2. WHOSE REPRESSED MEMORIES? *MAX MANUS: MAN OF WAR* AND *FLAME & CITRON* (FROM A SWEDE'S POINT OF VIEW)

Erik Hedling

In 2008, both Norway and Denmark delivered major contributions to the cinematic genre of the 'occupation drama' (Norwegian), or 'occupation film' (Danish): the Norwegian film was *Max Manus: Man of War* (*Max Manus*, Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg, 2008) and the Danish *Flame & Citron* (*Flammen og citronen*, Ole Christian Madsen, 2008). In Scandinavia, these generic markers refer to many films set during the Second World War and depicting the fates of Danes and Norwegians in the years 1940–5, when their respective countries were occupied by Nazi Germany. Thus, both Norway and Denmark eventually came to be on the victorious allied side of the war.

The other Nordic countries had different obligations. Finland was between 1941 and 1944 fighting on the side of Nazi Germany in a savage war against the Soviet Union. This struggle was bound to be lost, and Finland came to switch sides in 1944, making peace with the Soviets and agreeing to evict a German army in northern Finland by military force.[1] Sweden, most importantly in the present context, was neutral and kept its independence throughout the war. This chapter will study how *Max Manus: Man of War* and *Flame & Citron* can be understood in a Swedish context, referring to Swedish history during the war, textual analyses of mainly the scenes from Sweden in the films, and the reception of the films in Sweden. That is, I analyse Norwegian and Danish perceptions of Sweden during the war, but strictly from a Swede's point of view.

It should be noted that films about the occupation of Norway and Denmark have been very common particularly in Norway, where the occupation drama

has flourished and evolved in the cinema since 1946, including classics like the docudrama *Kampen om tungtvannet* (Titus Vibe-Müller and Jean Dréville, 1948) and the artistically refined *Kalde spor* (Arne Skouen, 1962) (Iversen 2011: 145–55). In Denmark, the first occupation film, *Den usynlige hær* (Johan Jacobsen, 1945) came shortly after the liberation, and the genre peaked in the early 1990s, with films like *Drengene fra Sankt Petri* (Søren Kragh-Jacobsen, 1991) (Schepelern, 2001: 136, 327). Few films, however, can match the domestic successes of *Max Manus: Man of War* or *Flame & Citron*.

Sweden's Relations with Norway and Denmark during the War

Research on Swedish actions during the Second World War has become more accessible lately due to several modern scholarly projects being summarised in a single volume written by Swedish historian Klas Åmark; the title of the book can be translated as 'To Be Neighbour with Evil: Sweden's Relationship to Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust' (Åmark 2011). This chapter will need some recounting of history, and here this will be based on Åmark's insights.

On 9 April 1940 Denmark and Norway were attacked and occupied by Nazi Germany in Operation Weserübung. The aim was to seal off Scandinavia, particularly the northern Swedish iron ore fields, on which the German war effort at this stage was dependent, and especially the sea route from the ice-free shipping harbour at Narvik, from where the iron ore was shipped to Germany in the winter season. Denmark capitulated more or less immediately; Norway resisted for a while, particularly in the sensitive Narvik area, where the Norwegians were aided by the British fleet as well as by allied ground troops.

Operation Weserübung caused shock not only in Norway and Denmark, but also in Sweden. Since Narvik was inaccessible by land from inside Norway, and the British navy blockaded the harbour from the sea, the best way to send German reinforcements was by train through Sweden. The Germans demanded three political concessions from the Swedish government: not to organise a corps of Swedish volunteers to go to Norway to fight against the Germans (as the Swedes had done to help the Finns against the Soviets in 1939), not to mobilise its armed forces, and to allow for German transits by Swedish rail to Norway.

Sweden conceded, but not entirely. The army was indeed partly mobilised and Sweden also challenged the idea of transiting German soldiers to Norway while there was still fighting going on. In the end Germany did send war materials and soldiers to the battle zone, disguised as 'humanitarian aid'. When the Germans had successfully concluded the fighting in June 1940, and Norway was fully occupied, regular transit traffic of soldiers on leave from Norway through Sweden, where the Germans kept more than 400,000 men, became

the norm. This traffic was to last until the autumn of 1943, when Sweden stopped it (that is, in the wake of the German defeats against the allies at Kursk and in Sicily).

