



Limitation and Liberation  
Women Writers and the Politics of Genre

Edited by Åsa Johansson and Petra Ragnerstam

Uppsala  
Skrifter från Centrum för genusvetenskap, Uppsala universitet 1  
2005

ISBN: 91-975680-0-7

© The contributors and Centrum för genusvetenskap, Uppsala universitet 2005  
All rights reserved.

Cover illustration by Anki Carlsson  
Layout cover by Örjan Folcke  
Layout by Carina Laukkanen, Lajodesign&layout  
Printed in Sweden by Intellecta Docusys AB, Nacka, 2005

Contact:  
Centrum för genusvetenskap  
Thunbergsvägen 3 H  
Box 634, 751 26 Uppsala  
Phone: 018-471 22 77  
Fax: 018-471 35 70  
[www.gender.uu.se](http://www.gender.uu.se)  
[anneli.wennstrom@gender.uu.se](mailto:anneli.wennstrom@gender.uu.se)

# Limitation and Liberation

Women Writers and the Politics of Genre

Edited by Åsa Johansson and Petra Ragnerstam

Skrifter från Centrum för genusvetenskap,  
Uppsala universitet 1  
Uppsala 2005



*Limitation and Liberation: Women Writers and the Politics of Genre* is the first volume published in the series *Skrifter från Centrum för genusvetenskap*. The articles discuss women writers and how their work help us to rethink genre and literary history. The aim of the series is to promote new and challenging research in gender studies. Reports from seminars and conferences held at The Centre for Gender Research will regularly be published in the series. It will also be a forum for scholars at the Centre to publish their work.

*Skrifter från Centrum för genusvetenskap* wants to reflect the development in gender research and further cross disciplinary perspectives. There is an ongoing discussion among scholars at the Centre on how to establish new connections between gender research in the social sciences, the humanities and medicine and science. *Skrifter från Centrum för genusvetenskap* will also be a forum for that dialogue.

The Centre for Gender Research, the English Department and the Department of Literature have contributed financially to this volume.

**Margaretha Fahlgren,  
professor and director of The Centre for Gender Research**

AnnaCarin Billing's article "Novellgenren, den kvinnliga författaren och litteraturhistorieskrivningen" is a reworking of parts of her dissertation *Hvad er sannhet? Studier i Cora Sandels novellistik (What is Truth? Studies in Cora Sandel's Short Fiction)*. Oslo 2002. Diss. Uppsala 2002.

Jenny Björklund's article "Kärlekens mystik. Rut Hillarp och det litterära fyrtioalet" is a reworking of a chapter in her dissertation *Hoppets lyrik: Tre diktare och en ny bild av fyrtioalisten – Ella Hillbäck, Rut Hillarp, Ann Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg (The Poetry of Hope: Three Poets and a New Conception of the Swedish Modernist Movement of the 1940s. Ella Hillbäck, Rut Hillarp, Ann Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg)*. Eslöv 2004. Diss. Uppsala 2004.

Anna Nordlund's article "Selma Lagerlöf's 'Outcast' Novel – a Novel of Ideas Concerning Her Aesthetics" is printed by permission of *Scandinavian Studies*. The article is an excerpt of the substantially longer article "Corpses, Curses, and Cannibalism. Containment and excess in Selma Lagerlöf's *Bannlyst* and Its Reception", published in *Scandinavian Studies* 2 (2004), Scandinavian Women Writers. Contemporary Critical Approaches.

Petra Ragnerstam's article "*Lucy Church Amiably*. Nonsense and the Production of Meaning" is a reworking of her chapter on Stein in her thesis *Subject Language Ideology: The Politics of Representation in Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse, Djuna Barnes's Nightwood and Gertude Stein's Lucy Church Amiably*. Lund, 2004. Diss. Lund 2004.

Helena Wahlström's article "'A Little Liberation' or just Transportation?: Female Picaresque and Anne Roiphe's Long Division" has previously appeared in *Collusion and Resistance: Women Writing in English*, Ed. Kerstin W. Shands, Stockholm: Södertörn English Studies 1, 2002, and is printed by permission from Kerstin W. Shands and Södertörns högskola.

# Contents

Petra Ragnerstam Introduction

## **Part 1: Genre Intervention**

Susan Donaldson "Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Realism, and Literary Debates on Changing Gender Roles"

Jenny Björklund "Kärlekens Mystik. Rut Hillarp och det litterära fyrtioalet"

Jenny Bonnevier "Drawing a Line: Science Fiction or Fantasy? The Case of Ursula Le Guin's Always Coming Home"

Marta Ronne "'The Mind and Body Problem': Academy, Gender and Power In Women's Contemporary Dissertation Novels"

## **Part 2: Genre Invention**

Anna Linzie "Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas and The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas"  
Petra Ragnerstam "Lucy Church Amiably: Nonsense and the Production of Meaning"  
Anna Nordlund "Selma Lagerlöfs 'Outcast'

Novel: a Novel of Ideas Concerning Her Aesthetics"

Helena Wahlström "'A Little Liberation' or Just Transportation?: Female Picaresque and Anne Roiphe's Long Division"

## **Part 3: The Production of Literary History**

Ann Öhrberg "Att skriva kvinnolitteraturhistoria"

AnnaCarin Billing "Novellgenren, den kvinnliga författaren och litteraturhistorie-skrivningen. Exemplet Cora Sandel"  
Chatarina Edfeldt "The 'Other' Feminist: the Representation(s) of Feminist Women Writers in 20th century Portuguese Literary History"

## **Contributors**





# Introduction

Petra Ragnerstam

Every work of literature belongs to at least one genre. Indeed, it is sure to have a significant generic element. For genre has quite a different relation to creativity from the one usually supposed, whereby it is little more than a restraint upon spontaneous expression. Rightly understood, it is so far from being a mere curb on expression that it makes the expressiveness of literary works possible. Their relation to the genres they embody is not one of passive membership but of active modulation. Such modulation communicates. And it probably has a communicative value far greater than we can ever be directly aware of. (Fowler 20)

The terms gender and genre actually have the same root etymologically, both referring to “kind” and “sort,” according to the OED, which means that both in some sense function as categories of classification. Although both terms have quite a clear etymology, they are extremely mobile, ambiguous and changeable terms—and therefore also difficult, but challenging to use. By arguing that gender and genre are categories of classification, they both are of great importance not only for literature and the study of literature, but for culture, interpretation and meaning at large. The question is; how does gender and genre intersect or interact? Important to acknowledge is the fact that the connection between gender and genre not is as harmonious or apparent as one might think. In traditional genre theory gender is often ignored.

There is a classical resistance to connecting the two since genre supposedly rests upon aesthetic grounds. Bringing gender into the aesthetic foundations about literature, where genre plays a major role, breaks such discourses by making aesthetics into a political issue. Genre can no longer be perceived as a universal, neutral, given category. Rather, as Mary Gerhart argues in *Genre Choices, Gender Questions*, “[g]enre is what we collectively believe it to be” (Gerhart 150). Gerhart makes clear that both gender and genre are cultural constructs but constructs that we hardly can do without. When arguing that genre and gender are cultural constructs, it also becomes clear that they both work by systems of value, hierarchy and knowledge. Alistair Fowler argues that a theory of genre without acknowledging the elements of

evaluation would be “[c]onsistent, but quixotic” (Fowler 29). The same could be argued about gender, whose classificatory function also is imbued with cultural signification and significance. The connection between genre and gender is not haphazard but crucial to theories about power, cultural value and identity.

Does the reworking of genre in any way imply a radical reworking of gender? Does a focus on gender imply a radical reworking of genre? Most certainly—the question is just in what ways and what consequences their interconnection supposedly has. It is in this very recognition that an active investigation into their interconnectedness can be fruitful. As Mary Gerhart argues, by combining the two, gender and genre might become “a new kind of theory for political action” (6).

Genre is intrinsic to meaning construction. Writers, readers, literary historians, literary critics and literary theorists always presuppose genre, and thus it must be recognized as a fundamental category to the reading experience. It is not only so that genre helps categorizing literature, or that genre is an inescapable categorization to authors writing literature. It has more far-reaching implications because of its connection to ideology, culture, discourse and questions of individuality and originality. In her book, Mary Gerhart argues that questions of genre always are bound up with the meaning of a text. Since genre is so conclusive to texts and their interpretation, there is an ongoing critical discussion

to whether it helps or limits interpretation. Rather than setting up an either/or distinction, Gerhart argues that: “[g]enres, in other words, can be seen to determine (in a negative sense) and to make room for (in a positive sense) what can be thought” (5). Thus, genre both induces limitation and enables liberation in literary practices, something which of course is important to the ways in which women writers relate to genre in order to find a workable, creative space in the literary field.

Genre theorists today all seem to argue that genre, as a categorizing concept, is inescapable to constructions of meaning. In other words, there is no meaning without genre. Such a view is much grounded on Bakhtin’s influential study of speech genres, where he argues that all speech is divided into genres, into different uses: “Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call speech genres” (60). It could consequently be argued that although Bakhtin says utterances are individual, they are always uttered in an already existing type of utterance to which every speaker conforms. Nonetheless, “emphasis should be placed on the extreme *heterogeneity* of speech genres” (60). What is imperative to interpretations of gender and genre is that speech genres are always constructed but also constructive when it comes to interpretation and the construction of meaning in an utterance. The fact that genres

are constitutive to language and language use as a whole does not imply that genres are neutral or innocently produced and used. The construction of genre creates hierarchies of privilege, value and status. They tell us something about constructions of truth and reality in a culture. As Gerhart argues, because of its different principles of selection, different genres control different aspects of reality (132). But because some genres get higher status and privileged truth value, they can also be argued to control reality (or at least our apprehension of reality). Genre is consequently crucial to how we understand and perceive things. Of course, this overall function has effects on gender analysis. If things are excluded generically—we do not see them. If things are classified in certain generic ways—we cannot perceive them in any other way (or at least we have great difficulty doing so). Hence, the cementation of, for example, gender hierarchies made by genre.

It is here that it becomes clear that gender theory and feminism has changed notions of genre, showing that genre has a cultural function that is not innocent. Categorizing literature by genre implies categorizing literature by cultural parameters of value and recognition, which means that no investigation into genre is free from judgments of gender. But that does not mean we can do away with notions of genre. And it is not certain that feminism would benefit from such an endeavour.

When we analyze genre do we 1. question/in-

vestigate an individual work of art? 2. question/investigate a genre and its limits? 3. interrogate the idea of uniqueness? 4. promote uniqueness? 5. scrutinize genre and/or an individual texts in relation to a cultural and social field? These questions create anxiety among women writers and women critics alike. The notion of genre (a sort or a class) is set against the idea of a unique (original) text. Consequently, the tension between individuality and collectivity is inherent in the concept of genre itself. To do away with ideas of uniqueness or originality is not something that literary critics (feminist or others) willingly do. And how to negotiate the two is not an easy task, even from a feminist perspective. These issues show that gender analysis and genre theory are at the heart of meaning construction and notions of identity and subjectivity as a whole. Not surprisingly, there is no consensus concerning how to relate gender to genre, even if there is a consensus that feminist literary theorists have to deal with genre to analyse gender in literature.

