

clear. The notional subject is what is supposed to govern the choice of verb form. However, as demonstrated above, actual usage differs considerably from the rule. Faced with a situation that calls for *there* + *seem* and a plural notional subject, one native speaker/writer out of three goes for the “incorrect” alternative. It would seem cruel to penalize learners severely if they do the same, but at the same time it should be pointed out to them that what would guarantee universal acceptance of their text would be to follow the general rule for subject-verb concord.

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CobuildDirect text categories

bbc	= BBC World Service radio broadcasts
npr	= US National Public Radio broadcasts
oznews	= Australian newspapers
sunnow	= UK Sun newspaper
times	= UK Times newspaper
today	= UK Today newspaper
ukbooks	= UK books; fiction & non-fiction
ukephem	= UK ephemera (leaflets, adverts, etc)
ukmags	= UK magazines
ukspok	= UK transcribed informal speech
usbooks	= US books; fiction & non-fiction
usephem	= US ephemera (leaflets, adverts, etc)

JANINA NORDIUS

Gustavus Vasa in a Gothic Mirror: Anna Maria Mackenzie's *Swedish Mysteries*

In the early 1790s, British readers could indulge their taste for the exotic by delving into a newly published travelogue set in the northern outskirts of Europe, entitled *A Journey through Sweden* (1790).¹ Originally written in French, *A Journey through Sweden* was translated into English by William Radcliffe, an Oxford scholar who later went into journalism and became the owner and editor of the *English Chronicle*. Yet he is probably better known to readers in the twenty-first century as the husband of Ann Radcliffe, uncontested queen of the gothic novel in the 1790s, who at the time her husband was translating the travelogue had already published her first novel.² The couple's simultaneous preoccupation with the gothic novel and with Sweden may have been a coincidence; but it nonetheless points to a confluence of interests not unique to the Radcliffes at this time in Britain, and which, as I shall discuss, is highly relevant to the topic of this essay.

The 1790s was the decade when the gothic novel reached its first peak of popularity, after a rather slow start some decades earlier.³ The somewhat cryptic term “gothic” refers, when used in this sense to denote a literary genre, to the fact that the first narratives thus labelled were often (but not always) set in the past, in what eighteenth-century Britons called “Gothic” times—a term which to them meant virtually anything before and even including the Renaissance.⁴ It was the barbarous and inhuman practices of this supposedly unenlightened past that ostensibly accounted for the central place of terror and horror in gothic fiction; but

¹ [I. F. Henry Drevon,] *A Journey through Sweden, Containing a Detailed Account of Its Population, Agriculture, Commerce and Finances* [. . .]. Written in French by a Dutch Officer, and Translated into English, by William Radcliffe, A. B. of Oriet College (London: G. Kearsley, [1790]; Oxford. Dublin: P. Byrne, J. Moore, J. Jones, Grueber & M'Allister, and W. Jones, 1790).

² Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe* (London: Leicester UP, 1999) 57. Ann Radcliffe's first novel was *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne: A Highland Story* (1789).

³ Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is often cited as the first gothic novel.

⁴ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, vol. 1, new ed. (London: Longman, 1996) 5. Like many other names for historical literary genres, the term “gothic” is a later construct introduced by critics in the 1920s and 30s. Throughout this article I use lower-case g—“gothic”—when referring to the literary genre, and reserve capital G for references to the people—the Goths—and their historical period.

behind the narrated scenes of past atrocities, there often lurked some very contemporary fears that such practices might return to haunt the would-be progressive modern age.

Hence, literary gothic had only something very remotely to do with the Goths, the Germanic tribes who swept through Europe and kept attacking the Roman empire between the third and fifth centuries. But even so, considering that the original home of the Goths was commonly believed by the eighteenth century to have been situated in Sweden – a belief also articulated in William Radcliffe's translation of the *Journey through Sweden*⁵ – it is tempting to ask oneself whether this country never caught Ann Radcliffe's imagination as a suitable location for a novel. Yet if indeed it ever did, no evidence remains to show this to have been the case; for Radcliffe went on to write a series of highly popular gothic narratives set on the continent of Europe, and Scandinavia does not figure importantly anywhere in her writing. But what Radcliffe left unexplored, others apparently found more inspiring; for in 1801, William Lane's Minerva Press published a three-volume novel entitled *Swedish Mysteries, or Hero of the Mine: A Tale*. It is this novel that is the focus of the present essay.⁶

The title page of *Swedish Mysteries* claims it to be a translation "from a Swedish Manuscript, by Johanson Kidderslaw, Formerly Master of the English Grammar School at Upsal"; however, a Minerva Library catalogue of 1814 attributes the novel to Anna Maria Mackenzie, a productive writer of popular novels at this time.⁷ *Swedish Mysteries* features as its hero Gustavus Ericson, otherwise known as the Swedish Renaissance king Gustavus Vasa, and the main part of the action is set in Sweden during the years of rebellion against the Danish king Christian II, which preceded Gustavus's ascension to the throne in 1523.⁸

⁵ Drevon 219. The notion that the Goths originated from Sweden occurs as early as in Olaus Magnus's *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555), see Sten Carlsson och Jerker Rosén, *Den svenska historien*, 2nd ed., 15 vols. (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1977-79) 3: 214.

