such as Svensk Filmindustri and Sandrew (Hedling 2016; Jönsson 2016).

Because they were commissioned or facilitated by the state, industry or other organisations, in many cases it is possible to trace the production histories of such films. We can shed light on political and cultural priorities of the time by investigating why the films were commissioned and funded, by whom, and whether the commissioning bodies mandated particular criteria regarding the films' content. What do the films assume the viewer already knows, and what does s/he still have to learn? Just as revealing is the style of the films: how did they conform to, borrow from or re-work contemporary cinematic norms in an effort to capture and hold the attention of viewers? For example, how do they use music, costume or editing? What kind of voices can be heard in the voiceover and,

where relevant, the dialogue? How the films were received and reviewed can also be revealing: how audiences understood the films did not always correspond to the intended message. In all these senses, informational films are snapshots of their time: they tell us something about the technological and legal novelties of the day, and about collective anxieties and beliefs.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of informational films from the twentieth century survive in the archives of companies, organisations and national film institutes. Increasingly, these films are digitised and made available online, primarily for national audiences. For example, the Danish Film Institute has created the streaming site danmarkpaafilm.dk, which associates informational, amateur and orphan films (films whose director, rights holder etc. are unknown) with geographic areas, and allows site visitors to contribute comments and information about the places and events depicted. At oslofilmer.no, Oslo City Archive has digitised many short films about the Norwegian capital, ranging from informational films about transport, sanitation and hospitals to tourist films promoting the capital as a cultural destination. And the Swedish Film Institute is developing filmarkivet.se, which gathers industrial, informational and advertising films under a range of themes. The majority of such films were made in the Scandinavian languages for domestic audiences, and today's streaming sites reflect this. However, a significant proportion of informational films were made in English and other languages for overseas audiences, promoting Scandinavia as a tourist destination, and sharing information about traditions, handicrafts, industrial products and social welfare.

We can thus study informational films as symptomatic of their time and, often, as documents produced with the intention of intervening in culture. They show us the images that Scandinavian societies nurtured about themselves, and the images that cultural institutions wished to project to the outside world. We need also to bear in mind that the actual viewers of the films might not have corresponded to the intended audiences, and that there was always scope for films to be misconstrued. In the case studies below, we can trace how the films play, narratively and visually, with auto- and xenostereotypes in order to communicate their messages to a range of audiences.

Health for Denmark (1947)

In April 1947, a package of five informational films premiered in Copenhagen under the rubric *Social Denmark*. The English title for the series

was deliberate: the five films had been commissioned with a British audience in mind, and were made under the supervision of Arthur Elton, a leading figure in the British Documentary Movement. Around twenty copies of each film were sent to the UK (Thomson 2018, 82), introducing Danish social policy in the areas of healthcare, childcare, holiday pay, services for pensioners and support for single mothers. *Social Denmark* was thus a canny act of 'cultural propaganda' (Glover 2009), which kick-started two decades of filmmaking for foreign audiences alongside the production of informational film for Danes.

One of the *Social Denmark* films was *Health for Denmark*, which sketches the Danish sickness insurance scheme as it existed in the late 1940s: locally organised and government-subsidised 'sick clubs'. This system was identified by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and by Arthur Elton as a particularly resonant topic, not least because the UK was in the process of establishing its own National Health Service (Thomson 2018, 74). Typically for the genre, *Health for Denmark* uses local, fictional characters as metonyms for a complex, abstract system that existed on a national scale. The film begins with a long shot of the town square of the fictional Nordkøbing. (The cathedral spires of the real-life town of Roskilde are clearly visible.) We are introduced to the local cobbler, postman and tobacconist as they exchange cigars for shoe repairs, establishing community-level cooperation. The three men are on the committee of the local sick club, and we see both a committee meeting and the club office, a gathering place for all classes and occupations. The voiceover introduces Mrs Ipsen, who is described as 'pretty typical'. She is asked to tell us about her use of the sick club, and so her voice forms part of the voiceover. When her husband Mr Ipsen is taken ill with flu, the action shifts to the local hospital and to a more straightforwardly documentary mode, showcasing the hospital's modern facilities in a montage of the latest medical treatments: x-rays, tests for tuberculosis, heat and light treatments featuring suspiciously glamorous women patients in bathrobes, isolation wards, nurses' quarters, and so on. The 'facts' of Denmark's sickness insurance system thus emerge in the film from a blend of narrative and visual strategies, including metonymy (fictional characters standing in for a national system), and the visual juxtaposition of traditional (the town's cathedral spires, the tobacconist shop) and modern (the gleaming hospital facilities).

