"Kill the Damn Masters!"

Narratives of Religious War and Social Conflict in Kvistbro parish 1843

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Abstract

This thesis examines narratives of the events called "The War of Religion in Kvistbro", a violent turmoil that erupted in Närke, Sweden 1843. The events involved persons connected to the Shouter Movement, a pietist inspired revivalist movement, and governmental officials who were ordered to arrest a preacher.

A narrative analysis based on a model inspired by Labov and Chatman, is used for examining contemporary local newspaper Nerikes Allehanda's and the revivalist historian E. J. Ekman's narrations of the events. The theoretical framework of this thesis is founded on Charles Tilly's theory of collective violence, and James C Scott's theories of hidden transcripts and weapons of the weak.

The results of the analysis indicates that there are three main understandings of the events within the empiric material: a religious framing, a medical framing, and a socio-political reading. The socio-political reading of the narratives implies that the concepts medicine as control, social antagonism, and gender-coded aspects of conflict, emerge from the material.

Keywords: The Shouter Movement, The Reader Movement, The War of Religion in Kvistbro, revivalism, narrative, Nerikes Allehanda, E. J. Ekman.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Orientation

The Swedish region of Närke had a hot summer in 1843, and the drought that followed radically affected the agriculture. But besides the plague of the heat, another "plague" harried the region. This "plague" came in the shape of a movement of shouting repentance preachers, peasantry with convulsions and housemaids with visions of a coming Judgment Day. The "contagion" was more thoroughly discussed in the local newspaper Nerikes Allehanda, than the abnormal heat wave.

This "Shouter Movement" was understood as a severe problem by the governing authorities and the bourgeois media spectators. Tensions were high, and when violence finally erupted on the plains near the mountain ridge of Kilsbergen, it took some time for Nerikes Allehanda to explain the phenomenon to their readers. The individuals that partitioned in the movement were described by the newspaper as unreasonable, easily influenced and mentally ill. The violent turmoil has later been called "The War of Religion in Kvistbro", because of the religious expressions and the Christian revival message of the conflict around the Shouter Movement. The events were understood in this "religious" manner by later revivalists, but they were interpreted quite differently by the contemporary media.

Contemporary commentators were oscillating between a description of the Shouter Movement as madness and as religious expression, whereas there are grounds for discussing this from other viewpoints. Research in this field has discussed whether the Shouter Movement should be understood in a social perspective, and whether the Shouters' actions should be read as political. I want to position this thesis within the discussion on framing the Shouter Movement in a socio-political context. In doing so, this thesis analyzes the narratives of a specific aspect of the Shouter Movement, namely the events in and around Kvistbro in 1843.

1.2 Research Purpose, Questions and Structure

This thesis is about the events in Kvistbro parish during the midsummer of 1843, and the contemporary commentaries on the events. The purpose of this study is to understand how these events have been narrated in the newspaper Nerikes Allehanda and by the revivalist historian E. J. Ekman. This is done to investigate how the conflict in Kvistbro can be
interpreted in different ways, positioning this study in a contemporary discussion on how to understand religious and social conflicts.

The research questions are as follows:

   a) How is the turmoil in Kvistbro 1843 narrated by contemporary media and by representatives for other contemporary revivalist movements?

   b) In what ways can the events be narrated or interpreted differently, than what is being done in the commentaries studied in this thesis?

   c) How can the different interpretations and narratives of the events contribute to the discussion of what can be understood as social aspects of religious conflicts?

These questions will be answered through the following disposition: a background that introduces the field of study and previous research, followed by theoretical framework, methodology, analysis, discussion and conclusion.

2 Background and Previous Research

2.1 The Historical Context

The majority of the Swedish population in the mid 19th century lived and worked in rural areas, and most of them were connected to family holdings, where work revolved around farming in household units.¹ In the area of western Närke, a fair share of the population were connected to production of charcoal and to mining and metal casting in foundries.² The parish of Kvistbro was divided by plains of farm lands to the east and forested mountain areas, with mining settlements, to the west.³

According to the historian Susanna Hedenborg, mining villages where organized with an Iron master at the top of the hierarchy, followed by different officials, church clergy and school teachers. At the lower end of the hierarchy there were the workers of the foundry, divided into sub-hierarchies. Women and children were sometimes involved in the work at the foundries.

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¹ Hedenborg, 2009, p. 112.
² Harbe, 1972, p. 490ff.
³ Hansson, 1972, p. 9.
but women were also responsible for small family cultivations, which resulted in more work and thus asymmetrical gender-coded division of labor. Unmarried youth often worked at larger farms or mansions as farmhands or housemaids, where their freedom was bound to the houselford's opinions. Violence towards farmhands and housemaids were common. Some housemaids were sexually abused by their masters, acts that, according to Hedenborg, increased during the proletarianization period of the 1800s. In the cities, governmental officials, lower officials, shop-owners, merchants and craftsmen occupied the upper strata. Newspapers where read by a growing number of people with a higher degree of education, also constituting an upper strata, since single copies of papers were expensive.

2.2 The Spiritual Revivals

In the first half of the 1800s, several pietist inspired spiritual revivals occurred in different areas of Sweden. A generic term for these revivals has traditionally been ”The Reader Movement” or simply ”The Reading”. Etymologically, this is explained by to the practitioners’ diligent reading of Christian devotional literature and a new widespread access to bibles. Church historian Gunnar Westin argues that early revivalism was essentially a conflict within the Christian community, and a concern that was related to laws that regulated religious expression and restricted gatherings outside the control of the Swedish Lutheran Church. Less researched is the connection between unrest and uprisings with a ”socio-political” character, and social unrest of movements seen as more ”religious”. There are few examples of revivalists in open social conflict with the surrounding society at the same period as the Kvistbro events. However, two of the more thoroughly researched subjects within this field are ”The Erikjansonists” and ”The Kautokeino Rebellion”.

Contemporary to the Shouter Movement was ”The Erikjansonists”; a revival movement in the region of Hälsingland that inspired the farmer Erik Jansson (1808-1850) in the 1840s. He and his fellow believers argued for separatism through the distance to other Readers, the sobriety movement, Lutheranism and the state. Church historian Cecilia Wejryd states that the group

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4 Hedenborg, 2009, p. 113f.
5 Hedenborg, 2009, p. 118.
8 Ekman, 1898, p. 936.
9 Westin, 1956, pp. 11-21.
burned books in public; among them Luther's Small Catechism, psalm books and a law book. Wejryd interprets these actions, even the burning of the law book, within a theological framework; she calls the burning of the law an expression of antinomianism.\(^\text{10}\) She argues further that these actions were above acceptable for the uniform Swedish society, that the group was attacked for this action by governmental agents and ultimately emigrated to the United States.\(^\text{11}\)

Another event in the sphere of conflicts between society and revivalism was the "Kautokeino Rebellion" in 1852, when a group of approximately 35 Sami residents burned down a house, attacked a priest and killed a district sheriff and a merchant. The rebels were initially inspired by Læstadianism, a pietist revivalist lay movement within the Swedish Lutheran Church, but the rebels also carried idiosyncratic millenarian convictions. Religious historian Roald E. Kristiansen categorizes the explanations of the events in Kautokeino into four categories: personal, medical, religious and social explanations. These explanations have been proposed by researchers also after 1950, thus viewing a broad range of results of research concerning a conflict like the one in Kautokeino.\(^\text{12}\) Kristiansen states that contemporary commentators considered the Samis of Kautokeino as uneducated, "deranged" (mentally ill), or driven by a desire for revenge.\(^\text{13}\)

2.3 The Shouter Movement

The Shouter Movement started in the region of Småland in 1841. Wejryd argues that it had its foundation in house devotions that grew into conventicles.\(^\text{14}\) The movement has been called "The Shouter Movement", "the preaching sickness", "the Hjälmarö sickness" and "chorea".\(^\text{15}\) It was also seen as an extreme branch of the Reader Movement,\(^\text{16}\) but the Shouters probably called themselves "voices".\(^\text{17}\) The Shouter Movement was widespread in the regions of Småland, Västergötland, Värmland and Närke, during the years 1841-1843.

