Visual Representations as Environing Technologies: Anticipating the Øresund Fixed Link in Danish and Swedish Printed Media (1930-1999)

Francesco ZAVATTI

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ABSTRACT: *This article shows that visual representations are valuable sources for investigating the cultural and social history of the humankind-nature relationship. It does so by considering visual representations of future acts of environing as technologies that, connoting the making of the environment, disclose societal sensibilities and actors' agendas regarding technology, the environment and nature. By analysing a series of visual representations of one yet-unrealised mobility infrastructure published in the Danish and Swedish printed media from 1930 to 1999, the article shows that technological utopias and warnings over the consequences of environing competed to connote visually the act of environing throughout the last century.*

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ABSTRACT: *Questo articolo dimostra che le rappresentazioni visive sono fonti di particolare importanza per indagare la storia culturale e sociale del rapporto uomo-natura. Le rappresentazioni visive di future azioni umane sulla natura e sull'ambiente sono qui considerate come tecnologie che, dando connotazione all'azione umana, rivelano sensibilità e intenzioni delle società del passato riguardo alla tecnologia, all'ambiente e alla natura. Tramite l'analisi di una serie di rappresentazioni visive relative a un'infrastruttura ingegneristica non ancora realizzata e pubblicate sui media svedesi e danesi tra il 1930 e il 1999, l'articolo dimostra che sia le utopie tecnologiche che i moniti relativi alle conseguenze negative dell'impatto della tecnologia sull'ambiente sono coesistite durante lo scorso secolo, dando differenti connotazioni dell'azione umana sulla natura e sull'ambiente e quindi della tecnologia stessa.*

Introduction

Investigating the history of the humankind-nature relationship requires a focus that reconcile cultural representations and social formations. Scholars of environmental history and ecocriticism, who started respectively from analysing the interaction between humankind and the environment and from the discursive construction of human ecological agency in literary texts, have recently acknowledged the fruitfulness of their reciprocal researches by focusing on

environing, that is, the historical process of demarcating the environment from nature.[1] Since representations contained in literary and scientific texts are historical constituents of the social world, the cultural making of environing is a social process that can be historicised.[2] Analysing the circulation of representations of the humankind-nature relationship highlights the social mediation of ideas, values and attitudes on environing, the environment and nature. It facilitates recognition of the environing agency of a supposedly passive audience of specialised regimes of knowledges and an expansion of the range of considered texts to the most various modalities, formats and genres[3]. The resulting history of the humankind-nature relationship would be at the same time a cultural history of the environment[4] and a social history of its representations.

When accounting the complexity of the social mediation of the humankind-nature relationship, communication takes salience. The relevance of communicators, of formats other than the written and of rhetorical figures from the most different genres in mediatising and connoting acts of environing is well evident in the growth of the new environmental consciousness in the second half of the twentieth century. By then, highly mediatised literary proses and satellite images were much more relevant than scientific reports to creating a global awareness of the irreversible consequences of pollution and the limit of resources[5]. Recently, communication has been acknowledged as pivotal in raising awareness and in engendering action

[1] SÖRLIN, Sverker, WARDE, Paul, *Making the environment historical – an introduction*, in SÖRLIN, Sverker, WARDE Paul (eds), *Nature's End: History and the Environment*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, pp. 1-23, p. 8; D'ARCY WOOD, Gillen, «Eco-historicism», in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 8, 2/2008, pp. 1-7, p. 4.
[2] BERGTHALLER, Hannes, EMMETT, Rob, JOHNS-PUTRA, Adeline, KNEITZ, Agnes, LIDSTRÖM, Susanna, MCCORRISTINE, Shane, PÉREZ RAMOS, Isabel, PHILLIPS, Dana, RIGBY, Kate, ROBIN, Libby, «Mapping Common Ground: Ecocriticism, Environmental History, and the Environmental Humanities», in *Environmental Humanities*, 5, 1/2014, pp. 261-276, p. 274.
[3] ÖSTLING, Johan, «Vad är kunskapshistoria?», *Historisk Tidskrift*, 135, 1/2015, pp. 109-119; LARSSON HEIDENBLAD, David, *The Environmental Turn in Postwar Sweden: A New History of Knowledge*, Lund, Lund University Press, 2021; SANDMO, Erling, *Circulation and monstrosity: the sea-pig and the walrus as objects of knowledge in the sixteenth century*, in ÖSTLING, Johan, SANDMO, Erling, LARSSON HEIDENBLAD, David, NILSSON HAMMAR, Anna, NORDBERG, Kari (eds), *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge*, Lund, Nordic Academic Press, 2018, pp. 175-196.
[4] BURKE, Peter, *Afterward*, in SÖRLIN, Sverker, WARDE, Paul (eds), *Nature's End: History and the Environment*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, pp. 349-357, p. 355; BURKE, Peter, *What is Cultural History?*, Cambridge, Polity, 2004, pp. 74, 114.
[5] HÖHLER, Sabine, *Spaceship Earth in the Environmental Age, 1960-1990*, London, Routledge, 2016; JASANOFF, Sheila, *Science and the Public Reason*, London, Routledge, 2012, pp. 78-102.

against climate change[6]. At the same time, professional communicators are also pivotal in feeding the hegemonic culture of climate change denial with scepticism, warnings against climate science and doubts and uncertainties fabricated by rhetorical appeals to competing discourses, emotions and lifestyles[7]. Professional communicators are able to establish the most different attitudes and to justify the most different agendas concerning the humankind-nature relationship in the public space, since they know how to make familiar the unfamiliar by the most various modalities, genres and media. Pretending to anticipate the future consequences of environing is one of the strategies they use for establishing their messages convincingly.

Delimiting the field of inquiry to one modality, the visual, and to one temporal dimension, the future, this article asks: What can visual representations of future acts of environing tell about the history of the humankind-nature relationship? First, the article discusses the use of utopic visual representations as historical traces. Since utopias are technologies of change, their visual representations are environing technologies by which artists and their clients attempt to establish determined messages societally. Second, the article elaborates a method in order to include visual representations of future acts of environing within the texts that mediate the discourse on the humankind-nature relationship societally. It proposes to analyse series of visual representations of yet-unrealised infrastructural concepts and, through approaches and methodologies borrowed from disciplines that give art central stage, to highlight the inferences for technology, the environment and nature. The article tests the method with a focus on the visual representations published in the printed media for the Øresund fixed link between Sweden and Denmark, when this mobility infrastructure existed only in representations (1930-1990).

1. Traces of the Future

The visual turn in history has been inspired by considering visual representations as equal to texts, and thus as evidences for historical inquiry[8]. According to Peter Burke, visual representations are traces of the social world of the past. They suggest attitudes, values and prejudices, complementing the written documents with immediacy. Since they play a part in the cultural construction of society, they bear witness to past social arrangements, «and above all the

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[6] MOSER, Susanne C., «Communicating Climate Change: History, Challenges, Process and Future Directions», in *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 1, 1/2010, pp. 31-53.

[7] DUNLAP, Riley E., MCCRIGHT, Aaron M., *Organized climate change denial*, in SRYZEK, John S., NORGAARD, Richard B., SCHLOSBERG, David (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 144-160; NORGAARD, Karie Marie, *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, 2011.

[8] BEHR, Charlotte, USBORNE, Cornelie, WIEBER, Sabine, «Introduction: The Challenge of the Image», in *Cultural and Social History*, 7, 4/2010, pp. 425-434.

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past ways of seeing and thinking»[9]. Visual representations are, at the moment of their creation and circulation, subversive processes that, besides offering information, propose aesthetics that aim to influence the perceptions of the audiences[10]. It is this dimension that sets visual representations as important instruments of change and that offers to the historian the possibility of capturing unspoken past sensibilities and agendas.

The subverting power of visual representations rests in their ambivalent nature between art and technology. As argued by Søren Riis, in his reading of Martin Heidegger, from the point of view of the danger that art entails, *art is technology*; conversely, from the point of view of technology as a saving power, *technology is art*. While technology *promises* to emancipate humankind from need, art *warns* of the dangers of technology[11]. Therefore, art and technology are closely related to imagining the future. According to Ernst Bloch, by anticipating the future in utopia, humankind reaches its true potential, in a world dominated by fear and uncertainty. Need, Bloch writes, is the primary cause of wishful thinking. It contributes to the formation of representations guiding humankind to the future in a climax of perfection, establishing virtues and values. A section of Bloch's work is dedicated to wishful architecture in painting. Through the observation that the pictorial art influences architecture and vice versa, Bloch shows that the advancement of technology makes possible the realisation and advancement of architectural utopias[12]. Therefore, utopias are historically determined technologies of change that can be traced in wishful visual representations. As posited by Hans Georg Gadamer, the historical context is the point of departure in the experience of the work of art and the constitution of aesthetic. The artists operate by fusing past traditions and, with their interpretations and skills, convince the audience of the credibility of the work of art, that present a supra-historical, moral, religious and sacred world with whom the audience can identify. In this way, through art, the bright future of utopia is disclosed and fulfilled[13].

The circulation of utopic representations has societal consequences. As claimed by Reinhart Koselleck, technology is necessary for imagining new, brighter future horizons. Those horizons, imagined from the present, differ, since the experiences of the societal actors differ. Conflicts over utopias are thus inevitable[14]. Utopias that showcase bleak futures warn that the actions of

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[9] BURKE, Peter, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London, Reaktion Books, 2001, p. 185.

[10] NEAD, Lynda, «The History in Pictures», in *Cultural and Social History*, **7**, 4/2010, pp. 485-492.

[11] RIIS, Søren, *Unframing Martin Heidegger's Understanding of Technology: On the Essential Connection between Technology, Art, and History*, London, Lexington Books, 2018, pp. 10, 146-148.

[12] BLOCH, Ernst, *The Principle of Hope*, vol. 2, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, 1986, pp. 710-714; ID., *The Principle of Hope*, vol. 3, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, 1986, pp. 1312-1318.

[13] GADAMER, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method,* London, Continuum, 2004, pp. 112-114, 124.

[14] KOSELLECK, Reinhart, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, New York (NY), Columbia University Press, 2004, pp. 18-19.

the present can have catastrophic consequences, thus raising ethical dilemmas and imposing ethical choices which are weaponised against competing actors and their agendas[15].

Since utopias are technologies of change, their circulation multiplied with the proliferation of the printed press. The most heterogenous range of professional communicators know the power of utopias in establishing societal messages. Visual artists are among them. The final claims of visual representations, invariably, orientate the audience towards buying into or rejecting future utopias[16]. Advertisements, for example, fascinate by using symbols and archetypical scenes. Crafted with the consciousness that conflicting expectations and moral stances are rooted in the audience[17], they work by inspiring the audience to re-elaborate the advertised message by instinctive intuition and, through undeletable marks, to establish their final claim. In Jens E. Kjeldsen's terms, «Buy it!», buy this utopia, is the final claim of advertisements. Negative utopias, whose final claims are warnings to not buy into something, are also represented in a myriad of multimodal genres. Satire represents subjects from ethical standpoints opposite to the subject portrayed[18]. Humour, which is strictly interconnected with satire, positions the audience in front of incommensurable obstacles, engendering a sense of powerlessness and of ridicule for the subjects depicted[19]. Political cartoons evoke imagined situations in order to invite the audience to judge persons and discourses[20]. Advertisements can exploit the rhetoric of these genres as well.[21] Importantly, even apparently neutral visual representations contain utopias and warnings: for example, persuasive maps mimic cartographic representations in order to promote the most diverse values and products[22].

The temporal dimensions of these final claims, which pervasively permeate contemporary history, coincide with the ones of positive and negative utopias: advertisements operate on a future dimension, constructed as near and desirable, while the epiphanies contained in the rhetoric of political cartoons, satire and humour may warn of the future consequences of present actions. Both utopias and warnings present their cause as technology and therefore as a saving

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[15] KOSELLECK, Reinhart, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, Stanford (CA), Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 84-99.

[16] KJELDSEN, Jens E., *Pictorial argumentation in advertising: visual tropes and figures as a way of creating visual argumentation*, in VAN EEMEREN, Frans H., GARSSEN, Bart (eds.), *Topical Themes in Argumentation Theory: Twenty Exploratory Studies*, Berlin, Springer, 2012, pp. 239-255.

[17] HUSZ, Orsi, «Private Dreams and Public Expectations: Lotteries and Dilemmas of Progress and Social Welfare in Early 20th Century Sweden», in *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 53, 2/2002, pp. 53-79.