Obviously, the transit traffic was in breach of international conventions regarding neutrality, but the Swedes also tried to give the Norwegians some assistance, receiving more refugees from Norway than from any other country. And the Norwegian Legation at Stockholm was the very centre of coordination between the Norwegian government in exile in London and the resistance movement. But here Åmark notes:

> The Norwegian resistance movement in Sweden also cooperated with the British Special Operations Executive, SOE. But Swedish police closely monitored this activity. During the war years nearly four hundred Norwegians were convicted of spying or of illegal intelligence gathering because of their providing information to the British about the state in Norway . . . The general pattern is obvious. At the beginning of the war, the government [of Sweden] was quite harsh when dealing with Norwegian activities on Swedish soil aimed against Nazi Germany. Eventually, the resistance movement became stronger, bolder and more efficient. (Åmark 2011: 578–9)

In some cases, however, Sweden played a more positive role regarding both Norway and Denmark. This pertained to the Jews, where Sweden had had a very restrictive immigration policy up until 1943 (hardly any Jews had had the opportunity to enter Sweden after the outbreak of war in September 1939). In the autumn of 1942, the Germans started the round-up of Norwegian Jews and 770 were sent to Auschwitz for extermination; however, 1,100 escaped to Sweden. Åmark states that: 'The major rescue mission was performed on the Norwegian side by the Home Front and other Norwegians who helped Jews cross the border to Sweden' (2011: 536). In Denmark, the rumours of the mass arrest of Jews in October 1943 leaked out before the arrests were implemented, making it possible for about 7,900 Jews to escape across the strait from Denmark to Sweden.[2]

Finally, one might add that Sweden, after 1943, when many politicians realised German collapse was imminent, set up and trained special police forces consisting of Norwegians and Danes, ready to keep order after the German defeat. They also established the White Buses in the spring of 1945, a Scandinavian help scheme fronted by Swedish diplomat Count Folke Bernadotte, a relative of the Swedish king, to get Scandinavian prisoners out of the concentration camp system (prisoners of many other nationalities also made it to Sweden on the buses). In general, though, Åmark in his final chapter – called 'The Moral Dilemma of Neutrality' ('Neutralitetens moraliska dilemma') – stresses the

generally ambiguous stance of the Swedish government in the war years: it had not much stamina against the Germans up to the turn of the tide in 1943, but it did gradually take a stand afterwards (Åmark 2011: 641–74).

Max's Holidays in Sweden

Max Manus: Man of War, which opened in Norway on 18 December 2008, is a classically narrated war film, an occupation drama and a biopic based on historical events, depicting the actions of real Norwegian war hero Max Manus between 1940 and 1945. The second two-thirds of the film show Max's successful sabotage actions against the Germans after 1943. The beginning portrays how Max sees action on the Salla front in Finland in March 1940, having volunteered to fight the Soviet invaders, as did several other people from the Nordic countries. The rest of the film depicts him as a victim of post-traumatic stress disorder, which is further complicated by the deaths of several of his co-fighters – the so called 'Oslogjengen' – in the Norwegian resistance against the German occupation. Max turns gradually to drink in order to relieve his pains and the information supplied at the end of the film tells us that he suffered from alcoholism and problems with his nerves for the rest of his life.

Max Manus has been much discussed primarily in Norway where the film, according to Norwegian film historians Gunnar Iversen and Ove Solum, had been seen by nearly 1.2 million people by the spring of 2009, one of the highest audience figures for a domestic film ever in Norway, and it was also an overwhelming success on DVD (Iversen and Solum 2010: 299). One needs to take into consideration Norway's 5 million population in order to appreciate the film's enormous popularity. Iversen and Solum also provide the most thorough close reading of the film, emphasising the film as masculinity spectacle, a boys' adventure (not least in the shape of main actor Aksel Hennie's adolescent looks) and as a provider of a strong sense of national identity; *Max Manus* is a didactic presentation of Norway's role as one of the victors of the Second World War (Iversen and Solum 2010: 309–14).