⁶ [Mackenzie, Anna Maria.] *Swedish Mysteries, or, Hero of the Mines: A Tale*. 3 vols. Translated from a Swedish Manuscript, by Johanson Kidderslaw, Formerly Master of the English Grammar School at Upsal (London: The Minerva Press for William Lane, 1801). References to this work will be given parenthetically in the text.

⁷ Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press 1790-1820* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1939 [for 1935]) 201.

⁸ According to Lars-Olof Larsson, in *Gustav Vasa-landsfader eller tyrann?*, 2nd ed. (Stockholm: Prisma, 2005), Gustavus himself used the patronymic Ericson (Eriksson), whereas his family name Vasa began to be commonly used by historiographers from the late sixteenth century (24-25). King Christian's deposition in 1523 put a definite end to the political union that had formally existed between the Scandinavian countries since 1388 (the Kalmar union between Denmark, Norway and Sweden). See Carlsson 2: 170, 190ff, 3: 207.

The view of Gustavus Ericson in recent historiography is that of a rather typical Renaissance prince aspiring to absolutist rule—tough-minded, quite brutal in enforcing his will, and prepared to turn against former allies and even have them executed if it suited his purposes. Hence whereas the epithet "tyrant" has traditionally been reserved for the deposed king Christian in Swedish historiography, Gustavus Ericson may in the view of some later historians have been rather well qualified for that title himself.⁹ However, this was not how he appeared in the older historiographic tradition that began to emerge already during his own life, and which was probably partly based on the king's own words as dictated to his first chronicler Peder Swart.¹⁰ In this tradition, which lasted well into the twentieth century, Gustavus is portrayed as a benevolent paternal figure, caring for his people and the good of his country; in particular, his adventures as a young man hiding from king Christian's troops in Dalecarlia have long been part of the romantic lore cherished by this tradition. Nor was this idealising view a feature of Swedish historiography only: there were by Mackenzie's time an impressive number of histories and plays written in English as well as other languages glorifying the person and achievement of Gustavus.¹¹

⁹ See e. g. Larsson on Gustavus Ericson's treatment of the former bishop of Västerås, Peder Jakobsson "Sunnanväder" who was executed in 1527 (103-4, 130, 145-49), and also on Gustavus's allegedly ruthless execution of more than sixty men apparently promised safe conduct out of Kalmar, a stronghold of the opposition against Gustavus, when the latter took possession of that city in the summer of 1525 (141-42).

¹⁰ Peder Swart, *Konung Gustaf Vs Krönika*, ed. Nils Edén (Stockholm: Ljus, 1912). See Larsson 46.

¹¹ As Margaret Omberg points out in her informed discussion of a number of these plays, the English interest in Gustavus Ericson was largely a consequence of the popularity enjoyed by his grandson, Gustavus Adolphus. The latter's fame as a "champion of European Protestantism" helped to draw attention to the elder Gustavus, "who had not only liberated Sweden from Denmark but the Swedish Church from the power of Rome" (see Omberg's "Gustavus Vasa and the Myth of the Mines," *Studia Neophilologica* 67 [1995]: 21-22). Two of the plays discussed by Omberg, both of them published prior to Mackenzie's novel, are Catharine Trotter's *The Revolution of Sweden: A Tragedy* (London, 1706) and Henry Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa, The Deliverer of his Country: A Tragedy* (London, 1739), the latter banned from the stage under the Licensing Act of 1737 but nonetheless reprinted several times throughout the eighteenth century. Of plays in other languages one may mention Alexis Piron's *Gustave: Tragedie en cinq actes* (Paris, 1733), Cornelis van der Gon's *Gustavus de Eerste, Hersteller van Zweedden: Treurspel* (Amsterdam, 1727), and Johan Henrik Kellgren's *Gustav Wasa: Lyrisk tragedie i tre acter* (Stockholm, 1786). The most popular history in eighteenth-century Britain recounting Gustavus Ericson's rebellion, and hence providing much of the background for later writers on the same topic, was René Aubert de Vertot's *The History of the Revolutions in Sweden*, published in French in 1695 and translated into English the following year (see Omberg 21-22, 36n2). A later eighteenth-century history is Sarah Scott's *The History of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden* (London, 1761), published under the pseudonym of H. A. Raymond.

Hence, it is certainly not as a tyrant that Gustavus comes across in Mackenzie's novel, where he is rather portrayed as an admirably noble person of unsurpassed moral integrity, but also, somewhat surprisingly, as a sentimental hero. Mackenzie was probably familiar with some of the glorifying accounts of Gustavus already existing in English. Yet what makes her novel stand out from previous versions of the story is, as I will discuss below, the way she so conspicuously projects upon the figure of Gustavus and the situation in early sixteenth-century Sweden the concerns current in British late eighteenth-century gothic fiction.