[18] GAUT, Berys, *Art and ethics*, in GAUT, Berys, MCIVER LOPES, Dominic (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, London, Routledge, 2013, pp. 394-403.

[19] COHEN, Ted, *Humor*, in GAUT, Berys, MCIVER LOPES, Dominic (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, London, Routledge, 2013, pp. 425-431, pp. 429-430.

[20] MAGNUSSEN, Anne, PLATZ CORTSEN, Rikke, LA COUR, Erin (eds.), *Comics and Power: Representing and Questioning Culture, Subjects and Communities,* Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. xvii–xxiii.

[21] NILSEN, Don, PACE NILSEN, Alleen, *The Language of Humor,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

[22] MUEHLENHAUS, Ian, «The Design and Composition of Persuasive Maps», in *Cartography and Geographic Information Science*, 40, 5/2013, pp. 401-414.

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power, while only warnings connote utopias as a dangerous art. Therefore, visual representations of future acts of environing are among the *environing technologies* by which visual artists transform impressions of and data from the world into intelligible constructs[23] that pretend to anticipate the consequences of environing. Reading visual representations of future acts of environing as texts discloses past sensibilities and the agendas of past actors on the humankind-nature relationship and its constituents: technology, the environment and nature.

2. Method and Methodology

As a method of investigation, the article proposes to focus on visual representations of future mobility infrastructures. Infrastructures are *concepts*: their investigation discloses co-existing actors' agendas, which account for social formations in history[24], and it reveals intersecting political, economic and environmental discourses developed in relation to infrastructures, which account for diverging anxieties and expectations[25]. Lay visual representations of new technologies are evidences of the attempt to persuade non-specialised audiences that concepts will eventually work, by conveying values of hope and best-case scenarios[26]. Visual negative utopias on new technologies are instead warnings about the concepts' negative consequences. The inferences on the act of environing are inscribed in both, although with diverging final claims and arguments.

Investigating visual utopias and warnings in history requires acquaintance with those fields that give arts central stage[27] and, at the same time, contextualising visuals of past epochs requires historical knowledge of the cultures under scrutiny[28]. Since series of visual representations tend to be more reliable than single ones with regard to the world views of given times and cultures[29], decoding a broad sample of visual representations related to one concept through approaches borrowed from other disciplines reveals the spectrum of attitudes and agendas towards environing, technology, the environment and nature in history.

The *final claim* of the visual representation is the most important marker of the connotation given to the concept. Either it connotes the concept as *utopic* or it sets one or more *warnings*

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[23] SÖRLIN, Sverker, WORMBS, Nina, «Environing Technologies: A Theory of Making Environment», in *History and Technology*, 34, 2/2018, pp. 101-125, p. 108.

[24] RAMESH, Aditya, RAVEENDRANATHAN, Vidhya, «Infrastructure and Public Works in Colonial India: Towards a Conceptual History», in *History Compass,* 18, 6/2020, URL: < https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/hic3.12614 > [accessed on 25 November 2022].

[25] BRUNN, Stanley D., WOOD, Andrew, *Introduction to megaengineering: the concept and a research frontier*, in BRUNN, Stanley D. (ed.), *Engineering Earth: The Impacts of Megaengineering Projects*, vol. 1, London, Springer, 2011, pp. 3-12, pp. 4-9.

[26] FERGUSON, Eugene, *Engineering and the Mind's Eye*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, 1993, pp. 114-152.

[27] JORDANOVA, Ludmilla, «Image Matters», in *The Historical Journal*, 51, 3/2008, pp. 777-791, p. 779.

[28] BURKE, *Eyewitnessing*, pp. 36-37; BOUNEGRU, Liliana, FORCEVILLE Charles, «Metaphors in Editorial Cartoons Representing the Global Financial Crisis», in *Visual Communication*, 10, 2/2011, pp. 209-229, p. 223.

[29] BURKE, *Eyewitnessing*, p. 187; OSTEN, Philipp, «Photographing Disabled Children in Imperial and Weimar Germany», in *Cultural and Social History*, **7,** 4/2010, pp. 511-531, p. 513.

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against it. Since visual representations may have lost their immediacy, either because the historical knowledge of the visualised situations is lost, or (but most often *and*) since their final claim is naturalised and thus hidden[30], identifying final claims may require supplementary decoding.

When possible, identifying the artists and their world-views and the visual representation's clients and their purposes may provide clues to the visual's intended function[31]. On an iconographical level, identifying *cognitive attributes*, and among these *anthropic*, *environmental* and *natural elements*, reveals what the artist registered on technology, the environment and nature, but not the inferences made on them, or their functions in the visual's semiotic. Identifying the visual's rhetorical appeal to competing discourses discloses the *affective attributes: connotation*, that may be *positive* or *negative*, and *tone*, that may be *conciliatory* or *non-conciliatory*. *Textual elements* and *textual* and *discursive contexts* on the same page of the media (as unit of observation) help to identify the discourses coded within the visual. By linking texts and contexts, the inferences given to the concept under scrutiny emerge across overlapping discourses rooted in the target cultures and societies[32]. They position the artists and their messages in their socio-cultural spaces of origin. *Rhetorical figures*, when present, are important elements for analysing the verbal meaning of the visual and the given connotation and tone. Identifying the *genre*, which has specific rules and conventions of representations, helps to disclose the meaning of the rhetorical figures[33].

While the methodologies outlined above minimise the distortion that the visual representations' aesthetic has in the eyes of the historian[34], the aesthetic experience can be turned into a vantage point[35] for identifying the final claim and its relationship to acts of environing, technology, the environment and nature. The emotional dimension is a necessary part of the analysis, since emotional rhetoric and imagery aim at shaping the opinions of the audiences[36]. Since visual representations elicit emotional responses that may not be evocable

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[30] BARTHES, Roland, *Image-Music-Text*, London, Hill and Wang, 1977, pp. 45-46.
[31] BURKE, Peter, «Interrogating the Eyewitness», in *Cultural and Social History*, **7,** 4/2010, pp. 435-443, pp. 349-350.
[32] SARACENI, Mario, *The Language of Comics*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 36; EL REFAIE, Elisabeth, «Understanding visual metaphor: the example of newspaper cartoons», in *Visual Communication*, 2, 1/2003, pp. 75-95.
[33] GOMBRICH, Ernst, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art*, London, Phaidon, 1963, pp. 127-142; MORRIS, Ray, «Visual Rhetoric in Political Cartoons: A Structuralist Approach», in *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, 8, 3/1993, pp. 195-210; FORCEVILLE, Charles, «Pictorial Metaphor in Advertisements», in *Metaphor and Symbol*, 9, 1/1994, pp. 1-29.
[34] LIEPE, Lena, *Konst som historiskt källmaterial? Om bildens epistemologi*, in ANDERSSON, Lars M., BERGGREN, Lars, ZANDER, Ulf (eds.), *Mer än tusen ord: bilden och de historiska vetenskaperna*, Lund, Nordic Academic Press, 2001, pp. 19-36, p. 26.
[35] NEAD, Lynda, *op. cit.*, p. 491.
[36] BARCLAY, Katie, «Introduction: Emotions and Change», in *Emotions: History, Culture, Society*, 1, 2/2017, pp. 1-9, p. 4.

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through non-pictorial means[37], the historian, by interpreting the *emotions evoked* within their historical context alongside the *emotions portrayed* in the facial expressions of the portrayed subjects, may reveal the interpretative key conveyed by the artist in discourses whose socio-cultural knowledge has been lost. Among these emotions, the sublime should not be forgotten. In the last three centuries, visions both of nature and of technology have inspired this mix of arousal, pleasure and vitality that excites the audience through the terrifying but also through the noble and the magnificent[38]. Schadenfreude, which is the cynical satisfaction of seeing others suffering, should not be forgotten either, since it is part of the reading convention of visual satire and humour[39].

3. Case Study

In the case study that follows, the quantitative analysis of a series of visual representations of one yet-unrealised infrastructural concept will reveal the frequency with which visual artists deployed competing final claims on environing across genres in a timespan of seven decades. Secondly, the analysis of a sample of the most representative visual representations, selected by salience of genres and final claims along the timeframe under focus, will show what the visual artists communicated regarding environing and through which visual arguments they did so.

3.1. The Concept

The existing fixed link across the Øresund strait, opened to car and train traffic in 2000, is only one of the versions of the concept that, across history, were debated in Sweden and Denmark for connecting the two countries. Private engineering firms started to propose projects for bridges and tunnels to the states in the second half of the nineteenth century. The two states started to investigate the possibility of establishing a fixed link in 1953, on the recommendation of the Nordic Council. From the 1950s to the 1980s, four bilateral commissions worked to assess the feasibility of the concept. Economic and political factors halted the decision, until in 1991 the two parliaments ratified the agreement that led to the construction of the Øresund fixed link.

Across the twentieth century, the concept generated social anxieties and expectations referable to multiple discourses, which included politics, the economy, the environment and their

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[37] MESSARIS, Paul, *Visual persuasion: the role of images in advertising*, Thousand Oaks, SAGE, 1997; LINUS, Abraham, «Effectiveness of Cartoons as a Uniquely Visual Medium for Orienting Social Issues», in *Journalism & Communication Monographs,* 11, 2/2009, pp. 131-144.
[38] RISPOLI, Giulia, ROSOL, Christoph, «Introductory Notes», in *Azimuth*, 6, 12/2018, pp. 9-13; WORMBS, Nina, «Sublime Satellite Imagery as Environing Technology», in *Azimuth*, 6, 12/2018, pp. 77-91.
[39] CHU, Yingchi, «On the Hypoiconic Structure of Cartoons», in *Social Semiotics*, 32, 2/2022, pp. 262-278.

intersections, as previous studies report[40]. In reference to the visual representations of the concept, Markus Idvall has highlighted the power of cartographic representations in redefining the political and social spaces of Southern Sweden and Zealand in a new socio-political and cultural entity, the Øresund region. The mediatised visual representations of the region and its missing link shaped expectations and anxieties, engendering heterotopic visions[41]. Focusing on the connotations given by Danish and Swedish visual artists to environing the Øresund with a fixed link will provide clues about the shifting approaches existing in the two cultures on the nexus between technology, the environment and nature.

3.2. Materials and Corpus Analysis

The case study implements the method on visual representations of the concept published in Danish and Swedish printed newspapers and periodicals between 1930 and 1999. I have analysed 163 visual representations published in Sweden and 166 visual representations published in Denmark. The resulting databases permit dating of the distribution of the genres used for visualising the concept in Denmark (Table 1) and in Sweden (Table 2), as well as the frequency of *utopias*, *warnings* referable to other discourses than the environment, warnings about the consequences of the concept for the environment and warnings against concept-related negative utopias, in Denmark (Table 3) and in Sweden (Table 4). By this aggregated data, I have analysed societal sensibilities and agendas of Danish and Swedish actors towards the act of environing the Øresund and its environment and nature with a fixed link, in the last century. This allowed me to provide a periodization of these sensibilities and agendas and an account of their clashes, in determined timeframes. The analysis of a selection of the most representative visual representations published in each timeframe provides evidence that considering visual representations as texts is rewarding, in terms of insight within past sensibilities and agendas towards environing. I have established the visuals' representativeness by looking simultaneously at the peaks for genre and final claims, reported respectively in Table 1 and Table 3 for Denmark and in Table 2 and Table 4 for Sweden.

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[40] LINDE-LAURSEN, Anders, *Det nationales natur: Studier i dansk-svenska relationer*, Lund, Nordisk ministerråd, 1995; NILSSON, Fredrik, *När en timme blir tio minuter: En studie av förväntan inför Öresundsbron*, Lund, Historiska media, 1999; DEKKER LINNROS, Hannah, HALLIN, Per O., «The discursive nature of environmental conflicts: the case of the Öresund link», in *Area*, 33, 4/2001 pp. 391-403; O'DELL, Tom, *Regionauterna*, in BERG, Per-Olof, LINDE-LAURSEN, Anders, LÖFGREN, Orvar (eds.), *Öresundsbron på uppmärksamhetens marknad: regionbyggare i evenemangsbranschen*, Lund, Studentlitteratur, 2002, pp. 97-113; LÖFGREN, Orvar, «Island Magic and the Making of a Transnational Region», in *Geographical Review*, 97, 2/2007, pp. 244-259; PEEBLES, Gustav, *The Euro and its Rivals: Currency and the Construction of a Transnational City*, Bloomington (IN), Indiana University Press, 2011; EMANUEL, Martin, *Conflictual politics of sustainability: cycling organisations and the Øresund crossing*, in COX, Peter, KOGLIN, Till (eds.), *The Politics of Cycling Infrastructure: Spaces and (In)Equality*, Bristol, Bristol University Press, 2020, pp. 157-178.
[41] IDVALL, Markus, *Kartors kraft: Regionen som samhällsvision i Öresundsbrons tid*, Lund, Nordic Academic Press, 2000.

