ABSTRACT

GEOGRAPHIES OF SCIENCE – MEN AT THE END OF THE WORLD

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The title of this paper refers to the conclusion early travellers draw as they arrived at Lake Torne. Surely this must be the place where the world ends!

Focus of this paper is on the spatial relations of knowledge production. Explorations of the concrete positioned character of research and researchers can be considered as part of a larger epistemological project that problematises the production of knowledge. The themes and argumentation presented in this paper are empirically grounded in an ongoing study of the geography of science.

Empirical materials grounding the analysis are products written by academics from various disciplines concerning the Lake Torne valley in Northern Sweden. Questions I ask to texts produced by these writers are such as: Where do you come from? What do you see? Whereto do you bring your findings? The study of these academic texts and what they describe has been contextualized by a more ethnographic approach in order to get access to a variety of positioned stories about the area, but also to generate material about science’s local relations.

Departing in the integrated arrival of industrialism, science and tourism to the area this paper charts some specific aspects of the spatial and gendered character of research. Inspired by Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway the themes and lines of argumentation that are explored in relation to the case study are cycles of knowledge accumulation, centres of calculation, instruments for bringing it back home, variations of gendered positions of knowledge, gendering fieldwork and metaphors of space and people.