Another notable strategy in *Health for Denmark* is the innovative use of voiceover. Arthur Elton had insisted that the films should be narrated through English-language voiceover, rather than shot with a Danish script and then dubbed or subtitled (Thomson 2019). The film's

voiceover is ostensibly a typical example of mid-twentieth-century 'voice-of-God' (Nichols 2017, 53–5), an authoritative perspective on the action. In this case, the dominant voice is a clipped, male, upper-class English accent, which is spoken by Ralph Elton, brother of the above-mentioned producer Arthur Elton. However, the voiceover subverts expectations in two ways. First, Elton observes and explains, but leaves room for the locals, such as Mrs Ipsen, to recount their experience in their own voice. Second, the film plays with viewer expectations and knowledge about voiceover conventions in cinema. Twelve minutes into the film, during a meeting of the local hospital's Board of Governors, the voiceover suddenly intervenes in the meeting: 'Before they get down to business, I'd like to interrupt', he says. He asks the chairman to say something about the hospital. In Danish, the Chair asks the other Board members for permission, then switches to English to give an overview of the hospital's architecture, facilities and plans. This shift in the voiceover to a thickly-accented 'we' quite literally gives the local Danes a voice in the description of their achievements and future plans as regards social security and healthcare. But this is also a sophisticated strategy which compliments the viewer by assuming that s/he understands that the logic of cinema normally precludes direct interaction between voiceover and characters. This is a variant on the practice of 'breaking the fourth wall', the imaginary barrier between the world of the film and the world of the viewers. The effect is both gently amusing, and a comment on the artificiality of the informational film; both comedy and self-referentiality can be effective strategies for maximising the memorability and the impact of an informational film. This play with levels of narration serves as a surprising change of pace in the narrative; retaining audience engagement is the holy grail for informational filmmaking.

Health for Denmark and the other *Social Denmark* films presented Denmark as a socially progressive and culturally sophisticated nation, but also as a cosy, humble and pragmatic one. A 1948 catalogue of Danish informational films for export describes the ambition of the films as 'an experiment in post-war help and inspiration' to help the world get 'back to normal' after the war; 'perhaps there are things to be found in Denmark which may be useful in other countries', suggests the blurb for *Social Denmark* (Statens Filmcentral 1948, 69). Picking up on this stance, the British filmmaker Basil Wright wrote of the *Social Denmark* series that the films showed 'a healthy attitude of discontent with the status quo and an atmosphere of self-criticism which gives them a real validity for social students in all other countries' (Wright 1947, 24). Here we see an example of the intertwining of auto- and xenostereotypes in the production

and reception of the films: the notion of Denmark as a small, modest, but socially and technologically advanced nation.

Marianne på sykehus (1950)

In Norway, government ministries also used film to inform the populace about healthcare. A particularly interesting example from 1950 is the 45-minute film *Marianne på sykehus* (Marianne in Hospital). While this film is narrated in Norwegian and not available with English subtitles, its voiceover and most of the dialogue is slow and clear, as befits a narrative aimed at children; the film should be relatively easy to understand for learners of Norwegian. The film was commissioned by Rikstrygdeverket, Norway's national social security agency, in collaboration with Rikshospitalet, the national hospital. Based on a popular children's book by Odd Brochmann, and directed by Titus Vibe Müller, the film's premiere in December 1950 was a national event attended by King Haakon, and the film was seen by 31,000 people in its first two weeks (Weium 2003, 3585). The film's purpose was to explain to children what goes on in a hospital, and what would happen to them should they need to have an operation.