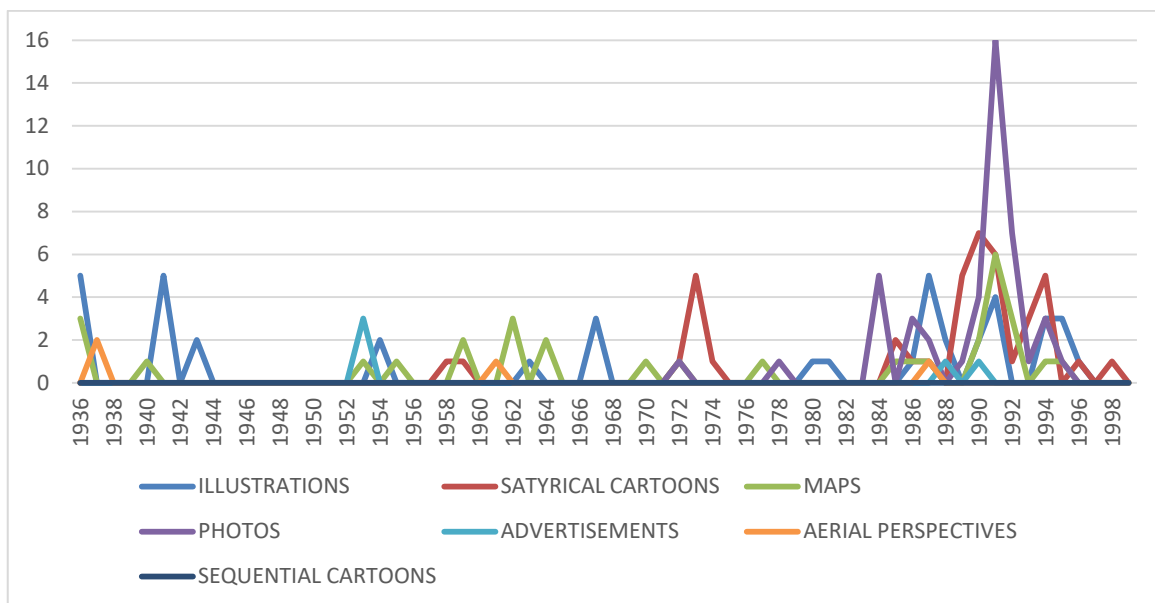**Table 1. Frequency of Visual Representations of the Concept per Genre: Denmark.**

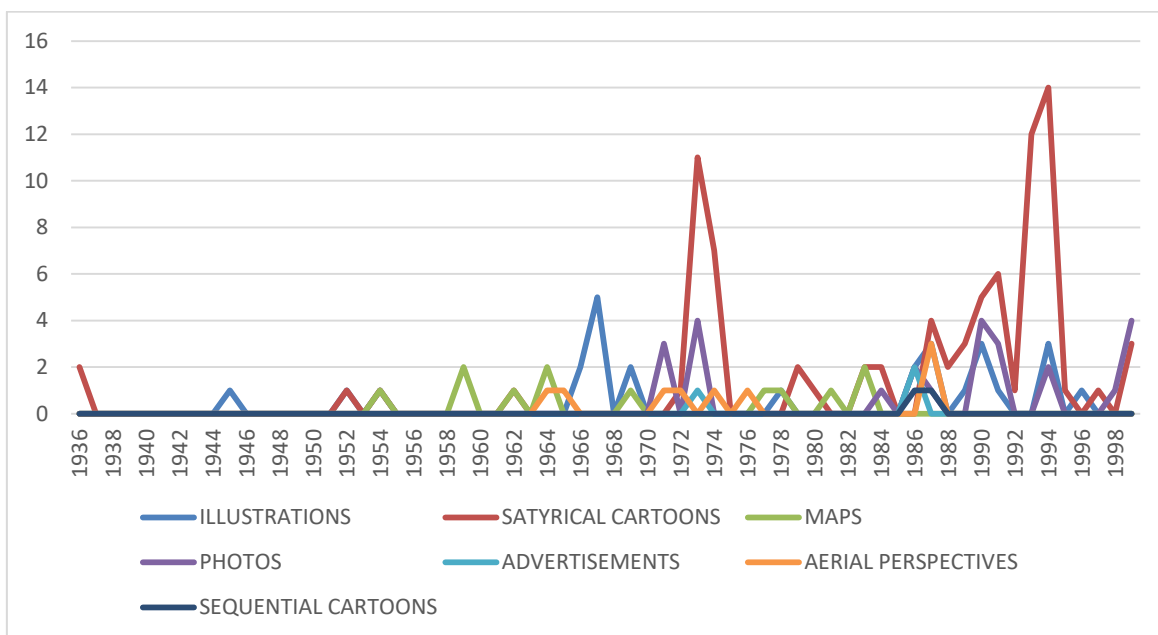**Table 2. Frequency of Visual Representations of the Concept per Genre: Sweden.**
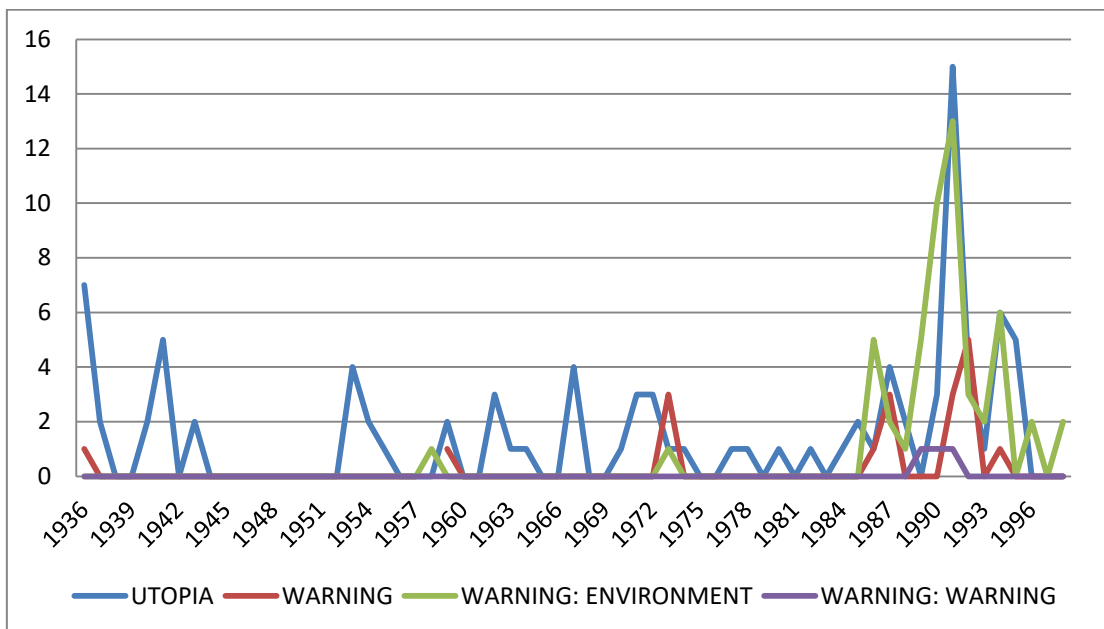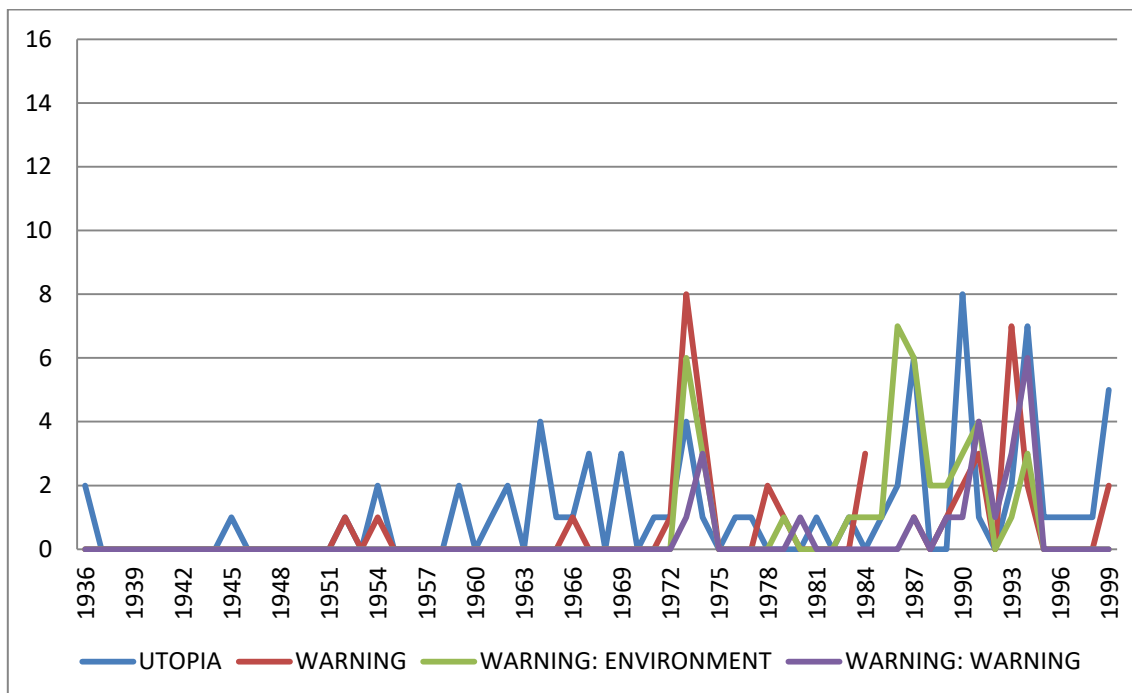
Table 3 – Utopias and Warnings: Denmark.

Table 4. Utopias and Warnings: Sweden.

The sections will focus on one or two genres and final claims per timeframe, in order to highlight the competing connotations that visual artists gave to the concept in relation to the humankind-nature relationship in the two countries. The visual representations analysed are limited to illustrations, aerial perspectives, satirical cartoons and maps that have utopia or warnings about the consequences of the concept for the environment as their final claim. I will account succinctly other genres and warning on issues other than the environment in order to contextualise the humankind-nature relationship in the broader social and cultural history of the concept.

3.2. Sublime visions: 1930s-1950s

Between the 1930s and the late 1950s, Danish and Swedish actors represented the concept almost exclusively as utopic. In the 1930s, modernising utopias dominated Europe. Among these, projects for mobility infrastructures promised to unite divided spaces of the continent[42]. In Sweden and Denmark, engineers saw a business opportunity in the natural divide represented by the Øresund strait. Since engineering is always contextual with regard to culture and society, a transnational fixed link had to fit both countries' trends, habits, identities and claims[43]. The engineering firms that in the interwar era proposed versions of the concept to the two states, which had the power to avail the necessary concessions, did so by utilising both verbal arguments and the emotional language of visual representations. Although the Øresund had been exploited as a natural waterway for centuries, there were several arguments available for connoting it as a natural barrier: it impeded the passage to railroads and highways[44]. With a distance of between three and fifteen kilometres between the Danish and Swedish coasts, the divide looked minimal yet insurmountable. Reaching the other shore required the use of ferry boats and waiting in long queues – when the meteorological conditions did not prevent the crossing.

Visual representations of the concept, published in brochures distributed by the engineering firms to the Danish and Swedish newspapers, witness the attempt to also convince the audience of the concept's goodness and feasibility by non-verbal arguments. Their illustrators had to take into consideration the two media cultures and the approaches to infrastructural modernisation existing in the two countries, in order to establish the concept as a utopia. Denmark had undertaken infrastructural modernisation since the 1920s, with the building of new roads, tunnels and bridges. In the 1930s, advertisements of state-supported infrastructural projects were

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[42] SCHIPPER, Frank. *Driving Europe: Building Europe on Roads in the Twentieth Century,* Amsterdam, Aksant, 2008, pp. 83-86.

[43] LAVELLE, Sylvain, *Contextualism in Engineering – Section Introduction*, in HYLDGAARD CHRISTENSEN, Steen, DELAHOUSSE, Bernard, MAGANCK Martin (eds), *Engineering in Context*, Aarhus, Academica, 2009, pp. 29-32, p. 29.