The most important issue to deal with when combining gender and genre is the fact that genre has favoured male perspectives, male authors and male themes. Since most genres were established on these grounds, women were automatically excluded from certain genres, both when it comes to authors, themes and perspectives. Since genre is inherent to meaning construction there is no way women can do without genre. The main issue is how to make the two work together.

There are different ways for feminists to deal with questions of genre. Much traditional feminist literary criticism has argued that, for women, there are no obvious genres to follow. They have to create them (even if in relation to existing male genres) or at least relate to them in different ways. One way to deal with this problem is to keep and adhere to classical, male oriented, genre definitions and to add women writers and women's perspectives to the genres. This gives women cultural capital since they would be included in a genre that already is established as such. However, such a move could imply limiting the perspectives of women and women's experiences. Another move would then be to create new genres that would allow, and perhaps even target women, women's issues/themes and women's writing. Such a move would give them the freedom that such a space implies. But such a space might also relegate women to those genres. Furthermore, this might mean denying women some cultural status. Another issue related to these aesthetic/political moves is; is it possible to free oneself of genre? Is genre obsolete? In *Kinds of Literature*, Fowler quotes Ihab Hassan who argues (in *Dismemberment of "Orpheus"*) that: "the history of artistic genres and forms becomes irrelevant" (32). Is this really so? It would seem that one always writes and reads in relation to existing genres—whether one wants it or not. And the exceptions confirm the rule.

Gender studies and feminism has shown that

concepts of genre are historical and continually changing, and therefore possible to change. Gender and genre both radically constructed. Isn't it so that gender theory and feminism points to the historicity of genre? And this is the reason for the vehement reaction against feminist and gender analysis of genre. All articles in this anthology point to the plasticity and historicity of genre without diminishing its importance. They also show how gender always is interactively entwined in concepts of genre. They furthermore demonstrate that genre and gender are cultural processes—defined and possible to redefine by praxis. This is one of the main points of this anthology, the active redefinition of both gender and genre—and their relation—by concrete examples. In this anthology, consequently, it becomes clear that something happens when gender is introduced to genre. It becomes a fruitful interaction with political implications.

This collection of articles is assembled from a collaborative, two-day conference held at Uppsala University by both the English Department and the Department of Literature. The conference in many ways confirmed Bakhtin's statement about the heterogeneity of genres but also the various perspectives available when dealing with gender in relation to literary genres. Rather than trying to manipulate or control the contributions for this anthology, the contributors have been urged to keep their individual perspectives (and their individual languages) in order to maintain the open atmosphere

that characterized the conference. Nonetheless there are structures, and perhaps even genres, that have emerged when organizing the anthology. Consequently, two sections of this anthology deal with the need to find new ways for women to relate to genre. They represent the two feminist strategies discussed above, showing the ways in which genre not only is bound up with issues of gender, but that issues of gender can be radically questioned by genre intervention. The third section deals with the production of literary history as a genre of its own.

The first part, called Genre Intervention, consequently deals with placing or finding a place for women writers in already established, often male, genres. This act means not only an active placement of the text, and getting cultural capital from such placing. It can also function as a form of subversion by working in/through an already existing genre. By adding gender to such a genre, it must change. Such a placing questions borders, stretches genre boundaries and creates genre blurring.

This part of the anthology starts by an article on Elizabeth Stuart Phelps by Susan Donaldson, who brings up what traditionally has been seen as a paradigm shift in American literature—the rise of realism in the 1880s. This literature was, and still is, placed in opposition to the sentimental novels of the ante-bellum era, setting up gender distinctions by making realism male and sentimentalism female. By placing Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in the realist tradition, Donaldson argues

that women writers of the time made use of realist techniques to explore and criticize gender roles. By doing a reading of two novels by Phelps, *The Story of Avis and Doctor Zay*, Donaldson shows the ways in which gender and genre go hand in hand. Realism turns out not to be a literary space void of women but a space explored by them.

Jenny Björklund, in her article “Kärlekens Mystik. Rut Hillarp och det litterära fyrtiotalet,” focuses not so much on a specific genre as on a time period in Swedish literary history, the 1940s. This decade, however, is seen as the peak of Swedish avant-garde writing, especially when it comes to poetry. By being constructed as avant-garde it can be said to form a genre in Swedish poetry because of its homogeneous appearance. Not surprisingly, this period has been constructed as exclusively male. Arguing that the women poets of the time were difficult to place, traditional literary history has simply excluded those writers. By focusing on love as a central theme in Rut Hillarp’s poetry, especially in the collection called *Solens Brunn*, and by comparing it to Erik Lindegren’s poems from *Sviter*, Jenny Björklund points to the similarities in their poetry. Rather than separating Rut Hillarp from the 1940s the theme of love surprisingly enough places her in its midst.

Jenny Bonnevier, in her article “Drawing a Line: Science Fiction or Fantasy? The Case of Ursula Le Guin’s *Always Coming Home*” focuses on Ursula Le Guin and her novel *Always Coming*

*Home*. This novel is published as sf, but clearly breaks central principles of the genre. Such breaks are mainly grounded on feminist positions taken by the author. Jenny Bonnevier argues that scientific discourse as such is gendered and the questions that concern her in this article are the ways in which women sf writers engage not only in the sf genre as such, but also in scientific discourse and epistemology as a whole. This engagement inevitably also engenders certain response from (mainly male) critics and guardians of the genre itself.

The last article in this section is an analysis of the dissertation novel by Marta Ronne who investigates representations of women and the ways in which women have contributed to the development of the genre. In her article Marta Ronne focuses on two women writers, Gail Godwin and Rebecca Goldstein. In her analysis Ronne shows that the dissertation novel in fact belongs to an older, mainly male dominated genre, the university novel. However, women writers could not really find a place within this genre until they were established at university, hence their place within the dissertation novel. Marta Ronne focuses on what she terms the mind-body problem to highlight how these two women writers explore and develop the genre in terms of gender.

The second part of this anthology, called Genre Invention, focuses on women writers who in some sense (try to) establish new genres by their work. This section displays the creativeness of such an endeavour, but also to how difficult it

is to break away from already existing genres. The new genres or texts created in some way always relate to already existing genres—but in ways that again redefine and reformulate them completely.

The first article in the second part of this anthology deals with the controversy concerning the text *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. This text in itself clearly plays with and departs from genre conventions, in this case the autobiography, by problematizing the question of authorship. Anna Linzie questions many of the traditional understandings of authority and authorship by foregrounding Alice B. Toklas as an authoritative force in the text, despite the fact that Gertrude Stein by name stands as the author of the text.

Petra Ragnerstam's article focuses on a text that not only is positioned on the verge of several genres (from the novel to prose poetry) but on the verge of literariness, language and meaning as a whole. Analyzing a little read, nonsensical text by Gertrude Stein, *Lucy Church Amiably*, Petra Ragnerstam shows the ways in which the text departs from traditional genres. Trying to break away from gendered genres, Gertrude Stein goes where (probably) no woman has gone before, and thus tries to escape the boundaries of traditionally male genres. However, by analysing the function of repetition in the text Petra Ragnerstam simultaneously demonstrates that even the most nonsensical of texts rely on generic conventions, and that an

escape from such genres seems practically impossible to realize.

Anna Nordlund's article brings up one of Sweden's most famous authors, Selma Lagerlöf. By analysing a little read text by Lagerlöf, *Bannlyst*, Nordlund departs from stereotypical portrayals of Lagerlöf as the "Great Storyteller" who works on intuition and merely draws on folklore and legend in her work. *Bannlyst* is a text that is set apart from such constructions by being a novel of ideas that breaks realist conventions concerning composition. Rather, it works by means of gaps and contradictions based on magical-realist foundations. Anna Nordlund does a reading of the novel as a disturbing, complex text of protest in the face of war by focusing on two of the characters in the text representing realism and supernaturalism respectively.

In her article Helena Wahlström brings up a specifically gendered genre, the liberation novel of the 1970s. This is a genre formed particularly to deal with women's situations and experiences and can be said to be a genre formed by women for women. However, Helena Wahlström shows that this genre is built upon earlier, already established genres. Rather than placing it in the tradition of the Bildungsroman, however, Wahlström argues that the liberation novel is allied with the picaresque because of its circular, repetitive structure. This also puts it in close affinity to the classic American road narrative. When these picaresque traits are used by women writers like Anne

Roiphe (in *Long Division*) they change in several aspects, changes that show the ways in which gender and genre are interconnected.

The last section, The Production of Literary History, deals more specifically with the ways in which genre works by exclusion and inclusion. By analysing how genre is used to exclude women and their work from literary history, it becomes clear that genre always deals with cultural value. It also shows that genre is constructed and that such constructions always are politically guided. It furthermore shows that genre and its inclusions and exclusions are done after the fact, so to speak, and that genre has an enormous cultural power. This section deals more with a meta-genre in that it investigates a genre that in fact classifies literature by genre. Thus, this section also shows that such classifications are important power factors which establish, maintain and guard the borders of both genre and gender.

In her article on the problems of writing women's literary history, Ann Öhrberg argues that women have felt the need to establish women's own history, because of the omission of them in conventional histories. However, writing women's history as separated from men's has its problems, the two most important ones being that of dichotomization and hierarchization—two fundamental aspects of the gender system that feminists and gender theorists wish to dismantle. Furthermore, the endeavour to write women's history also risks the loss of com-

plexity concerning historical processes and power struggles. However, Ann Öhrberg argues that these traps can be avoided, and that they by no means should hinder attempts to write women's histories. By the active use of gender and feminist theory focusing on constructions of power, the necessary amount of self-awareness can be established. Her article deals with the practical aspects of such work, grounded on her current project on women published between 1720 and 1772 in Sweden.

The second article in this section of the anthology is an analysis of a literary genre, the short-story, which has been lightly treated in literary history. This, as we know, is also true of women writers. In her article, AnnaCarin Billing asks what fate a women writer specialising in short stories would have in literary history. The object of her study is Norwegian writer Cora Sandel. Traditionally the short story form has attracted many women writers, and critics have argued that this is partly because of the short-story's undefinable form, which makes it open for reformulations of women's experiences. On the other hand, it can also be argued that this is a genre many traditional critics gladly would ascribe as feminine because of its manageable, short form. However, AnnaCarin Billing argues that Cora Sandel used the short-story as a literary practice suiting the modern world and the modern woman, and was furthermore recognized as such by the literary establishment at the time. AnnaCarin Billing shows the ways in which critics try to manoeuvre

between gender and genre in their reception of Cora Sandel's short-stories.