\(^{11}\) Wejryd, 2012, p. 257.  
\(^{12}\) Kristiansen, 1999.  
\(^{13}\) Kristiansen, 1999.  
\(^{15}\) Aronsson, 1989, p. 246.  
\(^{16}\) Nerikes Allehanda, 1843a.  
\(^{17}\) Aronsson, 1989, p. 246.
lacked any form of formal leadership and consisted of lay-people who, according to themselves, "shouted" out of inspiration from the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{18} Many of the Shouters were young and unmarried, often women, who preached condemnation of sins and an imminent judgment to the audience.\textsuperscript{19} The Shouter meetings were reported to be ecstatic events where convulsions, shaking and trance-like states were common, both among the preachers and the audience.\textsuperscript{20}

Research on the Shouter Movement is limited. When it comes to scholarly research, the published works on the movement are produced by historian Peter Aronsson (1989), ethnologist Christian Richette (1983) and church historian Ragnar Redelius (1935). Aronsson argues that the strata of origin of the Shouters is a key to understand the social aspects of their message. He argues further, that both Redelius and Richette sees social aspects in the Shouters' message; Redelius argues that it is an attack on the "masters" as an "individualistic" progress in a proto-democratic milieu,\textsuperscript{21} and Richette that it is an encounter of struggle between the dominator and the dominated.\textsuperscript{22} However, beyond the social origin of the Shouters, Aronsson argues that the movement contained three main phenomena with social aspects attached to them. First, convulsions were common for the Shouters and people close to them. The convulsions were at the time believed to be caused by a neurological disease that stemmed from bad rye; and even though Aronsson dismisses this explanation, he notes that bad harvest might sharpen social conflicts.\textsuperscript{23}

Second, the Shouters argued that they could not help their "shouting" and convulsions, since it came from God. This makes God, and not the Shouters themselves, responsible for possible controversial social aspects of their message. Aronsson sees this lack of responsibility for the message as a way for people to articulate social protest, which otherwise would have been impossible.\textsuperscript{24}

And third, the Shouters' message consisted of two main sub-categories; allegations and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Aronsson, 1989, p. 246.
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Aronsson, 1989, p. 247.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Both Ekman and Nerikes Allehanda argues for this. Also Aronsson uses the word "ecstatic" in 1989, p. 247.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Redelius, 1935, p. 65.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Richette, 1983, p. 77.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Aronsson, 1989, p. 250.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Aronsson, 1989, p. 251.
\end{itemize}
predictions. The predictions were made concerning the Judgment Day, the end of the world and the end of life for either the Shouters themselves or their audience.\footnote{Aronsson, 1989, p. 254.} The allegations were directed against "impiety" like sensual pleasure, drunkenness, pride, gambling, trade, dance and gluttony. Aronsson suggests with Christer Ahlberger, that this privation motif of early revivalists in Sweden is to be understood as a construction of identity; the poverty of their strata was lifted up to an ideal. The privation motif might also be seen as illuminating objects of malignity. "Pride" was for example popularly connected to the upper strata, whereas a condemnation of a life of pride was an indirect condemnation of the "Masters". However, Aronsson states that not everything condemned by the Shouters could be understood as a class-consciousness, since things like dancing and drunkenness were already seen as sin by the church, and officially dismissed by the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Aronsson suggests with E.P. Thompson that attacking these sins could be a part of a "rebel traditionalist culture"; the Shouters are fighting for causes that are seen as obsolete among the ruling classes.\footnote{Aronsson, 1989, p. 252f.}

The contemporary authorities' interpretation of the movement are divided into three categories by Aronsson: 1) The Shouter Movement is a (quixotic) religious movement, 2) The Shouter Movement is a medical state – either in the form of a neurological disease or madness – or 3) The Shouter Movement is animal magnetism, a force that combines and is the basis for the planets movements, tidal water and suffering and healing of the sick. This third suggestion of interpretation exist in the borderlands "[…] between the spiritual and the profane, and the sick and healthy, in the attempts to define the movement."\footnote{Aronsson, 1989. p. 257.}

In sum, the Shouter Movement appeared in a hierarchical milieu, where division of labor was asymmetrical between different genders and strata. In this milieu there existed different revivals, collectively called the Reader Movement. The Shouter Movement came to Närke from southern regions and was an ecstatic version of the Reader Movement. Convulsions, prophecies and condemnations of acts like sensual pleasure, drunkenness and pride were recurrent. Aronsson argues that these condemnations could be a form of class consciousness.
3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 The Struggle of Religion

The concept of “religion” is notoriously difficult to define, and there is no consensus on how the term should be understood.\(^\text{28}\) However, this thesis does not discuss the concept of religion as an analytical term, but rather explores religion as an emic concept. Religion is a prominent concept within the empiric material, and the primary aim of this thesis is to discuss the narratives of the material. In Nerikes Allehanda, the concept of religion is present when the newspaper marks its distance to “fanaticism”. For revivalist historian E. J. Ekman, the framing of the events as religious is prominent in several ways, but especially since he labels them a “war of religion”. I suggest, in addition to the understandings of religion in the material, that there are social aspects to the religious expressions within the narratives, as will be discussed in the following sections.

3.2 Expressions of Resistance

In the material analyzed in this thesis, there are several explanations to how social unrest and violent turmoil could evolve and erupt in Kvistbro in 1843. Drawing on the previous chapter, I will in this section discuss social antagonism in relation to religion (the revival) and violence (the turmoil in Kvistbro). A popular reading of events concerning religion and violence offers a divisional understanding of the link between these two concepts. However, I suggest that religion coexists with socio-political expressions in several ways, and that there are possible ways to understand actions and messages beyond this divisional reading.

Social historians Andreas Brink Pinto, Stefan Nyzell and Magnus Olofsson argue in their work on Swedish riots and violent social uprisings during the 1800s, that history writing on this period generally has been described as a development of social harmony and unity. However, as their studies show, violent social conflicts occurred repeatedly in different locations throughout the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century.\(^\text{29}\) When discussing explanations of why uprisings occur, Brink Pinto et al. argues that social hierarchies and economical injustices of the Swedish 1800s, are not explanations enough for the occurrence of uprisings. They argue that the question is rather

\(^{28}\) Cavanaugh, 2009, p. 57.

\(^{29}\) Brink Pinto, Nyzell & Olofsson, 2011, p. 130.
why there were not more uprisings during this period.\(^{30}\)

The authors suggest with anthropologist James C Scott's concept of *hidden transcripts*, that the suppressed masses should be seen as subjects of history since they, through counter images, often question domination when the dominator is absent. In other words: secret visions of resistance and of another order are articulated behind the back of the authorities. Brink Pinto et al. argues further that the concept of *hidden transcripts* might explain how a society that has been peaceful for a long time, rapidly can outburst in acts of collective violence aimed at governing authorities.\(^{31}\) Even though the mid-19th century in Sweden was a period of social upheavals, Kvistbro parish had not seen any social unrest for a period of time when the turmoil in 1843 took place.\(^{32}\) Following the theory of *hidden transcripts*, social movement scholar Charles Tilly refers to Scott's concept *weapons of the weak*. This concept claims that everyday resistance like sabotage, mockery and foot dragging are used to attack oppression by marginalized people. According to Scott, this is done in place of more open resistance, when other options are practically unavailable.\(^{33}\) The Kvistbro events will be discussed in relation to *hidden transcripts* and *weapons of the weak* in the analysis sections of this thesis. However, since the Kvistbro events also resulted in open acts of violence, these concepts will be complemented with a discussion on violence in the following section.

### 3.3 Violence As Politics

Tilly claims that the use of collective violence should be understood as politically created, motivated and driven. Tilly defines collective violence as infliction of physical damage on persons and/or objects that involves at least two perpetrators, and to some extent results from coordination of the perpetrators.\(^{34}\) According to Tilly, different types of collective violence has common patterns even when they differ in form, and mentions a wide range of violence as examples, from police force to peasant rebellions. Tilly's theory is mainly based on studies of modern regimes, but he does apply it on several historical regimes as well; for example British

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30 Brink Pinto, Nyzell & Olofsson, 2011, p. 132.
32 Harbe, 1972, pp. 486-489.
33 Tilly, 2003, p. 175. Scott studied peasant resistance in South East Asia, and his results indicated that all these kinds of *weapons of the weak* were used.
34 Tilly, 2003, p. 3.
colonial rule in America during the 1740s and French victory over Algerian troops in 1830s.\textsuperscript{35} He sums up his theory of collective violence stating that it:

occupies a perilous but coherent place in contentious politics. It emerges from the ebb and flow of collective claim making and struggles for power. It interweaves incessantly with nonviolent politics, varies systematically with political regimes, and changes as a consequence of essentially the same causes that operate in the nonviolent zones of collective political life.\textsuperscript{36}

Tilly argues that collective violence is a form of contentious politics. It is \textit{contentious} since participants in collective violence make claims that affect other's spheres of interest, and it is \textit{politics} since it relates to governmental power.\textsuperscript{37} According to Tilly, governments and authorities are almost always actors in collective violence, either as attackers or objects for attack, competitors or intervening agents.\textsuperscript{38} This study utilizes Tilly's theory in general, and that of \textit{scattered attacks} in particular. Tilly argues that:

Collective violence qualifies as scattered attacks if, in the course of widespread small-scale and generally nonviolent interaction, a number of participants responds to obstacles, challenges, or restraints by means of damaging acts; examples include sabotage, scattered clandestine attacks on symbolic objects or places, assaults of governmental agents, and arson.\textsuperscript{39}

I suggest that scattered attacks should be understood as \textit{responses} by people to oppressive, and violent actions initiated by governments and other authorities. In sum, the theoretical framework of this thesis is a joint study of a) the term “religion” as something to be understood in an emic sense; that it is a concept of significance \textit{within} the narratives of the material, b) the concepts of \textit{hidden transcripts} and \textit{weapons of the weak}, and c) collective acts of violence as understood as a form of politics.