[44] IDVALL, Markus, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-50.

setting the art of engineering in the Danish minds[45]. For the Danish audience, uniting the Øresund was an unprecedented technological challenge. In Sweden, since the early 1930s, functionalist architects and artists had advanced the idea that adapting nature to societal exigencies through rational thinking and technology could amend the flaws of "old" Sweden[46]. Those ideas resounded in the new philosophy implemented by the advertisement industry: the promotion of ideas of progress, prosperity, technological innovation and science that promised, in a good artistic shaping, to improve society[47]. Therefore, the visual representations had to construct the concept as a technological challenge while emphasising the improvements that it would accomplish. Invoking the humankind-nature relationship allowed the artists to comply with those sets of traditions.

One of the illustrations of the brochure *Highway with bridges over the Great Belt and the Øresund* (Figure 1), published in 1936 by a Danish-Swedish engineering consortium, presented the functions that the link would fulfil: transit and non-impediment to navigation. Yet, some elements attempted to fit the concept within the traditional and natural landscape: a sailing boat and an old vessel make their appearance; birds are flying in the distance over the sea. The utopia presented the fixed link as part of the urban landscape, visible by the bike lane and pedestrians' walk on the right and by the people wandering across it. These anthropic and natural elements served to domesticate the unfamiliar, terrorising aspect of a technological challenge, and to emphasise that the concept would deliver more than the sum of its functions: it would make it possible to conciliate novel technologies with nature, in normalised sublime experiences that could be replicated in everyday life.
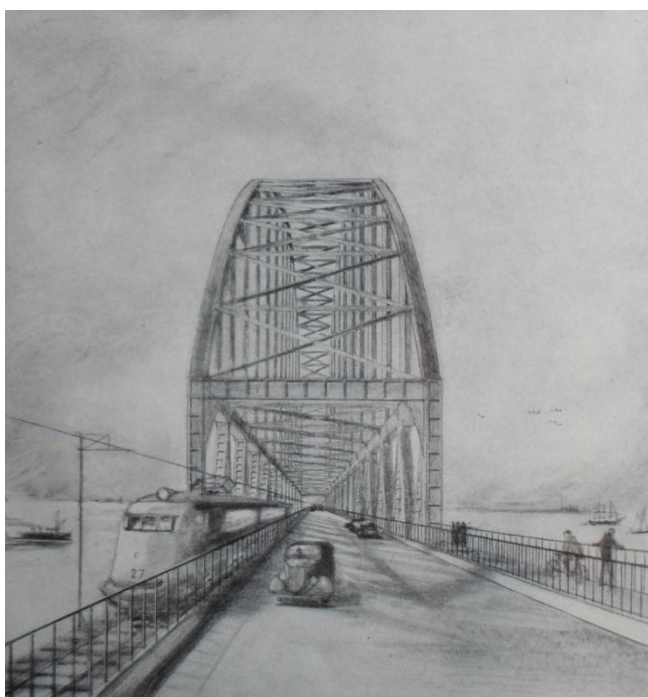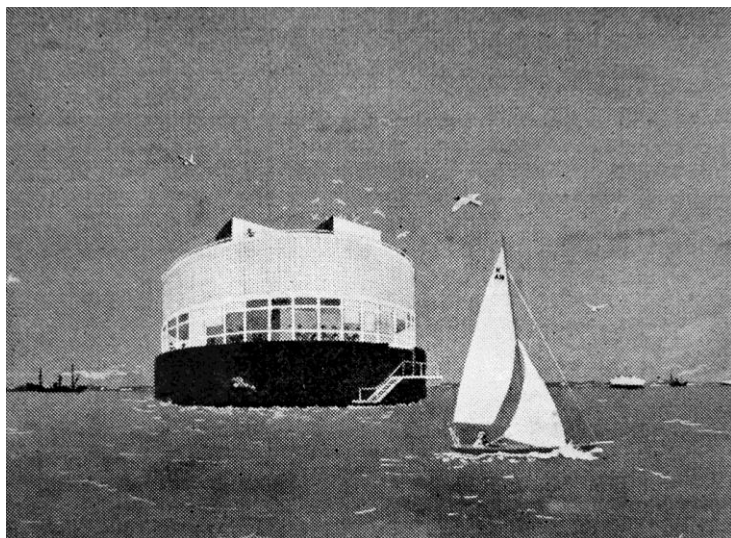

Figure 1. [Anonymous, «No title»]. Source: *Motorveje med broer over Storebælt og Øresund,* **Copenhagen, Self-printed, 1936.**

Figure 2. Source: *Øresundstunnelen*,
Copenhagen, Self-printed, 1941.

Other visual representations of projects of the same era construct the humankind-nature relationship as a quest solved by technology. In 1941, the Danish engineering firm Manniche & Hartmann advanced a project for a tunnel under the Øresund[48]. The firm framed the concept in the discourse on tourism and the resulting utopia was the Øresund as a tourist paradise. One of the pictorial perspectives present in the firm's brochure (Figure 2) illustrated a sea-view of one of the ventilation towers of the tunnel, which hosted a restaurant and a solarium. The natural elements played an important role in constructing the concept as utopic. The sublime is an integral part of the narrative, since the audience is invited to take part in a sailing trip, which is a sort of little adventure in nature: the waves against the boat's keel are mild but well visible; a big bird is passing over the boat. The waves touch also the ventilation tower, on which several birds are finding haven. The perspective emphasises the tower's colossal volume: the waves against it are smaller than those against the sailing boat, and the birds are almost invisible on its top. Ultimately, the ventilation tower is the technology through which humans can find salvation from nature and coexist with it harmoniously.

The Swedish government's lack of interest in the concept also influenced the mediatisation of the firms' visual representations, which were reproduced almost exclusively in Danish printed media in the 1930s and the 1940s. Once, in 1953, the Nordic Council had recommended the construction of the fixed link between Sweden and Denmark, the matter became political in both social democracies. The rhetoric with which the firms' brochures constructed the utopia in the early 1950s did not change from that of the previous decades. One of the perspectives advanced by the German firm Krupp in 1954 (Figure 3) explicitly established the similarity between the quest of a large trade ship and that of the bridge against the sea waves, in order to simultaneously emphasise the idea of non-impediment to navigation and to railways and highways and the robustness of the bridge against the natural elements[49]. A new visual representation of the 1930s' project by the Danish-Swedish consortium (Figure 4) attempted to convey the same messages, but

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[48] *Ingeniøren*, 22, 1941; *Billed Bladet*, 23 November 1943; *Expressen*, 6 February 1949.
[49] *Helsingborgs Dagbladet*, 8 November 1954.

it indulged in constructing the sublime by playing with the colours of the sea on a calm day and with the elements of clement weather: the blue sky and a cloud that is dissolving far on the horizon target the emotions of the audience with positive inputs that reflect the connotation of the concept[50].

Figure 3. Source: *Öresundsbro Hälsingborg – Helsingör*, Stockholm, Self-printed, 1954.

Figure 4. Source: *Motorvägförbindelse Sverige – Danmark mellan Malmö och Köpenhamn*, Stockholm, Self-printed, 1954.

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[50] *Politiken*, 8 January 1954.

3.3. Cartooning and satirising utopias: 1958-1972

By the late 1950s, the visual representations of the concept show that the understanding of the relationship between technology and the human environment had changed dramatically in Denmark, but only minorly in Sweden. In Sweden, utopic visions of modernisation were characteristic of the post-war rhetoric of social democracy. Mass media mediatised the politics of *Folkhemmet* (*the people's home*) through written reports of the proposals and plans of social and civil engineers[51]. Cartoons served the purpose as well, with their strong focus on consumer information[52] and social advertisements[53]. The state plans for the Øresund bridge started to be represented in cartoon persuasive maps that appealed euphorically to mobility across the strait. For example, in 1959, the daily «Sydsvenska Dagbladet» commissioned a map of all the hypotheses that the two states were considering for the location of the link (Figure 5).
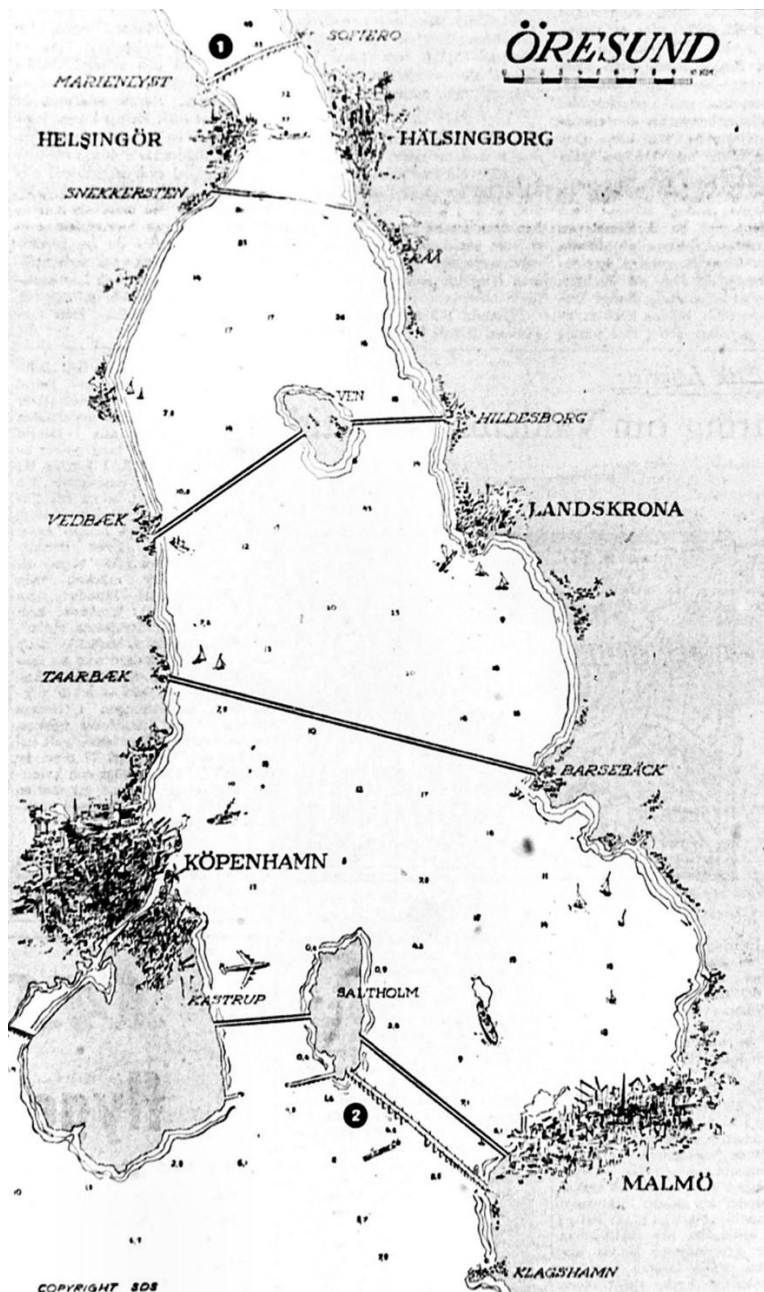
Figure 5. SDS, «Öresund». Source: *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällpost*, **5 March 1959. Credit:** *Sydsvenskan.*

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[51] OLSSON, Tom, *The right to talk politics in Swedish journalism, 1925-1995*, in HURD, Madeleine, OLSSON, Tom, ÅKER, Patrik (eds.), *Storylines: Media, Power and Identity in Modern Europe*, Stockholm, Hjalmarson & Högberg Bokförlag, 2002, pp. 52-77, p. 63.

[52] LUNDSTRÖM, Gunilla, RYDÉN, Per, SANDLUND, Elisabeth (eds.), *Den svenska pressens historia*, vol. 3, Stockholm, Ekerlid, 2001, p. 43.

[53] LINDBERG, Tobias, «Lite konfetti i vardagens ansikte: om *Obsi* – en dambilaga till *Obs!*», in *Presshistorisk årsbok*, 25, 1/2008 pp. 247-261, p. 257.