In the last article of this anthology Chatarina Edfeldt does an investigation into the treatment of women writers and their work in Portuguese literary history. Edfeldt shows how women's literature is treated as a clearly separated field, which thereby also can be dismissed by literary critics. The few feminist revisions of women writers' and their work that have been made have not made way into the writing of literary history. Even contemporary literary histories devalue and/or dismiss not only women writers but also the topics treated by them—especially if feminist or otherwise political. This is true of women writers of the turn of the century up to the 1970s.

## **Bibliography**

- Bakhtin, Michel. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Trans Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas press, 1986.
- Fowler, Alistair. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.
- Gerhart, Mary. *Genre Choices, Gender Questions*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.



# Part 1

## Genre Intervention



Susan V. Donaldson

## Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Realism, and Literary Debates on Changing Gender Roles

The year 1885 has traditionally been designated by literary historians as the *annus mirabilis* for American literary realism. Just a little over a decade ago, Daniel Borus in his study *Writing Realism* noted that 1885 was the year that “*The Century*, arguably the country’s most august general circulation monthly, had published serials of William Dean Howells’s *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and Henry James’s *The Bostonians*” (15). This was the year, according to more traditional histories of literary realism, that realism in America began in earnest and left behind the romances and sentimental novels of the antebellum period. From that year on, this argument goes, writers would increasingly ally themselves with ordinary, accessible subject matter, close observation, objectivity, and an emphasis on facts (Becker 23–29).

Not incidentally, what all three novels also had in common was a preoccupation with masculinity seemingly under siege by the presence and concerns of women. We see, for instance,

Huck Finn lighting out for the territory at the end of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to escape the prospect of being tamed by a world of Aunt Pollys and Aunt Sallys. Similarly, Howells expends a considerable amount of energy in *The Rise of Silas Lapham* defining his chosen metier of realism in opposition to the disorienting and destructive consequences of sentimental novel reading, which creates considerable problems for his middle-class family on the rise. In a like vein, Henry James sets up in *The Bostonians* his Mississippian Basil Ransom as a counterpoint of sorts against a feminist reform tradition in Boston that seems ethereal and high-strung next to Ransom’s masculine practicality.

Not doubt with that preoccupation in mind, Nina Baym argued in her famous article twenty years ago on “melodramas of beset manhood” that a slew of twentieth-century white male critics had defined American literature largely in those terms—as narratives of the lone individual arrayed against society—and more often than not, the individual is male and the society he re-

sists is figured as male. Taking note of the critical paradigm of the American Adam in struggle against the confines of tradition and society dominating American literary studies for several decades, Baym declares: "There is no place for a woman author in this scheme. Her roles in the drama of creation are those allotted to her in a male melodrama: either she is to be silent, like nature, or she is the creator of conventional works, the spokesperson of society. What she might do as an innovator in her own right is not to be perceived" (138).

That paradigm in turn echoed the very real struggles that male writers like James, Howells, and even Twain saw themselves waging against a legion of popular women writers specializing in best-selling sentimental novels and against rapidly changing gender roles as well affecting their own sense of artistic vocation and masculinity. Alfred Habegger in particular has made a highly persuasive case along these lines in his two influential books. For as Susan Coultrap-McQuin has ably documented, women writers dominated the literary marketplace during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the antebellum period, fully forty percent of novels reviewed in journals and newspapers were by women, and by 1872, Coultrap-McQuin reports, "women wrote nearly three-quarters of all the novels published" (2). The common perception of the novel and its readers was predominantly widespread enough to lead one prominent critic to complain in 1887 that "the female reader and

her magazine was the Iron Madonna who strangles in her frond embrace the American novelist" (qtd. in Lichenstein 39). Not for nothing, then, did gender seem to take center stage when any talk turned to the novel produced in the second half of the nineteenth century. "Almost no one in the nineteenth century (or the twentieth, for that matter)," Coultrap-McQuin observes, "was entirely able to separate the evaluation of literary work from the sex of the author" (18). Indeed, by the last decade before the Civil War novel-writing was largely viewed as an "effeminating" occupation, in David Leverenz's pungent assessment, and if anything, that perception, Elizabeth Ammons tells us, intensified after the war (Leverenz 4; Ammons, "Gender and Fiction" 26).

The response of a good many white male writers, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, was to recast writing and the literary profession in strictly male terms. In particular, as critics including Michael Davitt Bell, Donna Campbell, Nancy Glazener, Alfred Habegger, David Shi, and a host of others have argued, realism came to be viewed by a good many male writers as a peculiarly masculine preserve by virtue of its insistence on facts and objectivity and its opposition to the putative emotionalism and lack of craft characterizing sentimental novels by female writers. Hence up until the last twenty years or so literary histories of realism have tended to concentrate on male figures like James and Howells and to start their

histories with that miraculous year 1885. But if we expand our purview of literary realism to include a good many of those so-called sentimental writers who also seemed to make use of realistic techniques, like attention to detail, repudiation of the extraordinary and the heroic, and concern with the everyday, that miraculous year doesn't seem quite so unique and path-breaking after all. Critics like Joan Hedrick, Judith Fetterley, Sharon Harris, and Elizabeth Ammons, in fact, have presented persuasive arguments for moving histories of literary realism back to the antebellum period, when writers like Caroline Kirkland were exploring representations of the everyday. Perhaps more to the point, if we direct our attention to one of those female writers, best-selling Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, to be specific, we discover that literary realism in many respects served both male and female writers as an arena for exploring and critiquing changing gender roles, for posing possibilities for gender reversals, and even for redefining conventional notions of both femininity and masculinity. Indeed, what I want to argue is that literary realism served as a peculiarly apt but highly contested arena for examining and critiquing rapidly changing gender roles, in part because of realism's central concern with demolishing certain key cultural conventions associated with earlier forms of writing.

This kind of approach makes a good deal of sense if we take into consideration how rapidly roles for both men and women were changing in the aftermath of the Civil War. The primary issue,

of course, initially seemed to be the "Woman Question" in response to the growing presence of women in the public realm of education and the workplace in the second half of the nineteenth century. As E. L. Godkin noted, "Woman's mind, body, social and political condition are now the subject of constant debate . . ." (316). This was, after all, the era of the New Woman, usually seen as the daughter of the antebellum period's True Woman, defined by her piety, submissiveness, and domesticity. In Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's words, "the single, highly educated, economically autonomous New Woman" constituted "a revolutionary demographic and political phenomenon." The New Woman more often than not substituted dedication to a profession for marriage, championed a wide range of social and economic reforms, and even began to wield a considerable political clout in the public realm. And as the New Woman began to redefine white femininity in particular, it became increasingly evident that male roles were going to change partly in response to the very presence of that New Woman. "Repudiating the Cult of True Womanhood in ways her mother—the new bourgeois matron—never could," Smith-Rosenberg concludes, "she threatened men in ways her mother never did" (245).

Accompanying the rise of the New Woman were certain notable changes in cultural definitions of white masculinity. A striking range of masculine roles had been available to white men in the antebellum period, from Christian abolitionists to

white southern aristocrats to backwoods frontiersmen portrayed so vividly in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Uniting all of these roles, though, was the notion of independence and self-sufficiency—working for oneself rather than under the supervision of someone else (see in general Griffen). In the waning years of the nineteenth century, though, those multiple roles available to white men began to erode as the frontier retreated and as corporations began to make their presence felt in American culture. Independence for many white middle-class men became an increasingly ephemeral goal as they found themselves forced to subordinate themselves in the realm of education and the workplace and as a burgeoning consumer-oriented marketplace made pressing demands for homogenization. The percentage of self-employed men dropped from 67 percent to 37 percent between 1870 and 1910, and the number of clerical positions in offices and stores rose sharply. White men found themselves working for others more and more, and under increasingly problematic conditions as cycles of economic booms and depressions began to become pronounced between 1873 and 1896. “Under these conditions,” historian Gail Bederman notes, “the sons of the middle class faced the real possibility that traditional sources of male power and status would remain closed to them forever—that they would become failures instead of self-made men” (12).

What, then, are the connections to be made

between changing definitions of masculinity and femininity and the rise of literary realism? Over the past fifteen years, in fact, a good many literary historians and critics have offered arguments for redefining American literary realism as a peculiarly masculine form of discourse. Critics like Alfred Habegger, Michael Davitt Bell, Daniel Borus, David Shi, Christopher Wilson, Mark Selzer, and Donna Campbell have characterized American literary realism and naturalism as male preserves where writers as wide-ranging as Henry James and Frank Norris sought to consolidate within their fictions the boundaries and definitions of white masculinity. This kind of approach does seem to make sense when we scrutinize texts like *The Bostonians*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, all of which implicitly link sentimentalism and wrong-headed thinking with women and realism, skepticism, and hard-nosed commonsense with men. Mark Twain, for one, takes a famous swipe at the huge popularity of mid-century literary sentimentalism in his portrayal of Emmeline Grangerford’s graveyard poetry and drawings, which tend to give Huck Finn “the fan tods.” William Dean Howells makes a particular point in *The Rise of Silas Lapham* of showing how easily both men and women can be misled by expectations created by sentimental novels written by women. Henry James, for his part, skewers feminist reformers with abolitionist antecedents as “disfigured,” in Kenneth Warren’s apt term, and foregrounds his rugged and aggressively

masculine protagonist Basil Ransom in opposition to those reformers (62). Ransom says forthrightly that he wants to save his own sex “From the most damnable feminization.” Indeed, in the novel’s most famous passage, Ransom condemns the times as a whole:

the whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it’s a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solitudes and coddled sensibilities, which, if we don’t look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and flattest and the most pretentious that has ever been. The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world in the face and take it for what it is—a very queer and partly base mixture—that is what I want to preserve, or rather, as I may say, to recover, and I must tell you that I don’t in the least care what becomes of your ladies while I make the attempt. (327).

Certainly, I think one can make a case, as Alfred Habegger does, that writers like James and Howells did define their work as ‘realistic’ in direct opposition to what Nathaniel Hawthorne famously called that “dam’ned mob of scribbling women” —best-selling sentimental writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe, Susan Warner, E. D. E. N. Southworth, and Augusta Evans, to name just a few. But a good many feminist critics, like Sharon Harris, Joan Hedrick, and Judith Fetterley, argue that it was precisely those women writers condemned as “sentimental”

who pioneered in observation and representation of the local and the everyday, who shifted their literary concerns from the heroic to the ordinary, and who directed attention to the great social issues of the day, not the least of which was slavery. Critics like Fetterley and Harris, as well as Alfred Habegger and Daniel Shi, argue that a refocused new perspective on antebellum women writers like Caroline Kirkland in *A New Home, or Who’ll Follow?* (1839) or Susan Warner in *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) might require a recasting altogether of the history of American literary realism. These are the writers, they suggest, who may very well be the true originators of American realism, not Howells, James, and Twain.