But Iversen and Solum also address the more problematic aspects of the film as a representation of history: for instance, the lack of representation of ordinary Norwegian people and their lives under the occupation (Iversen and Solum 2010: 304–5). Many, many Norwegians were even collaborators, but in *Max Manus*, they are only hinted at, most strikingly in the character of Solveig Johnsrud (Victoria Winge), who becomes the mistress of the villain of the film, SS-Hauptsturmführer Siegfried Fehmer (at least partly sympathetically played by German actor Ken Duken), the head of the Gestapo in Oslo.[3] What could have happened to a girl who hobnobbed with the Gestapo after the war? No answer is provided in the film where she is just left out at the end.[4] In his review in *Sight & Sound*, Guy Westwell sums up the general strategy in *Max Manus*:

Figure 2.1 *Max Manus*: An idyllic image of the Stockholm City Hall showing that Sweden is also prepared for war.

'Norway has produced a pasteurised, thoroughly conventional war movie that offers the audience the easy pleasures of individual heroism, personal redemption and nationalist reassurance' (Westwell, 2009: 72). One of the obviously repressed dimensions that Westwell emphasises is the fact that the freighter *Donau* that Max and his compatriots sabotage was the very ship in which a substantial part of the Norwegian Jews were sent to their destruction in the concentration camps. There is no mention whatsoever in the film of this event, or any general reference to the fact that one of the most striking aspects of Nazism was its murderous anti-Semitism. The persecution of Jews could indeed, as stated, be seen also in Norway during the war.

My primary interest here, however, is the references to Sweden in the film. Max visits Stockholm no less than four times in the film and several minutes of precious screen time are spent there, in fact more than 14 out of a total 117. The first time is after the completion of Operation Mardonius in Oslo harbour on 27 April 1943, where Max and his compatriots blow up several German ships. Realistically, they are afterwards depicted as walking over the Norwegian–Swedish border, and they then presumably take a train to Stockholm. The entrance into Sweden is somewhat romantically highlighted when Max tells his colleague, 'That, my friend, is Sweden', as they pass a pathway among birch trees.

The first image of Stockholm is iconic: the City Hall in bright sunlight with the south side of the town in the background; a tram passes the bridge which also contains a platoon of Swedish soldiers, signalling that Sweden was also mobilised at the time. At the British Consulate, Tikken (Agnes Kittelsen),

who eventually becomes Max's lover and his future wife, supplies them with various items of military equipment, but also with whiskey and cigarettes. Later, they go to a restaurant where they drink red wine; the table is adorned with a yellow rose (one part of the Swedish blue and yellow colours – the blue is provided by the tram at the beginning of the sequence). All this is important, since wartime Stockholm is described as a beautiful haven. This idyllic depiction reappears in Max's further visits (or refuges from the Oslo heat). Max, Ticken and Max's co-fighter Gregers Gram (Nicolai Cleve Broch), who is later killed in action in Norway, visit another restaurant where they drink champagne and cognac; the yellow rose is there once again, and the blue tram can be seen in the beautiful establishing shot of Nybroplan (just in front of an invisible Royal Dramatic Theatre). Later, they end up in a smart apartment with a chandelier, drinking and dancing into the small hours. Stockholm is the site of relief from the terrible burdens of a resistance fighter, even providing lavish hospital care after Max later accidentally shoots himself in Oslo. 'You can be safe here', Tikken reassures Max, trying to prevent him from returning to Norway prematurely.

The stylish Stockholm imagery in *Max Manus: Man of War* is dramatically at odds with the sordid depiction of the Swedish capital at the time by Swedish author Ola Larsmo, who specialises in historical narratives, in the recent novel *Förrädare* – in English 'Traitors' (Larsmo 2012). Larsmo here tells the story of the work of the Swedish military intelligence during the war, like the country at large deeply divided in its moral stance against the belligerents. Several of the officers had been volunteers in the struggle against communism in the Finnish civil war of 1918, and they are shown as sympathisers of Nazi Germany, betraying Norwegian resistance fighters seeking refuge in Sweden to the Germans; in some cases the Norwegians end up on the guillotine in Hamburg. Larsmo tells about Max Manus's first visit to Stockholm in April 1941, which is not shown in the film. The Swedish authorities were indeed interested in Max Manus, who had then escaped from a hospital in Oslo, after having been arrested by the Gestapo. Larsmo has located an authentic memo written to the police by a civil servant at the National Board of Health and Welfare, the authority handling all foreign refugees in Sweden at the time, in which it was stated:

