

THIS IS A TRANSLATION OF THE ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN SWEDISH IN  
HORISONT

## **Seeking Sweden in a Portrait of Charles XII**

Susan Brantly  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

All the king's horses and all the king's men  
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

-- Mother Goose

This article is about literary attempts to piece together a portrait of Charles XII. Charles XII is one of the most potent and controversial icons of Swedish history. Depictions of Charles XII are never simply about an interesting man who lived at the beginning of the 18th Century. Usually, such narrations are about nation-building, about seeking Sweden in a portrait of Charles XII. We have Erik Gustaf Geijer's word for it that "Svenska folkets historia [...] är dess konungars."<sup>1</sup>

Before beginning a discussion of the shifting fate of Charles XII in Swedish letters, a few words about the operative historical metaphor in this paper are in order. For some, especially many professional historians, the act of writing about the past is akin to laying a puzzle. According to this metaphor, the past already exists as a complete picture, and the historian's task is to gather enough pieces of the puzzle to reconstruct that picture. Thus, one can speak with this metaphor of accurate reconstructions and of historical truth. The metaphor of history as puzzle is common in all forms of historical writing, but the theorists who defend this point of view include C. Behan McCullagh, David Carr, Alasdair MacIntyre and Fredrik Olafson.<sup>2</sup>

Another camp, represented by the likes of Roland Barthes, Paul de Man, Hayden White, Louis O. Mink, Hans Kellner and others, see writing history as an act of construction.<sup>3</sup> Here the operative metaphor might be that of constellations. We start with the general chaos of the heavens -- so many random points of light -- and from them we derive pictures, and about those pictures narratives. From this point of view, the past is not accessible to us through the medium of language and it exists only as an irretrievable chaos. Hence the stories we tell about the past are all inventions having nothing to do with a "real" past.

A compromise position between these two disparate metaphors might be one suggested by Tandläkare Link in Sigrid Combüchen's novel *Byron* (1988):

Att skriva uppsatser om verkliga personer är arkeologi. Man rekonstruerar genom at konstruera. Men man använder sig åtminstone av de skärvor och stenar som man finner.<sup>4</sup>

In an archeological dig, one has fragments - shards of pottery and bone - that were physically present in the past and that set some limits on what the historical narrative can claim. Therefore, there is some sense that one is actually speaking of the past, and the field of what one may "just make up" is not as broad. The significance and function of these fragments, however, is wide open for interpretation, hence the potential for great variation in historical narratives.

Now to return to Charles XII and the operative metaphor of this article. Charles XII (the Humpty Dumpty of the epigraph) has been tossed on the kitchen midden of history. Authors who seek to write about Charles XII are presented with a heap of facts and from this pile they must sift out the pieces that are useful. Depending on one's purpose, one might choose to emphasize Narva as opposed to Poltava. One might choose to praise Charles XII for abstaining from wine and women, or to chastise him for

throwing a puppy into a furnace. Generally, authors will find what they seek. If they are looking for a stoic hero, they will find him. If they are looking for a psychopath, they will find him too. From the myriad of contrasting shards in the history midden, one may build arguments as to whether Charles was a good, bad, or rotten egg. The way that authors construe the facts about such a highly political figure as Charles XII is determined in part by a conscious or unconscious political agenda, and in part, by the guiding Foucauldian episteme.

Romanticism seems to be responsible for turning Charles XII into a major patriotic hero. Olov Westerlund in his book *Karl XII i svensk litteratur från Dahlstierna till Tegnér* (1951) has analyzed the fate of Charles XII in literary representations leading up to Romanticism. Charles' image -- despite or because of Voltaire -- was not particularly positive in Enlightenment circles. He is interpreted in the same light that Don Quixote was interpreted by the Enlightenment: Both are fools who are unable to see the world reasonably or realistically. The Enlightenment diagnosis of Charles XII as a fool was of course couched in a good many phrases of respect for royalty in general.