This includes on the one hand such more traditional themes usually associated with so-called "Gothic" times as anti-Catholicism and various kinds of feudal despotism; for the reign of Gustavus Ericson has traditionally been seen as instigating the modern era in Sweden, and putting an end to the medieval epoch. Hence, in *Swedish Mysteries*, Gustavus comes across as the herald of modernity, whereas Christian and his supporters are seen as benighted and despotic upholders of the past. On the other hand, however, Mackenzie does not dwell exclusively on topics that were already well established in gothic fiction, but also includes such less traditional themes as began to emerge in the second half of the 1790s, when the political climate in Britain turned more conservative in the wake of the French revolution. For when the Terror began across the Channel, and when Britain found itself at war with France and even threatened by invasion, many British people began to fear a return of such tyranny and violence as they felt should have been safely relegated to the past.

*

Although not the first to make mysterious events an appreciated ingredient in gothic fiction, Ann Radcliffe had developed the practice of building her stories around a series of mysteries into an art, and her example caught on among her followers. When Mackenzie outlines her own agenda for writing gothic romances in an essay prefaced to her 1795 novel *Mysteries Elucidated*, she thus pays tribute to Radcliffe's "genius" and "brilliant imagination," but she also objects to the latter's flirtation with the supernatural, arguing instead that "historical anecdotes are the most proper vehicles for the elucidation of mysteries."¹² Hence the mysteries in *Swedish Mysteries*, of which there are indeed plenty, are all solidly of this world and punctiliously elucidated at the end; yet the so-called "historical anecdotes" on which the author bases her plot are

¹² "To the Readers of Modern Romance," rpt. in Rictor Norton, ed. *Gothic Readings: The First Wave 1764-1840* (London: Leicester UP, 2000) 28-29.

highly imaginative, as Mackenzie stretches her license to invent fictitious characters and events to the limit.¹³

The mysteries pertaining to the birth and subsequent fate of Mackenzie's character Catherine Sleswie is a case in point. A supposed orphan, Catherine is secretly in love with Gustavus who, however, has eyes for no one but her friend Sigismunda, daughter of Catherine's guardian Marienburg. Despite Gustavus's professed feelings, his old friend and mentor Marienburg mysteriously insists that he marry Catherine rather than Sigismunda; and not until the third volume do we learn the reason why. For Catherine is eventually revealed to be the daughter of Marienburg's sister by Magnus, Duke of Saxe Lunenburgh; yet due to the plotting of a rejected suitor of her mother's, Sir Gormund, her parents were separated before her birth, and her mother abducted to a convent and forced to take the veil when Catherine was still a baby. Mackenzie's representation of the nun St. Alexa who eventually turns out to be Catherine's mother seems to owe not a little to Radcliffe's Olivia in *The Italian* (1797). *The Italian*, with its abundance of mysterious monks glimpsed in shady ruins or cathedral cloisters, may also have inspired the scene at the end of *Swedish Mysteries* where Duke Magnus, walking through Stockholm, is approached by "a dark and slowly moving figure emerging from a low door, leading to a side aisle of the Cathedral" (3: 204). "Its height, although diminished by a bend of the shoulders, the groan it uttered as it closed the iron door, its black drapery, and musing melancholy attitude" captures the attention of the Duke, who soon discovers him to be "a Friar of one of the most rigid orders Stockholm contained" (3: 204-05). Needless to say, the mystery is swiftly explained as the friar turns out to be the once wicked Sir Gormund, now repentant and anxious to set things right by confessing his sins.¹⁴ Having in this manner reinstated Catherine to her proper social position and made Sigismunda die a tragic death, Mackenzie is free to marry Catherine to Gustavus at the end of the novel, presumably hoping thus to align her invented story with historical facts. However, her fictitious Catherine has nothing but the name in common with the historical Gustavus Ericson's first wife, Catherine of Sachsen-Lauenburg.¹⁵

¹³ Although some of the fictitious elements in Mackenzie's novel would have been adopted from the sources on Gustavus's life available to her, whether plays or histories, her own additions to the story are nonetheless quite liberal. For a survey of Trotter's and Brooke's reliance on and fictional departures from Vertot—the latter's account of the historical Gustavus's rebellion being also to some extent fictitious —, see Omberg 25-30, and also, for Brooke, Paul Walsh, "Henry Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa*: The Ancient Constitution and the Example of Sweden," *Studia Neophilologica* 64 (1992): 74-75.