Bearing in mind the primary target audience, it is not surprising that *Marianne på sykehus* begins with a 'spoiler': Marianne is about to leave hospital, healthy and smiling. The rest of the plot is then organised chronologically: she accidentally swallows a brooch which has fallen into her breakfast porridge, is found crying in pain by the local doctor, is sent by seaplane to hospital in Oslo, and has an operation to remove the brooch. The detail with which all the stages of the story are related panders to the curiosity and anxiety of children watching the film. We see the interiors of the medical seaplane, the ambulance, the x-ray room and the operating theatre, and are brought face to face with anaesthetic and surgical equipment. *Marianne på sykehus* is also infused with a sense of security. Despite the momentary lapse of attention which results in the brooch falling into the porridge pot, Marianne's mother and father are kind and attentive. The local doctor is introduced as a man so beloved in the small town of Lillesund that he cannot walk down the street without having to greet every passer-by. There is a recurring trope of kind nurses taking Marianne's hand to comfort her. The musical score is generally jolly and uplifting, except for a few moments of drama. And the film is held together by the voiceover, a narrating voice which is kind and expressive in tone, and also sustains a degree of solidarity with the viewer

by occasionally stumbling over the pronunciation of difficult words like 'anestesi' (anaesthesia).

An example of the balance between drama, security and technical detail achieved by *Marianne på sykehus* is the sequence in which Marianne is being x-rayed. The sequence is dominated by a series of two-shots, in which Marianne stands behind the x-ray machine to the left, and the radiographer sits to the right of the screen, operating the machine. We cross-cut to a nurse in a nearby room who is operating the controls. The medics' curious code of communicating in whistles adds levity, while the radiographer speaks calmly and quietly to the 'little miss' whose stomach pain he has been asked to diagnose. Here the iconography of x-ray technology is used to increase suspense: the film cross-cuts between the eyes of the radiographer studying the glow from the screen, and Marianne's eyes watching him, until, with an ominous musical flourish, the camera pans upwards from the patient's hips and spine on the x-ray screen to reveal the sharp black outline of the brooch sitting under her ribs. Though the viewer has known for some time that Marianne swallowed the brooch, the cause of her malady is now confirmed by a modern visual technology.

The dialogue establishes that children whose parents are members of Trygdekassen, the national health insurance scheme, get free healthcare, including transportation across the country for specialist care. Here, again, we see progressiveness as a national autostereotype, co-existing with tradition and community, and harnessed in the service of perfecting that same progressive society by persuading its members to participate. As Frode Weium points out, *Marianne på sykehus* was also designed to function as a kind of propaganda film directed at parents: it paints an unrealistically positive picture of the efficiency with which Marianne is admitted and diagnosed, and it lingers on plans for the modern renovation and expansion of *Rikshospitalet* which were ongoing at the time (Weium 2003, 3587). Like *Health for Denmark*, this film is a snapshot of a welfare state under construction.

The Riddle of Sweden (1963)

A decade later, the very title of *The Riddle of Sweden* (directed by Gösta Werner, 1963) acknowledges that the projected audience – primarily North American – was both fascinated and puzzled by the Swedish model. The film opens with a drumroll and trumpet flourish, and a

montage of aerial shots of lakes and mountains. A male American voice-over introduces Sweden:

> Let's take a look at a country which is off the beaten track. A small but much talked of country: Sweden. Admittedly Sweden lies a long way north, but she is by no means as cold as she is reputed to be. We've heard tell of this country, of the riddle that is Sweden. But the keys to this riddle are not easy to find.