> The Norwegian citizen Max Manus . . . has applied for a visa . . . According to the Norwegian Police Bulletin . . . Manus is wanted under A-2 as being a dangerous person, who might employ armed weapons if he is arrested. He is wanted for several crimes, among them violent assault . . . Close surveillance is requested and an eventual arrest should be reported to the Head of the State Police in Oslo . . . Manus's emergency visa and applications are enclosed and are expected back along with due investigation. (Larsmo 2012: 281)

A report to the Norwegian police at the time was of course the same as reporting to the Gestapo. Even if the Swedish authorities to a certain extent must have permitted the Norwegian resistance to operate on Swedish soil, the sheer bliss of the visits to Stockholm in *Max Manus: Man of War* is under all circumstances somewhat exaggerated, or at least biased. Indeed, there were strong forces in Sweden who disagreed with what the Norwegian resistance fighters were doing. A striking example of this is that the Commander-in-Chief of the Swedish armed forces, General Olof Thörnell, forcefully advocated an active Swedish intervention on the side of the Finns against the Soviet Union: that is, on the side of Nazi Germany (Åmark 2011: 125).

Bent and Jørgen under Surveillance in Sweden

Flame & Citron had its premiere in Denmark on 28 March 2008. Generically this film is similar to *Max Manus: Man of War* – war film, occupation film, biopic – but it is narrated in a different mode, derived from the ambiguities typical of European art cinema. In her review of the film in *Sight & Sound*, Kate Stables characteristically refers to the influence from French director Jean-Pierre Melville, whose *Army of Shadows* (*L'armée des ombres*, 1969) is one of the classics of the genre (Stables 2009: 57).

Bent Farschou-Hviid (Flame, played by Thure Lindhardt) and Jørgen Haagen Schmidt (Citron, Mads Mikkelsen) are two-real life hitmen, working for the resistance group Holger Danske, assassinating various collaborators and informants during the war. Like Max Manus, they are depicted as victims of their trade, suffering severe psychological strains. Their boss is the prosecutor Aksel Winther (Peter Mygind; Winther's real name was Vilhelm

Figure 2.2 *Flame & Citron*: The old town in Stockholm with the German church towering in the middle. Image courtesy of Nimbus Film Productions.

Leifer), who provides them with their murderous missions. Gradually Bent and Jørgen becomes entangled in a haze of mystery regarding why they are asked to assassinate certain people – are those people really guilty of collaboration, or is Winther following a trajectory of personal revenge? The film does not provide clear answers to all our questions and in the end the two protagonists die as a result of betrayal by the mysterious Ketty Selmer (Stine Stengade). She is paid the reward money by one of her lovers, the head of Copenhagen Gestapo, SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Heinz Hoffmann. He is another sympathetic German murderer, covering the bodies of Bent and Jørgen as the other German policemen desecrate the corpses when they are brought back to headquarters after having been killed; interestingly, Hoffmann is played by German actor Christian Berkel who was also the good Nazi – the SS doctor Ernst-Günther Schenk – in Oliver Hirschbiegel's controversial *Downfall* (*Der Untergang*, 2004), and one of the heroic conspirators, Colonel Mertz von Quirnheim, against Hitler in *Valkyrie* (Bryan Singer, 2008).[5]

Controversy also hit *Flame & Citron*, Denmark's most expensive film ever, but according to official Danish statistics it attracted 673,764 people to the cinemas, and was thus a smash hit in the domestic market. The debate regarding the film was massive, however, and a major reason, I suspect, why there is as yet no thorough academic study of the film (which would have to take into consideration a huge amount of newspaper articles). In short, the debate concerned the usual question of historical accuracy: for instance, whether Ketty Selmer really was a double agent and whether she, as indicated in the film, framed Flame, causing his death, and whether Winther really ordered the murders of innocent people (Fredensborg 2008). But generally, *Flame & Citron* is a film that problematises history, and of course it would cause some consternation since it depicts two posthumously highly-decorated war heroes performing – possibly – more or less meaningless deeds in the struggle against the German occupier. The film is also less ethnocentric than *Max Manus: Man of War* in that it portrays the nasty Danish collaborators, the so-called Schalburg Corps, used as auxiliary police by the Germans. It also refers explicitly to the Holocaust, in that Flame's motive for becoming a man of the resistance, as Swedish historian Ulf Zander has pointed out, has to do with his personal experience of the persecution of Jews in Germany (Zander 2011: 218).