If, in fact, we take a close look at one of those best-selling, supposedly sentimental writers, in this case, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, we just may discover that concern with redefining masculinity in a rapidly changing world does not exclusively belong to male writers of the period. We may discover that American literary realism was peculiarly concerned not so much with debating masculinity but with quarreling over gender definitions and roles in general, roles that were deeply contested and highly uncertain as the country entered the age of industrialization. Certainly realism in general, as George Becker has observed, was “born in controversy and developed in acrimony” (3). From the beginning realism had arrayed itself against convention and tradition, and it was defined as such by critics at

the time (Levine 15; Shulman 121). Offering an overview of William Dean Howell's accomplishments in the newly named *Century Magazine* (changed from *Scribner's Monthly*), Thomas Sergeant Perry observed: "After all, what can realism produce but the downfall of conventionality? Just as scientific spirit digs the ground from beneath superstition, so too does its fellow-worker, realism, tend to prick the bubble of abstract types. Realism is the tool of the democratic spirit, the modern spirit by which the truth is elicited" (qtd. in Warren 50). Male writers in this period, though, were not alone in this iconoclastic endeavor. A good many women writers were allying themselves with the anti-conventional and the anti-authoritarian features of American literary realism and offered in particular critiques of romance and romanticism as discursive forms fostering dependence and subservience in women (Walker, "I cant write a book" 54 and 55). Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* comes immediately to mind as an attack not just on slavery but on the romantic illusions of white men—and so do a host of later writers who do indeed seem to support Elizabeth Ammons's characterization of American literary realism as wide-ranging and multicultural in character, attracting more white women writers and authors of color, ultimately, than white male writers ("Men of Color, Women, and Uppity Art at the Turn of the Century" 15).

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, who lived from 1844 to 1911, was one of those iconoclastic, anti-aut-

horitarian, and anti-romantic writers whose work suggests the range and heterogeneity of American literary realism and above all the centrality of changing gender roles in American realist novels. Admittedly, on the face of things, Phelps would appear to be the last in line to be included in the ranks of American realist writers, especially from the perspectives of writers like Mark Twain and Henry James. The author of 57 books and hundreds of short stories, Phelps was most famous for her 1868 best-seller *The Gates Ajar*, an odd combination of sermon, allegory, sentimental novel, and realistic representation of New England village life that portrays heaven as something very like a New England utopia with dogs, front porches, and gardens, as recounted by a woman lay preacher to a young girl grieving for her brother, who had been killed in the Civil War (Kelly 20 and 31; Smith, introduction, xxv–xxvi). Years later Phelps claimed, after the fashion of her idol Harriet Beecher Stowe, that an angel told her to write the book, but it was a narrative inspired in part by Phelps's grief for a male friend killed at Antietam (Chapters 95 and 131; Kelly 10). In her autobiography *Chapters of a Life*, she asserted that she wrote the book for women mourning the losses incurred by the Civil War who found little comfort in sermons and homilies. "Creeds and commentaries and sermons," she wrote, "were made by men. What tenderest of men knows how to confront his own daughter when her heart is broken? What can the doctrines do for those desolated by



death?" (*Chapters* 98). Phelps's unorthodox and slyly anti-patriarchal portrayal of the life thereafter struck a deep chord among those grieving women: the book sold 80,000 copies in this country and over 100,000 in England before the end of the nineteenth century. Translated into several languages, *The Gates Ajar* was so popular that it was followed by several sequels—*Beyond the Gates* (1883), *The Gates Between* (1887), and *Within the Gates* (1901). Phelps herself recalled in her autobiography that the book's popularity was marked by merchandise in stores including a *Gates Ajar* tippet and a *Gates Ajar* paper collar. "Ghastly rumors," she added, "have reached me of the existence of a *Gates Ajar* cigar. . ." (*Chapters* 113).

This was, of course, precisely the kind of best-selling woman's novel that writers like James and Twain found so worrisome. James was at his most acerbic in assessing the worth of Phelps's writing in a composite novel commissioned by William Dean Howells, called *The Whole Family*, that required James and Phelps to write adjacent chapters about the perspectives of a brother and sister in that family. In his chapter James referred to his "sister" as "deadly virtuous and deadly hard and deadly charmless—also, more than anything, deadly *sure!*" (James, "The Married Son" 154). Twain, as usual, was even more direct. He pronounced the paradise evoked in *The Gates Ajar* to be "a mean little ten-cent heaven about the size of Rhode Island." He also produced a parody of Phelps's book, not

published until 1908, called *The Gates Ajar, Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* ("In a Writer's Workshop" 247).

However subject the book was to satire, though, it did have radical—and feminist—implications, especially as the work of the daughter and granddaughter of Protestant ministers, one who grew up at Andover Theological Seminary, still a bastion of Calvinism in the 1860s. During Phelps's childhood and youth, Andover, where her father taught, still subscribed to the Westminster Shorter Catechism and the Hopkinsian Creed, the doctrines of which included the sovereignty of God, predestination, total depravity of human beings, limited atonement, and hell for the non-elect (Kelly 27). Phelps's *Gates* books, though, explicitly rejected the orthodox religious doctrines of her fathers by espousing an all-inclusive heaven where women were "acclaimed" and traditional "passports to power," as her biographer Lori Duin Kelly notes, "were rendered invalid (37). In her later *Gates* books Phelps quite simply ignored the doctrine of damnation; in her version of heaven everyone was eventually saved—and in this respect, she implicitly allied herself with the burgeoning Spiritualist Movement of the mid-century and its underlying feminist critiques of traditional male religious authority (see in general Braude).

The book transformed Phelps into something very like a lay minister with her own congregation brought together by her considerable correspondence, but it also earned her condemna-

tions and accusations of heresy by a host of religious publications (Kelly 27). The controversy, in turn, appeared to have radicalized her and pushed her further toward feminism. As she observed herself in her autobiography, writing *The Gates Ajar* seemed to have led her to question what she called “the old ideas of womanhood” (qtd. in Kelly 5). These were ideas, not incidentally, that were associated in her mind with her father Austen Phelps, as minister and professor of theological doctrine at Andover and a writer himself, one who, moreover, became more and more adamantly opposed to women’s rights over the years. By 1869 his daughter had become a public proponent of women’s rights and began writing for *The Independent*, once an antislavery paper and now an advocate of women’s suffrage and liberal religion, where she attacked what she called the “masculine oligarchy” she saw as responsible for keeping “one half of the full human race . . . eternal minors” (qtd. in Kelly 49 and 50). Her alliance with feminism, though, had not come without its costs. “It is almost impossible to understand now,” she wrote tersely in *Chapters of a Life*, “what it meant when I was twenty-five, for a young lady reared as I was on Andover Hill, to announce that she should forthwith approve and further the enfranchisement and elevation of her own sex” (249–50). Such a stance meant, to a great extent, setting herself in opposition to her whole family tradition and to her own father—and in a manner of speaking in opposition to the literary establishment as well.

In this respect, she saw herself as allied with the new mode of literary realism touted in the postbellum press, and in many ways her ideas on realism did resemble those of William Dean Howells—but Phelps by and large was far more likely than Howells to link literary realism with reform sentiments, even though Howells himself eventually was to become politicized by labor unrest in the 1880s. It was the responsibility of the artist, Phelps noted in her autobiography, “to tell the truth about the world” —but that truth, she warned, must include “moral responsibility” (*Chapters* 259 and 263). In particular, Phelps had in mind linking the task of truth-telling to the great reform movements of the century. “The last thirty years in America,” she wrote in *Chapters of a Life*, “have pulsed with moral struggle. No phase of society has escaped it. It has ranged from social experiment to religious cataclysm, and to national upheaval. I suggest that even moral reforms, even civic renovations, might have their proper position in the artistic representation of a given age or stage of life” (265).

In *The Story of Avis* Phelps’s own experiment with “truth-telling” —scrutinizing the institution of marriage with a cold and critical eye—was premised, like that of any good realist, male or female, with a direct attack on romance as dangerous and misleading. The novel opens with the meeting of a literary club in the New England town of Harmouth, a thinly disguised version of Andover, Mass., “a society almost Western in its munificence” of masculinity, as Phelps described it in her

autobiography (*Chapters* 29). At that gathering, an aspiring young woman artist named Avis Dobell, just returned from six years of artistic training aboard, displays her sketch of Una, from Spenser's *The Fairie Queene*, poised in mid-flight from a knight seeking to win her. It is an oddly prophetic drawing because at that same meeting Avis sees the young and handsome Philip Ostrander, whose beauty she had remarked upon in a brief chance encounter earlier in Paris, and who is now on the verge of pursuing her like the knight in Spenser's tale. This opening reference to romance is especially ominous because Avis's dead mother was captured, in a sense, when she married Avis's father, Hegel Dobell, a philosophy professor whose romantic idealism and fervor won his wife just before she had been about to run off for a life in the theater. She too had been named Avis, for her flights of imagination, but she was imprisoned, in a manner of speaking, by what the novel's narrator calls "the old imperious story we know so well—this story of the scholar and the woman" (40). The elder Avis dies early on, her youthful ambitions unfulfilled, and even after her death, Avis's father regards her devotion to him with some complacency and says, "My wife was not like most women, given to magnifying every little aesthetic taste into an unappreciated genius" (45).

In this respect, Avis's mother resembles Phelps's own mother, who died when Phelps was eight, but not before she published a best-seller in 1851 called *The Sunny Side; or the Country*

*Minister's Wife*, which sold 100,000 copies (Kelly 1; Tracy 148). The death of Phelps's mother was to haunt the daughter all her life, for she always maintained that her mother's premature death was brought on by the demands of writing coupled with those of running a large household. Significantly, her mother—and her mother's plight—served as the model for several of Phelps's heroines, including Avis and her mother (Kelly 15).

Romance, though, seems to be propelled in *The Story of Avis* by a momentum all its own, and despite Avis's protestations that she is not domestic and disinclined to compromise her heart by marrying, Philip Ostrander finally "wins" her—a key word that Phelps comes back to again and again in the narrative. To wear down Avis's resistance, Philip insists that they can define marriage anew, and when Avis persists in her opposition to marriage, he enlists in the Union Army and becomes badly wounded at the battle of First Bull Run. Weak and fragile upon his return, the wounded Philip appeals to Avis's strength and despite her best intentions they marry.