This brief account of the mysteries pertaining to Catherine's supposed orphanhood should be enough to evidence Mackenzie's skill in concocting spectacular plots out of the traditional sets and props of gothic fiction. While her flair for deploying this talent to capture the anxieties and expectations of British readers at a particular moment in time is what makes her novel interesting from the viewpoint of this essay, the literary quality of her work is however often uneven. The rather supercilious reviewer for the *Critical Review* was apparently not overly impressed by *Swedish Mysteries*, predicting that it would "most likely, amuse for two or three months those who search after novelty," after which short span of popularity it would, "like its brethren, [. . .] be forgotten."¹⁶ How far the reviewer was right in his predictions is of course difficult to say in retrospect, but to my knowledge *Swedish Mysteries* did not go through more than one edition; however, it was available to prospective readers at quite a number of circulating libraries, and seems also, importantly, to have inspired yet another stage version of the Gustavus story.¹⁷

Nor do we know how far the reviewer's dismissive lines are influenced by Mackenzie's choice of topic, but they certainly reflect some national stereotypes current at the time. Speculating whether the novel is indeed a translation or not, the reviewer remarks: "The narrative is sufficiently gloomy, and the language sufficiently turgid, to warrant a belief that it is the offspring of some northern author."¹⁸ This remark

¹⁴ The assassin who glides about the cathedral in the opening section of Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and the mysterious monk appearing at Paluzzi in that novel's first chapter seem likely models for this scene.

¹⁵ The historical Catherine of Sachsen-Lauenburg was indeed the daughter of a Duke Magnus, but she did not grow up a supposed orphan in Sweden. She was seventeen years Gustavus's junior, and the couple had never met before Catherine arrived at Stockholm for the wedding in 1531. See Larsson 183-84.

¹⁶ *The Critical Review* 34 (April 1801): 476.

¹⁷ Of nineteen examined circulating libraries, *Swedish Mysteries* was available at nine; see *British Fiction 1800-1829: A Database of Production, Circulation & Reception*, accessed 28 December 2004 at <http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/circlibs/swed01-39.html>. – William Dimond's *The Hero of the North, An Historical Play* (London, 1803) clearly owes as much to *Swedish Mysteries* as to previous dramatizations of the Gustavus story. The blizzard in the opening scene, the travelling patriots finding a shelter from the storm in the cottage of an honest miner, the romantic connection between Gustavus and the daughter of his old friend and teacher, and the confinement of a young woman in a convent are just some of the elements that Dimond seems to have taken over from Mackenzie. Dimond's is the third play discussed by Omberg, and *Swedish Mysteries* would hence seem to be the missing link between Brooke and Dimond implicit in Omberg's remark that the "melodramatic plot" of the latter's play relies on a "gallery of largely fictitious characters" and seems ostensibly to have "little relation to Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa*" (Omberg 32).

¹⁸ *The Critical Review* 34 (April 1801): 476.

may say more about the reviewer than of the author of the novel, but it is worth noticing that Mackenzie too resorts to ethnic stereotyping when not dealing with her major characters. The miner's wife Mrs. Van Melen is, for instance, "like many others in the frigid zone," said to be "in the constant habit of drinking spirits" (1: 22), which propensity also shows in her outer appearance: "Her aspect was heavy, and her manner exhibited neither wonder nor compassion" (1: 22). Yet even more noticeable than the ethnic stereotyping in this characterization is the class bias, as we are explicitly told that "neither gentleness, cleanliness, nor elegance of deportment was to be expected in a province so remote from the higher order of life" (1: 23).

Yet, again, this kind of stereotyped characterization was rather the rule than the exception in British gothic fiction, especially when the lower classes or the customs of other countries were concerned.¹⁹ As Mackenzie's expertise was obviously more in the traditional conventions of the genre than in any intimate knowledge of Sweden, her sense of Swedish geography is likewise rather topsy-turvy, apparently informed by whatever current sources she had access to rather than any personal knowledge of the place.²⁰ Presumably drawing on both Abbé Vertot's *History of the Revolutions in Sweden* and Henry Brooke's popular tragedy, *Gustavus Vasa, The Deliverer of his Country*, Mackenzie sets her opening scene among the mines of Dalecarlia, where Gustavus Ericson arrives in disguise to muster support for his uprising against Christian.²¹ In contrast to Brooke, however, Mackenzie introduces a note of lurking terror as her hero seeks shelter in "an old copper-mine, long since disused" (1: 8), for he soon concludes, on inspecting "the rugged walls of his retreat" and "the impending ruins that nodded above," that their "threatening aspect seemed to forbid his stay" (1: 12).

Perhaps this is the scene that makes Frederick S. Frank refer to *Swedish Mysteries* as a "subterranean Schauerroman," a novel of the type

¹⁹ We need only think of Radcliffe's French peasants in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) who, though more cheerfully rendered than Mackenzie's Swedes, seem to spend their time doing little but dancing happily on the banks of the Garonne or similarly picturesque places (chapters 1: 6; 1: 8), and their Italian colleagues in *The Italian* doing likewise on the beach at Naples or by the lake of Celano (chapters 1: 3 and 2: 2).

²⁰ When, for instance, the author has one of the characters kidnapped on the river Dala and taken to "the Castle of Lunenburgh" in Saxony, only to find its master "still at Hernosand" (a town in the north of Sweden), the distances she makes her characters traverse with such seeming ease may possibly cause one or two eyebrows to rise; and this even apart from the fact that Hernosand was not founded until 1585, some sixty years after the supposed events described here (1: 96-7).