Like Max Manus, Flame and Citron travel to Stockholm in the film, even twice, and in the final scene we see Ketty Selmer arriving at the Stockholm central station, ambiguously meeting with one of the heads of Danish military intelligence. In all, more than ten and a half minutes (of a total of 130) are set in Stockholm. This time the journey is not to hide out in a haven, however, but to receive orders from various superiors, including the shady Winther. As in *Max Manus: Man of War*, Stockholm is introduced by a touristy and sunlit establishing shot of the old town (here created by digital means). We

can clearly discern the German church 'Tyska kyrkan', maybe coincidental, but to me a sign of German–Swedish connections. Flame, Citron and their superiors meet in restaurants, not the cosy ones in *Max Manus: Man of War*, but rather a large room with a single table and several waiters (far more than needed) walking around. I am not sure whether I read this as a realistically staged scene. Rather the many people constantly walking about seem to make for a theatrically inspired symbol for Stockholm as meeting point of various national interests (which it was, with all its embassies and legations). The fare served, however, is particularly lavish: white wine, pineapple, strawberries and crayfish, the latter being a Swedish speciality, signifying the luxuriousness of keeping out of the war, of being neutral.

One scene in Stockholm is particularly striking. By a hotel room window, Flame spots three men in long coats on the street. Winther informs him that they are Swedish security police and that they are scared of Flame, and that they fear that Flame will shoot somebody on Swedish soil. 'They don't want problems with their German friends', Winther adds laconically, thus explicitly expressing his opinion of the Swedes as German fellow travellers. Even if, as Larsmo indicated, it is realistic that Swedish security forces closely guarded resistance fighters when they were in Sweden, it is a bit late – the scene takes place in 1944 – to accuse the Swedes of harbouring such blatant pro-Nazi sentiments. The tide had in reality turned.

The most significant connection to Stockholm in the film, however, is the presumed traitor Ketty Selmer. She is married to a Swede, travels back and forth between Sweden and Copenhagen, and in the end is seen arriving one final time in Stockholm, after selling out Flame to the Gestapo. We have, then, quite a different portrayal of Sweden in *Flame & Citron* from that in *Max Manus: Man of War*. Whereas in the latter film it was reassuring and soothing, in the former it is treacherous and evasive.

Bleak Swedish Receptions

Max Manus: Man of War was certainly no hit in Sweden, as it had been in Norway. According to the Lumiere database, only 7,923 tickets were sold at the Swedish box office when the film was released in May 2009. Obviously, the Swedish audience was not interested in a film about Norway during the war. Taking the extremely modest box office returns of the film in Sweden, it feels particularly ironic that Aksel Hennie, the actor playing Max, gave an interview to the Swedish press just before the premiere. Here, he expressed his great expectations:

> If Sweden had not been neutral they [the Norwegian men of the resistance] would not have been able to sabotage. Sweden was of vital significance

> to the resistance fighters. Trikken was in Sweden. That is where they found their love and it was thanks to Sweden that it survived. To me it is really something that Max Manus will be shown in Sweden. To me, Sweden provides an inspirational model regarding cinema. (Gentele 2009)

The Swedes did not appear to share his enthusiasm.

The film did however receive a lot of press coverage, although very little offered any comments regarding the depiction of Sweden in the film. One critic refers to a theory that *Max Manus: Man of War* probably opened in Sweden because of its connection to Swedish history (Engström 2009). Critics, however, were as lukewarm as the general audience. The highly experienced Jan Aghed in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* compared the film to a series of great occupation dramas, like Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (*Roma, città aperta*, 1945), Andrzej Wajda's *Kanal* (1957) and Melville's *Army of Shadows*, adding ironically: 'Only a blinded Norwegian patriot would get the idea to put the film in the earlier mentioned company' (Aghed 2009). And in the Stockholm major *Dagens Nyheter*, Eva af Geijerstam is mildly affirmative, although she complains about the need for jingoistic stories in Norway; Max and his friends will, however, she adds, come as a surprise to Swedish youth (Geijerstam 2009). The other Stockholm daily, *Svenska Dagbladet*, dismissed the film as an over-the-top generic mix (Janson 2009).