It is, though, hardly a happy marriage. Instead of ending with the traditional wedding, Phelps writes "beyond the ending," to borrow Rachel Du Plessis's phrase, and reveals an increasingly unhappy marital union. From the beginning, Avis's art gives way to the demands first of housework and then children, and Philip's vaunted ideals of romance and love, the narrative makes clear, make it impossible for him to

remain constant in his devotion to his family. Philip grows increasingly distant, but a romantic to the end, he tells Avis that it is inevitable that their love would eventually become diminished under the weight of everyday life. The two separate, and Avis herself feels a new kinship with defeated women: “Betrayed girls, abandoned women, aged and neglected mothers, lived in her fancy with a new, exacting claim,” the narrator tells us (365). And if Avis is betrayed by romance, she also discovers her artistic talent has become “emaciated” —the narrator’s word—in her married life, for “Household care had fed on it like a disease” (375). To underscore the point, her son dies as well.

Despite these endless troubles, Avis does manage to finish at long last a painting representing the restored Sphinx guarding the secrets of womanhood—and Philip does return to her. But his old war wound develops into consumption, and he dies during a trip to Florida for his health. Avis herself is left with the “ideal” of her husband in her heart, but her love, the narrator observes, has “eaten into and eaten out the core of her life, left her a riddled, withered thing, spent and rent” (447). We see her in the end pinning her hopes on her daughter, who she prays will not repeat her own victimization by romance, but ominously, our last sight of Avis is of her reading a romance of Sir Launcelot and the holy grail to her daughter. The result is a fairly hard-hitting critique not just of the dangers of romance and romanticism in the best realist tradi-

tion but of the debilitating effects of a hierarchically defined marriage upon both men and women. For if Avis’s talent is for all intents and purposes ruined by household demands, Philip remains envious to the end of the artistic gift that seemingly underscores his own failure as a man, a husband, and a father.

This is, in short, a deeply pessimistic novel about the prospects of traditional marriage and of women seeking to develop their talents within that institution. There is also, though, an underdeveloped subtext of gender role reversals that offers possibilities for redeeming marriage as an institution—and that Phelps explores much more fully in her lighter, more comic 1882 novel *Doctor Zay*. For if *The Story of Avis* opens and closes with the incarcerating frame of romance, the text itself periodically hints that Avis is the hero and Philip is the heroine of the narrative. From the beginning Philip is slyly defined by his personal beauty. He is, in fact, pronounced “the beauty of the faculty” at the small college at Harmouth where he teaches, and it is his beauty that first catches Avis’s eye in that early chance encounter in Paris. Later on, when they formally meet in Harmouth, Avis paints his portrait, which becomes the talk of the community. And if Philip is defined both by his beauty and a certain accompanying flightiness, Avis is associated with strength of character and mind and dedication to her art. This is strength that she loses only after Philip determinedly “wins” her in the fashion of the mythic hero braving the circle of fire protecting the “daughter of the gods”

(115). That tantalizing motif of gender reversal, though, remains largely muted in *The Story of Avis*—although the narrator does go to considerable lengths to stress Philip’s increasingly capricious nature and the unsteady influence of romantic idealism upon him.

It is in Phelps’s 1882 novel *Doctor Zay*, a story of a resolutely New Woman who has made a singular success of herself as a homeopathic doctor, that Phelps as feminist writer makes full use of fiction to explore the comic—and reformative—possibilities of gender role reversals.

The result is a witty commentary not just on the arbitrary nature of stereotypical gender roles but also upon what Phelps herself seems to see as genuine possibilities for defining New Women, New Men, and New (egalitarian) Marriages. There is, then, a utopian strain in this novel—as contemporary reviewers were quick to point out—and it reminds us that literary realism in general has the width and breadth to include such visionary moments—life as it should be as well as life as it is.

*Doctor Zay* begins with the journey to rural Maine of a spoiled young man from Boston named Waldo Yorke, who is in much need of moral reformation. He is on his way to Sherman, Maine, to receive a legacy, significantly enough, from a male relative, and on his way he meets a grave young woman, none other than Doctor Zay herself, who speaks to him, the narrator tells us, “as simply as one gentleman might have spoken to another” (20). Yorke in response tries to

see her in idealized Greek terms—“erect, slender, and blue, and motionless as a caryatid out of employment”—but his emerging idealized picture of her is abruptly interrupted by a carriage accident that forces him to spend some weeks convalescing under the care of Doctor Zay herself—short for Doctor Zaider Atalanta Lloyd (22).

Yorke is initially nonplussed at the prospect of being placed in the care of a female physician. “He knew nothing,” the narrator observes, “of the natural history of doctresses. He had thought them chiefly as a species of higher nurse, —poor women who wore unbecoming clothes, took the horse-cars, and probably dropped their ‘g’s’ or said, ‘Is that so?’” (63). What Yorke learns first of all is that he is as sickly and as dependent as any female invalid he has earlier scorned, and the narrator has a good deal of fun stressing how implicitly feminized Yorke’s position as a patient is under Doctor Zay’s care. Yearning for attention from his busy doctor, who is forever leaving on one important errand after another, Yorke acknowledges that he is now very much like a female invalid himself, and he waxes indignant over male dismissals of female illnesses. At one point he asks himself, “How dare men ridicule or neglect sick women?” (84). He also becomes increasingly interested in Doctor Zay as a woman, but he is at a loss on the best approach to take to her:

He occupied himself with dwelling upon the modern disadvantage attending an interest in the

Useful Woman, who has no time to be admired, and perhaps less heart. It occurred to him to picture one of Scott's or Richardson's stately heroes stranded meekly in a basket phaeton, with matters of feeling trembling on his lips, while the heroine made professional calls and forgot him. How was a man going to approach this new and confusing type of woman? The old codes were all astray. Were the old impulses ruled out of order, too?" (187)

Such musings are treated in the novel as lingering romantic illusions and expectations, briefly evoked only to be abruptly debunked and shuttled aside. For Yorke finds his declarations of love to Doctor Zay repudiated as so much romantic posturing, and Yorke himself as something resembling "a hysterical girl" (197). Doctor Zay in turn is forthright and no-nonsense, defined by gestures and mannerisms that Yorke thinks of as "masculine," like drumming her fingers impatiently, and by frankly allying herself with science and facts. "Your ideal and my fact are a world's width apart," she tells Yorke in no uncertain terms (197). For good measure Doctor Zay says to him, "Put yourself in my place for a moment. Reverse our positions" (200). Yorke responds by saying that he would become a madman if he did so, but he eventually does pull himself together long enough to promise that he would never "absorb her, annihilate her" (239)—an interesting and revealing concession for a man given to dreamy poses and idealized yearnings and strongly attracted to the notion of capturing his own

Atalanta.

It is, moreover, a concession that shows how far Yorke has moved from his dreams and romantic illusions into the uncharted territories of new, emancipated identities for both men and women pondering a new kind of marriage for New Women and New Men. Doctor Zay tells him frankly, "I have never heard a man talk like that before," and she praises him for his nobility—and, significantly enough, his "manliness" (239). Marriage, she declares—and here her words echo the opposition assumed between romantic illusion and real fact stressed by so many self-consciously realist male writers—means waking from the romantic dream from which the marriage originated. And she adds that she has only known three marriages herself that could be described as "real." As for herself, she tells Yorke, she is decidedly a "new kind of woman" requiring "a new type of man" (244). But however much she admires Yorke for his daring break with the past, she tells him that he would simply not know how "to cultivate happiness with a woman who had diverged from her hereditary type" (244).

Waldo Yorke persists in his suit, though, and when he declares toward the end of the novel—in something of a personal breakthrough for him—that she is not to be "won" but rather to decide on her own to accept him freely, she does indeed accept him, in the spirit of New Woman, New Man, and New Marriage. What emerges, then, is a novel every bit as critical of romantic illusions and sentimentality as *Adventures of*

*Huckleberry Finn*, *The Bostonians*, or *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, but it is nevertheless a narrative that reverses the usual association of romantic illusion and sentimentality with women. Rather, it is Phelps's men—and not her women—who reveal their strong preference for romantic illusion over facts. Moreover, a novel like *Doctor Zay*—and even *The Story of Avis*, to a certain extent—suggests that in narratives defining themselves in part as anti-romantic and anti-convention, nearly all conventions, including those of masculinity, femininity, and marriage, can be open to sharp scrutiny, revision, and redefinition. If the relationship between *Doctor Zay* and Waldo Yorke is to survive, the narrative of *Doctor Zay* tells us, it will be only because both characters have shown their willingness to break away from the constraints of conventional definitions of womanhood and manhood and from traditional narratives of heroes in pursuit of heroines. *Atalanta*, *Doctor Zay* makes clear, is “overtaken” only because she herself makes the decision to choose her partner. Or as Waldo Yorke himself says when *Doctor Zay* insists upon taking the reins of her horse buggy, “I don't care who has the reins . . . as long as I have the driver!” (257).

Reading these two novels, in short, helps us dislodge those three crucial texts of 1885 from their privileged positions in literary histories of American realism and directs our attention to texts by both men and women whose scrutiny and critiques of conventions in general include those of masculinity and femininity in particular.

Foregrounding a neglected writer like Elizabeth Stuart Phelps also highlights not just the deeply contested and heterogeneous nature of American literary realism and the close association of realistic discourse with hard-hitting critiques of conventions and abstract types in general and romance in particular but also with the remaking of representations of masculinity and femininity—and by implication gender roles themselves. To be a realist writer, Phelps's novels insist, is to interrogate all abstract ideals, even those that define the ways that we situate ourselves as men and women. The heroic act for this supposedly sentimental writer, is not the pursuit and “capture” of the heroine by the hero but a rescripting of those very roles and their places in narratives of romance. The true heroes of Phelps's novels are those who refuse to accept inherited narratives and who set about writing their own stories and their own notions of manhood and womanhood. It is as good a definition as any of Phelps's own notion of what the realist writer herself should set out to accomplish.

## Bibliography

- Ammons, Elizabeth. *Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century*. New York: Oxford UP, 1991.
- . "Gender and Fiction." *The Columbia History of the American Novel*. Eds. Emory Elliott et al. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. 267–84.
- "Men of Color, Women, and Uppity Art at the Turn of the Century." *American Literary Realism* 23.3 (1991): 14–24.
- . Anesko, Michael. "Friction with the Market." *Henry James and the Profession of Authorship*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Bardes, Barbara, and Suzanne Gossett. *Declarations of Independence: Women and Political Power in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1990.
- Barker, Deborah. *Aesthetics and Gender in American Literature: Portraits of the Woman Artist*. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell UP, 2000.
- Baym, Nina. "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors." *American Quarterly* 33 (1981): 123–39.
- . *Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820–1870*. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell UP, 1978.
- Becker, George. "Introduction: Modern Realism as a Literary Movement." *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*. Ed. George Becker. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1963. 3–38.
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995.
- Bell, Michael Davitt. *The Problem of American Realism: Studies in the Cultural History of Literary Idea*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.
- Bender, Bert. *The Descent of Love: Darwin and the Theory of Sexual Selection in American Fiction, 1871–1926*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996.
- Berthoff, Warner. *The Ferment of Realism: American Literature, 1884–1919*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1965.
- Bledstein, Burton J. *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1976.
- Borus, Daniel H. *Writing Realism: Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1989.
- Braude, Ann. *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*. Boston: Beacon P, 1989.
- Brodhead, Richard H. *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.
- Campbell, Donna M. *Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885–1915*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1997.
- Clinton, Catherine, and Nina Silber, eds. *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Conn, Peter. *The Divided Mind: Ideology and Imagination in America, 1890–1917*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1983.
- Coultrap-McQuin, Susan. *Doing Literary Business: American Women Writers in the Nineteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1990.