²¹ See note 11 above.

that promises “[h]orrendous incidents in an underground of no return including the imminent possibility of live burial.”²² This characterization of Mackenzie’s novel seems however rather misleading; for once the author has set the tone of latent terror in the opening scene, the narrative quickly moves on from subterranean Dalecarlia to other settings, leaving Mackenzie free to explore a spectrum of gothic conventions more specifically concerned with such horrors as, it was felt, ought rightly to belong to a barbarous past.

One of the most common themes in gothic fiction, from Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) onwards, is the threat of sexual assault that tends to hang over the heroines, and from which they are saved, if lucky, by a more considerate suitor. While this theme is by no means unique to the gothic, it has nonetheless a clear bearing on the genre. For by contrasting the libertine would-be rapist with the much preferred sentimental lover, these novels—often written by women—in fact make a statement in favour of modernity. The libertine rake, once a popular character in the aristocratic culture of restoration drama, becomes in gothic fiction an icon of the feudal past, a period when heartless tyrants were free to exercise their arbitrary power over their hapless subordinates. In contrast, the sentimental hero is made to stand for a new ideal of manliness, more suited to a modern and enlightened age—an ideal where self-will and brute force are replaced by sympathy and consideration, and where moral virtues are as highly valued as noble birth or prominent connections.²³

Hence, it is no coincidence that Mackenzie makes Christian a libertine and Gustavus a sentimental hero in *Swedish Mysteries*. Sigismunda, said to be “dearer than life itself” to Gustavus (1: 33), becomes the object of Christian’s “infamous design” (1: 105). When she rejects his proposals, he resorts to “terror” as the only way to achieve his goal (1: 106), and professes “his natural bias to revenge, declaring, that whoever incurred it by an opposition to his will, should be, and were, when opportunity assisted, the certain subjects of it” (1: 108). Gustavus on the other hand is represented as the typical sentimental lover, for large parts of the novel on the brink of abandoning his military campaign against Christian for the sake of assisting his damsel in distress (1: 254). When at a crucial point in the narrative Gustavus finds his beloved Sigismunda dying from starvation and neglect in a convent to

²² Frederick S. Frank, *The First Gothics: A Critical Guide to the English Gothic Novel* (New York: Garland, 1987) 221-22.

²³ For a discussion of shifting ideals of manliness, see Philip Carter, “An ‘Effeminate’ or ‘Efficient’ Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary,” *Textual Practice* 11.3 (1997): 429-43.

which she has been abducted, he behaves quite according to protocol: we are told how “a film came over his terror-struck eyes” at the sight of her condition, “his senses failed, and the great Gustavus sunk helpless by the side of his lost, his murdered love!” (2: 228).

Yet if Mackenzie’s Gustavus outshines king Christian in modernity when it comes to the cultivation of feelings and the right attitude to women, this is nothing compared to his purported progressivism in religious questions. In *Swedish Mysteries*, as in most British gothic fiction written from an expressly pro-Protestant perspective, anti-Catholicism is a major theme; for even though the reformation movements in both Sweden and England had as much to do with politics as with religion, in Protestant propaganda the rites and practices of the Roman Church were soon becoming associated with a backward and oppressive past. As it was the historical Gustavus Ericson who enforced the Protestant reformation in Sweden, Mackenzie makes her hero a fervent Lutheran who vigorously challenges the alleged superstition and bigotry of the Catholic Church.²⁴ In contrast, Christian and all the other villains in the novel are represented as Catholics or Catholic sympathisers, who “conceived themselves justified in defeating, by every possible means, the pious endeavours of enlightened men” (1: 120).²⁵

Gothic fiction tends generally to dwell less on the merits of Protestantism than on the supposed corruption of Catholicism, the latter topic clearly yielding more opportunities for writers to concoct spectacular or frightening episodes. *Swedish Mysteries* is no exception, for Mackenzie has her characters routinely condemn the “foppery, glare, and superstition of the Romish Church,” its “superfluous ornaments, unessential ceremonies, and [. . .] anathemas [. . .] hurled against those who could not afford to pay for sinning” (3: 31). Moreover, as we have seen, she also follows the convention that represents Catholic convents as covert detention centres, where innocent victims are imprisoned at the will of their enemies. If they are not, as Sigismunda, locked up in a dungeon and

²⁴ Mackenzie would not have seen a conflict between Protestant belief and Enlightenment ideas, for, as Roy Porter explains in *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (2000; London: Penguin, 2001), the British enlightenment “ceased to equate religion with a body of commandments, graven in stone, dispensed through Scripture, accepted on faith and policed by the Church.” Instead, “[b]elief was becoming a matter of private judgment,” and religion hence “subjected to reason” (99).