The Romantics reinterpreted Don Quixote. His madness became higher insight. He was a hero striving after impossible ideals. In this way, Charles XII could be rehabilitated by the Romantics. Romantics, of course, had a taste for Quixotic genius, dark heroes, poetic souls and Charles XII could be made to fit this model. In an article in *Polyfem* from February 1812, titled "Om Snillen och Stora Män", the following pronouncement is made:

Äkta Snillen lefwa i ett beständigt krig: hwar stor man är hjelte. Ju flera hufwuden hydran har, desto ärofullare att wara Hercules.  
Den som bäfwar för swårigheterna, är icke skapad att besegra dem.  
Carl den Tolfte är idealet af en Hjelte.<sup>5</sup>

By the early 1800's the actual memory of the hardships during Charles XII's reign had paled, and his depiction as a Romantic hero was not readily gainsaid.

Other factors were in the air that interested Swedish Romanticism in martial heroes. The Finnish War of 1808 and Napoleon's military campaigns. Because of the threat posed by Napoleon, Sweden wanted to be reminded of its martial successes in the past. Narva, by all means, is the piece from Charles XII's kitchen midden that the Romantics choose to celebrate.

Karl Johan, Sweden's newly adopted king, admired his namesake, and especially his plans to unite the Scandinavian peninsula. On January 14, 1814, Karl Johan compelled Denmark to give up Norway and he marked this concession by traveling to Fredrikshald in August and holding a small ceremony in Charles XII's honor.

Thus, the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Charles XII's death day, November 30, 1718, saw a flurry of poems in honor of Charles XII. Tegnér's "Carl XII på hans minnesfest 1818" is certainly the most famous of these, perhaps because it invokes the quintessential qualities of a romantic hero. Tegnér's Charles XII is "den unga hjälte" and it is his victory at Narva ("Och en mot tio ställdes") that is invoked.<sup>6</sup> Further, the turning away of Aurore Königsmarck is seen in Charles' favor: He is a man with a higher calling who has no time for women. Tegnér's Charles is young, impulsive, idealistic: "han kunde icke vika,/ blott falla kunde han."<sup>7</sup> The purpose of admiring such a figure and honoring his grave is clear: "Svenska äran viger/ sin segerfana där."<sup>8</sup> The honor of Charles XII is the honor of the Swedish nation. He becomes a rallying point for Swedish national identity.

Similarly, Geijer had chosen to depict the young Charles XII pulling on his boots in order to get to business in an earlier poem, "Karl den Tolfte" from 1811. Like Tegnér, he also chose to emphasize the victory at Narva in the poem he composed for the 1818 celebrations, "Ord till Karl XII:s marsch vid Narva." Significantly, Geijer was much more reserved about Charles XII in his history writing than in these public poetic

utterances. It is as if he understood that public history, history for the consumption of the masses, serves a different purpose than history written for and by scholars. Public history is about nation building.

Further, to add another famous, though somewhat later Romantic poet to this group, Runeberg in "Konungen" from *Fänrik Ståls sägner* (1848) depicts an unstable Gustav IV Adolf putting on "Den skrud, vårt Svenska lejon/ Vigt in vid Narvas slag."<sup>9</sup> The point in this poem is that Gustav IV Adolf is not the man to fill Charles XII's boots and dressing up like him is not going to be of much help. Although the poem is less than complimentary to Gustav IV Adolf, it seems to appeal to the portrait of Charles XII painted by the Romantics: the young military hero against whom Gustav IV Adolf falls short by comparison.

The Romantics established Charles XII as a hero around whom the nation could rally, especially at times when pressure from Russia seemed too great. Obviously, for this purpose, Narva is the moment to cling to and Poltava should be passed by in silence. So, at a time when the Czar had squelched the rebellion in Poland and Denmark had lost its war with Prussia, the statue of Charles XII that decorates Kungsträdgården was erected in 1868. This is, of course, the event that causes one of August Strindberg's characters to hang himself in a closet in *Brända tomten* (1907).

Steffan Björck has done an admirable job of describing the political climate of turn-of-the-century Sweden in *Heidenstam och Sekelskiftets Sverige* (1946). On the one hand, conservative patriotism was characterized by an enthusiasm for Swedish history, particularly its martial exploits, and enmity towards Norway, which at the same time was agitating for independence from Sweden. On the other hand, the opponents of conservative patriotism assaulted the sacred cows of Swedish military history, foremost among them being Charles XII, and argued for paying attention to the needs of the Swedish people, rather than the military need to defend oneself against the world. The initial labor pains of the birth of the Modern Swedish State were being felt at this time.