4\, Method

4.1\, Material

The first material that will be analyzed in this thesis consists of articles from eight issues of the

\textsuperscript{35} Tilly, 2003, p. 231.  
\textsuperscript{36} Tilly, 2003, p. 238.  
\textsuperscript{37} Tilly 2003, p. 26.  
\textsuperscript{38} Tilly, 2003, p. 26  
\textsuperscript{39} Tilly, 2003, p. 171.
newspaper Nerikes Allehanda, published during the period of July to August, 1843. The second material is extracted from the revivalist author E. J. Ekman's work "Den inre misszionens historia" 40, published in 1898. When the weekly newspaper Nerikes Allehanda receives information about the ongoing events around the Shouters in the rural areas of Närke, they publish several articles on the story in eight separate issues. The events are however not presented in a strict chronological manner, since the newspaper add more information to the story when they receive more information; thus the first reports are short and the overall picture somewhat disorganized. The accounts that Nerikes Allehanda retells are based on witness reports that are sent as letters to the editors, and occasionally published unabridged in the paper. 41

Nerikes Allehanda's account constitutes the most contemporary set of texts written on the events in Kvistbro, and are also used by Aronsson as a source material. 42 The reports start before the outbreak of violence and ends right after the first court hearings of the suspects. This makes Nerikes Allehanda a source that is close in both time and place to the events, and thus an important material for analysis. Furthermore the newspaper is a representative for the worldview of the contemporary upper strata, also of interest within the broader analysis of this thesis.

E. J. Ekman on the other hand, publishes his account on the events in 1898. His report is thorough, but there is not a clear overview on what sources he draws on. However, there are two passages where Ekman mentions court protocols in a way that implies that he has a good knowledge of the material. 43 Alongside the court records, there are indications that Ekman has access to other source material, either as witness reports, secondary hearsay or the like. 44 Ekman is one of the earliest writers on revival history, and his accounts are the first written on the Kvistbro events from a revivalist perspective. The events in Kvistbro have since Ekman largely been reproduced within a revivalist framing, which makes his early writings essential in

40 Literally translated as "The History of the Domestic Mission".
41 For example in Nerikes Allehanda, 1843c.
42 Aronsson, 1989, p. 264
43 Ekman, 1898, p. 940, 952. Ekman states for example that the court's decision is 80 pages long, which match the records of Edsbergs häradsrätt, 1843-1844.
44 Long quotes indicate other sources than court protocols (Ekman, 1898, p. 949). In one section Ekman also quotes an anonymous "missionary that is familiar with the conditions" (Ekman, 1898, p. 946), and in another that he has an eyewitness report from a "Shouter meeting" (Ekman, 1989, p. 945).
this respect. However, there no scholarly research done on his narration of the events, even though his work is used as a historic source by Aronsson. Alongside this, the extent of Ekman's report, combined with that it is one of the earliest coherent retellings of the events overall, makes Ekman's account a significant part in the establishment of the greater narrative of the Kvistbro events, and thus a narrative of interest for analysis.

4.2 Demarcation and Research Problems

The very limited amount of contemporary material makes the demarcation process straightforward. There is however one set of source material not consulted for this thesis: the court protocols. Due to the restrictions of this project in time, proportion and length, the extensive and inaccessible material that constitutes the protocols have been left out for future research projects.

There are some problems related to translation within this project, generally handled in the body text and some in footnotes. There are however two common words that need to be addressed here: "allmoge" and "herre". The first, "allmoge" is a word that literally can be translated with the word "people". However, this translation is not complete, since "allmoge" indicates a certain part of the people, mainly the lower strata. In the narrative of Nerikes Allehanda, it should be understood as even more specific, probably as the lowest strata of the peasantry. With this as a background, I use the translation peasantry.

Furthermore, the word "herre" is somewhat difficult to translate in this context. It could mean "Lord", but that is a narrow understanding of the word in relation to the analyzed texts. It should be understood as attributed to the upper strata, like the bourgeoisie, the clergy, industrial foremen etc. Since "Lord" has certain specific connotations in Great Britain for example, I have chosen the word "Masters" instead, due to its general broader range of meaning.

4.3 Narrative Analysis

The material analyzed in this thesis retells past occurrences in a structured (Ekman) or semi-
structured (Nerikes Allehanda) order, which indicates that they reproduce knowledge with what is commonly defined as a narrative mode. Furthermore, the narrative turn within research, where not just stories, but also identities and actions are understood through the lens of narratives, has benefits when looking at texts from and about history. Following the narrative turn, we will be able to converse with the material in a more intense way; we will be able to look beyond what is just being said. This is why a narrative analysis will be the methodological tool used in this thesis for opening up the broader meaning of the “War of Religion in Kvistbro”.

The analysis applied in this thesis follows narratologist Seymour Chatman's model of narratives as divided into two sub-groups: histoire (story) and discours (discourse). Chatman argues that every narrative is structured by a content plane (story) and an expression plane (discourse). Histoire refers to what might be understood as a narrative's plot; for example characters, milieu and course of events, while discours refers to means of issuing and negotiating the substance of a narrative. The division between story (histoire) and discourse (discours) is illustrated in the chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis; chapter 5 contains an analysis of the construction of story (histoire) in the material, and chapter 6 a discussion of the framing (discours) of the stories' contents.

4.3.1 Story

When it comes to the story of the narrative, my analysis is based on the linguist William Labov's model that organizes narratives into six sub-categories: abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, evaluation and coda. However, in this thesis, I will modify this model for the purpose of simplifying the analysis. My modification of the model is divided into three sub-categories relevant for this study. The first category is the cause of the events, where the first two categories of Labov is combined; orientation, which indicates time, place, situation and participators. It also includes the category of abstract, because of the synoptical character of the re-telling of the storyline. The second category is the core of the events, which indicates the main part of the narrative plot. This is what Labov calls the complicating action, understood as the detailed elaboration of the main problem of the

48 Robertson, 2012, p. 222.
narrative. The third category is the outcome of the events. Within this category, I suggest that the resolution should be examined together with Labov's categories of the evaluation of the events by the author, and with the coda, where the author marks an application, or moral implications, of the narrative.

The two reasons for this modification of Labov's narrative model are: first, the comprehension of the source material; there is a tenuous amount of sources available concerning the events around the area of Kvistbro in 1843 and the ones that exist are fairly brusque. This means that summary of the story sub-categories will simplify the analysis. And second, these summarized categories resonate better with the source material, due to the nature of the way the stories are represented; this means that it will substantiate the second part of the narrative analysis, which is the examination of discourses within the material.

4.3.2 Discourse

Discourse within Chatman's sectioning is understood by Alexa Robertson as the ”how” of the narrative; in other words, the way in which a narrative is communicated.\(^\text{52}\) Discourse is thus seen as something subordinated to the narrative in the modified methodical model, based on Chatman and Labov.\(^\text{53}\) Chatman defines discourse as the expression of a narrative; the ”means by which the content is communicated”.\(^\text{54}\) In the analysis of the material in this thesis, Chatman's definition of narrative discourse will be applied. This means that after the stories of Nerikes Allehanda and Ekman are analyzed (with my modified version of Labov's model), we will shift analytical focus towards what Chatman calls the ”deep narrative” and discuss the implications of how the narratives are told and expressed.\(^\text{55}\)

In sum, the material analyzed in this thesis consists of articles from Nerikes Allehanda and of excerpts from Ekman's revival history work. As a contribution to the discussion on the Shouter Movement, a narrative analysis will be applied on the material, where the concepts of story and discourse are central. The discourse should be understood as the expression of the narrative, and the story as the plot of the narrative. The story of the narrative, will be analyzed in the


\(^{53}\) Thus, I will not conduct a discourse analysis, since Chatman's use of the term discourse does not involve what is generally seen as a discourse analysis.

\(^{54}\) Chatman, 1978, p. 19.

\(^{55}\) Chatman, 1978, p. 146.
following chapter, and the discourse of the narrative in chapter 6.

5 Stories of Turmoil

5.1 Setting the Stage

In this chapter, the story according to the newspaper Nerikes Allehanda and the revivalist historian E. J. Ekman will be analyzed and discussed. This is done through a close reading of the texts, where the story of the narratives will be analyzed with a modified model of Labov and Chatman; the story will be organized according to the core, the cause and the outcome of the events.

How the process of the events is told follows a similar outline in both sources: A large number of people gather in different places in the southern and western areas of Närke. These are gatherings of allmogen, the peasantry, and contain ecstatic and religiously colored expressions. Information about this reaches the governor of Närke, who in turn orders local law enforcers to arrest one of the most active preachers, Adam Smedberg. During the attempted arrest of Smedberg, violent turmoil occurs that lasts, in varying intensity, for at least a day. When Smedberg finally is detained, several local residents are arrested and accused of crimes alongside him.

5.2 The Story According to Nerikes Allehanda

5.2.1 Narrating the Cause of the Events

The focus of most of the summer issues of Nerikes Allehanda in 1843 is on the ongoing events in the rural area south and west of the city of Örebro. When the paper first reports on the events, the posture of the paper is uncertainty; the information is weak and the writers ask their readers for more intelligence on what is happening. The events is thus an evolving news story, that gradually is retold, interpreted and delivered by Nerikes Allehanda. This affects the chronology of the story in the source material, since it returns to earlier events when paper receive more information on certain details.

