

**ARTICLE**

# The novel reconsidered: Emotions and anti-realism in mid-19th-century Scandinavian literature

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## Abstract

The aim of the present article is to investigate the novel as remediation of nationalist pedagogy: how was the pedagogical, nationalist project charged with emotions? How did elements from non-realist genres make emotions ‘stick’? And what are, in return, the implications of the use of non-realist elements for the nationalist project, more specifically for nationalist temporalities? The hybrid novel form allowed for incorporating different kinds of archives, constructing a national heritage, such as material from collections of oral tradition, records from witchcraft trials, medieval manuscripts and geographical accounts including cartography. The novel added emotions to the nationalist pedagogical project by means of elements from decidedly non-realist genres such as melodrama, the Gothic novel and allegory. I argue, contrary to Benedict Anderson, that ‘Messianic time’ was in fact essential in the novel’s contribution to nationalism; a temporality of prefiguration and fulfilment made emotions stick.

## KEYWORDS

antirealist genres, emotions, 19th-century Scandinavian nationalisms, the novel

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## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The novel is an affect-producing machine. Emotions are usually understood as the key element with which to mobilise the masses to transform nationalism from an elite project to a mass movement. Literature in general, and the novel in particular, was no doubt the medium in the early 19th century with an ability not only to reach different strata of the population but also to arouse emotions. The crucial role of the novel in the development and spread of nationalism in the 19th century was also due to the fact that it is a hybrid form; the flexibility allows it to encompass other media forms. The novel was able to remediate practically any other kind of nationalist pedagogy. It took part in the construction of national heritage by incorporating different kinds of archives, such as material from collections of oral tradition, records from witchcraft trials, medieval manuscripts and geographical accounts including cartography. The novel added emotions to the nationalist pedagogical project, and it did so by means of decidedly non-realist generic elements. The aim of the present article is to investigate the novel as remediation of nationalist pedagogy: how was the pedagogical, nationalist project charged with emotions? How did elements from non-realist genres make emotions 'stick'? And what are, in return, the implications of the use of non-realist elements for the nationalist project, more specifically for nationalist temporalities?

The importance of the novel to the spread of 19th-century nationalism has indeed been acknowledged ever since Benedict Anderson's (2006) argument in *Imagined Communities* that print media, and the realist novel in particular, were instrumental in bringing about a new sense of 'simultaneity', a temporality devoid of prefiguration. The 'homogenous, empty time', connecting different geographical places in the same moment, provided a prerequisite for modern nationalism (Anderson, 2006, p. 24). Franco Moretti (1998, p. 17) even claims that the novel was 'the only symbolic form that could represent' the nation-state, making sense of new, abstract forms of power relations, and turning the nation-state into a homeland. Although there is a growing body of research on how non-realist genres, such as romance and the Gothic novel, were used to promote nationalism (Grönstrand, 2015; Hatavara, 2015; Launis, 2013; Sanz, Scott, & van Dijk, 2014; Sommer, 1991), the key issue of how the novel made nationalist emotions stick has received considerably less attention.

The 19th-century novel envisioned nations as 'emotional communities' (Rosenwein, 2016). Barbara Rosenwein's concept relates to smaller communities—which may or may not be political—that share the same emotional norms: the valuation of different emotions and 'ways to express [...] feelings' (Rosenwein, 2016, p. 3). Nevertheless, the national novels were intended to constitute entire nations as emotional communities. Obviously, their success was only partial, but that should not obscure the fact that emotional communities were indeed envisioned, nor should we refrain from investigating their construction in fiction. We need to inquire into which emotions were evoked and how they were distributed—and redistributed—to bodies and objects. After all, if the people doing the imagining and experiencing the same moment are to form a community, in Anderson's sense, then the imagined emotions connected to the experience need to be at least compatible, if not the same. The sense of community hinges on emotions attached to the common experience. Sara Ahmed (2014) analyses how emotions circulate, how they 'stick' to bodies and objects and acquire value in a logic similar to capital in the Marxian critique. The 'affective economies' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 44–6) in 19th-century fiction need scrutinising in order to better understand the spread of nationalism.<sup>1</sup>

The examples through which to investigate how nationalist emotions stick are drawn from Scandinavian mid-19th-century prose fiction, mainly by best-selling Swedish and Finnish novelists. I will briefly mention a few Norwegian cases, but poetry was the predominant form of nation-building literature in Norway up until the 1850s. The investigation includes the most important historical novels for Finnish and Swedish nation building, Zacharias Topelius' series *The Surgeon's Stories* (1853–1867). Most of the examined novels, though, are set in a realistic, contemporary society and connect people in different places; that is, the kind of novel Anderson had in mind in his analysis of 'empty time'. However, in order to convey emotions, these novels still employ melodramatic elements, genre traits from the Gothic novel and even allegory—genres that all implicate a supernatural structure, and accordingly, a different temporality than the realist novel's 'empty time' (Anderson, 2006, p. 24). I argue, contrary to

Anderson (2006, p. 24), that 'Messianic time' was in fact essential to nationalism; a temporality of prefiguration and fulfilment made emotions stick. That does not invalidate Anderson's definition of the nation as 'imagined community', but focussing on emotions and anti-realist elements do complicate the temporality structuring the form of consciousness necessary for imagining the nation. To account for the function of the novel as an affect-producing machine for nationalist ideology, the theoretical implications of the novel form need to be reconsidered.

Anne-Marie Thiesse (2005, pp. 122–5) draws attention to the paradoxical 'identity trade' in national characteristics: a 'common model for producing differences' was established in the 19th century, including a history, a language, a typical landscape, folklore, traditional costumes, food—in short, a national 'identity checklist'. She stresses that the formation of national identities 'had to be accompanied by an enormous educational effort so that increasingly larger segments of the population could recognise these references and identify themselves with them' (Thiesse, 2005, p. 123). This was a task performed by the novel by means of aesthetic categories that produced emotions. Admittedly, no sharp lines can be drawn between genres such as romance and the Gothic novel, melodrama and allegory. Thus, Doris Sommer (1991, p. 5) includes allegorical elements in her definition of romance in her ground-breaking study *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*, and Peter Brooks (1995, pp. 17–20, 30–3) states that melodrama 'operates in the mode of romance' and points out the interdependence of the melodramatic imagination and the Gothic novel. The lines are even more blurred when analysing different genre traits that originate from these genres in a realist novel. Still, the Gothic novel, the melodramatic imagination and allegory not only target different emotions, but also implicate supernatural structures in slightly different ways, which had a bearing on the nationalist pedagogy.