Representing the alternatives altogether, the map invited the audience to invest emotionally in the possibilities that different versions of the concept would have created. In other maps, the idea of the harmonious coexistence of nature, the environment and technology emerged. The pedagogical cartoon maps by «Expressen»'s illustrator Magnus Gerne[54], in particular, show exemplary that technology can be normalised without grandeur but without negating its sublimity[55]. In his *Öresund* (*Øresund*) (Figure 6), the coasts of Sweden and Denmark are taken over by a myriad of mobility infrastructures and technologies alongside anthropic and natural elements. The idea of harmony between these human, natural and technological elements is explicitly suggested by the woman who, from the sandy beaches of Falsterbo, waves her hand to a supersonic jet (lower right corner).
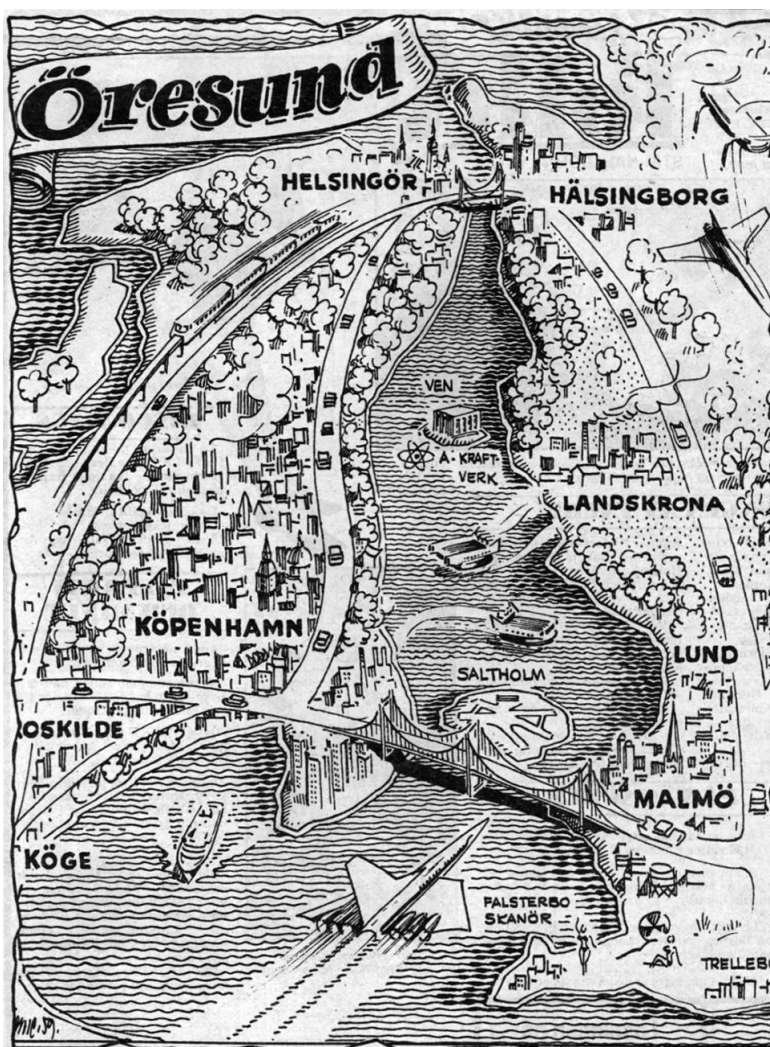

Figure 6. Magnus Gerne, «Öresund». Source: *Expressen***, 29 July 1984. Credit: Magnus Gerne's family.**

In Denmark, the concept received no similar connotation in those years. In the 1950s, the wonders of modern architecture were no longer novel or exciting. On the contrary, they started to be perceived as threatening for traditional human settlements[56]. Satirical cartoons, which were living a «golden age»[57], expounded technology's negative consequences for humans and their

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[54] GUSTAFSSON, Karl E., RYDÉN, Per (eds), *Den svenska pressens historia*, vol. 4, Stockholm, Ekerlid, 2002, p. 49.
[55] STORM, Anna, «Atomic Fish: Sublime and Non-Sublime Nature Imaginaries», in *Azimuth*, 4, 12/2018, pp. 59-75.
[56] MUNK, Hannibal, *Den visuelle leder: satiretegningen i dansk dagspresse siden 1924*, PhD Thesis, Roskilde, University of Roskilde, 2019, pp. 212-215.
[57] MUNK, Hannibal, VIGSØ, Orla, «Satirteckningar i Danmark och Sverige», in *Nordisk Tidskrift*, 2, 1/2020, pp.

environment. Cartoonist Bo Bojesen, who often expressed scepticism about technology on the daily «Politiken»[58], satirised the Øresund fixed link on two occasions. In 1958, he sided with the major of Elsinore against the building of the bridge in the city. *Kystens perle* (*The pearl of the coast*) was a luxury, Hollywood style hotel for international tourists established in the early 1950s south of Elsinore, created by renovating a historical inn. Since 1952, the abolition of the need for a passport for intra-Nordic mobility had increased the number of tourists travelling to and from the "Danish riviera". By exploiting the existing criticism of modern architecture and tourism, Bojesen turned the concept into *Kystens snerle* (*The bindweed of the coast*) (Figure 7), a grotesque modernisation project that would have been built directly over Kronoborg castle, an important cultural heritage building in Elsinore. The final claim is a warning about the environment, although ironical and conciliatory[59].
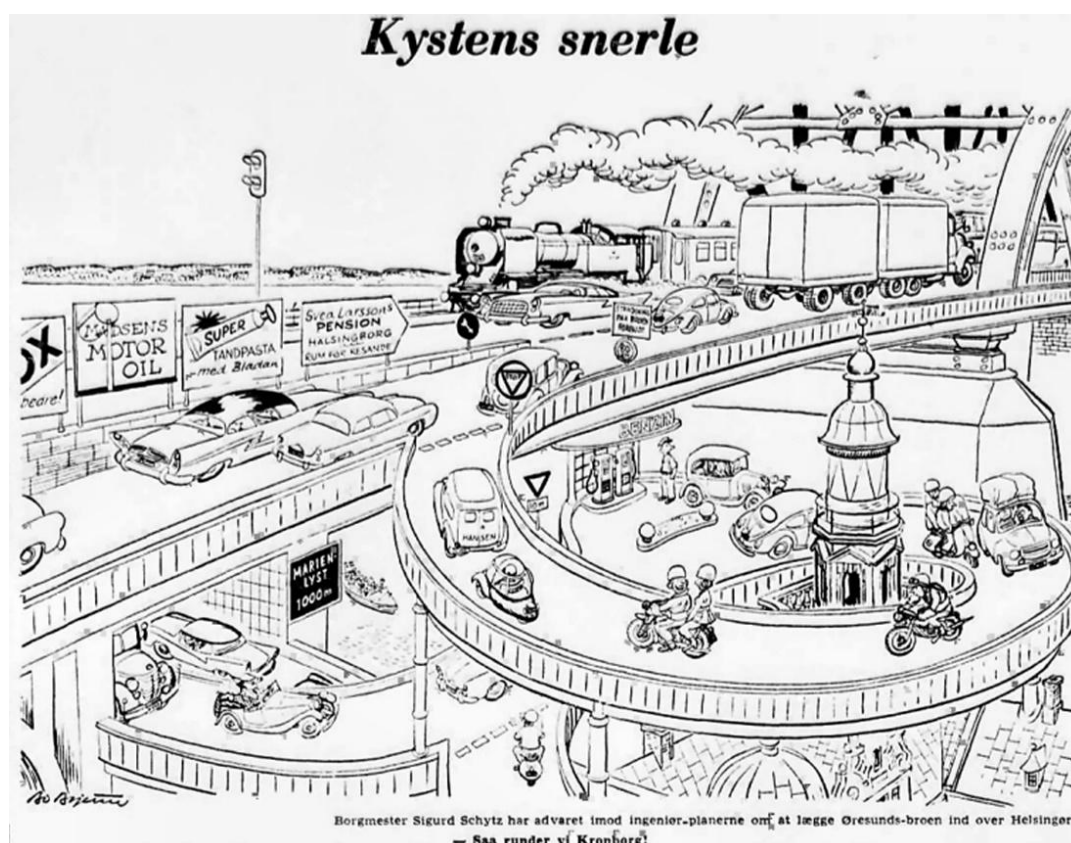

Figure 7. Bo Bojesen, «Kystens snerle». Source: *Politiken*, 27 July 1958. Credit: Niels Bo Bojesen and *Politiken*.

181-188.
[58] MUNK, Hannibal, *Den visuelle leder*, cit., pp. 208-212.
[59] HERTEL, Hans, *Verden ifølge Bo Bojesen*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 2000, pp. 70-71.

The second cartoon (Figure 8), from 1959, is still humorous but less conciliatory. It accompanies a critical article on technology. Improbable vectors between Danish and Swedish cities that are very far from the Øresund are passing over a traditional villa set on a small island. Cars and trains travel on a gigantic bridge, while helicopters, airplanes, ships and boats are storming all around. The only visible human being is the owner of the villa, who is resting in his garden with a newspaper over the face. He is evidently bored by all those technological innovations, and tired of being deprived of privacy and relaxation. The plants in the villa's garden are the only natural elements over which he has not lost control, while the sea and even the sky are at the mercy of mobility technologies and infrastructures. The final claim is a warning of the negative consequences of technology (including the concept) for humans and their environment.
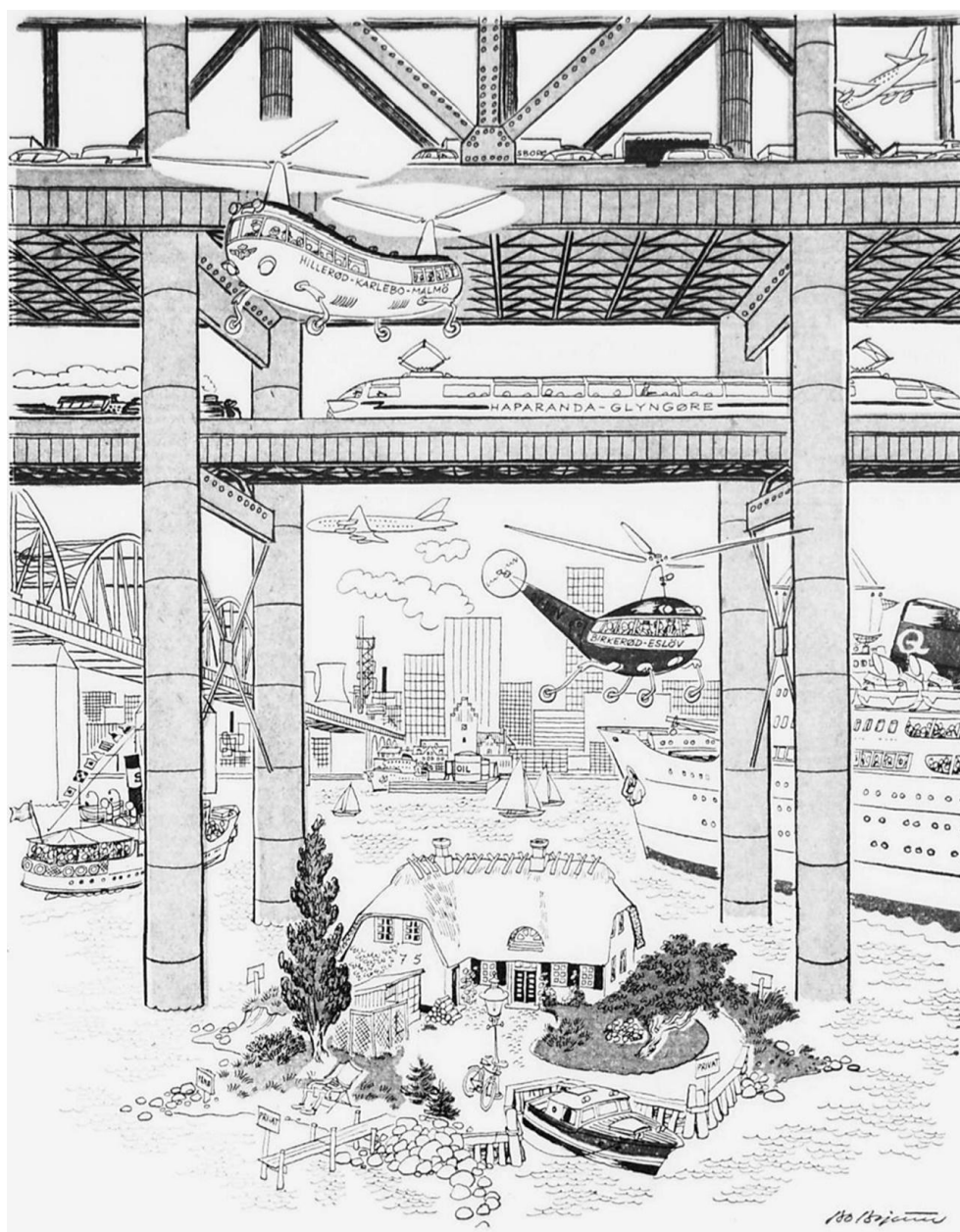

Figure 8. Bo Bojesen, no title. Source: *Politiken*, 1 Oct. 1959. Credit: Niels Bo Bojesen and *Politiken*.