As usual, history becomes an essential part of a national debate when national identity and the future are at stake. Charles XII stands at the very center of the debate.

In this climate, Verner von Heidenstam produced *Karolinerna* (1897-1898), which has generally been construed as being in support of the more conservative view of Charles XII. However, some conservative critics did not like Heidenstam's version of Charles XII because he had diverged from the Romantic vision of Charles as the young, admirable hero from Narva.

Heidenstam was interested in treating Charles XII aesthetically, as a tragic figure. Although Heidenstam would likely have denied the charge, he casts Charles XII into the mold of the decadent *fin de siècle*. I have discussed this view of *Karolinerna* at length in another context, so I will avoid going into too many details here.<sup>10</sup> Although a decadent hero might almost seem like a contradiction in terms, Baudelaire claimed of the dandy: "Le dandysme est le dernier éclat d'héroïsme dans les décadences."<sup>11</sup> As the world hurtles chaotically toward mundane democracy, the dandy creates his own rigid system of order in defiance. He will adhere to his code of honor even if it means his own death. Since Charles XII is a head of state, the fact that he chooses to behave in this manner, has implications for the entire nation. Heidenstam's Charles XII marches to the beat of his own drummer as the Swedish Empire crumbles around him.

Unlike in the romantic vision, where the hero is chasing higher ideals, the decadent hero sticks to a code in a fundamentally meaningless world. In the portrait of the decadent hero, there is room for cruelty, so Heidenstam includes pieces from Charles XII's kitchen midden that would not have been suitable for the romantic poems: Charles' practice of exercising his sword arm by chopping off the heads of calves -- indoors -- for example. Because of his emphasis on the tragic, Heidenstam needs to pluck Poltava and Fredrikshald from the midden, so that his hero may die in misfortune.

What sort of nationalistic picture emerges from this portrait of Charles XII? Erland Lagerroth explains in his study of *Karolinerna*, the Swedish people are

characterized by their self-sacrifice, their capacity "att ryckas hän och offra allt för en stor idé eller känsla."<sup>12</sup> Such a message of mindless submission might seem politically useful to anyone advocating strong leadership over democracy. Ultimately, the message of Heidenstam's novel is a conservative one, even if not quite to the taste of his contemporary conservative critics.

Strindberg's vision of Charles XII is the one that prevails in Sweden during the 20th Century, at least among supporters of Social Democracy and the Welfare State. With his usual perspicacity, Strindberg observes in "Tal till Svenska Nationen": "Varje gång man gräver upp Carl XII:s mumie, så finns ju ett motiv, ett ändamål, ett intresse."<sup>13</sup> In a word, Strindberg hates Charles XII. Inspired by the arguments of Anders Fryxell, Strindberg sees Charles XII as a figure who stands for the violent exploitation of the Swedish people. Strindberg is an iconoclast who sees part of his task as tearing down the romantic, nationalistic image of Charles XII, so that the Swedish people may begin to reinvent themselves in an image other than that of a self-sacrificing and submissive nation. In this same speech to the Swedish nation, Strindberg declares Narva a meaningless victory and calls Charles' escape from Poltava cowardly: "Det är således lögn att han inte kunde vika."<sup>14</sup> This is a direct assault on Tegnér's poem, and the romantic image of Charles XII. The only praise that Strindberg ever gives Charles XII has to do with him having no truck with wine or women.<sup>15</sup> This probably has more to do with Strindberg's personal idiosyncrasies than his overall political agenda.

Frans G. Bengtsson's monumental *Karl XII:s levnad* (1935) seems to have been written out of a sort of nostalgia for the romantic heroes of the past. For Bengtsson, Narva is "en av de stora romantiska drabbningar."<sup>16</sup> Such nostalgia may seem shocking in a world on the verge of WWII, where battles are anything but romantic. Bengtsson apologizes on occasion for Charles XII. Using reverse psychology, Bengtsson explains Charles XII's aversion to women as a sign that he really was quite interested in them. He concedes that Charles XII's decision to remove August from the throne of Poland was a

mistake, but "Det är inte något nedsättande, lumpet eller beklämmande fel, utan ett storslaget, positivt, och majestätiskt sådant."<sup>17</sup> In terms of the defeat at Poltava, "Ytterst berodde alltsammans på kungens blessyr."<sup>18</sup> The battle was lost because the strong leader was incapacitated.