The analysis will start out with how national cartography and territorial borders were charged with emotions and move on to the novel as an ethnographic museum. Before discussing the remediation of oral tradition, I will briefly highlight Gothic historiography. The redistribution of emotions will be a case in point when turning to folklore. Inspired by Walter Scott, Scandinavian mid-19th-century novelists featured an unexpected high number of witches; since the real effects of sorcery were still a cause for concern for people living in the country-side, different genre elements work to transform witchcraft from a terrifying threat to a tradition that engenders national identity. Old Norse manuscripts, edited, remediated and advertised in the novel bring a commodity form of national heritage into view. Finally, the ideal society, the very objective of the nationalist project, was constructed in realist novels by means of reactivating allegory. This brings the discussion back to the temporalities of nationalism and the novel form.

## 2 | AFFECTIVE TERRITORIALITY

National territory, and national borders in particular, was a highly emotionally charged topic in 19th-century nationalist literature (cf. Leerksen, 2006, pp. 173–185; Moretti, 1998; Thiesse, 2019, pp. 133–41)—and was a topic that quickly gained precedence in Scandinavian fiction in just a few years. Whereas nationalism in the Swedish novel of the 1830s paid very little attention to the national landscape, the novels of the 1840s by bestselling Swedish authors promoted a national identity firmly rooted in the ground. The novels of the 1840s perform a national cartography; they chart travel routes and constantly seek out borders (Bohlin, 2016). As geographer Jan Penrose notes, 'boundaries are not nearly as fixed, stable or uncontested as is commonly assumed', but rely on the repeated practices of *territoriality*, that is processes of 'bounding space' (Penrose, 2002, pp. 279–80). The imaginative geographies in 19th-century fiction carry out these practices of territoriality by investing those boundaries with emotions.

The novelist Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865) was the most internationally renowned Swedish author of her time, translated into many different languages from the 1840s onwards. She is known today as 'the forerunner of the Swedish women's movement'; to her mid-19th-century notions, women's emancipation also meant pioneering for a liberal brand of nationalism. Several of her novels produce affective national border. In *The Midnight Sun* (1848, Engl. trans. 1849), the Latvian woman Ida receives a declaration of love from a Swedish man on the very bridge over the

river that marks the border with Finland. The midnight sun, viewed from the mountain Aavasaksa just across the Finnish border, sweeps away all doubts and brings revelations of truth and love. Love happens on the border. Another of Bremer's novels, *Strife and Peace: or, Some Scenes in Norway* (1840, Engl. trans. 1844) even thematises national borders. After the Napoleonic wars, Norway proclaimed independence from Denmark, but was forced to enter a personal union with Sweden (1814–1905). Bremer's romance plot is set in Norway and represents the personal union as a love-story between the Swedish Susanna and the Norwegian Harald. And Bremer was by no means the first to use the romance plot as nationalist allegory.

In *Foundational Fictions* (1991), Doris Sommer shows that the Latin American national novels of the 19th century shared a romance plot, which united the nation in romantic love above regional, racial, political and economic differences. She defines the genre-concept she is working with as 'a cross between our contemporary use of the word as a love story and a nineteenth-century use that distinguished the genre as more boldly allegorical than the novel' (Sommer, 1991, p. 5). In these cases, the legitimisation of 'the nation-family through love' (Sommer, 1990, p. 76) was a real necessity in the reconciliation of conflicts after the Civil Wars. The founding of the Latin American nations was 'moved by the logic of love' (Sommer, 1991, pp. 18–9, 24, 78, 104). Heidi Grönstrand (2015) and Mari Hatavara (2015) confirm that this is also how the romance plot works in Finnish 19th-century historical novels. It is used to consolidate the Finnish nation above differences in class, ethnicity and language and in opposition to the former Swedish rule.

Still, the function of the romance plot in the novels by Bremer is slightly different as the novels focus on territorial borders. Bremer was very much aware of the strong Norwegian opposition to the personal union with Sweden and even shared the Norwegian views on the matter. *Strife and Peace* invites a Swedish audience to fall in love with Norway as a foreign nation, as the other, not as one's own. Furthermore, until Susanna and Harald form 'an eternal union' (Bremer, 1844, p. 276), they constantly quarrel over which country is the best. Hence, the emotions evoked by the story are certainly love, devotion, awe, and joy but also jokingly, vexation and indignation of Harald's scorn of Sweden. The novel does indeed harmonise conflicts, but in terms of loving the borders as a mark of differences. In *The Midnight Sun*, by contrast, the chief obstacle to the lovers' happiness is cast in ethnic and class terms: Ida's 'proud, bitter mind' (Bremer, 1849, p. 226), marked as Latvian upper-class in the novel, makes her unable to give and receive love. The ethnic differences in this case are overcome by amalgamation, as Ida has to renounce her upper-class 'Latvian' identity to be included in the Swedish community. However, the strong emphasis on being protected, and absorbed, by the national, emotional community in this novel also raises the issue of citizenship.

In several of the Swedish contemporary novels of the 1840s, borders generated highly emotional narratives of citizenship. Moretti (1998, pp. 35–7) studies the complex functions of territorial borders in historical novels and points out that external borders tend to generate adventure narratives, whereas internal borders in Scott's novels are sites of treason. In the Swedish novels, borders work in two different ways. On the one hand, the border intensified the nation's promises to the citizen of life, community and love. A case in point is *Life in Dalecarlia* (1845) by Bremer, where a woman called 'The Major' because of her moustaches and gender-crossing behaviour, moves into the wilderness near the Norwegian border to set up a successful business. She also provides for a physically disabled young male relative, whose 'ailment [...] no longer hindered him from being a useful and happy man' (Bremer, 1845, p. 158). This is shorthand for liberal citizenship: to contribute to the progress of the nation and in return be made happy. The border provided opportunities for non-normative bodies to exercise citizenship and, as a consequence, experience happiness (Bohlin, 2016).