In Nerikes Allehanda, one recurring factor for the commence of the Shouter Movement in

56 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843a.
Närke is due to the bordering areas in the south, Västergötland and Småland. This "evil" originates in the south, on the other side of the border, and has "infected" the "faithful Nerike", as stated in an anonymous letter, sent to the newspaper and published by them, dated 6th of July 1843:

During a journey to Lekebergslagen yesterday I was told that the Reading, this evil, that has ravaged for several years in Westergöthland and Småland, now also has infected our faithful Nerike.

Laws that ordered those who traveled between cities in Sweden to carry a passport was still in effect in 1843. This might be understood as a background for Nerikes Allehanda's focus on the border issue; the border is a protection from foreign elements and the Shouters are seen as an infiltration from foreign territory.

A second recurring factor in the growing Shouter Movement in Närke is mentioned in the subtext of the quote above. The writer of the letter states that the Reading "has infected our faithful Nerike". Faithful might also be translated with orthodox, meaning that Närke in this context is a place of doctrinal and "pure" ideas. This idea of orthodoxy is complemented with a view of the county as Enlightened. In Nerikes Allehanda there is a tone of surprise of how the Shouter Movement now are spreading in Närke, and it explains the rise of the Shouter Movement as due to the remains of "unenlightenment" in some areas. This should be seen, as mentioned, in relation to the supposed orthodoxy of Närke:

The enlightenment in Nerike is admittedly quite widespread, but it is not greater than that the peasantry about one year ago was ready to go into battle against the damned freemasons, that they said had abducted many people to deliver for Hundturken, and to destroy a man's building since they believed it had become a den for these presumed perpetrators.

This short recapture of an event where the peasantry allegedly had been close to attack Freemasons has several layers in it. Similar stories about the Freemasons exist in Swedish folklore, and the one about where they abduct people to sacrifice them to Hundturken is common. The derogatory epithet Hundturken was used for the Turkish sultan or nation, but stems from a concept of a cynocephalus; a dog-headed and man-eating creature from the Near

57 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843a.
58 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843c. All quotes from Nerikes Allehanda and Ekman are translated from Swedish by me.
60 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843a.
East. Which one of these interpretations of the term that the authors of Nerikes Allehanda refers to is unclear, but since the concept of unenlightenment is used to frame the Shouter Movement, it is safe to assume that it probably is the latter. The excerpt above also positions the peasantry as potential violent troublemakers, a positioning that Nerikes Allehanda returns to as the events evolve. In relation to other texts in the newspaper, one could also argue that Nerikes Allehanda frames the peasantry's unenlightenment as credulous. In one example the newspaper states that the "pious people sacrificed" both money and goods to the "fraudster" preacher Smedberg.

These two concepts – the infection from somewhere across the southern border and the unenlightenment of the peasantry – are the backdrop for the plot told by Nerikes Allehanda. It is how they further interprets the events, as we will see in the following section.

5.2.2 Narrating the Core of the Events

According to Nerikes Allehanda, the chain of events starts with a small group of repentance preachers crossing the border into Närke. In an anonymous letter sent to the newspaper and published by them, dated 4th of July 1843, the writer states that the group consists of the blacksmith Smedberg, a 13 year old boy who also preaches, and a coppersmith journeyman named Wegerell. Wegerell is described as a spy for Smedberg, which again marks out Smedberg as a fraud. This view, that Smedberg sends out Wegerell for intelligence work to find out things to tell for his prophecies, is shared and repeated by the Nerikes Allehanda on several occasions.

The letter also states that the authorities should consider violent intervention of the ongoing events even in this early state, since it claims that it "seems impossible to get to [Smedberg] without using an army". The people that listen to the preacher believe him, protect him and hide him from the authorities, and the writer of the letter states that it seems like the people are in a state of madness:

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61 Bergstrand, 1956, p. 10, 21f, 23f.
62 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843e.
63 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843c.
64 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843b; Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
65 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843c.
They are not listening to reasonable arguments but appears to be in a vertigo.66

However, there is no immediate cure proposed in Nerikes Allehanda, instead the idea of stopping the outbreak of shouting with violence or at least threats of violence, is repeated. In one text, the writers state that if the words "In the name of the Law and the King" would have been used earlier, none of the following events would have happened.67 But violence does break out, and gets most intense after Smedberg has been taken into custody in Kvistbro, when local women effectively liberates him. However, the liberation ends up with Smedberg being injured:

[T]he night before Smedberg's arrest, when acting county secretary Mr. Wikander already had seized the preacher, the women proved to be real Amazons, when they with joined forces at first overthrew a fence and then, each armed with a fence post, succeeded to free the captive, but with a missed strike of a fence post by a furious woman, struck the one who was being liberated and hit his head, which was badly wounded. 68

Smedberg was, according to Nerikes Allehanda, first seized by the official Mr. Wikander and then freed from him by a group of women armed with sticks. The liberty did not last long however, because Smedberg was arrested once again the day after. The newspaper describes the women as female warriors with the term "Amazons". This focus on the women as a potential dangerous group continues in the accounts by Nerikes Allehanda. In the quote above, the women are described in a fairly restrained, but surprised tone ("they proved to be real Amazons"). The tone changes however in the passage that follow, when the women are framed as fanatical:

This event gave rise to a new proof of the agitated mob's fanaticism. The blood that floated from the wounded Smedberg's head were sucked with lust, and the water that was mixed with his blood during the cleaning were drunk with great desire, all under the remark that this was the true Communion and that the wounded Shouter's blood was as holy as the Savior's. During the journey to Örebro county jail, many women supposedly kneeled along the road to show their reverence for the holy one.69

The way that Nerikes Allehanda in this report focuses on the women, reveals their worldview;

66 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843c.
67 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843e.
68 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
69 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
the men (Smedberg and his crew) are leaders and agitators, while the women are faithful servants of this leadership (they kneel alongside the road). It is viewed as a reverence in the wrong direction though, and thus becomes the worst aberration of the Christian fate – the distorted version of the Communion as a vicious offence, both distasteful and unchristian. But even though the women are active in the episode, arming themselves, mocking the Communion and kneeling before Smedberg – they are still depicted not as subjects but as objects. They are described as an "agitated mob", which indicates that they have been transformed (agitated) into this anomaly (mob). Their actions is thus not seen as something that is being decided by themselves, but rather forced on them by Smedberg with his convincing acts and preaching.

The arrests are not the focus for the articles from Nerikes Allehanda, but rather the broader "problem" with Readers and Shouters. When the violent events and the arrests are retold, it is done with a short resume, stating which people have been arrested and brought to Örebro. These brief notes of the arrests end with the short story of the housemaid Greta, in an area close to Kvistbro, who has fallen and been shaking violently:

On Tuesday, a 25 year old housemaid named Greta, from Finnerödja, Westergöthland, was carried away from Kräklinge parish. She supposedly fell and shook violently, but has not begun to preach. She is handed to the hospital to be treated there as a sick person.

Here, Nerikes Allehanda shows that the Shouter Movement is not yet disappeared in the area, even though the "agitators" have been arrested. It is as if there are two ongoing parallel processes that Nerikes Allehanda are retelling; one where fraudsters are in combat with the authorities (Smedberg and his crew) and one where a contagious disease is spreading among the parishes of southern and western Närke (the Shouting). This dual motif is amplified when the newspaper reports on the interrogations of the arrested Smedberg:

When asked, he confessed freely and openly that, what he had done to have a strong influence on the masses; shaking, falling, etc., was not something supernatural and overpowering, but that this depended on his own intent, and thus, following his own confession, constituted a fraud. We fear though, that he himself, through this habit, has started to believe in his own mission to repent the human race.

70 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
71 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
72 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
According to the report, Smedberg takes back his preaching in the interrogations, and calls his own actions a "fraud". But Nerikes Allehanda is not sure that Smedberg is being honest, but states that he probably has started to "believe in his own mission". This is a clear example of when the paper's view of the events is oscillating between fraud and medicine; an oscillation that is more thoroughly analyzed in chapter 6.

5.2.3 Narrating the Outcome of the Events

A recurring theme in Nerikes Allehanda's reports of the events is the idea of violent repression as a solution to the ongoing outbreak of the Shouting in Närke. The moral of the story is that if tough repression would have been used earlier, the conflict in Kvistbro could have been avoided and the threat of the Shouter Movement stopped before it could spread any further. In an account of the arrest of a shouter named Carl Jansson, the newspaper notes that:

We have seen the personal courage in the acting county sheriff Svensson, that although the Lerböck-people lamented, and without being supported by a venerable shape or age, swiftly appeared in front of [the Shouter] Carl Jansson from Undenäs and said: "In the name of the Law and the King I arrest you". Law and King – these are two words that makes the congregation bounce back, at least for the moment, and if used in the right time they would perhaps not fail to have effect, and the fraud, angel or prophet, would probably be arrested before the crowd had time to come to their senses.\(^\text{73}\)

Nerikes Allehanda calls for use of state legitimized violence and force to stop the events, and in the quote above they state that it should be done in an early state. Following this line of argument, Nerikes Allehanda suggests that the now arrested Smedberg should take back what he has preached in public, or suffer a severe punishment; he should be punished for misleading the peasantry:

Regarding the preacher, he should get the condition that either he takes back what he taught the foolish to scare them on the final judgment and their death [–] that those who are between 6 and 28 years [would die] before next new year [–] or serve this time in prison [...]\(^\text{74}\)

In another article, Nerikes Allehanda tells the story of a priest who visits a family where one of the daughters is struck by the "shouting”, and thus has convulsions and holds on to the stove to prevent herself from falling to the floor. In the retelling of the episode the priest tells the mother:

\(^{73}\) Nerikes Allehanda, 1843e.