The message of Bengtsson's opus is a conservative one: Great leaders like Charles XII are hard to find anymore and the Swedish people are able to rise to any difficult occasion and take their suffering in stride. Although Bengtsson's tribute seems to have been written in a mood of romantic nostalgia, representatives of the extreme right also adopted Charles XII in the 1930's as the model of a strong military leader. This is the beginning of Charles XII's association with Nazi and neo-Nazi movements. Charles XII's role as absolute monarch is seen in a positive light and compared favorably with Hitler's role as a dictator. From the Nazi point of view, Charles XII is some sort of precursor for Hitler.

After World War II, Social Democracy prevailed in Sweden, and along with it, Strindberg's old view of Charles XII as a despoiler of the Swedish nation. Between 1960-1990, what very roughly might be considered the heyday of the Swedish Welfare State, it became almost compulsory for various authors to follow Strindberg's lead and demonstrate what a disaster Charles XII was for the Swedish nation, thus affirming the choice of Social Democracy, which ensures that modern Swedes no longer have to tolerate such war and privation. Charles XII is also an appropriate vehicle for demonstrating the terrors of war, thus affirming Sweden's policy of neutrality and general tendency towards pacifism.

In his book *Furstarna* (1974), Ivar Lo-Johansson has gathered a number of unsavory facts about Charles XII that one must look long and hard for in other sources. Lo-Johansson tips the reader as to his views on the monarchy already on the first page, where he ironically juxtaposes Geijer's winged words about Sweden's history being the history of its kings with two cynical quotations from Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Like

Strindberg, who used Tegnér for the purpose, Lo-Johansson invokes Geijer in order to discredit the idealized romantic view of strong leaders. In his depiction of Charles XII, Lo-Johansson dwells on Charles XII's youthful cruelties. He narrates a story about Charles XII throwing a puppy into a furnace, a highly unsympathetic deed which I have not discovered in the rest of my reading about Charles XII. Lo-Johansson changes the tone of the victory at Narva by describing how Charles XII took pot shots at the heads of drowning Russians, pretending that he was shooting ducks. Lo-Johansson, of course, does not forget the common people left in the wake of Charles' campaigns who must eat rats to live and starve when there are no more rats.

Lars Widding's *Karolinerstven* (1974-1977) also paints Charles XII as a sadist who indiscriminately leads his men into hardship, death and capture. Captain Pilfeldt is the figure in the novel who comes to represent the loyal and long-suffering Swedish national character. Pilfeldt follows Charles XII all the way to his final campaign, though he has become progressively more disillusioned with the monarch. In Widding's fiction, Pilfeldt is the one who shoots Charles XII, and by then, the reader is nothing but relieved by this violent revolution.

In her trilogy from 1983-1985, Elsie Rydsjö focuses on the women's perspective on Charles XII's campaigns.<sup>19</sup> Mette Christiern follows her husband Fredrik Jakob to the battlefield. Mette considers the king to be some sort of evil Pied Piper who is able to lead men to their own destruction. Mette's closest friends, Peter and Britta Hård, die terribly on the campaigns, and she herself is taken captive in the chaos after Poltava.

If one adopts the 18th century view of literature as letters in general, then one may perhaps include in the parade of negative portrayals of Charles XII Peter Englund's *Poltava* (1988). *Poltava* certainly qualifies as public history, perhaps the modern counterpart to Tegnér and Geijer's public recitations. The popularity of *Poltava* has astonished many. Perhaps the source of this best-seller's popularity is that it taps into this long discussion of Charles XII and the Swedish nation at a time when the Welfare State

is beginning to feel the onset of crisis. It is a book that reaffirms the importance of Swedish neutrality and pacifism. It deplors imperialism and appreciates the difficulties of the ordinary foot soldier:

De skulle offras för den svenska statens tullar, för aristokraternas stora baltiska jordagods, för handelskapitalisternas runda profiler. Deras liv var som vatten och klockan var runt kvart i tio och sammandrabbningen var oundviklig.<sup>20</sup>

Englund needed to choose Poltava for his purposes. He could not have had the same resonance with Narva.