The most comprehensive part of the reception of *Max Manus: Man of War* in Sweden consists of two scholarly essays written by the earlier mentioned Ulf Zander, who has addressed the film in a comparative analysis along with *Flame & Citron* (Zander 2011: 207–25, Karlsson and Zander 2012: 173–86). Zander does mention the cool reception of *Max Manus* in Sweden, and puts emphasis on the very different apprehensions of the Second World War in the Nordic countries. Sweden, he claims, adopted neutrality after 1945 as a 'state of mind' (quoting Swedish historian Alf W. Johansson) (Zander, 2011: 215), that is, as I understand it, neutrality as something of an inherently superior stance. Zander also refers to the vivid public debates regarding neutrality during the war in Sweden in the 1990s, concluding that: 'The fact that the Swedes once and for all have dealt with injustices of the past has been an invitation to revive the notion of Sweden as a moral example' (Karlsson and Zander 2012: 183). This might have something to do with the lack of interest in Norwegians fighting during the war.

The only Swedish text that I have found that deals explicitly with the depiction of Sweden in *Max Manus: Man of War* is a teaching guide published by the Swedish Film Institute (Lagerström 2009: 4–5). Here, Sweden's role of provider is emphasised – it was because of the Swedish willingness to submit neutral ground for the Norwegian Legation and the British Consulate that espionage and intelligence work could be pursued (Lagerström 2009: 4). Also,

Lagerström underlines the fact that Swedish people along the border helped the Norwegians, often risking their own lives. But she does also problematise Swedish concessions to Nazi Germany: the transit trains, the submission of air and water space, and the export of iron ore. One can conclude that *Max Manus: Man of War* at least had some kind of reception in Sweden, in the sense that it was quite widely written about in spite of its poor performance at the Swedish box office.

Flame & Citron did not manage at all. The film was never distributed in Swedish cinemas, and accordingly was not even reviewed in the press. It was, however, shown on television in three episodes. The reason for not distributing *Flame & Citron*, besides a general disinterest in our fellow Danes' ordeal, had, I think, to do with its art cinema traits. The narration of the film is certainly convoluted, a fact that could have frightened off potential distributors. I have not seen any references to the negative depiction of Sweden in the film, just a very brief mention about the production that parts of the film were set in Stockholm (Anon. 2006).

Still, it is somewhat odd, taking the film's lavish production values into consideration. As most film scholars in Scandinavia should know, Nordic films, even domestically successful ones, do not generally perform well in the other Nordic countries. An exception here concerns certain Danish art films, like the films of Susanne Bier, which can be highly appreciated in Sweden, sometimes reaching an audience of 100,000. Very little was written in the press on the matter. One critic openly complained about Swedish distributors choosing not to release the film (Malmberg 2009). Another critic has obviously misunderstood the mode of art cinema narration in a very short review of the film as it was shown at a festival, complaining about superficiality as well as lack of motivation in the protagonists (Domellöf-Wik 2009). The most sympathetic writing on *Flame & Citron* in Sweden, besides the analyses by Zander, is a very short review of the television mini-series by historian Fredrik Persson. Here, Persson applauds the strategy of questioning the resistance in the film, and the challenge it poses to the dominant heroic tale in Denmark (Persson 2010).

There is actually not much more to find about the film in Sweden, except for a few interviews and some basic background to the film (like Oscarsson 2009). But, as stated, the film did not perform at all in the Swedish cinema market.

Some Concluding Remarks

Why, then, this monumental disinterest in Sweden for the fate of our Scandinavian neighbours, especially as this concerns two films that from a reasonably objective point of view must be regarded as proficient in terms of technical prowess, acting and scripting? My personal favourite is *Flame &*

Citron precisely because of its ambiguity and its superb actors. Beside the realistic motivation for the inclusion of Stockholm in the films, this also displayed a commercial pretention: with Sweden being used as a setting, Swedes could possibly be attracted to the films, which is particularly obvious in *Max Manus: Man of War*, with its idyllic representation of the Swedish capital. But in this case it did not work.