\(^{74}\) Nerikes Allehanda, 1843e.
that as soon as the symptoms present themselves, use soft birch twigs as a cure, and advised her to try it immediately. The mother followed the advice, and was heading out to collect the necessary, but found it to be superfluous, since the sheer demonstration had the effect that the girl left her support, and walked steadily to a sofa nearby, where she sat down and did not shake anymore, as long as the Priest stayed.\textsuperscript{75}

Related to the conceptualization of the Shouter Movement as a matter of fraud, this reveals a suggestion of a solution to the ”problem” that has violent expressions. In the case of the girl, it is not a question of a criminal offence, but still immoral in the eyes of Nerikes Allehanda, which might be why they highlight a story including advocacy for a violent solution. This is even more clear in the following paragraph of the article. It retells an episode where two girls, 9 and 17 years old, has started to ”shout”. The governor has ordered the girls to be sent to the county hospital for medical care. However, the newspaper is not satisfied with this, and insists on the fraud-theme, that they should be threatened with physical force instead, like in the example of the priest mentioned above:

If the parents were wise enough to follow the ordination given in Skagershult, then the cure for this probably would not have been necessary to look for so far away and the cost for the ride to the Hospital could have been avoided.\textsuperscript{76}

The bottom line of the moral argument in Nerikes Allehanda is that severe punishment should be ordained for all who ”shouts” or supports the Shouter Movement. In this case (violent) events like the ones in and around Kvistbro could be avoided. The following section will now contrast these views of Nerikes Allehanda with the narrative according to the revivalist historian E. J. Ekman.

5.3 The Story According to E. J. Ekman

5.3.1 Narrating the Cause of the Events

Ekman focuses in the description of the origins of the Shouter Movement in Närke on the geographical and topographical characteristics and qualities of the area where the movement is most active. At the very heart of the revival, Ekman places the creek Svartån; a creek that connects the ”deep woods” of the borderlands of Närke and Värmland with lake Hjälmaren,

\textsuperscript{75} Nerikes Allehanda, 1843g.
\textsuperscript{76} Nerikes Allehanda, 1843g.
where Örebro is located. Ekman states that, around Svartån a "rich religious life" developed from the 1840s and onwards, but that its people, before the movement of the Shouters, led their lives in a "thick spiritual fog". This spiritual fog is described by Ekman as "immoral" practices like drunkenness, scuffle, larceny and "bitter domestic conflicts". The origins of this sinful behavior was, according to Ekman, above all, the high consumption of alcoholic beverages. This lead the youth to dance and play music only in the "slippery service of amusement", and to exchange words and looks of "lovemaking desire".

Ekman states that this was a time of sin, even in a larger context than the region around Svartån. But this was also a time when people "awakened":

The 1840s was a time of amazement and dismay: the people's conscience was depressed by the misery of sin and the expectation for God's judgment. It was at this time that large numbers of people in Småland, Bohuslän and Västergötland was touched by a mighty spirit that shone into the consciences, revealed hidden spiritual depths and opened people's eyes for the realities of evil. They awoke from the spiritual sleep, shouting to God for help and to the masses the necessity to seek the Lord.

In presenting the evolution of the Shouter "awakening" in Närke, Ekman retells a story of an event that indicates mythical and etiological capacities. At a dance where the youth drinks spirits set aflame, and lust and sin are pouring because of the "toxic steam" of alcohol, a "dark, tall character with his face hidden" enters the room and starts to dance with one of the girls. When all silent attention is focused on the dancing couple, the girl falls dead to the ground and the phantom-like character leaves the scene, leaving the other attendees scared and groaning. According to Ekman, this marks the first "shouts of repentance" in the county of Närke. Worth to notice is that Ekman, like Nerikes Allehanda, focuses on the "penetration" of the border, though in a more affirmative way:

77 Ekman, 1898, p. 939.
78 Ekman, 1898, p. 939.
79 Ekman, 1898, p. 939.
80 Ekman, 1898, p. 939.
81 Ekman, 1898, p. 939.
82 Ekman, 1898, p. 938.
83 Ekman, 1898, p. 940.
84 Ekman, 1898, p. 940.
These frightened and distressed people's shouts were mixed with others from Västergötland, and their shouts multiplied down over to Askersund, Viby, Kvistbro, Edsberg and other parishes in Nerike. People were amazed, alarmed and lamented their sins. And so the spirit that filled the 'shouters' begun to penetrate the border of Nerike.\textsuperscript{85}

In his account, Ekman also gives a short biography of the main character for the forthcoming events in Kvistbro, Adam Smedberg. When he enters the narrative, Smedberg, born on June the 30th 1813 in Dala parish, Västergötland, has been working as a farmhand, a blacksmith apprentice and for the military. After listening to a preacher in October 1842, Smedberg starts to preach himself in the northern parts of Västergötland. Here he meets people from Kvistbro who "urge Smedberg to hold meetings in the mentioned parish".\textsuperscript{86} Ekman describes Smedberg as a man of dual motifs, and states that: "It was more the law and the fervor of human zealotism, than the spirit of Christ, that controlled him."\textsuperscript{87} According to Ekman, Smedberg possessed a "crystal clear focus" on sins like vanity and drunkenness,\textsuperscript{88} but was still a sinner due to his own immorality.\textsuperscript{89}

5.3.2 Narrating the Core of the Events

According to Ekman, Smedberg gathers thousands of listeners, many of them coming from a great distance. He mentions as many as 3 000 auditors, coming from as far away as parishes in Västmanland, approximately 70 km from Kvistbro.\textsuperscript{90} And even before Smedberg arrives to deliver his sermon, the "spirit of the shouters" appears among the gathered auditors:

A young woman sees another one wear fringes on her head scarf. The young woman falls as dead to the ground, but wakes up short after and shouts: 'O man, o man, repent, before the flames catch you!'\textsuperscript{91}

This episode is marked by Ekman for a reason. The story does not start or end with Smedberg in Ekman's account of the events, something bigger is going on. The recurrent use of the term

\textsuperscript{85} Ekman, 1898, p. 940f.
\textsuperscript{86} Ekman, 1898, p. 941. Ekman states that the information about Smedberg's biography stems from records in Edsberg's judicial district court (häradsrätt) of his own testimony.
\textsuperscript{87} Ekman, 1898, p. 941.
\textsuperscript{88} Ekman, 1898, p. 941f.
\textsuperscript{89} Ekman, 1898, p. 940.
\textsuperscript{90} Ekman, 1898, p. 942.
\textsuperscript{91} Ekman, 1898, p. 942.
"spirit" marks Ekman's vision of the escalating sequence of events as something beyond the work of individuals; it is a spiritual awakening among the people. He states that the crowd sings hymns and are deeply moved by the cries for repentance. Some young men and women were:

'so deeply moved by the shouts of repentance, that they day and night could not do anything else than to bewail their sins.'

Ekman stresses the spiritual force of the change of behavior among the population in the parishes in western and southern Närke. He states that the change in behavior included the discontinuation of dancing and gambling, the returning of stolen goods, ending of family disputes etc. But above all the "mutual confession of sin" and a beginning to "with a sincere heart, seek to do God's will". The implication of these expressions of Ekman indicates his firm belief that the Shouter Movement was essentially a work of God.

In contrast to this view, Ekman states that the governor in Närke regards the Shouter Movement "like many others […] as sheer delusion". This is why the governor sends out the county secretary, E. J. Vikander, and the sheriff, C.M. Molin to arrest the preacher Smedberg. But in Ekman's retelling of the story, this is not an easy task:

They suspected that Smedberg would not let himself be arrested so easily. Along the road they gathered as many persons as they could bring. It was apparent that they had to seek out the enemies of the shouters and recruit them to the needed war force. The mob, that loves unrighteousness and hates righteousness, is common and even here there were many of them.

This crowd that "loves unrighteousness", had been waiting for an opportunity to attack the Shouters, according to Ekman, and they brought weapons like "loaded guns, sabers and sticks" with them. In describing this episode, military concepts like war force and enemies are used as axioms. It is the first time in his text that this conceptualization is used, besides the headline of the section, The War of Religion in Kvistbro. Later, Ekman speaks about the village of

92 Ekman, 1898, p. 943.
93 Ekman, 1898, p. 945.
94 Ekman, 1898, p. 945.
95 Ekman, 1898, p. 948.
96 Ekman, 1898, p. 948.
Bälsås, where Smedberg was arrested, as a battlefield, and of the group that the sheriff has gathered to arrest Smedberg as a hostile squad. The violence of the events is thus interpreted by Ekman as an armed conflict, a war, where the attackers are organized by the government and the defenders are constituted by the people awakened by the Shouter Movement.