²⁵ The historical Christian II of Denmark was not, however, as averse to the Protestant Reformation as Mackenzie would have him. For, even though the Lutheran Reformation in Denmark was not formally enforced until after his time, he supported incipient Reformationist ideas during his own reign. See Bispedømmet i København, *Den Katolske Kirke i Danmark*, under the section “Reformationen,” accessed 22 July 2006 at <http://www.katolsk.dk/index.php?id=628>.

starved to death at the instigation of a jealous rival, they are as her co-sufferer St. Alexa forced to take the veil against their will—"dragged to the altar" when "weakened and exhausted by monastic rigours, which extended even to merciless flagellations" (3: 153).

Anti-Catholicism also plays an important part when Mackenzie directs her attention to the political side of Gustavus Ericson's uprising against the Danish king and engages with the theme of usurpation, likewise a traditional topic in gothic fiction from Walpole to Radcliffe. Most previous gothic narratives dealing with this theme had drawn on fictitious plots, allowing their authors scope to develop their characters as they pleased.²⁶ But when Mackenzie sets her narrative among allegedly historical personages, she obviously finds herself in a rather precarious situation trying to make the right distinctions between usurpers, false pretenders and rightful claimants to the throne. Her implicit lodestar in this dilemma becomes religion. To put it crudely: if Protestant, the claimant is treated as legitimate, whereas if Catholic, he is seen as an impostor or usurper.

Hence Christian is represented as a "detestable usurper" who (1: 35), with some adjustment of historical facts, is said to have "usurped the lineal succession of Sweden [. . .] and murdered its Monarch" (1: 25-26). The latter statement is not quite true as the former regent, the younger Steen Sture, had actually died from a wound received in battle with Christian's troops in 1520; nor did he have any formal heirs to the regency as his position was elective.²⁷ But Mackenzie is not a stickler for detail; she concentrates on her task of reviling Christian as a "monster" (1: 50) known for his "barbarous despotism" (1: 1), and makes Gustavus comment: "Not a Swede whose property, principles, or situation could excite the envy, jealousy, or avarice of the invader, but suffered in various instances" (1: 154). Christian's followers apparently take after their master, for his "marauding Danes" are said to commit "the most cruel excesses in several undefended villages, inhabited by peasants of the poorest and most helpless description" (2: 204).

In Swedish historiography, the name of Christian II is perhaps most notoriously linked to the so called Stockholm Blood Bath, that is, the executions following Christian's coronation in November 1520, when more than eighty people lost their lives, including some of Sweden's leading councillors and prelates.²⁸ Among the historical victims of that event was Gustavus Ericson's father, but apparently unaware of this fact,

²⁶ See, e. g., Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1777), and Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*.

²⁷ Carlsson 3: 194-5, 202.

²⁸ Carlsson 3: 206; Larsson 49-50.

Mackenzie's sets the scene of his decapitation in Copenhagen; for in her version of the story, Gustavus's whole family are treacherously imprisoned there after acting as hostages for Christian's safety during a planned meeting with Steen Sture.²⁹ Such as it is, though, the episode comes across as gruesome enough: "His blood, that pure stream which had fed a heart nearly allied to perfection, flowed to my feet" (1: 145), the unfortunate victim's son laments. Even more spectacular is the scene where Mackenzie makes Christian execute Gustavus's mother – here called Augusta—and sisters. For in a drawn-out episode that suggests an auto-da-fé arranged by the Inquisition, Christian orders Augusta and her daughters, all of them "laden with the heaviest chains," to be burnt to death at the stake (1: 205, 208-11).³⁰

Mackenzie's demonising of Christian and hailing Gustavus – incorrectly – as "the lawful heir to Sweden's Crown" (1: 156) seems in many ways to duplicate a story she had told with great success before, in her 1790 novel *Monmouth*.³¹ In that novel she champions the Protestant duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II and, in Mackenzie's view, rightful claimant to the British throne after the death of his father. The novel gives us Mackenzie's highly romanticized version of Monmouth's short-lived and unsuccessful rebellion against his Catholic uncle, James II, in 1685. Her unequivocal backing of the Protestant candidate against his Catholic antagonist clearly shows the extent to which she partakes in the dominant discourse favouring established state Protestantism that informed the political climate in post-1688 Britain. It is the same discourse that informs her narrative of political events in sixteenth-century Sweden, for when she reverses the Monmouth situation and presents her readers with a pretender to the Swedish throne explicitly denounced as false, this claimant is not only generally wicked and corrupt but also liaised with the Catholic forces in the novel.³²

²⁹ While Gustavus himself formed part of the hostage historically granted Christian on this occasion, neither his parents nor his sisters did. See Larsson 40-41.

³⁰ The historical Gustavus's mother and sisters were taken prisoners after the Stockholm executions and transported to Denmark where they died (Larsson 50); the stake-burning seems however to be Mackenzie's own invention. Gustavus's historical mother was called Cecilia; Mackenzie may have got the name Augusta from Brooke's tragedy where Gustavus's mother appears under that name.

³¹ Apart from there being no formal line of succession to the throne, Gustavus Ericson was only distantly related to the deceased Steen Sture, the latter's wife Christina being his mother's half-sister (Larsson 33).