The fact that *Max Manus: Man of War* and not *Flame & Citron* was shown in the cinemas also reveals that Sweden is more concerned with Norway than with Denmark, which could have to do with the fact that Norway was governed by Sweden between 1814 and 1905. Also, Norway is closer to the Swedish capital than Denmark (this would not be true for southern Sweden, though, as it has had close cultural affinities with Denmark ever since Sweden conquered it in 1658). And presumably contacts between the countries during the Second World War were more intense between Sweden and Norway, as is also indicated by Åmark's book.

But as Zander claimed, there might also be a feeling of moral superiority in Sweden, a sense that neutrality was the only way when the big powers clashed during the Second World War. In this regard, some very interesting remarks on the two films were published a short time ago by highly lauded Swedish author Elisabeth Åsbrink in *Dagens Nyheter*, Sweden's largest morning newspaper. Åsbrink has achieved fame by unveiling Swedish capitalist Ingvar Kamprad (the creator of Swedish furniture giant IKEA) as a former Nazi. Åsbrink dismisses these two films out of hand as propaganda for two seemingly victorious countries, when, as she claims, in reality neither Norway nor Denmark put up any serious resistance to the German invader. Regarding *Flame & Citron* she maintains that it appealed strongly to an idealistic Danish self-image and that the Danish audience 'responded with love and ticket purchases' (Åsbrink 2012). This remark makes me conclude that she has not seen the latter film. And in the case of Norway, why did the Germans keep an occupation army of 400,000 men – towards the end of the war, troops badly needed elsewhere – if there was no resistance?

Even if Åsbrink generally displays a highly critical approach also to Sweden, she is clearly on dangerous ground moralising about Norway and Denmark with historical hindsight. One really needs to try to imagine what all those people really thought before they acted more than seventy years ago before jumping to conclusions. But she definitely illustrates a Swedish stance, perhaps even an image of moral superiority, as if Norway and Denmark had a choice. Obviously, we Swedes do not want to hear much about Norway and Denmark during the war, even if we are duly invited by our neighbours including scenes from our country in their films about the war. I am not sure that we are that keen to hear about ourselves either, even if the debate about Sweden's role during the Second World War is still ongoing. So if *Max Manus: Man of War*

and *Flame & Citron* somehow represent repressed memories of the war, these are also memories integral to Sweden.

Notes

1. Finland also makes films about this period but they are obviously not occupation dramas, rather war films, some of them quite remarkable ones like *Ambush* (*Rukajärven tie*, Olli Saarela, 1999).
2. Here, however, a well-established theory claims that SS-Obergruppenführer Dr Werner Best, Plenipotentiary of the Nazi regime in occupied Denmark, consciously made this mass escape possible in order to improve German relations with the Danes (Åmark 2011: 538).
3. Fehmer is according to contemporary conventions depicted as a charming, friendly but still deadly person, particularly keen on Norwegian women, as was reputedly the case with the real-life Fehmer, eventually executed for war crimes in 1948 in Oslo. Regarding the contemporary conventions, I am here thinking of films like *Conspiracy* (Frank Pierson, 2001), where Kenneth Branagh convincingly portrays SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich as a man whose malicious power clearly derives from his highly developed social skills, even when condemning millions to death, as he did at the Wannsee meeting in 1942. Another example of this type of outwardly sympathetic Nazi is Sebastian Koch as SS-Hauptsturmführer Ludwig Müntze in the Dutch occupation drama *Black Book* (*Zwartboek*, Paul Verhoeven, 2006). Depicting Nazis as thugs, which has been the cinematic code, is often a bit too facile.
4. An article on the Internet about a Norwegian woman called Anne Marie Breien describes her as both Fehmer's mistress and as a hero of the resistance. According to her story, she had a long affair with Fehmer in order, first, to get her father, a man of the resistance, out of the Gestapo's claws. She continued to provide information to the resistance, but was nevertheless charged with treason after the war. Even if she was never condemned, she apparently had to live with rumours of her treachery, in spite of resistance people vouching for her innocence. See <http://www.side3.no/article3340091.ece#>, accessed 20 December 2013.
5. It could be added that the real-life Hoffmann was condemned to death in Copenhagen after the war; the death sentence, however, was commuted to a prison sentence.

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