In several reviews of Englund's *Poltava*, the connection between Poltava and the Welfare State were made explicit. Lasse Henricsson, the reviewer from *Arbetarebladet*, explained: "På sätt och vis började vi därmed grundlägga vad som skulle bli det moderna Sverige och i förlängingen Välfärdsstaten."<sup>21</sup> In an article from *Dagens Nyheter*, titled "Poltava början på vår välfärd," Mats Holmberg explicitly draws the moral of neutrality: "Sverige skulle knappast haft fred sedan 1814 om vi hade vunnit i Poltava."<sup>22</sup> In Englund's book, the defeat of the Swedish military machine is turned into a victory for modern Sweden.

*Poltava* catapulted Peter Englund from being an unknown history graduate student into a guru of Swedish history. The Swedish media courts Englund's opinion anytime a question about history is raised. It seems to be important for the public that Peter Englund is a professional historian and not a fiction writer. Tegnér and Geijer need no other authority than the status of poet. People in a post-historicist world prefer academic credentials. The public very much wants to believe that Englund's version of history is true, because it affirms all the fundamental precepts of Social Democracy, the Welfare State, and neutrality. The message of *Poltava* is that Sweden should be proud to

have left its military past behind and instead to have focused on the welfare of its citizens.

Since about 1990, the fall of the Soviet Union, the ousting of the Social Democrats, and an economic crisis, Sweden has been engaged in something of an identity crisis. Should the Welfare State be dismantled? Should Sweden join the EC? What effect will that have on the Swedish Model?

Charles XII's death day has become the day chosen by the neo-Nazi's for their public demonstrations, and on occasion, people have been killed as a result of these events. Most of the neo-Nazi's in Sweden are young, economically disadvantaged youths who blame the immigrants for unemployment. They have also singled out homosexuals for harassment. For neo-Nazi's it would be inappropriate to select from the kitchen midden of history the fact that Charles XII spent a few years as an unwelcome immigrant who lived on the dole from the Turkish government. Indications of Charles XII's homosexuality would similarly not interest them.

In the midst of Sweden's identity crisis, Herman Lindqvist began publishing *Historien om Sverige* (1992-1995). Lindqvist, a journalist, writes entertainingly about Swedish history as a history of its kings, something which had not been possible for years. His books have inspired a popular TV program on Swedish history hosted by Lindqvist and his public lectures are almost always filled to capacity. Despite his immense popularity, Lindqvist's career as a public historian has been riddled with controversy.

Like Frans G. Bengtsson, Lindqvist apologizes for Charles XII and claims that he was not the catastrophe everyone makes him out to be. He tackles Charles XII's shortcomings by blaming them on his upbringing: "Det olyckliga för Karls del var att bägge föräldrar försvann innan hans egen frigörelseprocess hade börjat."<sup>23</sup> Charles is just a man who behaved in accordance with the way he had been raised. Turning Charles XII into a dutiful child is just the way to appeal to the sensibilities of most Swedes. With

regard to Poltava, like Bengtsson, Lindqvist deems Charles XII's injured foot to be "en av huvudorsakerna till att allt gick som det gick."<sup>24</sup>

Lindqvist has said that he is against historical masochism "vars syfte är att vi skall plåga oss med vår egen historia, påminna varandra om att vi minsann inte var bättre än någon annan och att de svenska trupperna brände och plundra de värre än alla andra."<sup>25</sup>

This is a curious reading of the rhetorical strategy of digging up the dirt of history. If Lo-Johansson, Widding, Rydsjö, and Englund are being referred to, the accusation of historical masochism does not seem fair. These authors dig up atrocities from the past, not to make Sweden feel bad about itself, but on the contrary, to affirm how far Sweden has come as a nation.