Figure 9. Anders Sten, «Varningsord ur djupet».

Source: *Sydsvenska Dagbladet snällposten*, **21 December 1962.**

Credit: Johan Sten and *Sydsvenskan*.

In Sweden, no similar critique connoted the concept like Bojesen did. However, signs that criticism on modern industrial society had started to circulate[60] are perceivable by the fact that the *topos* mankind vs nature was exploited only in conciliatory visual satire on the concept. In a cartoon published in the daily «Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten» (Figure 9), Mej Figge, a character by cartoonist Anders Sten, witnesses the quest posed by Neptune to Alex Strand, who had been tasked by the government to analyse the feasibility of establishing a bridge between Elsinore and Helsingborg. Since the geologists had warned of the dangers involved in building the bridge in that point, the forces of nature are here humanised in order to represent the state commission's work as an epical quest. The cartoon invites to smile at the quest, and at Strand, with a veiled Schadenfreude conveyed in Neptune's sardonic smile. The personification of nature is here the villain of the hero of the visual, Strand – but the heroisation of state commissioners and the antagonisation of nature was appropriate only in satire.

In utopic visual representations of the following years, nature and the environment continue to be either absent or harmonious corollaries to technology. In the cartoon map commissioned by the Øresund Council to illustrator Bengt Böckman in 1969 (Figure 10), infrastructures permit connections between all the natural and human wonders of the strait, and thus they make the Øresund region a hotspot for tourism and leisure[61].

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[60] MÅRALD, Erland, NORDLUND, Christer, *op. cit.*, pp. 509-510.
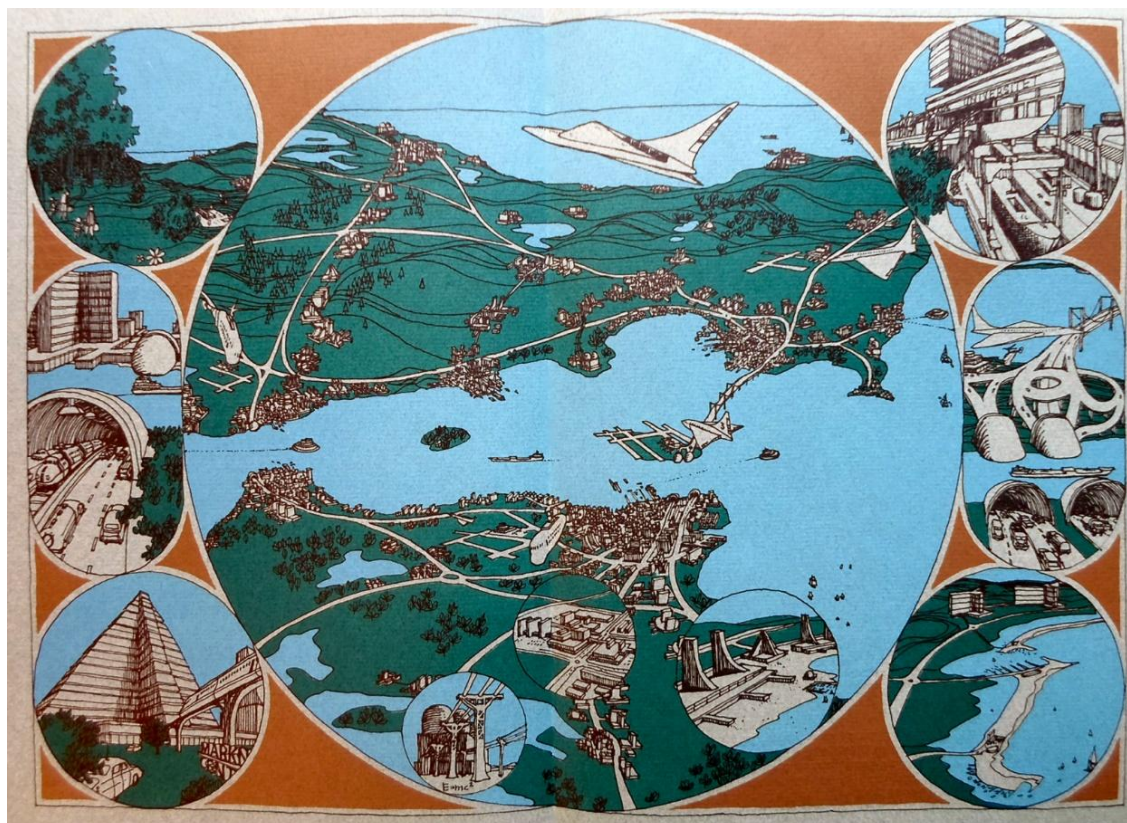[61] LÖFGREN, Orvar, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

Figure 10. Bengt Böckman, no title. Source: *Öresundsregionen: Information om Öresundsregionen*, Malmö, Öresundsrådet, 1969. Credit: Edith Böckman.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, persuasive maps in Denmark and cartoon illustrations in Sweden remained the predominant genres for constructing the concept as utopic. «Expressen» tasked Gerne at least ten times to cartoon the concept in perspectives, aerial views and maps. These visuals exploited the same cognitive attributes that characterised the illustrations put forward by the engineering firms in the 1930s and 1950s. In some cases, as in George Beverloo's 1972 illustration (Figure 11), the cartoonists represented multiple perspectives in the same artwork, in order to amplify the spectrum of positive experiences that the concept would engender once materialised.
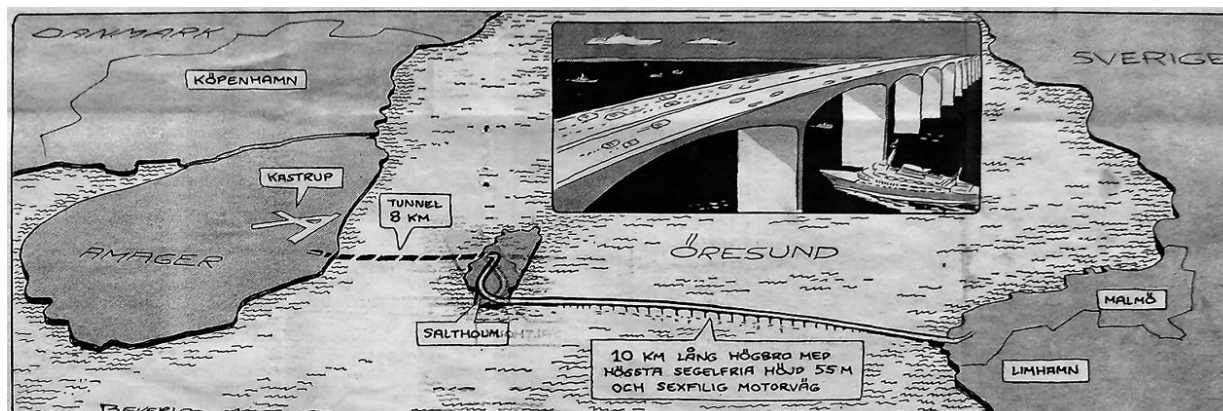

Figure 11. George Beverloo, no title. Source: *Aftonbladet*, 22 November 1972. Credit: Margaretha Beverloo Smith and *Aftonbladet*.

3.4. Visual environmental consciousness: the 1970s

Between 1972 and 1975, warnings over the economy, politics and the environment appeared suddenly and massively in the visual representations of the concept published in Sweden. Their total number doubled that of utopic visual representations. The concept had become an object of contention. On the one hand, it was a project of social democracy. Emerging ideologies increasingly contested social democracy's social planning and mass consumerism as anti-values[62]. The artists, who were part of those conflicting spaces of experience, started to visually contest or downplay *folkhemmet* and its representatives: while social democratic politicians were satirised in cartoons[63], the advertising sector tuned down the rationality invoked during the previous decades[64]. On the other hand, the circulation of scientific knowledge about the negative consequences of environing, through the works of engaging communicators, had contributed to a change in values, beliefs and attitudes towards technology and the environment in both countries in the late 1960s. While the states created authorities for environmental protection, civil societies' actors mobilised in new grassroots organisations that aimed to establish the primacy of ecological interests over political and economic ones in their societies[65]. The media, and the printed press in particular, played a key role in communicating to the general public the warnings raised by scientists and environmental activists about the consequences of environing[66]. Cartoonists and illustrators were among the communicators who issued such warnings. They did so by negatively connoting technological utopias, among them the Øresund fixed link.

In December 1972, the Swedish daily «Aftonbladet» published the first concept-related non-satirical visual warning about the environment. It regarded Denmark, which within a few days would become a member of the European Community. It accompanied an article that claimed that the Øresund bridge and the connected airport on the Danish island of Saltholm would reduce Denmark to a transit area. The illustration, by Ewert "EWK" Karlsson, showed what environing Copenhagen with engineering utopias meant: turning the city into a messy juxtaposition of highway ramps and viaducts in the flight paths of airplanes[67]. In 1974, «Land», the magazine of

[62] WIKLUND, Martin, *I det modernas landskap: Historisk orientering och kritiska berättelser om det moderna Sverige mellan 1960 och 1990*, Stockholm, Symposion, 2006.

[63] LINDBERG, Karl, *Förrädare och pampar: karikatyrer av Socialdemokraterna inom svensk höger och vänster under 1970-talets andra hälft*, MA Thesis, Huddinge, Södertörn University, 2014.

[64] HOLMBERG, Gustaf, *Vettigt hemarbete: om reklam för tidsbesparing och hemmafruidealets förändring 1950–1970*, MA Thesis, Uppsala, Uppsala University, 2018; LIVBOM, Thomas, *Vi hänger me': dagstidningsannonser i NSD 1960-1970 som en spegling av tidsandan*, MA Thesis, Luleå, Luleå Technical University, 2003.

[65] AGGER, Peder and BRANDT, Jesper, *NOAHs flyvende start – og tiden derefter*, in HOUGGARD, Asger, HOLTEN-ANDERSEN, John, KJÆRGAARD LANGE, Mads, BENDSEN, Palle (eds.), *Miljøbevægelsens rødder,* Copenhagen, NOAHs Forlag, 2019, pp. 24-39; JAMISON, Andrew, EYERMAN, Ron, CRAMER, Jacqueline, LÆSSØE, Jeppe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1990, pp. 24-54, 76-89.

[66] LARSSON HEIDENBLAD, David, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[67] *Aftonbladet*, 2 December 1972.
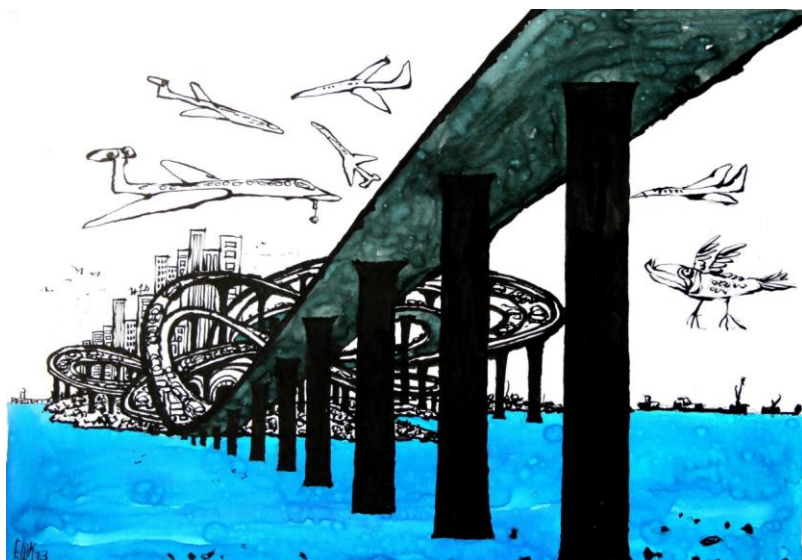
the Federation of Swedish Farmers, published another version of EWK's illustration with the Øresund bridge in primo piano (Figure 12)[68].

Figure 12. Ewert Karlsson, no title. Source: *Land*, 25 October 1974. Original artwork conserved at EWK-Museet, Norrköping.