Ekman describes a surprise arrest of Smedberg, in the house where the Shouters had gathered, like: "[b]irds of prey that ascends among a group of sparrows". Ekman says the group is quiet and in prayer when the enemies attack. Smedberg is seized by the sheriff and a turmoil arises that is heard throughout the village, which attracts a crowd that:

- with force pulled Smedberg out of the hands of the sheriff. The battle was hot, the county secretary had been seriously mauled and the preacher suffered hard strokes and much blood loss.

This short recapture presumably alludes the same story as the one where Nerikes Allehanda describes the liberation of Smedberg. The versions differ remarkably from each other. In Ekman's version the group of women has been reduced to an anonymous "crowd", and both the attackers and the preacher Smedberg are injured in the turmoil. Smedberg suffers blood loss in both versions, but Ekman tells nothing of Nerikes Allehanda's information that argue that Smedberg's injuries stem from a wrongful strike from one of the women's sticks. The episode of the women drinking Smedberg's blood is also omitted in Ekman's version. The warrior aspects of the "crowd" ("women" in Nerikes Allehanda's version) is also moderated by Ekman, instead he emphasizes the conscious acts of the crowd:

- Hoff [a sheriff] read the law for the people and ordered obedience and submission. But the people despised the sheriff and the legal enactments he referred to, and said: 'We know not that our gatherings have violated the bids of our heavenly commander or in this respect done any evil. We have our own horses and carriages and will transport Smedberg back home to Västergötland, but we do not need your help for it.'

In this episode, Ekman portrays the Shouters as disregarding the laws and authority, instead they say that they follow rules from God. Following this, Ekman describes a battle, where both

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97 Ekman, 1898, p. 948.  
98 Ekman, 1898, p. 948.  
99 Ekman, 1898, p. 948.  
100 Ekman, 1898, p. 949.  
101 Ekman, 1898, p. 949.
sides used ”sticks, stones, clubs, bludgeons and 'whatever the enraged crowd could get a hold off”. The fighting continues according to Ekman, from the early morning until the afternoon, with injuries and bloodshed as part of the turmoil. The description is broad and does not contain much detail. It is stated though, that Smedberg is arrested in the afternoon and that the fight ends with it.

5.3.3 Narrating the Outcome of the Events

Together with Smedberg a man named Jonas Jonsson is arrested for carrying a loaded gun. Ekman also writes about a group of around 20 men and women who is prosecuted for taking part in the turmoil. When reviewing the outcome of the events, Ekman is critical of using weapons to gain ”spiritual advantages”:

But the righteous had, during this moment of tribulation, in a rapid and rash spirit intermixed with the profane people that in this way could reveal their true nature. However, it was the righteous shouters' comfort, that they had been attacked for good doings, when they had gathered to seek the voice of God.

According to Ekman, the intermixing of ”righteous” people with the ”profane” was one of the major road marks toward the violence in Kvistbro. Still, the group that belonged to what Ekman calls ”the righteous shouters” were attacked because of their righteousness when they were seeking God. Thus Ekman once again emphasizes the conflict as one where the authorities strike against a certain kind of spirituality. He also criticizes the authorities for their use of Konventikelplakatet, a law that ruled religious meetings outside the church illegal. If enacting similar laws, the authorities should take the War of Religion Kvistbro as a sign of warning to those who ”[…] in spiritual matters wants use worldly weapons”.

As noted earlier, Ekman considers Smedberg as a man of dual motifs, as being driven by both God's spirit and his own moral legalism. Ekman quotes court records about Smedberg that says that he, as a person without a passport, had deceived and confused the peasantry and that he also:

102 Ekman, 1898, p. 950.
103 Ekman, 1898, p. 950.
104 Ekman, 1898, p. 950.
105 Ekman, 1898, p. 953.
[...] was accused for inciting the peasantry to resist the authorities and to kill the sheriff.\textsuperscript{106}

This idea of Smedberg as an instigator is somewhat shared by Ekman himself, and this might be the reason why he is quoting the court records. In the eyewitness reports that both Ekman and Nerikes Allehanda use as their main sources, however, there does not seem to be anything that supports the idea of Smedberg as an agitator for violent resistance against the authorities. Ekman thus follows the court's version of the events and criticizes Smedberg for being an insurrectionary character, and filled with the "spirit of Sinai":

Night and day they raised shouts of prayer to God: both awake and asleep they spoke conscious and unconscious about the transcendental, eternal things. But the leader [Smedberg] himself was more filled with the spirit from Sinai than the spirit from Zion and had his mind by no means adapted to the words of Christ: ‘But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also’ (Matthew 5:39).\textsuperscript{107}

The idea of a duality of the early revival forms a mental grid for Ekman, where Smedberg represents both spirituality and legalism, with a leaning towards the latter. However, Ekman extends this mental grid to all of the Shouter Movement in the following quote:

When a large fire is lit, at first the fire and the smoke are blended with each other, so that you can not easily separate them. Likewise was light and darkness, truth and delusion, in the beginning as closely intertwined in the shouters wonderful movement, but the fire, the light, the truth worked its way and won a glorious victory at last.\textsuperscript{108}

If there was both spirituality and legalism represented in Smedberg, so was the same in the larger movement as well, according to Ekman. When trying to explain this early confusion of the revival movement, Ekman contradicts his other statement that the violence was instigated by Smedberg and the mix-up with the "profane“. In one paragraph Ekman even suggests that the violent events evolve from within the revival crowds:

In the spiritual dawn, like here, there is a lack of clear sight of things.\textsuperscript{109}

But Ekman still argues that the people who violently resisted the authorities stayed spiritual

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{106} Ekman, 1898, p. 947.
\textsuperscript{107} Ekman, 1898, p. 947.
\textsuperscript{108} Ekman, 1898, p. 939.
\textsuperscript{109} Ekman, 1898, p. 947.
\end{footnotesize}
when imprisoned, through prayer, bible reading and "a hallowed mind". At the same time Ekman describes the imprisoned Smedberg as a warning example and a fallen star, since he, according to Ekman, fell into drunkenness in the prison and seemingly left faith and died impoverished at the poorhouse.

In sum, Ekman's view of the outcome of events is that it represents an anomaly, a misstep or irregularity in the development of the revival movements that paved the way for the very movement that Ekman himself is a part of, and the one that he is conducting the history writing for.

5.4 Summary

Nerikes Allehanda describes the cause of the events as partly a contagion spreading from the south, and partly as due to unenlightenment among the peasantry. Furthermore, they argue that madness and fraud are at the core of the event, and that the use of violence should be "ordained" to avoid similar situations.

Ekman argues, in contrast, that the events start because of the great need for repentance from sin, and that the core of the events as a spiritual awakening. He concludes that the violence that erupts is a kind of anomaly to the revival, due to the intermixing of the “righteous” and the “profane”.

6 Discussion

6.1 Discourses in Turmoil

In the previous chapter I have analyzed and discussed different aspects of the story presented by both Nerikes Allehanda and Ekman. I will now continue to analyze the material from a different angle, looking at what Chatman views as the discourses of the narratives. There are two explicit framings emerging from the analysis of the material, a religious framing and a medical framing. In addition to these two explicit framings, I conclude this analysis that there is a third, implicit framing present in the material: a socio-political reading of the events.

110 Ekman, 1898, p. 953.
111 Ekman, 1898, p. 953.
6.2 The Religious Framing

The events in Kvistbro has since the end of the 1800s recurrently been called ”The War of Religion in Kvistbro”. ¹¹² But Nerikes Allehanda does not use this caption, they even generally avoid the question of religion, and especially the thought that the events would concern clashes between different religious mindsets. When they adhere to a religious framing, it is when the newspaper depicts the followers of Smedberg as ”fanatics”. Ekman, however, represents the opposite opinion. The Shouter Movement is a spiritual awakening, and The War of Religion in Kvistbro is an obstacle in the greater story of the revivalist movements' development.

Ekman speaks of the events in and around Kvistbro mainly in religious terms. Even though he sees the The War of Religion as an obstacle to the true revival, Ekman portrays the beginning of the events as an attack on spirituality from the authorities. He argues that the Shouter's cause for defense is righteous, but that their tactics are wrong; he warns about using worldly weapons in a spiritual battle.¹¹³

Since Ekman describes this as a battle of religion, one could wonder which religion he is referring to. Ekman mentions the Spirit as the mover of the people and that they sincerely are seeking God. This could be understood as a statement where Ekman argues that the true essence of religion is the ”inner life”, represented by the revivalists. One could therefore argue that Ekman is portraying the battle in Kvistbro as a battle between religion of ”inner life”, and those who are representing its enemies (the authorities). In sum, Ekman argues that true religion exist within the Shouter Movement, and that it is attacked from the outside.

Though Ekman considers the Kvistbro turmoil as mainly an attack from the authorities on pious people, he does however view the violent response from the revivalists as a mistake on their part. The collective violence is for Ekman an anomaly of the revival, an exception that proves the rule; that spiritual matters have nothing to do with ”worldly weapons”. This view of the events as an anomaly in the development of the revival in Sweden, reveals Ekman's problem with interpretations of the Christian tradition that causes rebellious behavior. Towards the end of his narrative, Ekman wrestles with the Shouters of his story, trying to convince the

¹¹² Ekman is likely the first one who uses this caption, but it gains great impact. Redelius, Carlsson, Aronsson and other writers on the events all use the term ”war of religion”. However, sometimes the caption is used with quotation marks.