- Dijkstra, Bram. *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.
- Donaldson, Susan V. *Competing Voices: The American Novel, 1865–1914*. The Critical History of the Novel. New York: Simon & Schuster/ Twayne/Macmillan, 1998.
- Donovan, Josephine. *New England Local Color Literature: A Woman's Tradition*. New York; Frederick Ungar, 1983.
- DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara, and Deirdre English. *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women*. Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1979.
- Elliott, Emory, et al., eds. *The Columbia History of the American Novel*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991.
- Ermath, Elizabeth Deeds. *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1983.
- Fetterley, Judith, ed. *Provisions: A Reader from 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Women Writers*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985.
- Fisher, Philip. *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Fulton, Valerie. "Rewriting the Necessary Woman: Marriage and Professionalism in James, Jewett, and Phelps." *Henry James Review* 15 (1994): 242–56.
- Glazener, Nancy. *Reading for Realism: The History of a U. S. Literary Institution, 1850–1910*. Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1997.
- [Godkin, E. L.]. "The Other Side of the Question." *Nation*, Oct. 17, 1867: 316–17.
- Griffen, Clyde. "Reconstructing Masculinity from the Evangelical Revival to the Waning of Progressivism: A Speculative Synthesis." *Meanings fr Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*. Eds. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990. 183–204.
- Habegger, Alfred. *Gender, Fantasy, and Realism in American Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.
- . *Henry James and the "Woman Business."* New York: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- Harris, Sharon M. *Rebecca Harding Davis and American Realism*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1991.
- Hedrick, Joan D. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.
- Henza, Louis. *"A White Heron" and the Question of Minor Literature*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984.
- Howells, William Dean. *The Rise of Silas Lapham*. 1885. *Novels 1875–1886*. New York: Library of America, 1982.
- . et al. *The Whole Family: A Novel by Twelve Authors*. Introd. Alfred Bendixen. New York: Ungar Publishing Co., 1986.
- Huf, Linda. *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Woman: The Writer as Heroine in American Literature*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983.
- James, Henry. *The Bostonians*. 1886. Introd. Charles R. Anderson. New York: Penguin, 1984.
- . "The Married Son." *The Whole Family: A Novel by Twelve Authors*. Eds. William Dean Howells et al. Introd. Alfred Bendixen. New York: Ungar Publishing Co., 1986. 144–84.
- Jones, Suzanne, ed. *Writing the Woman Artist: Essays on Poetics, Politics, and Portraiture*. Philadelphia: U of

- Pennsylvania P, 1991.
- Kaplan, Amy. *The Social Construction of American Realism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.
- Kearns, Katherine. *Nineteenth-Century Literary Realism: Through the Looking-Glass*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Kelley, Mary. *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1984.
- Kelly, Lori Duin. *The Life and Works of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Victorian Feminist Writer*. Troy, N.Y.: Whitson Publishing Co., 1983.
- Kerber, Linda K. "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History." *Journal of American History* 75 (1988): 9–39.
- Kessler, Carol Farley. *Elizabeth Stuart Phelps*. Twayne's United States Authors Series No. 434. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982.
- . "The Heavenly Utopia of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps." In *Women and Utopia. Critical Interpretations*. Eds. Marleen Bam and Nicholas D. Smith. New York: UP of America, 1983. 85–95.
- Kilcup, Karen, ed. *Soft Canons: American Women Writers and Masculine Tradition*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1999.
- Leverenz, David. *Manhood and the American Renaissance*. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell UP, 1989.
- Levine, George. *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981.
- Lichenstein, Nelson. "Authorial Professionalism and the Literary Marketplace, 1885–1900." *American Studies* 19.1 (1978): 35–53.
- Long, Lisa A. "The Corporeity of Heaven: Rehabilitating the Civil War Body in *The Gates Ajar*." *American Literature* 69 (1996): 781–811.
- McKay, Janet Holmgren. *Narration and Discourse in American Realistic Fiction*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1982.
- Martin, Jay. *Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865–1914*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hal, 1967.
- Masteller, Jean Carwile. "The Women Doctors of Howells, Phelps, and Jewett: The Conflict of Marriage and Career." *Critical Essays on Sarah Orne Jewett*. Ed. Gwen L. Nagel. Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall & Co., 1984. 135–47.
- Miller, Elise. "The Feminization of American Realist Theory." *American Literary Realism* 23.1 (1990): 20–41.
- Mitchell, Lee Clark. *Determined Fictions: American Literary Realism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1989.
- Morris, Timothy. "Professional Ethics and Professional Erotics in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' *Doctor Zay*." *Studies in American Fiction* 21 (1993): 141–52.
- Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart. *Chapters from a Life*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1896.
- . *Doctor Zay: A Novel*. 1882. Afterword Michael Sartisky. New York: Feminist P, 1987.
- . *The Story of Avis*. 1877. Introd. Elizabeth Hardwick. New York: Arno P, 1977.
- . *Three Spiritualist Novels: The Gates Ajar (1868), Beyond the Gates (1883), and The Gates Between (1887)*. Introd. Nina Baym. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000.
- Pizer, Donald. *The Cambridge Companion to Realism and Naturalism: Howells to London*. New York:

- Cambridge UP, 1995.
- . ed. *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1998.
- Quirk, Tom, and Gary Scharnhorst, eds. *American Realism and the Canon*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1994.
- Rotundo, E. Anthony. *American Manhood: Transformations of Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.
- Samuels, Shirley, ed. *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Selzer, Mark. *Bodies and Machines*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Shi, David. *Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture, 1850–1920*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Shulman, Robert. "Realism." *The Columbia History of the American Novel*. Eds. Emory Elliott et al. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. 160–88.
- Slotkin, Richard. *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800–1890*. New York: Harper/Perennial, 1985.
- Smith, Gail K. "From the Seminar to the Parlor: The Popularization of Hermeneutics in *The Gates Ajar*." *Arizona Quarterly* 54.2 (1998): 99–133.
- Smith, Helen Sootin. Introduction. *The Gates Ajar*. By Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard UP-Belknap, 1964. v–xxxiii.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Stansell, Christine. "A Study in Female Rebellion." *Massachusetts Review* 13 (1972): 239–56.
- Sundquist, Eric J., ed. *American Realism: New Essays*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982.
- Sussman, Herbert. "The Study of Victorian Masculinity." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 20 (1993): 366–77.
- Thomas, Brook. *American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.
- Thompson, G. R., and Eric Carl Link. *Neutral Ground: New Traditionalism and the American Romance Controversy*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1999.
- Tracey, Karen. *Plots and Proposals: American Women's Fiction, 1850–90*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000.
- Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: An Authoritative Text, Contexts and Sources, Criticism*. Ed. Thomas Cooley. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Norton, 1999.
- . "In a Writer's Workshop." *Mark Twain in Eruption: Hitherto Unpublished Pages about Men and Events*. Ed. and Introd. Bernard DeVoto. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940. 196–253.
- Walker, Nancy. *The Disobedient Writer: Women and Narrative Tradition*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1995.
- . "'I cant write a book': Women's Humor and the American Realistic Tradition." *American Realism and the Canon*. Eds. Tom Quirk and Gary Scharnhorst. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1994. 52–68.
- Warren, Kenneth W. *Black and White Strangers: Race and American Literary Realism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.
- Wilson, Christopher P. *The Labor of Words: Literary Professionalism in the Progressive Era*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1985.



Jenny Björklund

## Kärlekens mystik. Rut Hillarp och det litterära fyrtioalet'

Det litterära fyrtioalet eller fyrtioalismen har kommit att bli ett begrepp i svensk litteraturhistoria. Fyrtioalets författare utgjorde ett litterärt avantgarde, som i hög grad bidrog till att modernismen slog igenom på allvar i Sverige. Om man studerar de litterära översiktsverken får man lätt intrycket av att fyrtioalet var ett specifikt manligt decennium. De flesta handboks-författare presenterar nämligen nästan enbart manliga fyrtioalsförfattare. Också forskningen intresserar sig främst för det manliga fyrtioalet: om de manliga fyrtioalslyrikerna finns ett dussintal avhandlingar, medan det bara finns en enda avhandling om en kvinnlig lyriker, Annelie Bränström Öhmans *Kärlekens ödeland. Rut Hillarp och kvinnornas fyrtioalsmodernism* (1998), som behandlar Rut Hillarp.

Fanns det då några kvinnliga fyrtioalslyriker? Under 1940-talet debuterade flera kvinnliga lyriker och dessa verkar under denna tid ha räknats till de litterära nyskaparna. Kritikern Bengt Holmqvist påpekar visserligen i essän *Svensk 40-talslyrik* (1951) att fyrtioalismens kvinnliga lyriker är "svåra att placera inom den snävare ramen"

(40). Holmqvist definierar aldrig denna ram närmare, men hävdar ändå att samtliga konstnärligt står "på den extremt modernistiska linjen" (40). Flera kvinnliga lyriker finns dessutom representerade i de båda utgåvorna av antologin *40-talslyrik*, som utkom i anslutning till 1940-talet och som kan sägas göra anspråk på att fånga något väsentligt i den nya lyriken.

De kvinnliga lyrikerna utelämnas alltså både i litteraturhistorieskrivning och forskning, och båda dessa företeelser bör ha bidragit till att forma bilden av fyrtioalismen i det allmänna medvetandet. Det finns därför skäl att undersöka hur de kvinnliga lyrikerna förhåller sig till den gängse bilden av fyrtioalismen: ansluter de sig till den, eller har marginaliseringen av de kvinnliga lyrikerna gett upphov till en bild av decenniet som bara täcker dess manliga sida? För att de kvinnliga lyrikerna ska rymmas inom fyrtioalismsbegreppets ramar kanske det måste modifieras, eller till och med helt revideras.