In December 1973, right before the first street protests against the concept by Swedish environmental activists, the destruction of nature made its appearance among the visual warnings. The opening sequence of a satirical cartoon published by Anders Andersö in the daily «Svenska Dagbladet» (Figure 13) represented the bridge as animated, in the act of trampling the Scanian environment and its nature, symbolised by a traditional house, by a willow tree pollard (the symbol of Scania) and by a white stork[69].


Figure 13. Anders Andersö, «Dannebron» (detail). Source: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 9 December 1973. Credit: Anders Andersö.

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[68] *Land*, 25 October 1974.
[69] IDVALL, Markus, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

Since the matter had become an object of political contention, visual satire targeted the utopists for the negative consequences that the concept could have. Danish cartoonist Klaus Albrectsen, in the Swedish daily «Expressen» (Figure 14), showed that the concept would fulfil the desire of the Social Democrats of bringing Sweden closer to the European Community, the export exigencies of the Swedish industries, and even libertine touristic expectations; but, as Albrectsen shows, crushing Scania, its economy and its environment were, metaphorically, the foundations upon which those desires, exigencies, and expectations were based on. The metaphor aimed to raise anger against unjust politics, and to look at the issue from the same perspective as that of the political opposition, which did not support the concept.

Figure 14. Klaus Albrectsen, no title. Source: *Expressen*, 11 December 1973. Credit: Klaus Albrectsen.
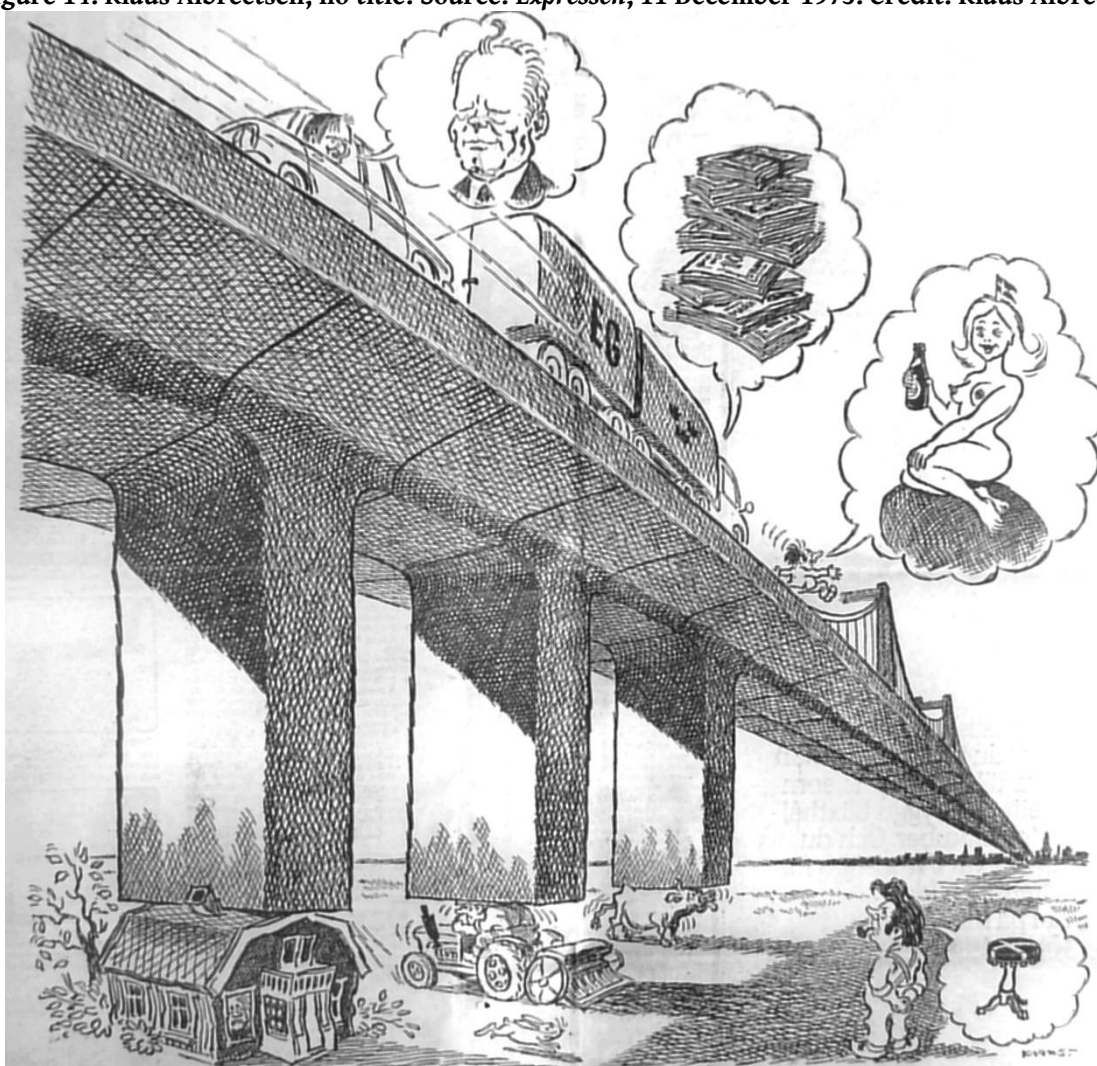
As a further novelty of this era, both countries' artists exploited the visualisation of concrete and exhaust gases in order to connote the concept negatively. Swedish cartoonist Lennart Rydén, on the cover of an anthology in which several Danish and Swedish environmental activists and

scientists criticised the link (Figure 15) represented the link as a river of concrete ready to flood the traditional Scanian landscape, the coastal settlements, its fertile land and nature[70].

Figure 15. Lennart Rydén, no title.
Source: *Öresundsbron* – *den hotfulla bron*, Stockholm, LTs Förlag, 1974.
Credit: Lennart Rydén.

In Denmark, where the link had received only minor societal attention, cartoonist Jørgen Saabye connoted negatively the exhaust gases and noises of the airplanes that would pollute the sky once Saltholm airport and the bridge environed the Øresund (Figure 16). These negative connotations show that artists were receptive of the discourse on the environment and that they co-participated in heightening the environmental literacy of the audiences with regard to acts of environing.
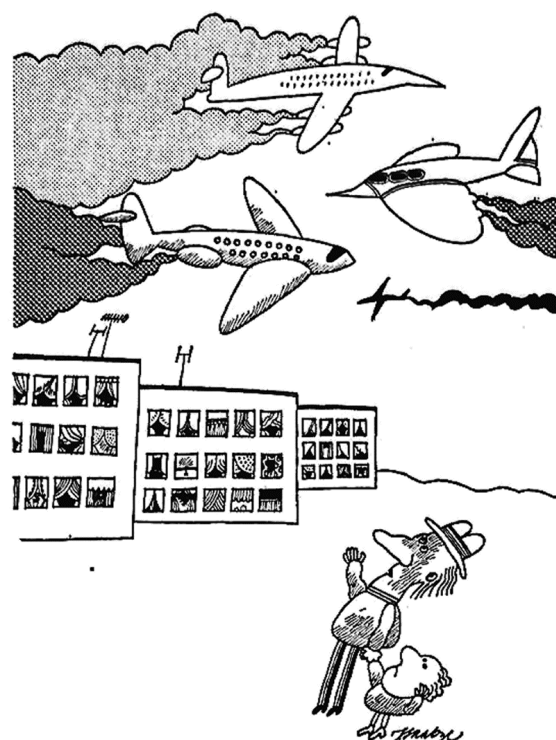
Figure 16. Jørgen Saabye, «Luftbro». Source: *Politiken*, 19 Sep. 1973.
Credit: Jørgen Saabye and *Politiken*.

Når Saltholm-lufthavnen og Øresundsbroen er etableret, skal biltrafikken ledes uden om boligområder.
— De oser måske ikke så meget, men de støjer mere!

[70] LINNROS, HALLIN, «The discursive nature», p. 396.

3.5. The environmental activists' cartoons: 1986-1990

In the second half of the 1980s, visual warnings over the environmental consequences of the concept would appear at different stages in Sweden and Denmark. The concept had re-emerged in both public spaces thanks to the activities of the bilateral information bureau *Öresundskontakt* (*Øresund Contact*), which since 1981 had reinforced the utopia of the Øresund region through intense publishing activity[71]. In 1983, the European Round Table of the Industrialists turned the concept into one of European "missing links". The Scandinavian Link, CEO Per G. Gyllenhammar promised, would unite the Nordic countries and Europe with a system of highways, tunnels, bridges and waterways.

By 1984, the establishing of a new Øresund Delegation revived the protests by the environmental activists. They established associations that opposed the concept, of which the fixed link was part, as a single issue: in Denmark, the activists of the environmental association *NOAH* established the association *Scan Link? Nej Tak!* (*Scan Link? No, Thanx!*), while in Sweden the association *Aktion Skåne-Miljö* (*Action Scania-Environment*) succeeded in coalising unions, local, Christian and environmental groups and political parties in the association *Motlänken* (*Against the Link*). Professional communicators submitted their competences to the cause. Satire served to negatively connote the utopists, their utopias and their supporters. In a sequential cartoon published in 1986 in the periodical *Motlänken* (Figure 17), Jan-Olof Sandgren satirised those who considered the concept as an opportunity to reach natural areas for touristic purposes.

Figure 17. Jan-Olof Sandgren, no title. Source: *Motlänken* (1986). Credit: Jan-Olof Sandgren.

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[71] IDVALL, Markus, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

The horror of «the wilderness» destroyed by irresponsible environing, Sandgren warned, was all the concept had to offer to uninformed tourists and infrastructural utopists. In another sequential cartoon (Figure 18), Sandgren connoted the Industrialists' concept as megalomaniac by presenting a future in which the European industrialists had destroyed local diversity on a continental scale and were by then planning to do the same on a global one.

Figure 18. Jan-Olof Sandgren, no title. Source: *Motlänken* **(1987). Credit: Jan-Olof Sandgren.**

In Denmark, *Scan Link? No Thanx!*'s visual warnings about the concept appeared in *NOAH*'s magazine and in various fliers[72]. In 1989, Albrectsen put his art in the service of the Danish environmentalists, drawing one illustration and one satirical cartoon for one of those fliers. The illustration (Figure 19) contains a visual metaphor: Scan Link is the long hand of corporate and industrial interests, which with increased traffic and cross-border trade will suffocate North Jutland (by cutting it off) and strangle public transport, small local businesses, nature (with pollution) and society alike all over Denmark. The satirical cartoon (Figure 20) sets dead trees and dead fishes as the foundations of the fixed link: in comparison to Albrectsen's illustration of 1973, in which the link threatened the Scanian environment and economy, here the warnings regard the destruction of the environment *and nature*[73].
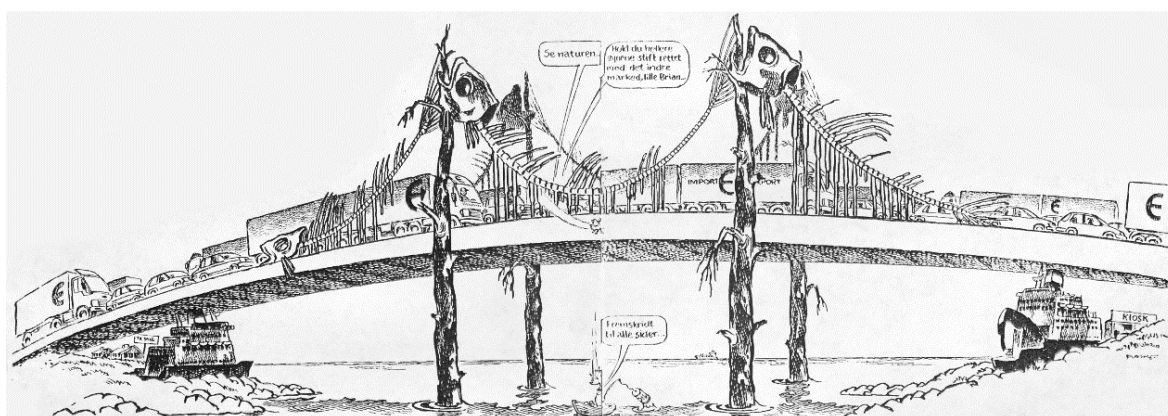

comparison to Albrectsen's illustration of 1973, in which the link threatened the Scanian environment and economy, here the warnings regard the destruction of the environment *and nature*[73].