³² To British readers, Mackenzie's introduction of the pretender theme would presumably have evoked memories of the two Jacobite rebellions in 1715 and 1745; yet her treatment of it clearly suggests her unwillingness to condone the "appropriation of [Gustavus Vasa] as a Jacobite icon" common in certain circles at the time, as revealingly discussed by Niall MacKenzie in "Some British Writers and Gustavus Vasa," *Studia Neophilologica* 78 (2006): 66.

Mackenzie probably based her character of Fitzer on the historical "Daljunkern" who, claiming to be Steen Sture's son Nils, got the support of the Dalecarlians for an uprising against King Gustavus in 1527; for Fitzer, likewise claiming to be Sture's son, is at the end of the novel said to be in Dalecarlia at the head of "a powerful insurrection" (3: 278).³³ Like his historical model, Mackenzie's Fitzer is said to belong in the Catholic camp: his aunt is the Abbess of a convent, used by the nephew as a handy prison for people he temporarily wants out of the way.³⁴ In the usual caricatured manner of gothic novels, Fitzer introduces his prospective detainees to his aunt as "secret favourers of the doctrine of the Reformation" in order to ensure their "rigorous" treatment (1: 120). That such a person should be the rightful heir to "the murdered King," as Mackenzie chooses to call Steen Sture (1: 90), is obviously unthinkable in the stereotyped system of religious values that informs her text. Hence, as speedily as the historical Gustavus Ericson dismissed the purported Nils Sture as an impostor, as expressly does Mackenzie make the falsity of Fitzer's pretensions a basic premise of her narrative (1: 89-90).

But even if Mackenzie mobilizes the traditional anti-Catholicism of gothic fiction to distinguish between her ruthless usurpers, false pretenders and lawful claimants to the throne in sixteenth-century Sweden, it helps her only so far in championing the Swedish "Revolution," as Gustavus's uprising against Christian was sometimes called.³⁵ For from the mid-1790s, a set of new and more acute worries had also begun to loom large on the horizon of the British reading public. As Robert Miles has discussed, the Terror in France would have evoked memories of similar violence in Britain's past history, which no more than the French Revolution could be blamed on Catholicism or the political interests of the Roman Church. The Civil War and the execution of Charles I in the mid-seventeenth century, and the more recent Gordon riots in London and Bath in 1780 are significant examples.³⁶

Mackenzie is clearly aware that her readers might get the wrong associations when reading about Gustavus's revolution, and she leaves

³³ Sarah Scott, evidently drawing on Vertot (7th ed. 1743, 224ff), mentions the presumed "Nils Sturius" in her *History* (270), evidently assuming he was a false pretender. Whether Daljunkern (meaning "the young man from Dalecarlia") really was whom he claimed to be remains unclear. Ivan Svalenius, in *Gustav Vasa*, rev. ed. (Stockholm: Wahlström&Widstrand, 1963; 1992) plainly rejects it as impossible (111), whereas Larsson, in contrast, seems to find it likely that Daljunkern may indeed have been Nils Sture (161).

³⁴ For the resistance to Gustavus's enforced Lutheran reformation expressed by Daljunkern, see Larsson 151.

³⁵ See Vertot and Trotter, note 11 above.

³⁶ See Robert Miles, "The 1790s: The Effulgence of Gothic," *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 41-62, esp. 55.

no stone unturned to assure her readers that *her* hero is by no means to be associated with either the revolutionary violence reported from France or the Protestant excesses of the British Civil War. Her account of the 1520 "massacres" at Stockholm seems clearly designed to remind her readers of the executions reported from France a few years earlier – the streets "echoing the shrieks and groans of unhappy senators and their mourning relatives" (3: 30). Yet, as this is so obviously an event where Gustavus and his family are the sufferers rather than the perpetrators, the horrors described do not reflect negatively on the future king. Quite to the contrary, when Gustavus turns up in Dalecarlia a fugitive from Danish captivity at the beginning of the novel, he is explicitly referred to as an "unhappy emigrant" (1: 3), a term which to an English reader in 1801 would immediately have suggested one of the many refugees seeking a safe haven in Britain from the revolutionary violence in France.

In her effort to exempt Gustavus from all association with excessive revolutionary violence, Mackenzie's rhetoric comes very close to that of the conservative Whig politician Edmund Burke, who lamented the extinction in France of "the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of *Fealty*" in his 1790 *Reflection on the Revolution in France*.³⁷ This ideal state is contrasted to the "anarchy" recently exhibited in revolutionary France, where "[l]aws [are] overturned; tribunals subverted; industry without vigour" and "the people impoverished."³⁸ Yet, as we are told that the "loyal patriot" (1: 9) Gustavus is permeated with

the love of liberty;—[but] not *that* which gives to rapine, sacrilege, and murder their diabolical powers of action—[and] not *that* which tears asunder the beautiful tie that binds an affectionate people to their lawful Sovereign—nor *that* which plucks from contented poverty its little earnings, perverts the decision of justice, and makes the decrees of a wise legislator subservient to its own nefarious purposes (1: 9-10),

we are apparently meant to rest assured that his is a revolution conceived entirely under the auspices of Burke's spirit of fealty.