One immediately obvious feature of the voiceover text is the pronoun 'we'. The 'voice-of-God' narrator thus aligns himself with the viewers, who are observing what is presumed to be a foreign country. These opening comments acknowledge both the existence of prevailing xenostereotypes and the difficulty of understanding the other culture.

During this introductory monologue, the opening montage of mountains is revealed to be the point-of-view of the passengers on a modern SAS aircraft. The plane glides to a halt on the runway, and businessmen spill out. Within the first minute of the film, then, the viewer's attention has been arrested by the spectacular scenery which is one xenostereotype associated with Sweden and other small, northern countries. The juxtaposition through montage of the landscape with another kind of spectacle – the impressively modern, gleaming plane – connects nature and technology for the viewer, framing the combination as both Swedish and a 'riddle'. This idea of contrasts as a riddle continues to underpin the film's narrative. After historical footage of the Nobel ceremony establishes Sweden as both a monarchy and a democracy, the voiceover asks what it is about Swedes that has enabled them to attain the highest standard of living in Europe. A montage of old wooden houses is juxtaposed with tower blocks, parks and fountains and the functionalist Slussen traffic complex. High levels of car ownership, compulsory comprehensive education with free lunches and care for the elderly are all mentioned before the film turns to the healthcare system.

The cost of healthcare is negligible, we learn, and it is 'the best possible medical care that modern research can give, with Swedish-designed equipment, like the artificial kidney, and the revolutionary heart-lung machine for cardiac operations'. The images in this sequence cross-cut between close-ups of technological detail – liquid bubbling through one gleaming machine, blood through another – and long shots of operations in progress. The climax to the healthcare segment of the film is the proton ray knife, used for brain surgery. A dramatic zoom and a close-up of a

finger pointing to the machine are followed by a shot of a patient undergoing proton ray treatment, and more recognisable x-ray images of brain lesions. Modern orchestral music punctuates the sequence, with woodwind flourishes drawing attention to details such as the flow of blood through equipment. The film then turns its attention to a range of aspects of industry, but the first few minutes of *The Riddle of Sweden* have established that the welfare system, democracy, prosperity, national culture, science and technology are all inextricably linked with Swedish business and industry.

The Riddle of Sweden was commissioned and funded by what at the time was called *Sveriges Allmänna Exportförening*, The Swedish Export Association, and produced by the company AB Filmkontakt. It was used by the Association's network of international offices as part of its broader promotional strategy for Swedish business (Stjernholm 2018, 275). Typically for the kind of films discussed in this chapter, the 16 mm and black and white format facilitated screenings in a range of settings, for example, for specific interest groups and companies, and at trade fairs, and the film was available in five language versions for use by members of the Export Association. In another sense, though, *The Riddle of Sweden* is different to the Danish and Norwegian films discussed above: it was commissioned by business interests as opposed to a government agency. In fact, there was no Swedish equivalent to Dansk Kulturfilm or Statens Filmsentral, and much of the production and development of nonfiction film in mid-century Sweden was undertaken by commercial companies, especially Svensk Filmindustri, or SF (Jönsson 2016, 126). However, this does not mean that film was less important in the service of the state in Sweden; quite the contrary. Mats Jönsson, for example, has examined how a range of film genres, including advertising, newsreels and political films were part of the same project of affirming and propagating the 'unusually successful social engineering project' that constituted the Swedish 'People's Home'; film production was 'meticulously supervised by the state and its official representatives', so that the population was 'visually and audiovisually disciplined' by film and other media (Jönsson 2016, 125). In much the same way, the Swedish Export Association strategically eschewed explicit advertising of products in *The Riddle of Sweden*, instead employing images of technological modernity and social progressiveness to 'sell' Sweden itself. The Association recognised that industry could only benefit from the crystallisation of these xenostereotypes of a modern, productive and prosperous Sweden. In *The Riddle of Sweden*, the framing metaphor of the 'riddle' gives expression to the awareness of agencies charged with promoting Sweden in trade circles that Sweden's

economic, political and cultural exceptionalism could itself be an oblique advertising strategy (Stjernholm 2018, 274-5).