On the other hand, the border constituted a zone of death: citizenship was evoked as the border marks the end of law enforcement and lives are endangered. Emily Flygare Carlén (1807–1892), also widely translated from the late 1840s, is famous for her use of elements drawn from the Gothic novel in her novels set on the West coast of Sweden (Leffler, 1991, pp. 55–69). National borders were invested with fear and horror in several of her novels, as they inspire illegal activities such as smuggling and the slave trade, leading to murder. The border is the site of moral as well as of legal collapse in *The Smugglers of the Swedish Coast; or The Rose of Thistle Island* (1842, Engl. trans. 1844), *A Night at Bullarsjon* (1847) and *The Maiden Tower* (1848, Engl. trans. 1853). This is also true of C.J.L. Almqvist's

(1793–1866) *The Three Wives of Småland* (1842–1843) modelled on the robber novel. A former schoolmaster, Almqvist had to resign on the grounds of his scandalous novels that criticised the institution of marriage, and to take up journalism in the liberal press, where he, among other issues, promoted Scandinavism. The borders in *The Three Wives of Småland* are internal: the province of Småland has, in the novel, its own jurisdiction and the fight against thievery, as well as the scheme for converting thieves into law-abiding citizens, are therefore confined to that province. Internal and external borders intensify love as well as fear connected to ideas of citizenship (Bohlin, 2016).

In Almqvist's novel, though, the province of Småland is labelled as a 'nation'. This was general practice in the mid-19th-century Swedish novel, appearing most conspicuously in Bremer's *The Midnight Sun*. The novel starts out with a catalogue of all the Swedish provinces portrayed as nations in their own right, complete with specific landscapes, industries, characteristics and a list of famous persons embodying these characteristics. The same logic of territoriality that was used to forge the nation-state—the combination of a culturally defined identity with significance attributed to the territory in terms of material resources (Penrose, 2002)—simultaneously resulted in the fracturing of the state into province-nations. A more potent emotional device was required to conjure up unity out of diversity: a body. The provinces in Bremer's account are held together in the map body of the beloved Mother Svea, the personification of the Swedish state (Bohlin, 2016; cf. Thiesse, 1991, pp. 243–52).

Map bodies are found in several of the Scandinavian mid-19th-century novels. Almqvist even prescribed a pedagogical trick of how to invest borders with aesthetic and emotional pleasure by drawing a map of Scandinavia and identifying different parts as human bodies. A governess, the title character in *Amalia Hillner* (1840), instructs her pupil to colour the coastline beautifully, even though the Norwegian fjords are tough work: 'Buckefjord, Hardangerfjord and Sognefjord: innumerable coves from Viken all the way to Lindesnäs, and then up again, on the other side, passing Statlandsudden, Trondhjem, Tromsö, Hammerfest, to Nordkyn' (Almqvist, 1995 [1840], p. 76, my trans.). She also 'loves' to paint the Swedish islands,

such as Öland, slender and straight as a cavalier before the dance, and Gottland, somewhat chubby, like an old woman, a kind housekeeper, who thinks about mutton with turnips, her cap nodding (the cap is Fårön in the North). (Almqvist, 1995, p. 76, my trans.)

The result of this pedagogy, incorporating national borders with the hand's movements, is a pupil 'so captivated by the land she is drawing, that [...] her eyes glitter' (Almqvist, 1995, p. 76). The borders have become affective. 'Finland is the best-beloved child of the Baltic' (Topelius, 1888, p. 134), according to Zacharias Topelius' (1818–1898) *The Surgeon's Stories*, whereas 20 years later in his extremely influential school-book, *The Book of Our Country* (Topelius, 2017 [1875], pp. 172–3) the Baltic Sea has become a mermaid. Sara Ahmed argues that a collective, such as a nation, 'appear as if it were a body' in a process similar to the materialisation of the surface and borders of the individual body, namely, through 'intensifications of feeling' (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 27, 39). Emotions circulate and stick to objects and bodies by way of contact: 'stickiness' is 'an effect of the histories of contact between bodies, objects, and signs' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 90). In this case, territorial borders are conceived of as the most emotionally sticky object—bodies—to invest the territory of the nation with borders that feel, that have agency and are capable of reciprocity. Love happens not only on borders but also to borders. Romance and horror fiction in the mid-19th-century novel endowed national cartography with passion.

### 3 | THE MELODRAMATIC MUSEUM

The love quarrel in Bremer's *Strife and Peace*, humorously exposing Norwegian food and ancient folklore, is part of the novel's celebration of Norwegian dances, music, costumes, modern, nationalist poetry and the landscape, and even the Norwegian language. Clearly, a nationalist pedagogy is at play: the novel is an ethnographic museum. In a similar manner Bremer elsewhere describes the people of Dalecarlia, including their incomprehensible dialect claimed

to be a remnant of Old Norse tongue, the Finnish speaking people in the North of Sweden, and the people of Gotland. Likewise, the Gothic traits in Flygare-Carlén's novels are, as Yvonne Leffler notes, embedded with a realist account of the living-conditions and customs of the West coast fishermen (1991, p. 56, 66). The Finnish Sara Wacklin's *A Hundred Memories from Österbotten* (1844–1845) is strictly speaking not fiction, but rather a collection of partly fictionalised stories from the province of Österbotten, reporting on the population. One of the longer episodes tells the story of an elopement, a romance with a tragic end. On the road, the lovers encounter Sami people and take a turn with the reindeer and a pulka. However, just like in Bremer's description of Sami people (Bremer, 1848)—and the peasants of Dalecarlia, Gotland and Norrland—the Sami have no narrative function whatsoever other than to be on display as included in the national people.