En av dessa kvinnliga fyrtioalslyriker i litteraturhistoriens marginaler är Rut Hillarp. Rut Hillarp

(1914–2003) debuterade som poet 1946 med samlingen *Solens brunn*. Denna följdes under 1940-talet av ytterligare två samlingar, *Dina händer ekon* (1948) och *Båge av väntan* (1950). Därefter lämnade Hillarp lyriken för en tid för att ägna sig åt prosa, och under 1950- och 1960-talen utkom romanerna *Blodförmörkelse* (1951), *Sindhia* (1954), *En eld är havet* (1956) och *Kustlinje* (1963). Efter drygt tre decennier av lyrisk tystnad utgav Hillarp diktsamlingen *Spegel under jorden* (1982), vilken följdes av ytterligare två, *Penelopes väv* (1985) och *Strand för Isolde* (1991). Dessa samlingar innehåller förutom dikter också författarens egna fotomontage bestående av fotografiska dubbelkopieringar. Några år senare utkom ett urval dikter från Hillarps samlade produktion i samlingen *Nattens språk* (1995). Vid sidan av sitt författarskap arbetade Hillarp som lärare vid Statens normalskola och Södra latin, båda i Stockholm. Hon har också ägnat sig åt experimentell film och översatt lyrik.

I denna uppsats kommer jag att analysera en av Rut Hillarps dikter ur debutsamlingen *Solens brunn* och diskutera hennes hemmahörighet i det litterära fyrtioalet genom att kort relatera dikten till översiktsverkens bild av fyrtioalismen. Kärleken är det övergripande temat för Hillarps fyrtioalslyrik, och som jag kommer att visa är kärleken förknippad med liv och kan fungera som ett alternativ till den kristna tron. Denna hoppfulla syn på kärleken tycks inte harmoniera särskilt väl med den pessimistiskt färgade bild av fyrtioalet som återfinns i de litteraturhistoriska översiktsverken.

Jag kommer emellertid också att göra en läsning av en av Erik Lindegrens dikter ur *Sviter* (1947), inte för att spåra genetiska samband, utan för att se om Hillarp verkligen är så apart i fyrtioalet som hon i förstone kan verka. Det visar sig att den ljusa kärlekssynen återfinns också hos Lindegren, något som faktiskt har uppmärksammats i Lindegrenforskningen, men inte fått något genomslag i handböckernas framställningar om fyrtioalet. Slutligen diskuterar jag den kärlekssyn som uppträder hos Hillarp och Lindegren i ett större litteraturhistoriskt sammanhang genom att sätta den i relation till John Donnes dikt "The Canonization". Det finns nämligen en historisk kontinuitet mellan Donne och det svenska fyrtioalet som blir synlig först då man frigör sig från det traditionella sättet att se på fyrtioalet som återfinns i översiktsverken. När bilden av fyrtioalet modifieras förändras ju dess relation till andra litteraturhistoriska perioder.

*"på andra sidan kropparnas förlåt": kärlekens transcendens hos Rut Hillarp*

I fokus för Hillarps författarskap står alltså kärleken, och jag har valt att studera en kärleksdikt ur samlingen *Solens brunn* (1946):

Vem söker jag bakom orden och bilderna  
under ögonens vingar och händernas lås  
på andra sidan kropparnas förlåt  
Är det dig är det mig är det Gud  
Vad söker jag: jag vet blott vad jag finner  
lyckan  
de namnlösa minuterna

då vi båda bleknar bort krymper samman  
till ofödda tvillingar närda av samma blod  
vilande i samma eviga skötes värme. (58)

Diktens första rader präglas av brist. Diktjaget söker något som inte tycks finnas i diktens nu, och detta befinner sig "bakom", "under" och "på andra sidan" och förblir därför onåbart. Oåtkomligheten framhävs genom bilder för slutenhet och begränsning, såsom uttrycket "under ögonens vingar", som ger associationer till ett slutet ansikte, respektive "händernas lås". Denna uppgivna inledning till trots finner jaget så småningom något, nämligen lyckan, vars centrala position i dikten framhävs genom att ordet ensamt utgör en rad. Lyckan tycks här vara synonym med kärleksakten, i vilken de älskande smälter samman, men också "bleknar bort krymper samman" i. Sammansmältningen innebär alltså också utplåning av det egna jaget, något som ger associationer till den kristna mystiken. I dikten förekommer ytterligare kristna referenser: i de första raderna hör Gud till en av dem som jaget tror sig söka, och det talas om "kropparnas förlåt". Enligt Bibeln avskiljs templets innersta rum, det allra heligaste, genom ett förhänge, förlåten, som sägs ha brustit i två delar i samband med Jesu död och därmed uppfattades som ett tecken på att Jesus genom sin död öppnade vägen till Gud (Matt. 27:51, Heb. 6:19–20 och 10:19–20). Att jaget i dikten finner lyckan bortom "kropparnas förlåt" tyder på att kärleksakten har samma funktion som förhänget i templet och öppnar vägen till någon form av andlighet och nytt liv.

Driften till jagutplåning inom ett slags kärlekens mystik återfinns även i andra av Hillarps dikter. I "Svarta floder rinner över himmelen" (Hillarp, *Solens brunn*, 7f.) talar slutraden om begäret som "elden som befriar mig från mig själv", och i prosadikten "Vem finns väl mer än du" (Hillarp, *Dina händers ekon*, 48f.) leder jagets fokusering på duet till att identitetsgränserna överskrids. Inom kristen teologi fungerar den romantiska eller erotiska kärleken ibland som en metafor för andra relationer, till exempel den mellan Kristus och kyrkan. I Platons Symposium och i Dantes gudomliga komedi blir den romantiska eller erotiska kärleken ett steg på vägen mot den högsta formen av kärlek, nämligen kärleken till det gudomliga. Jag vill emellertid hävda att man inte kan förstå kärlekens religiösa anknytning som ett kristet uttryck i Hillarps dikter. Hos Hillarp förekommer kristendomen endast i form av kristen symbolik och bibelallusioner i samband med kärleken, och i en enskild dikt, "Alla gudar" (Hillarp, *Dina händers ekon*, 65), talar citat som "Alla gudar är grymma", "Inga gudar ger oss något" och "Alla gudar kräver vårt blod" för att de traditionella religionerna har spelat ut sin roll. I stället fungerar kärleken i Hillarps lyrik som ett alternativ till religionen, hos vilken människan kan få samma upplevelser av livskraft, fullkomlighet och transcendens som religionen traditionellt har erbjudit.

Robert M. Polhemus hävdar i boken *Erotic Faith. Being in Love from Jane Austen to D. H. Lawrence* att den sekulariseringsprocess som tog sin början under 1700-talet lett till att kärleken

ersatt religionen som syntesskapande kraft. Han menar att övertygelsen om att mening, värde, hopp och transcendens kan uppnås genom erotisk eller romantisk kärlek i grunden är religiös till sin natur och benämner den därför "erotic faith" (1). Föremålet för Polhemus studie är visserligen inte modernistisk lyrik, utan engelskspråkiga romaner från Jane Austens *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) till D. H. Lawrences *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). Begreppet "erotic faith" tycks gå att applicera på olika perioder och genrer och kan också användas för att beskriva kärlekens roll i Rut Hillarps lyrik. I likhet med karaktärerna i romanerna Polhemus analyserar finner Hillarps kärlekspar mening, hopp och transcendens genom kärleken. Polhemus finner att litteratur och konst som skildrar kärleken ofta lånar symbolspråk eller estetiska metoder från den religiösa sfären. Gustav Klimts målning *Kyssen* (1908) ger exempelvis associationer till bysantinsk religiös konst, och Polhemus menar att denna förflyttning av den sexuella kärleken till en religiös sfär framhäver kärlekens andliga natur (285). Jag menar att Rut Hillarps användning av ett religiöst symbolspråk i kärlekslyriken delvis kan förstås på samma sätt: det kristna symbolspråket är inte bara ett i vår kultur lättillgängligt språk för att beskriva andliga upplevelser, utan förstärker dessutom genom sin närvaro i dikten kärlekens andliga karaktär.

Hur förhåller sig då Rut Hillarps lyrik till den traditionella bilden av fyrtioalet? Litteraturhistoriska översiktsverk tillhandahåller en homogen bild av fyrtioalismen, i synnerhet i de översikter

som brukar inleda avsnitten om fyrtioalet. Det andra världskriget och ett därmed sammanhängande krav på något flera handboks författare kallar "tidsmedvetenhet" har en framskjuten plats i dessa framställningar. Kriget sägs också vara den bakomliggande orsaken till den pessimism, ångest och vanmakt som enligt handböckerna genomsyrar decenniets litteratur. Författarna anses vända sig bort från de ideologier, till exempel kristendomen, psykoanalysen, humanismen och marxismen, som visat sig verkningslösa då de inte kunnat förhindra en av 1900-talets största katastrofer, andra världskriget. I stället för ideologier sägs 1940-talets författare förespråka medvetenhet, allmängiltighet och analys. Ett modernistiskt formspråk hör också, enligt översiktsverken, till fyrtioalismens särdrag (Björklund 37ff.).

Med tanke på den dystra bild av fyrtioalismen som målas upp i de litteraturhistoriska översiktsverken, skulle man kunna tro att Rut Hillarp inte hade särskilt mycket gemensamt med sina manliga kollegor. Hon använder sig visserligen av ett modernistiskt formspråk, och många av hennes dikter har en mytologisk inramning som ger dem allmängiltiga anspråk. Dessutom avisas traditionella religioner som kristendomen, något som skulle kunna ses som ett led i en ideologikritik. Däremot innehåller samlingarna inga dikter som direkt kommenterar andra världskriget, även om det kärlekslösa tillståndet flera gånger skildras med hjälp av krigssymbolik. I hennes fyrtioalsproduktion återfinns flera dikter som skildrar den oförverkligade kärleken och som har en betydligt



mörkare grundton än den tidigare citerade. Dessa mer pessimistiska dikter till trots kvarstår emellertid det faktum att många av Hillarps fyrtiotalsdikter presenterar en förtröstansfull syn på kärleken. På det stora hela ger därför Hillarps fyrtiotalsdiktning hopp om förnyelse, något som inte alls harmonierar med den etablerade bilden av fyrtiotalismen.