Nonetheless, this is Lindqvist's stated reason for not dwelling on the darker details of Swedish history. Lindqvist's light irony makes the execution of men, women, and children in Poland by the Swedes seem like amusingly exaggerated reactions to provocation by the troublesome native population. His narrative is very easy to digest. The irrational moments of history are rendered harmless through humor, and in the end, everything seems to be controlled by logical cause and effect, despite occasional amusing aberrations. It is easy to see why such a comforting message has been well-received by a population anxious about its future. Sven-Eric Liedman has described Lindqvist's books as "trygghetsfaktorer i den osäkra samtiden."<sup>26</sup>

Even so, Lindqvist makes some people uneasy. Peter Englund has become one of his most notable opponents. Englund is primarily distressed by Lindqvist's "great man" approach to history, but has effectively attacked Lindqvist in his most vulnerable spot: his facts. Englund announced in *Expressen* that he had found 140 mistakes in one epoch.<sup>27</sup> This is a typical rhetorical gesture commonly used by critics in a post-historicist world. Voltaire's attitude towards the historical mistake was quite different:

Une fausse date, un nom pour un autre, ne sont que des matières pour un *erata* . Si d'ailleurs le corps de l'ouvrage est vrai, si les intérêts, les motifs, les événements sont développés avec fidélité, c'est alors une statue bien faite à laquelle on peut reprocher quelque pli négligé à la draperie.<sup>28</sup>

After Otto Ranke, history is no longer an art form, history aspires to be a scientific discipline practiced by academic professionals. Thus Lindqvist becomes vulnerable to attacks upon his accuracy and his credentials. Lindqvist is, after all, "just a journalist", not a professional historian like Englund.

But it is not really Lindqvist's mistakes or credentials that are at the root of the unease Lindqvist creates. Objections to Lindqvist's facts and qualifications are merely tools to render Lindqvist's version of history less powerful. The real problem is Lindqvist's interpretation of Sweden's history; the statue itself, not the folds in the fabric. Sverker Oredsson protested in *Sydsvenskan*

Här är huvudbudskapet att Karl XII inte var någon "katastrof för Sverige utan tvärtom. Tack vare honom och den anda som rådde i landet, uthärdade och överlevde folket och riket." Detta är ju gallimatlas av sekelskiftets- och 30-talskaraktär. Om inte Karl XII var en katastrof för Sverige, vad skall då till för att någon skall meritera sig för den karaktäristiken?<sup>29</sup>

Lindqvist is flying the face of several decades, if not an entire century, of interpreting Charles XII as an irresponsible warmonger who drove his nation to ruin.

What seems to have escaped most participants in the debate as they quibble over facts and historical truth is the realization that the argument is not really about Charles

XII and the past, but about the Swedish nation and its future. Approving of a strong leader-figure like Charles XII has become equated with disapproving of the foundations of Social Democracy. Lindqvist himself observes as he is assessing the career of Charles XII: "Omvärderingarna av kungen har sällan berott på nya historiska fakta utan helt speglat den rådande politiska opinionen och trender i tiden."<sup>30</sup> Yet even after this clear statement, Lindqvist draws no explicit conclusions about the political implications of his own interpretation. Lindqvist sets up the far right and left as two equally irrational extremes. He hints at the foolishness of the distaste of the left for Charles XII by noting that even Karl Marx admired him. Lindqvist rhetorically positions himself between these two extremes, thus appropriating for himself the desirable Swedish status of "lagom." Lindqvist would have us accept his version of history as friendly, somewhat patriotic, but essentially nonpolitical.

Lindqvist's "lättflytande historievälling" seems dangerous to some because it lulls the public into accepting the comfort of strong leaders who make all the decisions so the public will not have to. The public only needs to go along with the decisions and endure the consequences. This is completely counter to the basic precepts of Social Democracy. The fear is that from this position the step to the extreme right is not so very far. Such a fear may not be so very far-fetched, if one recalls the simultaneity of Frans G. Bengtsson's "harmless" romantic biography with the "not-so-harmless" cult of Charles XII in pre-World War II Sweden. There is certainly political change in the wind for Sweden, and the anxiety created by Herman Lindqvist's popularity has to do with the direction those winds will blow.