While ethnographic collections of oral traditions started in the Scandinavian countries from the 1810s onwards, ethnographic museums were established only late in the 19th century. They became popular following the Paris Exhibition of 1878, and the Swedish open-air ethnographic museum Skansen in Stockholm, opened in 1891 (Thiesse, 2005, pp. 135–6, 1991, pp. 241–60; cf. Leerssen, 2006, pp. 190–1). However, they were preceded by ethnographic museums in novels. Pictures of the common people were issued from the mid-19th century onwards. In *Strife and Peace*, the playful romance plotline is countered by a melodramatic plotline that reveals a moral universe of good and evil. During a fatal storm in the mountains, the virtuous Harald is recognised as the long-lost child of his benefactress—an instance of what Brooks (1995, p. 45) calls the *voix du sang*: 'the secret impulse by which parents and children and siblings are irresistibly drawn to one another despite mistaken and lost identities'. The ethnographic museum is couched in literary forms designed to affect.

The intended effect of the affect-provoking genre traits is most clearly spelled out in the preface to Sophie von Knorring's (1797–1848) novel *The Peasant and His Landlord* (1843, Engl. trans. 1848). After a number of successful novels in the 1830s set in upper-class society, von Knorring turned to the depiction of the common people in her home province of Västergötland. The novel gives an accurate account of common people's living conditions and customs in the telling of a story of virtue and passion turned into a tragedy as a result of evil actions by demonic adversaries. The melodramatic imagination structures the ethnographic museum. In the preface, she addresses her middle- and upper-class audience and asks them to recognise themselves in the peasant to identify with his feelings. Though expressed in a different manner, she argues, the feelings experienced by the different classes are the same (von Knorring, 1843, p. 11). The nation is conceived of as an emotional community forged by the melodramatic imagination.

Common people were not only a literary motif but also the intended audience of a new genre. Both Almqvist and the Norwegian Henrik Wergeland wrote stories of and specifically for the working-classes in the 1830s and 1840s that reflected the living-conditions and concerns of ordinary people. Also, the expanding literary markets and a growing reading audience in the 19th century slowly connected the elite and common people, two groups that had formerly belonged to different reading circuits (Furuland, 2007, pp. 117–8). Still, the display of cultural, social and linguistic diversity in sparsely inhabited and remote areas of the Scandinavian countries, accessible only with difficulty, was a pivotal effort in forging a nation out of differences. Shared feelings were to provide the unity sought for.

Melodrama is often regarded as a democratic mode, and the dramatic genre at its beginnings did indeed appeal to a mixed-class audience in its heyday in early-19th-century France. The strong emphasis on emotions triumphed over other differences in taste (Brooks, 1995, pp. 14, 43–4, 47, 62–66, 82–88). Peter Brooks (1995, p. 15) claims that 'melodrama becomes the principal mode for uncovering, demonstrating, and making operative the essential moral universe'. Good and evil are the spiritual values 'both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality'—a supernatural structure that Brooks (1995, p. 5) calls the 'moral occult'. And, as Brooks (1995, p. 54) notes, 'good and evil are moral feelings'. The hyperbolic, excessively emotional melodramatic mode always gestures towards the sublime.

*Strife and Peace* starts by spelling out the sublime. The explicitly national landscape of Norway—mountains and fjords—engenders 'a holy awe':

Here is the old, ever young Norway; here the eye of the beholder is astonished, but his heart expands itself; he forgets his own suffering, his own joy, forgets all that is trivial, whilst with a holy awe he has a feeling that 'the shadow of God wanders through nature.' (Bremer, 1844: vol. II, 60)

The nation is superimposed on the sublime nature, recalling God. The experience of the sublime nation is supposed to encourage the reader to forget individual feelings, 'his own suffering' and 'joy'. The construction of the nation as an emotional community rests, in this instance, on the moral occult: the regulation of feelings in order to access a larger, moral universe in which the heart 'expands itself'. The good and evil of the melodramatic plot that unfolds in the novel ultimately relate to this supernatural, moral aspect of the nation. Thus, the ethnographic museum in the melodramatic performance not only implies recognising yourself in an imagined community above social differences in the present moment via supposedly shared emotions. The shared emotions of the melodramatic imagination, in turn, also imply access to a supernatural realm of morality, transcending the present time.

#### 4 | GOTHIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

Recognising oneself in radical difference is also the paradoxical objective of nationalist historiography. According to the nationalist idea, the national people is the same throughout history, but according to the historicist line of argument that underpins Romanticist historiography, each epoch must be understood on its own terms as different from the others. The Finnish Zacharias Topelius was not only a prolific novelist and ran a newspaper but was also appointed professor of history, although his only credentials were a thin PhD-thesis on marriage customs among ancient Finns and the historical novel *The Duchess of Finland* (1850). He was influenced by Romantic historians such as Michelet and claimed that history should be conceived of as inner experience. Emotions and reactions of individuals and of nations make up history, which is why the past has to be revived in order to be properly understood. As a consequence, the historical novel could be acknowledged as being a sub-genre close to historiography, and above all, as a powerful tool for nationalist pedagogy (Hatavara, 2002, 2015; Klinge, 2000). Feelings were the key to unlocking historical knowledge and constituted a time-travelling exercise that connected the three-dimensional temporalities of nationalism. Feelings were the means by which to enter the imagined, collective past that was believed to determine the present moment and to hold the promise of the future. Or, to put it the other way around: feelings brought the past into the present by means of aesthetic categories, making historical events the sticky objects of affect. A means of negotiating the paradox of the prescribed identity and difference of the past was the Gothic novel.

Kati Launis (2013, pp. 169–170) calls Topelius 'the pioneer of the Finnish Gothic' in the 1840s, the same decade that marks the beginning of the nationalist movement. She shows that in early Gothic stories in Finland—as indeed elsewhere—social topics were pivotal and that Topelius used the genre to analyse history and to criticise the aristocracy (Launis, 2013, pp. 172–83). As Marie Mulvey-Roberts (2016, p. 222) puts it: 'Invariably the Gothic arises out of conflict'. In his great cycle *The Surgeon's Stories* (1853–1867) that depicts Finnish history from the early seventeenth to the late 18th centuries through family history, it is the Catholic past that literally haunts the Lutheran construction of Finnish history.<sup>2</sup> As Brooks (1995, p. 20) notes, the Gothic shares with the melodramatic imagination 'the preoccupation with evil as a real, irreducible force in the world'. In Topelius' series of novels, Father Hieronymus, 'the leading Jesuit stereotype in the Finnish literary canon' (Elmgren, 2013, p. 195), is evil personified.