The Riddle of Sweden can also be usefully contextualised in the broader frame of strategies meant to promote Sweden abroad in the post-war period. Nikolas Glover (2009, 248–56) discusses how The Swedish Institute was established after the Second World War in order to safeguard the positive international reputation of the country in the wake of a conflict in which it had, controversially, remained unaligned. The Institute's founders were aware that Sweden had been known overseas since at least the 1930s as a socially progressive nation, a conception which chimed with domestic beliefs about the fundamental nature of Sweden, and they moved to leverage that stereotype in publications such as the 300-page tome of 1949, *Introduction to Sweden* (Glover 2009, 252). Glover traces how Sweden's international reputation as progressive, internationalist and democratic came to be prioritised over more traditionally cultural aspects of Swedishness such as literature and music, not just in the country's cultural diplomacy aimed at overseas markets, but also in domestic popular self-understanding. In other words, the xenostereotype of the Swedish politico-economic model came to influence the prevailing autostereotypes.

On the other hand, these images of Sweden co-existed and competed with other images whose value for industry and cultural diplomacy is harder to parse. The international success of Swedish cinematic auteurs such as Ingmar Bergman during the 1950s had established the popular notion of Sweden as a land of nude bathing beauties, as one of the officials involved in the commissioning of *The Riddle of Sweden* observed (Stjernholm 2018, 275). In this particular case, then, we see an interesting example of so-called 'useful cinema' being strategically deployed to mitigate the more mercurial impact of art-house cinema in mediating images of Sweden.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on three examples of informational film which engage with developments in healthcare in mid-century Denmark, Norway and Sweden, but for different purposes. By zooming in on sequences which visualise hospital treatment, we have been able to examine how the films address distinctive audiences. *Health for Denmark* provides a snapshot of an ambitious healthcare system under construction, expressly aimed at a British audience on the brink of establishing its own National

Health Service. *Marianne på sykehus* is designed to reassure nervous children and persuade their parents of the benefits of signing up to the new national sickness insurance scheme. And, aiming at an international business audience, *The Riddle of Sweden* frames Swedish healthcare as an iteration of the country's advanced social organisation and technological innovation.

The hospital imagery in all three films is surprisingly comparable, in that each film aims to connect treatment to modernity and national community. We can observe similarities in the oscillation between parts of machines and the teams of staff, in the use of x-ray images as popularly recognisable products of medical technology, and in the juxtaposition of old and new (through montage or within the frame) to construct a sense of modernity. Some of the interesting differences between the films lie in the voiceovers, from which we can glean a clear idea of the projected audience. As films made for foreign viewers, *Health for Denmark* and *The Riddle of Sweden* self-consciously exploit xenostereotypes to communicate their message. All three films address healthcare as a concrete expression of the rather abstract autostereotype of the modern, progressive welfare state.

While we can draw some conclusions about patterns and priorities in informational filmmaking from this kind of comparative analysis, it is important to bear in mind that the films which have been digitised and/or subtitled may have been made available to us for a variety of financial, cultural, technological or political reasons which have little to do with their representativity. As with any archival resource, we need to be careful not to assume that the materials available to us are entirely representative of output. Many analogue film formats were delicate and have not survived into the digital age to be digitised, and archives are limited in their activities by economic restrictions and political priorities. These films are available to us because of state investment in the preservation and restoration of older analogue film, and investment in digital platforms that mediate the films to today's viewers. In fact, the selection of film case studies for this chapter was made on the basis of their availability online. At the time of writing (autumn 2018), the digitisation of informational films and their mediation via streaming sites is gaining pace in all three Scandinavian countries. By the time you read this chapter, an even wider variety of this kind of film will be available to viewers who want to explore the stories that mid-twentieth-century Scandinavians told about their culture to themselves and to the world.

Films

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