The revolutionary violence in France left quite an imprint on gothic fiction in the 1790s. It was widely believed in conservative circles in Europe at the time that the French Revolution was the result of a secret conspiracy by political radicals, bred by the Enlightenment, and that

³⁷ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) 78.

³⁸ Burke 39.

there were secret societies in both Germany and England clandestinely plotting against governments and established religion.³⁹ Despite – or perhaps because – such sinister apprehensions, secret societies became a favourite topic in German horror tales; translated into English, these tales became popular also among British readers of gothic and spawned quite a number of followers. Mackenzie was quick to capitalise on the popularity of this trend, and possibly inspired by James Boaden's play *The Secret Tribunal* (1795) she represents a number of her characters in *Swedish Mysteries* as members or otherwise associated with the so-called "Free Judges" of a mysterious "Secret Tribunal" (see, e. g., 1: 93, 281-82). In contrast to her vehement incrimination of Roman Catholicism, however, Mackenzie does not seem to have a clear ideological agenda when dealing with this theme; for even though almost all of the main characters except Gustavus are at some point threatened by a summons to the Tribunal (whether fake or not), the characters represented as actually belonging to that institution tend to stay aloof from the worst villainy exemplified in the novel. Hence it appears that the hyper-secret Free Judges are mainly included to sound the background note of unspecified but portentous terror in Mackenzie's so-called historical romance; but the fact that they *are* there places her narrative solidly in the later phase of the first wave of British gothic fiction beginning in the late 1790s.

And that is what I have wished to emphasize in this essay. For although there were indeed several works in English dealing with the career of Gustavus Ericson by Mackenzie's time, and although all of them perhaps to some extent reflected domestic and contemporary British concerns, Mackenzie's novel *Swedish Mysteries* remains an unusually clear example of the way gothic fiction of late 1790s Britain can be read as an index of current anxieties existing very much then and there.

³⁹ See, e. g., John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe, Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies...* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1797).

CHRISTINE FARHAN

„Frisch gemacht“, aber „Eins soll weg“. Zur Frau zwischen Beruf und Familie in populärer Gegenwartsliteratur. Deutschland und Schweden im Vergleich

Populärkultur „verbraucht sich schnell und ist geprägt von einer verheerenden Kurzsichtigkeit“. So zwei Redakteure des schwedischen Kulturmagazins *ODD* in einer Debatte über Hoch- und Populärkultur in *Dagens Nyheter*.¹ Was hier negativ gefasst ist, könnte auch positiver ausgedrückt werden: Populärkultur reagiert unmittelbar auf anhaltende aktuelle Debatten. Themen werden aufgegriffen, die lebhaft in den Medien diskutiert werden, weshalb Populärkultur ein bedeutendes Aktualitätspotential aufzuweisen hat. Das wiederum macht schnelle Produktion und leichte Konsumtion erforderlich. Populärkultur wird somit wichtiges kulturelles Ausdrucksmittel, das Einsichten in gesellschaftliche Strömungen und Tendenzen vermittelt – auch das müssen die oben zitierten Verfasser zugestehen.²

In diesem Sinne erscheint mir eine Beschäftigung mit zwei Romanen zur Mutterrolle aus Schweden und Deutschland aufschlussreich. Die kontrastierende Analyse mit Fokus auf den Genderaspekt liefert wichtige Information über den gesellschaftlichen Geschlechterdiskurs und geschlechtliche Interaktionsmuster. Gerade der Vergleich Deutschland – Schweden ist in diesem Zusammenhang ergiebig, denn obwohl beide dem westeuropäischen Kulturkreis angehören, so sind sie doch, was Geschlechterrollen und Familienmodelle anbelangt, nahezu Gegenpole. Die Romane spiegeln deutlich, wie unterschiedlich sich der Genderdiskurs in den beiden Gesellschaften geriert.

Familienpolitik in Deutschland baut immer noch weitgehend auf das Kollektiv Familie, das wichtige soziale Funktionen ausübt. In Schweden dagegen hat sich ein stark individualistisches System durchgesetzt, was für die Position der Frau und Mutter entscheidende Bedeutung hat. Sind in Deutschland die Grenzen zwischen privat und öffentlich deutlich markiert, so hat in Schweden die öffentliche Hand, der Staat, wichtige familiäre Aufgaben übernommen. Zu diesem Ergebnis sind die Historiker

¹ Leopold, Linda; Schüldt, Eric: „Operation: Rädda finkulturen!“ In: *Dagens Nyheter*, 2006-12-08, Kultur. „[...] den [populärkulturen] bär på en glömska och en kortsiktighet som kan vara förödande.“ S. 6f.

² „Den [populärkulturen] är dagens viktigaste kulturuttryck [...]“, Leopold, Schüldt, *Dagens Nyheter*, 2006.