Even though the Gothic is characteristically historical fiction (Launis, 2013, p. 172), Gothic elements are also ubiquitous in Scandinavian realist fiction set in contemporary society or in the recent past—as is the case with the aforementioned Flygare-Carlén's novels. And admittedly, the overall genre guiding the plot in *The Surgeon's Stories* is romance. Nevertheless, I will analyse the Gothic in one particular scene in Topelius' historical novel at some length, since it carries a meta-discussion on historiography. In challenging the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural, between human and monster, and between the sexes, the genre often contains feminist critique,

destabilising the power of the masculine subject (Botting, 2008; Lindén, forthcoming). Interestingly though, the imprisoned vulnerable, young woman—the indispensable ‘innocent’ of the Gothic novel—is replaced by an elderly man: a historian incarcerated for treason.

The scene takes place in 1635 at the fortress Kajaneborg, which had been fairly recently built in the story, but was in ruins by the time the narrator tells his story to the 19th-century audience in the novel. The depiction of the site signals the Gothic mode by the heaping up of graves, sorcery, the heathen past and terror:

Here is the home of night and terror [...]. Here sorcery, shunning the light, weaves its nets around human faith; here were the graves of heroes; here was the Mount of Plagues. [...] Here the spirit of the Past brooded its gloomiest thoughts; here it retreated, step by step, before the light of a newer time; and here it has bled to death in its impotent rage; heathenism, fallen from its greatness, and banished from more cultivated fields, steals around in the sheep's clothing of Christianity, haunting nightly churchyards with ghastly rites. (Topelius, 1888, pp. 289–90)

This is obviously the setting for a Gothic story—and for the national past to come alive: ‘the spirit of the Past’ broods. Topelius points out the historical circumstances that are generally considered to be the explanation for the rise of the Gothic novel; the Gothic is the return of the uncanny repressed by rationalist Enlightenment ideas. Fred Botting (2008, p. 8) remarks that the Gothic ‘marks dis-continuity: situated in a gap between epochs’, the untimely return of what has, in Topelius’ words, ‘retreated, step by step, before the light of a newer time’ (p. 289). The distance to the national past, as radically different from the present moment, is explicit, while the past simultaneously is made present as an immediate threat. The repeated ‘here’ places the reader at the horrifying scene, immersed with fear.

Topelius’ story seems to subscribe to the subversive potential of the Gothic genre. The fortress, built as a strong defence against Russia, contains the enemy within. Placed in a prison-cell, the main character of the story threatens what Topelius perceived to be a core element of the Finnish nation: the Lutheran faith. Together with many of his contemporaries, he featured a vocational nationalism (Anttonen, 2012; Klinge, 2000, p. 28; Smith, 2003). The historical person Johannes Messenius (1579–1636) wrote the first history of the Swedish realm, but was accused of being a Catholic and condemned to lifetime imprisonment at Kajaneborg for high treason. In the novel, the fictive character Father Hieronymus visits him, appearing out of the shadows like a ghost. The Jesuit persuades and threatens Messenius into falsifying documents that will reflect so badly on Lutheranism that Sweden will re-join the Holy Catholic church. Though still a Catholic at heart, Messenius reacts with strong physical expressions, first of rage, then fear and finally of devastation at the idea of corrupting the true annals of the nation. In line with the Gothic innocent, whose virtuous commitment to truth never fails, he holds historical truth to be holier than any belief (Topelius, 2018 [1853], p. 185). The story constantly refers to glory—individual and national—as a transgression of earthly conditions.

The virtuous man is rescued by his irascible, fearsome wife, who destroys the faked documents with cunning and brute strength. Even though she is also a Catholic, she accuses Father Hieronymus of robbing an entire people of their history (Topelius, 2018, p. 190). Hence a combination of terror and virtue determine the ethics of the story (cf. Brooks, 1995, p. 18). The story ends with marital bliss and an accurate, restored national history. According to Launis (2013, pp. 176, 183), Finnish 19th-century literature tends to domesticate the Gothic in the end, and in this case, Topelius does indeed reinstate normative gender constructions. Also, the defensive walls of the Gothic ruin ultimately provide evidence for the memory of the reconciliation between Catholicism and Lutheranism in the light of national glory. Above all, the historical documents become sticky, emotional objects, charged with pride and love; the idea of falsification causes rage and fear, while saving them from corruption is the result of exceptional gender-crossing bravery. The terror of the Gothic is a powerful means by which to invest the annals of the nation with a whole range of emotions, bringing the past into the present as an affective response. In addition, the story invites intellectual reflection upon the contemporary historical situation as a result of the portrayal of the past. The Gothic

may be the uncanny haunting rational modernity, but Topelius' meta-discussion on the historical novel—claiming to present historical truths, yet of course adding lies—points to a more specific function of the Gothic of charging nationalist pedagogy with emotions. The genre's crossing of boundaries and excess of conflicting passions allows the reader simultaneously to identify with the past by affects, bringing it into the present, and to be repelled from the past as a scary and utterly different epoch in history. The Gothic allows for the paradox of the national people to remain open, only ostensibly reconciled. Furthermore, the crossing of boundaries opens the world of the living to the undead, allowing the reader to partake in the living death of past national glory.

## 5 | FOLKLORE: REDISTRIBUTING FEAR AND COMMODIFICATION OF THE PAST

You would expect to find the Gothic in folklore as an aspect of the construction of national heritage, especially since folklore is still a prominent feature in Scandinavian horror tradition (Leffler, 2013, p. 143). To be sure, folklore was already immersed with emotions, and the Gothic genre was activated in the novel in relation to magic, but the emotions were redistributed. Witches abound in the Scandinavian novel of the 1840s and 1850s, but in contrast to sorcery in literature later on in the century, they carry the narrative of the nation. Traditionally understood to be in a pact with the Devil himself, the witch came to represent a core element of the national people. Terror was replaced by compassion and motherly care. In the following, I will explore four examples of how the redistribution of emotions was achieved by means of shifts in genre characteristics. Finally, I will discuss emotions in an example of the remediation of Old Norse manuscripts in the novel.