¹¹³ Ekman, 1898, p. 953.
reader that the Bible neglects the idea of violent uprisings.

6.3 The Medical Framing

A disease seems to have infected the people.

– Quote from letter sent to Nerikes Allehanda, published July 8th 1843

In the material analyzed in this thesis, the newspaper Nerikes Allehanda is where a medical framing emerges most clearly. It is however not a pure motif, but rather a broad interpretation which struggles with competing perspectives about complete appropriation. The quotation above marks the fear of a contagion among the peasantry. In the very first article that Nerikes Allehanda publishes about the Shouter Movement, they use the term "preaching disease" and speak of it as an "epidemic". This is following the pattern from other regions in Sweden, where the Shouter Movement mainly has been seen as a contagious disease. However, there is a conflict within the first article, about whether the growing Shouter Movement should be seen as a disease or as unenlightenment, and there is a leaning towards the latter. The use of terms like "disease" and "epidemic" should rather be understood as metaphors, than as keys to a full interpretation. This is illustrated with the following, abridged, quote:

The enlightenment in Nerike is admittedly quite widespread, but it is not greater than that the peasantry [planned to attack the freemasons, and accused them for the abduction of] many people to deliver [them] for Hundturken[…]. The preaching disease should however not propagate at any particular speed, since it has probably had its day, and will eventually diminish like other epidemics.

The uncertainty of the phenomenon is due to the close relation at the time between the medical discourse and the Enlightenment. It is what might be seen as a discursive struggle; where on the one hand, the Shouters are the victims of a disease, and on the other, they are ignorants, who could be taught better. Since madness historically has been understood as more of a physical than a psychological state, this particular article reflects a transit period; it reveals a tension in the medical discourse between a physical illness and a psychological weakness.

114 Aronsson, 1989, p. 256.
115 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843a. Italics by me.
116 In line with this gradual reinterpretation, Foucault argues that the concept of madness has been treated differently within various historical contexts. The construction of the unbridgeable division between Reason and Madness constitutes the core of Foucault's analysis. According to Foucault, this division were fully pathologized during the 19th century, when it previously were treated in more moral terms. (Foucault, 1967,
This is also reflected in the argument of Aronsson, who states that one of two distinct contemporary views of the Shouter Movement in the 1840s is that it is a disease or medical condition. Contemporary reverends, governors and physicians in Småland all agree on this. Aronsson argues, however, that there is a discussion about whether the disease should be understood as neurological or psychological. The former is, according to Aronsson, argued to be a convulsive disorder named Chorea, where the patients becomes susceptible to religious fanaticism, and that the patients because of this can not be stopped with force, but needs to be medicated with anticonvulsants. There are also theories that argue that the rye flour has been infected with the fergus Claviceps purpurea, and thus is the cause of hallucinations and neurological symptoms.\(^{117}\) Aronsson continues to argue that there are those who hold a more psychological view, in other words: the Shouters are infected with a madness. The psychological view share the medical view of the symptoms, but is of another opinion on the causes of them, arguing that the essential predisposition is theomania and thus constitutes a mental illness.\(^{118}\)

In sum, Aronsson states that whatever opinion held in this debate, the overarching interpretation was that the Shouter Movement should be handled as a medical issue. The view of the religious deviation is thus transformed during the 1800s and becomes a "subject for the scientific gaze".\(^{119}\) The medical discourse could in this manner be understood as a new form of oppression of the growing social unrest that the Shouter Movement represents.

Alongside the medical discourse, Nerikes Allehanda occasionally depicts Smedberg and the Shouters as frauds.\(^{120}\) Worth noticing though, is that Nerikes Allehanda on one occasion disagrees with the view of Smedberg as a fraud, and rather depicts him as one who really believes in his own teachings.\(^{121}\) In relation to this, it can be argued that Nerikes Allehanda in some cases considers Smedberg and the Shouters as really infected with a disease that they can not get well from on their own.

The fraud motif and the medical discourse are not as present in Ekman's narrative, but he

\(^{117}\) Aronsson, 1990, p. 41.
\(^{118}\) Aronsson, 1990, p. 42.
\(^{119}\) Aronsson, 1990, p. 43.
\(^{120}\) This is more thoroughly discussed in the following section.
\(^{121}\) Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
expresses implications that the concept of hysteria or madness is present among the Shouters. The implications are however not coded in medical, but rather in fanatical religious terms. Like when Ekman states that the Shouters' sees Smedberg as a new Savior.\textsuperscript{122} An image that echoes the story in Nerikes Allehanda of the women drinking Smedberg's blood and calls it the "true Communion", and the people who kneels alongside the road when his carriage passes by.\textsuperscript{123} It is a concept of madness more related to fanaticism than to sickness, and thus something that is "chosen" by the people. The concept of chosen, or self-aware, madness should be understood in more political than medical terms, a theme that now will be explored in the following section.

6.4 A Socio-Political Reading

6.4.1 Medicine as Control

I expressed my wishes to listen to this supposedly mighty Prophet, but they replied that for such great sinners as Masters, he would not be heard.

– Quote from letter sent to Nerikes Allehanda, published July 15th 1843

In the analyzed material, there are implications of a possible third reading, alongside the religious and the medical framings. This reading is found rather in the subtext of the narrative than in the open text; what Chatman would call "the deep narrative".\textsuperscript{124} Aronsson argues that the upper strata, the authorities, interprets the actions and message of the Shouters in three ways: that it is religious (fanaticism), that it is a medical state or that it is animal magnetism.\textsuperscript{125} The two first categories are found in the material analyzed in this thesis. For Nerikes Allehanda, viewing the Shouters as suffering from a mental illness is the most common explanation. This could be seen as a way of reproducing power relations: 'the Shouters (and their message) are sick, we are healthy (and should therefore control the sick)'. This view of revivalism among the lower classes as mental illness was, according to Kristiansen, also present in early explanations of the Kautokeino Rebellion.\textsuperscript{126} In his studies of the Shouters, Aronsson suggests that there is a socio-political subtext in their message and actions. He frames this as a contraposition of the Shouters and their like-minded from the lower strata.

\textsuperscript{122}Ekman, 1898, p. 944.
\textsuperscript{123}Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
\textsuperscript{124}Chatman, 1978, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{125}Aronsson, 1989, 256f.
\textsuperscript{126}Kristiansen, 1999.
aimed towards the upper strata of the "Masters". According to Aronsson, the Shouters were presented in negative terms as superstitious or sick.\textsuperscript{127}

Following Aronsson, I argue for a complimentary category to the medical and the religious framings. I suggest that this category consists of suspiciousness towards the Shouters, and discussions whether they are really sick or if they are performers or fraudsters who know what they are doing. Nerikes Allehanda is oscillating between the medical framing and this fraud motif. Their initial stance is that the "shouting" is a medical state or mental deprivation ("unenlightenment"), but throughout the articles, the alternative idea that the Shouters are consciously making up their statements and faking their convulsions, is found in the subtext at a close reading. As shown above, Nerikes Allehanda retells episodes where Shouters have been caught "faking", and thus represents open mistrust of the Shouters' confessions. This reveals a view that the Shouters might be even more subversive than expected, a view that is amplified when unrest turns into violence in Kvistbro. Or as Aronsson puts it: "those who feel designated and accused by the message, suspect that the Shouters are not unaware or unaccountable for their actions".\textsuperscript{128}

I suggest that both unenlightenment and fraud are two components within a broader fraud motif. As stated above, the theme of unenlightenment, alongside the medical theme, is recurrent within the articles of Nerikes Allehanda. This is expressed most clearly in the episodes that depicts Smedberg as a fraud, for example in cheating the peasantry to gain material wealth (who therefore display their unenlightenment) and in spying beforehand to be able to make predictions and prophecies (to fool the auditors).\textsuperscript{129} But it is not only Smedberg and the more prominent Shouters who are portrayed as frauds, that is also true for persons who are only affected by the "convulsions". As discussed in section 5.2.3, the episode of the young girl who is threatened with violence and thus stops her convulsions, reveals Nerikes Allehanda's view of the Shouter Movement as seditious, as it has indications of being self-aware. The newspaper argues that the Shouter Movement is self-aware of its rebellious aspects, and should thus be stopped or threatened to be stopped, with violence. This makes the fraud motif a socio-political understanding presented by Nerikes Allehanda.

\textsuperscript{127}Aronsson, 1989, p. 248.
\textsuperscript{128}Aronsson, 1989, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{129}For example in Nerikes Allehanda, 1843c, 1843e, 1843f.
The fraud motif reveals that the medical framing of the Shouter Movement (and the events in Kvistbro) is doubted (but still used) by at least an important part of the upper strata (Nerikes Allehanda). Since a medical problem is generally treated with medical solutions and not with political violence, this indicates a discrepancy within the authorities' understanding of the Shouters; it reveals that the authorities considers the Shouter Movement as a subversive element. Thus, medicine is utilized by the authorities as a way to control the population and to prevent unrest, rather than to cure a disease.