The "real" Charles XII has long since slipped beyond our grasp; the pieces of Humpty Dumpty cannot be put back together again. Perhaps it has been anxiety over this creeping realization that has caused Charles XII's physical remains to be disinterred no less than four times. On the final occasion in 1917, Verner von Heidenstam was present, as though the crumbling physical remains of Charles XII could somehow bring him into

contact with the past and the person himself. Charles XII cannot be treated in a politically neutral way. The discussion will always have implications for Sweden's status as a nation. The discourse of the past two centuries has ensured that the history of the Swedish people is the history of its attitude towards Charles XII.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> Erik Gustaf Geijer, *Svenska folkets historia* in *Samlade skrifter*, vols. 4-6, ed. John Landquist (Stockholm: Norstedt's, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> See C. Behan McCullagh, "Metaphor and Truth in History," *Clio*, 23:1 (1993), 23-49; David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana U. Pr., 1986); Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (South Bend: Indiana U. Pr., 1984); and Friderik Olafson, *The Dialectic of Action* (Chicago: Chicago U. Pr., 1979).

<sup>3</sup> See Roland Barthes, "Historical Discourse," *Structuralism: A Reader*, ed. Michael Lane (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Pr., 1983), Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. Pr., 1973), Louis O. Mink, *Historical Understanding*, eds. Brian Fay et al. (Ithaca: Cornell U. Pr., 1987), and Hans Kellner, *Language and Historical Representation* (Madison: U. of Wisconsin Pr., 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Sigrid Combüchen, *Byron. En roman*. (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1988). 126.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Olov Westerlund, *Karl XII i svensk litteratur från Dahlstierna till Tegnér* (Lund: Gleerup, 1951), 276.

<sup>6</sup> Esaias Tegnér, *Samlade skrifter*, v. 3, eds. Ewert Wrangel and Fredrik Böök (Stockholm: Norstedt's, 1924), 66.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>9</sup> Johan Ludvig Runeberg, *Samlade skrifter*, vol. 5, eds. Gunnar Tideström and Carl-Eric Thors (Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1974), 109.

<sup>10</sup> Susan Brantly, "Heidenstam's *Karolinerna* and the *Fin de Siècle*", *Fin(s) de Siècle in Scandinavian Perspective: Studies in Honor of Harald S. Naess*, eds. Faith Ingwersen and Mary Kay Norseng (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993), 69-77.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes* ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Éditions Gallemard, 1961), 1179.

<sup>12</sup> Erland Lagerroth, *Svensk berättarkonst: Röda rummet, Karolierna, Onda Sagor och Sibyllan* (Lund, 1961), 140.

<sup>13</sup> August Strindberg, "Tal till svenska nationen," *Samlade skrifter*, v. 53, ed. John Landqvist (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1919), 40.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>15</sup> August Strindberg, *August Strindbergs brev*, vol. 12, ed. Torsten Eklund (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1970), #3465.

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- <sup>16</sup> Frans g. Bengtsson, *Karl XII:s levnad till uttåget ur Sachsen* (Stockholm: Norstedt's, 1989), 108.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 153.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 167.
- <sup>19</sup> Elsie Rydsjö, *Röd är ryttarens häst, Allra kärastan min!, Spelar min lind* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1983, 1985, 1985).
- <sup>20</sup> Peter Englund, *Poltava. Berättelsen om en armés undergång* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1988), 194.
- <sup>21</sup> Lasse Henricsson, "Peter raserar myten om hjältekungen," *Arbetarebladet*, 6 Nov 1988.
- <sup>22</sup> Mats Holmberg, "Poltava början på vår välfärd," *Dagens Nyheter*, 31 Oct 1988.
- <sup>23</sup> Herman Lindqvist, *Historien om Sverige. Storhet och fall*. (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1995), 271.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 498.
- <sup>25</sup> Quoted in Peter Englund, "Historien enligt Herman," *Expressen*, 26 Sept 1994.
- <sup>26</sup> Sven-Eric Liedman, "Lindqvists lättflytande men smaklösa historievälling väcker till eftertanke," *iDAG*, 29 May 1993.
- <sup>27</sup> Englund, "Historien enligt Herman."
- <sup>28</sup> François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* in *Oeuvres historiques*, ed. René Pomeau (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 1237.
- <sup>29</sup> Sverker Oredsson, "Rev. of Herman Lindqvist's *Historien om Sverige. Storhet och fall*," *Sydsvenskan* 5 Oct 1995.
- <sup>30</sup> Lindqvist, 678.