There were at least two important sources for the nationalist construction of folklore in the novel. Legal documents from 17th-century witchcraft trials, edited in the early 19th century, served as an inspiration and were even quoted in novels. The most important sources, though, were the published collections of oral traditions. The nationalist folklore collections had started some 30 years prior to the mid-19th century, but had not yet reached their full scale. The most famous publications of folklore in Scandinavia were the Finnish *Kalevala*, published by Elias Lönnrot in 1835/1849, and *Norwegian Folktales* published by Per Christian Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe in the 1840s—both edited rather heavy-handedly (Anttonen, 2012; Gjefsen, 2001, pp. 134–41; Hodne, 1982, pp. 43–53). Pertti Anttonen underscores the nationalist framing of the collections of folklore from the 1830s and onwards:

By transforming tradition into heritage, and by metonymising tradition in the course of its representation, the study of oral traditions has created 'national texts' that are authored by the nationalistically conceived 'folk', who are heard to speak in the voice of 'the nation'. (Anttonen, 2012, p. 330)

Publications of folklore material constructed a people endowed with a voice (Anttonen, 2012; Leerssen, 2012; Thiesse, 2019, pp. 16–8, 60–74). However, oral traditions were remediated once more into fiction.

*Kalevala* is referred to and quoted in Finnish as well as in Swedish prose fiction (see, e.g., Bohlin, 2016; Grönstrand, 2015). In Norway, magical beings originating from *Norwegian Folktales* are ubiquitous, for example in the poetry by J.S. Welhaven (1807–1873) from 1845 onwards (Seip, 2007, pp. 268–77). The remediation to fiction clearly involved a further rewriting of folklore material to fit into the nationalist pedagogy. A conspicuous example is the Norwegian author Hanna Winsnes' (1789–1872) *Evenings at Egelund* (*Aftnene paa Egelund*, 1852), a very successful children's book, published in new editions until the 1920s. The narrative instructs on how to raise four girls to become good citizens; it is, accordingly, an explicitly didactic project. The folktales are part of the moralising entertainment and have thus undergone considerable changes. Above all, Winsnes adds an allegorical dimension of moral virtues, underscored by allegorical names such as a girl named 'Patience', which would be foreign to the original folktales. Magical beings and the narrative structure of the folktales, which function to signal the nation's past, were redefined in the service of a future nation of moral citizens.

The belief in witchcraft was by no means confined to fairy-tales at the time, especially not in remote areas across Europe (Ankarloo & Clark, 1999). For example, the last public accusations of witchcraft in Sweden took place in the province of Dalecarlia as late as 1858 (Tegler Jerselius, 2003). The liberal press conducted campaigns to educate and enlighten the peasant population, perceived to be embarrassingly backwards and superstitious, at the same time as folklore collections constructed the very same beliefs as core nationalist characteristics. The conflict between magic and rationality was reflected in literature; a conflict that was consequently loaded with emotions. As the collection of folklore material continued well into the 20th century, peaking in the late 19th century (see, e.g., Stark, 2006, pp. 116–7), it is also fair to assume that the remediation of folklore material in the novel had an impact on the material later assembled.

Walter Scott's novels were immensely popular in Scandinavia as they were everywhere else (Rigney, 2012; Thiesse, 2019, pp. 109–30) and especially Topelius' and Almqvist's national novels were inspired by Scott (Forsell & Köhler, 2018; Hatavara, 2002, p. 10). Almqvist specifically refers to Scott when he introduces witchcraft in *The Three Wives of Småland*, arguing that Scandinavia may present equally 'magnificent trolls' as Scotland (Almqvist, 1998 [1842–1843], p. 48). The 'Swedish' witch Ellin is caught red-handed using magic in a Gothic setting: in the darkness of the forest at night, Ellin performs a heathen, magical rite that includes a dead cat and a knife, chanting in an incomprehensible ancient dialect (Almqvist, 1998, pp. 314–5). However, this horrifying scene is quickly and surprisingly exposed to be sentimental. The farmer, unable to provide for his family because of heavy taxes, has implored the witch to use magic in order to increase the outcome of the charcoal stack. She has obliged him out of compassion, as he threatens to commit suicide if his children are going to starve (Almqvist, 1998, pp. 316–7). Magical rites, for centuries the object of fear, are redefined as a compassionate welfare project, shifting the Gothic into a sentimental story of family love.

Compassion towards the witches themselves is the foremost feeling prescribed by Topelius' historical novels. The repeated historical lesson is that irrational superstition scared people into committing horrible crimes, completely devoid of any compassion for a fellow human being. As compassion is the most fundamental emotion for nation building in the emotional community Topelius promotes in his works, lack of compassion is a serious threat to society as a whole. In *The Surgeon's Stories*, the fifth story of the second cycle is named 'The Witch' and takes place in the 17th century. The Gothic is in this case located in the perspective of the characters present in the fiction: because of superstitious prejudices, the children in the novel expect Gothic horrors and interpret what they see accordingly. The person accused of witchcraft, 'Black Jane', is in fact a Catholic using innocent white magic as a source of income. Since she is a motherly woman, she takes pity on three small children, lost in the woods. She gives them supper and invites them to stay over-night in her cottage, but the children are terrified by the cottage and believe that the 'troll food' will turn them into worms (Topelius, 2018, pp. 317–20). The narrative adopts two different perspectives side by side, which results in a double exposure of the events. As far as the children are concerned, the situation has all the Gothic features of death: skulls, demonic sorcery, poisonous food and entrapment, whereas the reader is simultaneously given a rational account of Jane's God-fearing and nurturing care. The paraphernalia of evil are disclosed as a projection, redistributing the horror from witchcraft to prejudices.