Aronsson argues that the unaccountability that the Shouter's themselves claim, that the Holy Spirit is the one who works through them, is being incorporated into the authorities argument to stop the Shouters, when the medical framing is launched. Following Aronsson's argument, I suggest that the medical framing should be understood as a conscious exercise of control. In the Kvistbro events, there are dual fronts against the Shouters, one where they are seen as troublemakers and are being detained, and one where they are seen as mad and are being hospitalized. Both tactics result in the same outcome: the Shouters are removed from their social contexts.

6.4.2 Social Antagonism in Relation to Contemporary Stratification

Open aversion towards “the Masters” is recorded by both Nerikes Allehanda and Ekman. It is presented as being an integral part of the Shouters' message and in the peasantry's protection of the Shouters. I suggest that the fraud motif should be understood in relation to the lower strata's aversion of the upper strata. The “Shouting” could in this sense be seen as a weapon of the weak, to speak with Scott. According to the idea of the hidden transcript, where people criticizes the authorities in secrecy, the weapons of the weak are the expressions where these hidden transcripts surfaces, but still not as totally public expressions. Scott mentions sabotage of production means and pretending to work as examples of weapons of the weak. The Shouters' expressions of convulsions and judgmental preaching on greed and pride as implicit attacks on the upper strata, could similarly be seen as weapons of the weak, since the persons involved in the Shouter Movement likely are aware of the rebellious aspects of their actions.

This suggestion is supported by the eruption of open acts of violence, retold by both Nerikes

130 Aronsson, 1990, p. 43.
131 For example in Nerikes Allehanda, 1843c.
132 For example in Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f, and in Ekman, 1898, p. 949.
Allehanda and Ekman. Following Tilly, collective violence is politically created, motivated and driven. This view is applicable on the stories of the violent turmoil in and around Kvistbro during the summer of 1843. However, a few notes should be made when stating that the collective violence has political aspects. The presence of governmental agents is crucial to Tilly's theory of collective violence, either as attackers or objects of attack. In the story of Kvistbro, violence erupts after the authorities tries to seize the preacher Smedberg, and thus with force tries to stop the development of the Shouters. Governmental agents are thus at first attackers, but as soon as open conflict has started the positions are changed. As recaptured above, Nerikes Allehanda describes an event where a group of women arm themselves with fence posts, and attack several governmental officials to liberate Smedberg. To speak with Tilly, this could be understood as scattered attacks of collective violence.

Thus, the escalating conflict between the "peasantry" and the "masters" results in scattered attacks of violence from both sides. This process should be understood as beginning with the hidden transcripts of the lower strata (e.g. viewing the "masters" as extra sinful), followed by the use of a weapon of the weak (e.g. the "shouting") and peaking in collective violence through scattered attacks (e.g. the officials' arrest of Smedberg or the peasantry's liberating and defense of Smedberg). This process can be seen in both Nerikes Allehanda's and Ekman's narratives of the events, and constitutes the core of the socio-political reading.

6.4.3 The Question of Gender Within the Narratives

Nerikes Allehanda applies a gender-coded understanding to the events. The women are to some extent objectified as "agitated" by Smedberg, and depicted as "fanatics" when they kneel in front of him and drinks his blood as the "true Communion". The women are thus depicted as the blind followers of a man. I suggest that this gender-coding should be understood in relation to the severe marginalization of women at the time. Hedenborg argues that the proletarianization in Sweden was a process where violence towards farmhands and housemaids increased, since they moved further away from their homes, and the connection between families grew less significant. She argues that housemaids were occasionally raped by their

133 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
134 Ekman, on the other side, has a more indifferent attitude to the role of women in the narrative; he does not mention that the mob consists of women as Nerikes Allehanda does. He is aware of the story of the women, since he draws on the accounts of Nerikes Allehanda. This could mean that Ekman neglects the view that women played an active role during the early revivals.
masters while doing work at bigger farms. This reveals that there might be gender-coded aspects to the conflict in Kvistbro, but different to what Nerikes Allehanda suggests.

Furthermore, gendered-coded and "feminized" popular pathologization during the 19th century, like hysteria and neurasthenia could be seen as a concept of subjugation of women. This might be an explanation to why the authorities regarded the Shouter Movement as such a potential threat to social order. Karin Johannisson, professor in the history of ideas and science, summarizes this idea that: "a woman who lost ordinary control was considered more dangerous, more threatening than the man". This aspect is also reinforced by the narratives, both within the broader research on the Shouter Movement and within the material studied in this thesis, which frames women in the forefront of the Shouter Movement in general and in the Kvistbro events in particular. The women who violently liberates Smedberg are described by Nerikes Allehanda as female warriors, "amazons", thus depicting them as a threat to the prevailing order.

Aronsson states that one early Shouter, who was a housemaid, pointed out "sensual pleasure, greed, pride and drunkenness" as big sins. I suggest that there is a connection between Hedenborg's and Aronsson's arguments; a) that young women were violently and sexually abused, b) that women preached against a certain kind of sexuality and wealth, and c) that women collectively violently attacked "masters". In sum, I suggest that the prominent and active role that women had during the violent Kvistbro events, is connected to the broader social context of a violent patriarchy. In relation to the theories of Scott and Tilly, I suggest the Shouter Movement in general, and the events in Kvistbro in particular, could be understood as a way for marginalized women to make their voices heard.

6.4.4 The Subversiveness of Religion

Who are the attackers of the Kvistbro turmoil, and who is attacked? Ekman and Nerikes

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136 Johannisson, 2005, p. 158.
137 Johannisson, 2005, p. 146.
139 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
140 Aronsson, 1989, p. 252.
141 Nerikes Allehanda, 1843f.
Allehanda shares the same picture here, as discussed above; the authorities engage with violence to stop the spread of the Shouter Movement, and are consequently the first attackers in the turmoil. However, the violence does not seem to be directed at the peasantry in general, but rather at Smedberg and his fellow Shouter preachers. This provokes the peasantry, and violent counterattacks come in response.

Ekman argues that the intermixing of “righteous” people with the “profane” was one of the major road marks toward the violence in Kvistbro, and that the Kvistbro turmoil should be seen as an anomaly in the development of a long-lasting revival. However, this division of “profane” and “righteous” revivalists could be problematized from Ekman's own material, especially the quote of the man who claims that he has not broken any of God's laws (and indirectly questions the laws of government).\footnote{Ekman, 1898, p. 949.} This could be interpreted as antinomianism, following Wejryd's interpretation of the Erikjansonists burning of a law book. However, I suggest that it rather should be related to the events that follow, when the crowds attack the governmental agents in defense of their worldview. Here, I argue that the aversion against the "masters", and the cries that could be heard against them like "Kill the damn masters!" and "Down with the masters!",\footnote{These are mentioned by Redelius, 1935, p. 33.} should be seen as a part of an indivisible composition of a theological stance (antinomianism) and a political claim (anti-hierarchical action). I argue that the Shouters in Kvistbro differs from Ekman on this point, and that they are a representation of a worldview where religion and politics are not different objects, but rather aspects of one godly life.

\section{Conclusion}

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze how the turmoil in Kvistbro in 1843 was narrated by contemporary media and by representatives for other contemporary revivalist movements. To realize this I have utilized a narrative analysis and a theoretical framework based on theories concerning expressions of resistance. In this final section I will now briefly summarize the results of this study and identify possible future research.

In sum, as I argue in chapter six, the narrative analysis utilized in this thesis indicates that several nodes connect these to narratives to each other. Furthermore, my analysis evinces three
framings: an explicit religious framing, an explicit medical framing and an implicit socio-political reading. My analysis implies that the Shouter Movement and the events around them in Kvistbro in 1843, should be understood also within this socio-political reading. I argue in the previous chapter, that aversion towards the ”masters” in the stories indicates a conscious conflict between the ruled and the rulers. Alongside this, a medical framing is utilized by the authorities to control unrest, even though there are indications that this is not a case of a contagious disease. In the analysis in the previous chapter, I also suggest that the outbreak of violence should be politically understood; that both the authorities and the peasantry had political reasons for attacking each other. I also propose that hidden transcripts among the population in Kvistbro could be one of the reasons for the events. In addition to this, the analysis of the empiric material implies that pathologization of women could be a background for the violence of the authorities towards the Shouter Movement, and also that sexual, violent and economical oppression caused by the upper strata were responded to by women, by being at the forefront of the Shouter Movement in general, and the violent clashes with the authorities in particular.

Finally, the results of this study identifies possible future research within this field. The final of the four research questions of this thesis, asks how the narratives and the proposed reading of the Kvistbro events can contribute to the discussion on social aspects of religious conflicts. This question is partly answered by the finding that the Shouters in Kvistbro articulated a composition beyond (or before) the (modern) divisional reading of religion and politics. However, there are openings toward future research implied in these findings as well. First, this opens up a new question, whether political uprising could be seen as an integral part Christian theology. This has obvious dogmatic inclinations, but could also be discussed within the field of sociology of religion. Second, the events in Kvistbro can be researched further by a close reading of the court protocols and the narrative of the judiciary system. And third, there are more research to be done on the role of women in social struggle and revilalist history. Finally, this analysis opens for more future research in the field of revilalist history in Sweden and its connections to social unrest, and the negotiating of modernity within the shift between the agrarian and the industrialized Swedish state.
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