Figure 20. Klaus Albrectsen, no title. Source: *Scan Link? Nej Tack!* **(flyer). Credit: Klaus Albrectsen.**

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[72] *NOAH-bladet*, December 1987.
[73] *NOAH-bladet*, April 1989; *Berlingske Tidende*, 3 Feb. 1990; *Informationen*, 19 Jan. 1990; *Arbejderen*, 24 Aug. 1990.

3.6. Of monsters and dead fishes: the 1990s

In the 1990s, Swedish and Danish visual artists connoted the concept quite differently. In 1990's Sweden, the concept was subject to strong visual warnings referable to politics and the economy, since the popular perception associated it with a key debate, the entry of the country into the European Community[74]. After the agreement with Denmark, visual warnings over the environment reduced drastically. This is probably due, on the one hand, to the loss of autonomy of satirical cartoons, which since the early 1990s reduced numerically and were put to the service of accompanying articles[75]. On the other hand, the environmental activists' opposition to the concept turned into positive support[76]. These factors partly explain why, between 1990 and 1992, warnings were only half of the sum of utopic maps and *warnings about warnings* contained in satirical cartoons that, in the service of editorial politics, attacked environmental criticism and environmental activists. In Denmark, instead, warnings about the environment and utopic visual representations were approximately equal, numerically. Those warnings appeared as elements in the photographs of the environmental activists' public performances and in satirical cartoons. Evidently, environmental activists and other civil society organisations had been successful in attracting the cameras of the photo reporters but also in mobilising the cartoonists' environmental sensitivity[77].

Both countries' cartoonists exploited visual metaphors and metonyms for conveying warnings for the environment. They did so by extremising references to environing, the environment and nature into a powerful dichotomy: monsters and sea animals. In Sweden, cartoonist and illustrator Peter Johnsson represented the concept as a dragon in an illustration accompanying an article that forecasted an increase in air pollution (Figure 21).

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[74] PEEBLES, Gustav, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

[75] VIGSØ, Orla, *Satirteckningar i svensk dagspress, 1890–2017*, Gothenburg, Gothenburg University, 2019, p. 68.

[76] JAMISON, Andrew, STRAHL, Joe, «Environmental activism in Malmö: from opposition to construction», manuscript (2001); DEKKER LINNROS, Hannah, HALLIN, Per O., *op. cit.*, p. 396.

[77] EMANUEL, Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 174; *NOAH-Bladet*, July 1991; *Arbejderen*, 17 August 1991.

Figure 21. Peter Johnsson, no title. Source: Percy Nessling, «Vi behöver ingen bro!», (1990), in Skånes Arkivförbund (Lund), Aktion Skåne-Miljö Archive, A, Vol. 9, Newspapers' article collection, unnumbered. Credit: Peter Johnsson.
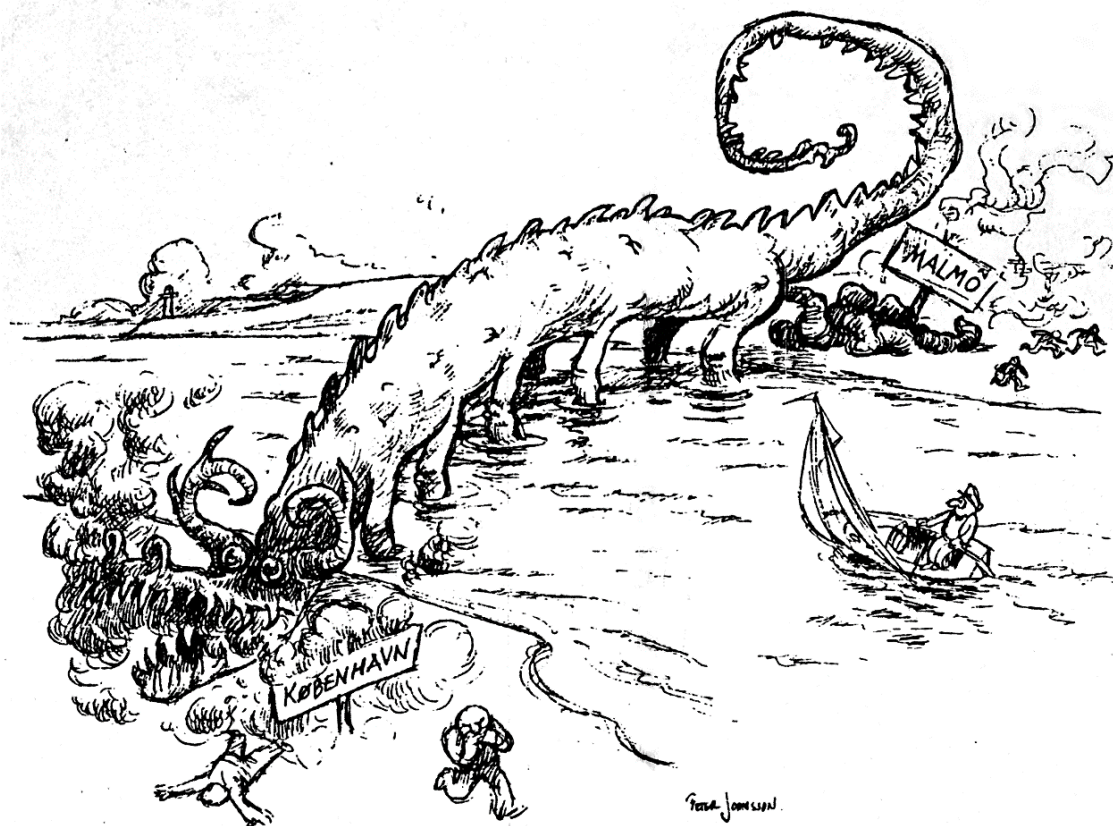
The epic and fantasy situations often exploited by Johnsson fit the uncompromising message of the article. Exhaust gases are here turned into by-products that have deadly consequences. Once, in 1991, Denmark and Sweden ratified the agreement, Saabye exploited one of the characterisations given by environmental activists to the concept, the monster of Loch Ness, to warning of its consequences for nature. In *Sukkenes bro* (*The bridge of sighs*) (Figure 22), published in «Politiken», one monster tells another «I might be adopted today», while a seal, looking at the audience with a sad expression, exclaims «Sigh!».

Figure 22. Jørgen Saabye, «Sukkenes bro». Source: *Politiken*, 14 August 1991. Credit: Jørgen Saabye and *Politiken*.
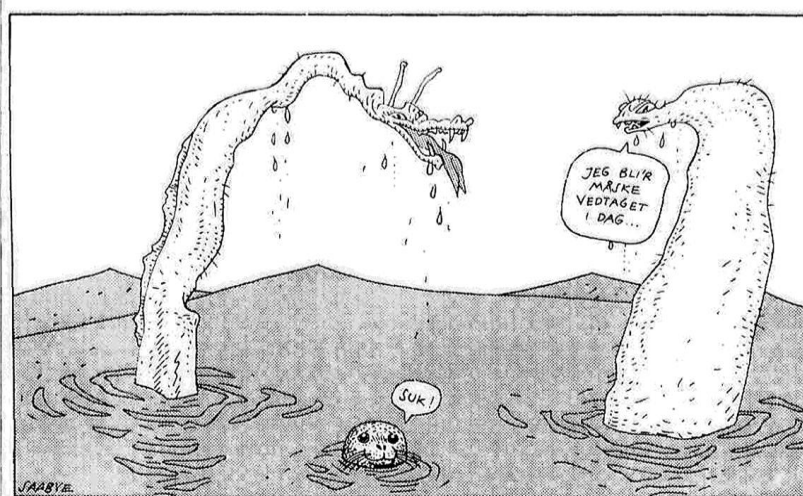
The monsters are the two halves of the fixed link that would dominate the waters of the Øresund. The seal, whose fate was much debated on a global level in the early 1990s, is here a metonym for ocean wildlife, which the concept would destroy. Saabye conveyed the warning by personifying technology as a monster and nature as a vulnerable subject that asked for a compassionate response from the audience.

A much more exploited metonym was the fish, which represented the fishing industry and the Baltic Sea ecosystem. The two audiences had been aware, since the 1980s, that dead fishes stranded along the coasts meant water pollution. Since the environmental activists warned that the excavation works would increase water pollution and possibly stop the water flowing from the oceans into the Baltic Sea, the fish was the cognitive attribute that could best signal a warning for the environment. In over twenty cartoons, cartoonists and illustrators drew the fish with several facial expressions. The fish reactions when seeing the bridge varied from surprise to fear and sadness[78]. Cartoonist Jørn Villumsen drew a fish who stared at the audience in disappointment, thus showing that the personification of nature aimed to target not exclusively the emotions of the audience, but also its ethics[79]. In other visuals, the fish was dead, as a consequence of environing the Øresund with the concept[80]. The fish became a symbol that stood for the negative consequences of environing for the environment and nature. Villumsen juxtaposed it to the flags of both countries, in a non-conciliatory, non-humoristic cartoon (Figure 23); its symbolisation among other symbols in an exclusively visual modality accounts for the
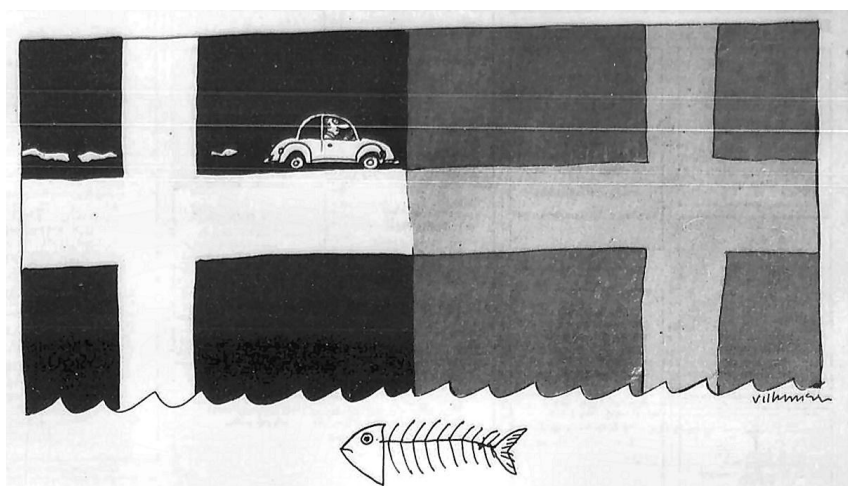
heightened environmental literacy of the audience, which was capable of understanding nature as a vulnerable subject with no further explanation.

Figure 23. Jørn Villumsen, no title. Source: *Politiken*, 22 January 1994.
Credit: Jørn Villumsen and *Politiken*.

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[78] *Göteborgs-Posten*, 19 October 1991; *Politiken*, 7 October 1993.
[79] *Politiken*, 4 January 1994.
[80] *Politiken*, 7 October 1993; *DN*, 26 August 1988.

Conclusions

Focusing on the final claim of visual representations of future acts of environing, with the support of methods and methodologies from disciplines that give art central stage, helps to outline the variety of sensibilities existing in society and to reveal the agendas of professional communicators and their clients in reference to technology, the environment, and nature. As seen in the case study, in order to establish technology as a *need*, utopic visual representations suggest the incompleteness of the present and the urgency of employing technology to remedy it. The sublime is possible only through technology, presented as the saving art that allows humankind to win the quest over nature and, by generating a splendid living environment, to coexist harmoniously with it.

Visual warnings are more problematic. Their final claim is the contestation of the truthfulness of utopic representations. The warnings discussed in the case study are exclusively referable to the consequences of acts of environing for the environment and nature. With those warnings, visual artists asked the audience to side with the defence of a threatened present. In the rhetoric of the analysed visual warnings, art was a technology that disclosed, in different timeframes, the consequences of environing for humankind, the environment and nature. The gradual disappearance of the conciliatory tone, humour and satire and the increasing evocation of sadness and anger throughout the years account for the increased environmental literacy of both audiences and for an increasingly radical rejection of technology as a saving power.

Ultimately, visual representations of acts of environing provide evidence of the variety of sensibilities and agendas through which past societies connoted the humankind-nature relationship.

Visual communicators, either for work exigencies or by choice, took a stance on acts of environing, thus disclosing the multiplicity of interests and passions in which societal actors engage when constructing their own relationship with technology, the environment and nature. The presence of similar figures of speech in utopias and warnings published in the two countries is noteworthy. They signal that both the utopias of technology and the environmental consciousness spoke the same language to the artists who mediated the concept and that those diverging sensibilities were present among the audiences of distinct socio-cultural systems.

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