The witch Waapuri in *The Duchess of Finland* is indeed guilty of potent *maleficium*, that is black magic, and she quotes runes from *Kalevala*. Her evil, though, is explained as the result of persecution: the authorities have burnt female members of her family at the stake for generations (Topelius, 2013 [1850], p. 94). Since the historical account in the novel of the 18th-century wars against Russia contends that the Swedish leadership had consciously left Finland to be burnt by Russian troops over and over again, the witch may be interpreted as the voice of the Finnish people, betrayed by the authorities in Stockholm (Bohlin, 2018, pp. 71–3). The witch possesses a frightening, magical power, but above all she deserves compassion and justice. The real terror has been displaced from the witch to the repression by state authorities.

The main character in Bremer's *Life in Dalecarlia* (1845), the teenage girl Siri, is referred to as a troll and a fairy. She furthermore identifies with the 47 persons burnt at the stake in Dalecarlia between the years 1668–1673. The historical facts are corroborated in the novel by a reference in a footnote to legal documents from the witchcraft

trials in Dalecarlia (*Blåkullefärderna eller Handlingar om trolldoms-wäsendet i Dalarne åren 1668-1673*), edited and published by the lawyer C.G. Kröningssvärd in 1821 with a new edition issued in the same year as Bremer's novel was published, 1845. Siri does possess several characteristics associated with witchcraft, particularly a close relationship with nature and a dislike for church, although she has no interest in Satan. Unlike the witches that represent societal critique in the late 19th century (Faxneld, 2014), all the witches in the national novels of the mid-19th century explicitly renounce Satan—apparently a prerequisite to being able to represent the nation (Bohlin, 2018). The novel verges on the Gothic when Siri is suddenly absent, possibly held captive and reported to have met with a dark stranger in the woods, but these suspicions are proven wrong. The dark stranger turns out to be Siri's long-lost biological father, and the novel settles for a melodramatic mode, celebrating Siri's innocence, revealing family identities in an excess of feelings.

Siri's witch-like qualities, especially the affinity with nature, are reinterpreted as a particularly loving relationship with animals and children and as sensitivity to the wisdom of the heathen past. Furthermore, her connection to the past will contribute to a prosperous national future: according to the novel, her affinity with sorcery qualifies her for citizenship (Bohlin, 2018, pp. 59–60). The Gothic is instead dislocated from the witch and attached to modern industry. Falu copper mine, for centuries the origin of Swedish wealth, is represented in the novel as a horrific, vast and life-threatening void, surrounded by poisonous fumes and the home of dreadful crimes and secret passions. Like Topelius, though, Bremer literally domesticates the Gothic in the end, transforming the dark pit into a tender home of the nuclear family. The mine becomes the powerful motor that drives the economic machinery of the nation as well as the circulation of feelings. And, more to the point: fear is redistributed from folklore to the dangers of modern industrialisation.

The Gothic genre elements are exposed as a false portrayal of what is actually a sentimental story revealed either by a shift in modes, or by a double perspective, explained as family history, or by being dislocated. The witch, the sticky object of terror, is redefined by way of aesthetic categories. Fear, however, has not vanished. It is redistributed, invested in new objects such as repression, prejudices and modern industrialisation.

A source of fundamental importance to the Scandinavian nationalisms—and to the pan-Scandinavian movement, vividly supported by many mid-19th century authors—was of course Old Norse literature. The Old Norse sagas served as a model for 19th-century Scandinavian literature, and references to Eddic poetry are frequent in the novels. Thiesse (2019, pp. 33–59) investigates the need for every nation to procure an ancient poem, a Homer of one's own, to claim nationhood and equality, in opposition to the former French aesthetic and political hegemony. The editing, translation and publishing of medieval manuscripts was a great philological enterprise and had a huge impact on national identities (see, e.g., Simonsen, 2018; Thiesse, 2019; Van Hulle & Leerssen, 2008). Obscure manuscripts were turned into mass-produced commodities: an enchanting national heritage for sale. The pride and joy found in the past were enhanced by the excitement of the commodity form of modernity—an aspect that Bremer draws attention to in *Strife and Peace*.

Bremer actually managed to remediate two different genres at once: medieval Old Norse manuscripts, published in philological editions, and the advertisement. One evening the company is

occupied with the newly-published beautiful work, 'Snorre Sturleson's Sagas of the Norwegian Kings, translated from the Icelandic by J. Aal.' The fourth number of this work lay before Harald open at the section 'The Discovery of Vineland.' He had just read aloud Mr. Aal's interesting introduction to the Sagas of Erik Röde and Karlsefne, and now proceeded to read these two Sagas themselves, which contained the narrative of the first discovery of America, and of which we here give a brief compendium. (Bremer, 1844, p. 158, Bremer's italics)

The narrator then goes on to do exactly that: to quote extensively from the sagas. The novel thus not only refers to, but actually incorporates, another genre. Furthermore, the praise for Mr Aal's 'interesting' and 'newly-published' edition provides very precise details; the only thing missing in terms of an advertisement is the information on where

to purchase this exciting national heritage in a 'beautiful' commodity form. The Sagas on the discovery of America cause an animated debate among the characters in the novel regarding the veracity of the sagas and the disputable virtues of the Vikings. The old manuscripts trigger emotions and have a bearing on how to understand progress in history, and consequently, the individual's own place in history, according to the novel.

The object of the national pedagogy consists of the published manuscript, and the novel suggests how the manuscripts may inform modern self-understanding and excite an emotional debate on the meaning of history. The novel thus elaborates on a pedagogical exercise in the uses of medieval documents for 19th-century national identity formation. The means for its circulation, though, is the modern literary market. By advertising the sagas as commodities, Bremer invests transgenerational national heritage with the allure of very modern consumer subjectivity. Temporalities collapse as a heathen past and a capitalist market presuppose one another to produce affect.

## 6 | THE IDEAL SOCIETY: ALLEGORY

The supernatural underpinning of nationalist ideology was most clearly spelled out by the many early 19th-century nationalists who assumed a Christian idea of evolution: they conceived of the nation as a step in God's plan for humankind. Characteristics of different nationalities would melt together to create a higher mankind in order to get closer to God (see, e.g., Aspelin, 1979, pp. 24, 174; Bohlin, 2013). The insertion of the nation into Christian salvation history allowed the allegorical mode to enter the realist novel.

One example is Fredrika Bremer's *Brothers and Sisters*, published in the year of revolutions, 1848. This is a realist novel in Anderson's sense, set in contemporary society, characterised by calendar time. The narrative relates how nine brothers and sisters decide to build an ideal society based on Utopian Socialism with a distinctive Liberal touch. However, at the crucial moment when the ideal society is going to be given a name, an allegorical mode is activated.

I baptise the new town by the old Swedish name of *Birka!* [...] It was in that old Birka in this region, that Christianity was first preached. It is a grain of that seed which now is growing up in the old ground, with harvests for the seed-time. No! not for time merely, for eternity! Not for earth merely, but for Heaven. (Bremer, 1848: vol. III, 172)

Birka is the Viking age town believed to be the place of the first Christian congregation in Scandinavia in the middle of the ninth century. Nevertheless, the model is obvious: the city that connects history and eternity, heaven and earth, is of course Jerusalem, which here is transported into nationalist history. The nationalist enterprise of building an ideal society in the novel refers to the Bible as a prior text, structuring the narrative—as a 'pretext' in Maureen Quilligan's (1979, pp. 97–155) terminology in *The Language of Allegory*. After all, the prefiguration and fulfilment of Messianic time is exactly the logic governing the three-dimensional temporal structure of modern nationalism. In Bremer's organicist metaphors, a grain of seed in the past contains the present moment, and this grain will flourish to be harvested in the future, ultimately in Heaven. The Christian interpretation of the Bible, featuring the Old Testament as a prefiguration of the New, is the temporal model of modern nationalism (Bohlin, forthcoming).

Almqvist's ideal society, which will convert the thieving peasants into moral citizens, is prepared in *The Three Wives of Småland* by activating an allegorical mode. The realist novel incorporates at this point the allegorical genre *psychomachia*. The three wives, who plan and help out in executing the construction of the ideal society, are realist characters with ordinary names, situated in correctly located, and mostly realistically described, contemporary places. Still, they are also explicitly personifications of Religion, Poetry and Practical Life. The Christian genre *psychomachia*, dating from the late fourth century, is introduced in a chapter called 'The Geography of the Soul' (Almqvist, 1998, pp. 283–9). Originally a battle between personified virtues and vices over the human soul, Almqvist's 19th-century novel presents the Old Testament Kingdoms of Judea and of Israel as representations of human capacities, Emotion and Thought, respectively. In a typological Bible exegesis influenced by the 18th-century mystic Emanuel

Swedenborg, Religion explains biblical history and Jesus' movements in different parts of the Holy Land (that is, allegorically the human mind) as the salvation history of the individual, making a person fit for the ideal, national society (Bohlin, forthcoming). It is no surprise that Christian beliefs and a Christian understanding of civic virtues are reflected in the 19th-century novel. My point is that allegory gains precedence over the realist mode at core moments when dealing with the main topic of the nationalist novel: to build the future society.

The soteriological perspective of allegory, connecting history to eternity, clarifies the function of the other anti-realist modes in relation to national pedagogy. The melodramatic imagination and the Gothic transgression of the mortal world permit the transcendence of the present moment, allowing the nation to be established as a transcendent entity. To make the transgenerational nation produce affect, means of transportation beyond the historical conditions were required. The anti-realist modes make emotions stick by inviting the individual into a supernatural dimension, reinforcing the Messianic paradigm for nationalist temporality in the mid-19th century. The new sense of simultaneity across geographical differences may have been a prerequisite to imagine a nation, but for 19th-century nationalism, that imagined community alone would be devoid of any meaning. Nationalist pedagogy was structured by a three-dimensional temporality, one that attributed meaning to the present moment only in relation to the past prefiguring a future of fulfilment. At the mid-19th century, time was not yet empty. The hybrid novel form succeeded in the complicated task of keeping two different temporalities, the calendar and the Messianic time, at play simultaneously, mutually exclusive yet presupposing one another, by mixing different genre elements.

## 7 | CONCLUSIONS

As a hybrid form, the mid-19th-century novel explored the capacity for instruction on how to connect different aspects of the national 'identity check-list' and on how to use them for identity formation. Cartography, historiography, ethnography and folklore are all incorporated into the novel form. The operations performed by the novel were manifold: the genre remediated practically all forms of written and oral source traditions to construct a national heritage, charging the national pedagogy with emotions and prescribing emotional communities. The national past entered the present as an affective response. This was achieved with anti-realist genre elements. Traits from the melodramatic novel, the Gothic novel, and allegory all contributed to the mechanics of the production of emotion. These genres all imply a supernatural dimension to history: the melodramatic moral universe, the 'moral occult', the Gothic destabilisation of the boundaries between life and death, and allegory, attributing the final meaning of historical events to eternity. Thus, these genre elements not only connect the individual's feelings to a supernatural structure but also suggest that emotions matter to the course of history. Achieving access through emotions to the moral universe, to the world of living death, and to salvation, the individual might partake in an imagined transcendent nation by means of aesthetic categories.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The history of emotions is cross-disciplinary field of research with no agreed terminology regarding the definitions of 'affect', 'emotion' and 'feeling'. I follow Rosenwein (2016: 7–9) and Ahmed (2014, pp. 5–6) in using the concepts interchangeably. As the aim of this article is to study the construction of emotions in literature, the distinction between the definitions does not have a bearing on my argument. For a discussion on the concepts, see Boddice, 2018, pp. 39–58.

<sup>2</sup> On Topelius' and Lönnrot's Lutheran framework for historiography, obscuring Catholic and Orthodox elements, see Anttonen, 2012, pp. 338–40. For a discussion on anti-Catholicism, often ascribed to the Gothic novel, although Catholicism is also used to engender the sublime, see Mulvey-Roberts, 2016, pp. 15–25.

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