*"kärlekens flammor som får helvetet att slockna":  
en parallell hos Erik Lindegren*

Är då Rut Hillarp verkligen så apart i det litterära fyrtiotalet? För att komma närmare ett svar på den frågan ska jag studera en av fyrtiotalismens förgrundsgestalter, Erik Lindegren. Lindegren har gått till historien som en av fyrtiotalets stora samtidsdiktare, men vid sidan av samtidsdikterna finner vi en mängd dikter som kretsar kring kärleken. Den får visserligen inte så stort utrymme i genombrottssamlingen *mannen utan väg* (1942), utan uppträder endast i några få dikter i mitten av samlingen. Där återfinns också några passager där kärleken tycks omöjlig: i sonett XXIV trotsar mannen kärleken genom att ställa sig upp med huvudet över molnen och lämna den gråtande kvinnan, och i XXVI skildras de älskandes avsked mot bakgrund av bilder från kriget. Trots detta vittnar båda dikterna om en i grunden förtröstansfull syn på kärleken: i XXIV leder kärleksmötet till tillit och närhet till både himmel och jord i samma ögonblick, och i XXVI talas det om "kärlekens flammor som får helvetet att slockna" (52f., 56f.). Liknande iakttagelser har också gjorts inom

Lindegrensforskningen. Lars Bäckström menar i boken Erik Lindegren att diktsamlingen har sitt "positiva kraftcentrum" i kärleksdikterna och att det är från dessa som lyftningen mot de till största delen förtröstansfulla slutdikterna utgår (75). Även Anders Cullhed ser i sin avhandling *"Tiden söker sin röst". Studier kring Erik Lindegrens mannen utan väg* kärleken i mannen utan väg som "en i sista hand segerrikt betvingande kraft" och påpekar dessutom att Lindegren till en början hade tänkt ge de älskande en framträdande plats i diktsamlingens final (197).

I allmänhet uttrycks kärleken hos Lindegren emellertid utan hjälp av kristen symbolik, men trots detta kan man många gånger se den på samma sätt som hos Hillarp, som ett alternativ till religionen. I "De fem sinnenas dans" i *Sviter från 1947* (67f.) leder kärleksakten till sammansmältning och jagutplåning:

O att få dricka dig sanslös och byta vingar  
medan pärfiskaren sjunker i sitt bländblå djup  
medan hjärtat flyter mot sin gröna katarakt  
att smaka en djupare glömska att glömma  
o att få dricka dig sanslös och byta vingar  
att få höra Ikaros brus och dykarens tysta sång  
och fiskens kristallsvarta glid över rusets botten  
att se en kyrkogård blomma i sitt oåtkomliga fjärran  
att höra någon träda in ur sitt fjärran fjärran  
o att dricka dig sanslös med dina vingar  
att smaka dina lemmars flykt till Daphnes grönska  
och grönskans förvandling till dina flöjter  
o att väckas av dig med mina vingar  
att smaka en djupare glömska att gömma

att höra zenit nära sig och katarakten  
att känna dina lemmars syn under mina händer  
och dina fyrars doft över våra månars gata  
o att få dricka dig namnlös och byta vingar  
o att få dricka din blundsyn med mina vingar  
att få lyssna till din doft av rymd och fyrar  
och svärd mot natt och syn under mina händer  
och skepp mot storm och väntan i ett åskmoln  
och katarakt mot skyn och fisken som delfin  
och pil mot zenit och svärd mot djupet  
och solens blix

O att ha druckit dig namnlös med dina vingar  
o att ha druckits namnlös med mina vingar  
o pil som alltid träffar i zenit av din bana  
o brygga av storm mellan soluppgång och  
nedgång  
du den första och sista rymdstrimman över havet  
minns oss du  
och vagga oss  
och blända oss  
och drick oss  
O drick oss med våra vingar!

Dikten innehåller en mängd erotiska symboler och fallosformade föremål: pärlfiskaren, månen, fisken och delfinen hör alla till den erotiska symbolvärlden, och bland fallossymbolerna kan nämnas flöjterna, fyrarna, svärdet och pilen. Lars Bäckström menar också att dikten direkt följer samlagets rytm, något som får bilda grunden för den växelverkan mellan höjd och djup som kan urskiljas i den. Bäckström betonar dessutom vatten- och sjöfartssymbolernas dominans i dikten (111f.). Vattnet tycks i dikten ofta referera till havet, vilket förstärker dess erotiska dimension, men vattnet framhäver även kärlekens livgivande funktion. Kärleken knyts också till naturens kretslopp. Referensen till nymfen Daphne – som enligt antik mytologi förvandlas till ett träd när hon förföljs av den av åtrå uppfyllda Apollon – indikerar att en sammansmältning med naturen äger rum i samband med kärleksmötet. Döden är närvarande i form av Ikaros, som möter döden i havet, och kyrkogården. Men kyrkogården blommar, något som framhäver dödens livgivande funktion och knyter an till årstidernas förlopp.

Som nämnts talar Bäckström om en rörelse mellan höjd och djup som framhäver samlagets rytm. Den sjunkande rörelsen dominerar i diktens första parti, där pärlfiskaren sjunker i djupet och fisken glider över rusets botten. I den passage som skildrar orgasmen ersätts den sjunkande rörelsen av en uppåtriktad strävan: katarakten strömmar mot skyn, fisken förvandlas till en delfin och förses därmed med egenskapen att kunna hoppa, pilen går mot zenit och det talas om

"solens blix". Ett undantag utgörs visserligen av svärdet, som sägs gå mot djupet, men detta uttryck ska nog snarare ses som en bild för hur mannens fallos i orgasmens ögonblick tränger djupt in i kvinnans sköte. De älskande tycks alltså genomgå ett slags elevation i kärleksmötets klimax, något som framhävs av de i dikten ständigt återkommande vingarna.

Kärleksakten leder till sammansmältning mellan de båda älskande, vilket betonas genom de många synesthesierna, till exempel "smaka dina lemmars flykt", "känna dina lemmars syn", "dricka din blundsyn" och "lyssna till din doft". Sinnesintrycken byter inte bara plats med varandra, utan rör sig dessutom mellan de båda älskande, något som ytterligare förstärker momentet av sammansmältning. Flera uttryck som anknyter till berusning eller extas förekommer i dikten: "dricka dig sanslös", "dricka dig namnlös", "rusets botten" och "djupare glömska". Det extatiska och berusningen betonas också genom de många upprepningarna. Namnlösheten indikerar även att kärleksakten leder till jagutplåning. Kärleken är i Lindegrens dikt alltså förknippad med ett flertal mystiska och religiösa företeelser som elevation, sammansmältning, extas och jagutplåning. Roland Lysell menar i sin analys av "De fem sinnenas dans" i sin avhandling *Erik Lindegrens imaginära universum* att kärleksmötet leder till en förening av jaget och duet i ett dubbelsubjekt. Han talar om rymdstriman i diktens slutrader som "ett överpersonligt kosmiskt medvetande" och anser att diktens sista rad är en bön till detta om att uppsluka dubbel-

subjektet i en *unio mystica* för att sammansmälta med det kosmiska skeendet. Jagsubjektet kan inte på egen hand uppgå i allt enligt Lysell, utan måste göra avkall på sig själv och låta sig invaderas av duet: visubjektet blir på så sätt ett villkor för att sammansmältningen med rymden ska bli möjlig (303). Även om den kristna symboliken i princip saknas hos Lindegren leder kärleken till mystisk sammansmältning med den älskade och världsalltet. Kärleken har därmed tydliga andliga konnotationer och fungerar, precis som hos Hillarp, som ett alternativ till den religiösa tron.

Som jag visat menar Robert M. Polhemus att en av konsekvenserna av sekulariseringen är att människan tillfredsställer sitt behov av andlighet genom kärleken. Men kärleken är, enligt Polhemus, inte bara ett substitut för religionen, utan också det som frälsar människan från en värld som kollapsat (60, 287f.). Jag menar att man kan se motsättningen mellan samtidsdikterna och tron på kärlekens frälsande kraft i Lindegrens fyrtiotalsdiktning i ljuset av detta resonemang. I en värld som härjats av krig, där universella värden har upplösts och där likgiltigheten råder tycks inget hopp finnas, och dessa känslor kommer till uttryck i samtidsdikterna. I Lindegrens kärleksdikter finns emellertid den livskänsla, den trygghet och den andlighet som omvärlden saknar, och hoppet om räddning sätts därför till kärleken. Översiktsverkens bild av fyrtiotalismen är till viss del tillämpbar på Lindegrens samtidsdikter. Samtidigt kan de knappast sägas ansluta sig till den helt, då det hopp om förnyelse som är knutet

till kärleken står i skarp kontrast till den pessimism som enligt översiktsverken kännetecknar fyrtiotalismen.

Det kan vara vanskligt att förstå Rut Hillarps lyrik på samma sätt, eftersom hennes dikter så konsekvent uppehåller sig kring kärleken och det saknas dikter som refererar till ett omgivande samhälle. Däremot har skildringarna av det kärlekslösa tillståndet likheter med de skildringar av andra världskriget som förekommer hos andra fyrtiotalstryker. Det kärlekslösa tillståndet förbinds i Hillarps dikter med död, begränsning, lögn och brist på seende respektive klarhet. I några av de dikter där kärleken inte förverkligas knyts också symboler för krig eller jakt till kärleken, och många gånger tar den oförverkligade kärleken formen av en maktkamp mellan de älskande. I ljust av Lindegrens dikter är det därför inte omöjligt att den tro på kärlekens frälsande kraft som återfinns i Hillarps lyrik kan kopplas till andra samtidslyrikers skildringar av den moderna världens sammanbrott och fungera som en kommentar till dessa. Eftersom denna tro på kärleken som en alternativ religion återfinns även hos en av fyrtiotalismens förgrundsgestalter ter sig dessutom Hillarps lyrik inte längre så apart i det litterära fyrtiotalet, och det finns kanske snarare skäl att ifrågasätta det pessimistiskt färgade fyrtiotalismbegreppet. Genom att studera en kvinnlig lyriker som normalt inte brukar räknas till fyrtiotalismen kan man alltså finna nya sätt att se på de redan etablerade fyrtiotalstrykerna och på fyrtiotalismbegreppet. Könsperspektivet blir här en vital kraft

som utmanar den traditionella bilden av fyrtiotalet och kan bidra till att förändra litteraturhistorien.

*"Mysterious by this love": det svenska fyrtiotalet och barockpoesin*

Synen på kärleken som ett slags religiöst-mystisk företeelse är inte specifik för den svenska fyrtiotalstryken. Som Polhemus' studie visar förekommer den också under 1800-talet och i början av 1900-talet i den engelskspråkiga romanen. Jag skulle vilja ta ännu ett steg tillbaka i historien och lyfta fram John Donnes dikt "The Canonization" som ett exempel på att en liknande syn på kärleken återfinns i barockens litteratur. Att dra paralleller mellan modernismen och barocken har varit populärt inom litteraturvetenskaplig forskning, och en del sådana ansatser har också gjorts i samband med svenska fyrtiotalstryker. Redan 1947, i sin anmälan av Erik Lindegrens *Sviter*, använder Karl Vennberg begreppet barock i samband med fyrtiotalstryken genom att han vill se Lindegrens diktsamling som en dokumentation av en utveckling från barock till romantik. För Vennberg blir barocken här en i huvudsak formell företeelse genom att han lyfter fram sådant som antiteser och det utpekulerade och våldsamma bildspråket som exempel på barock. Också Lars Forssell visar i en uppsats i *Femtitäl*, "Mannen utan väg: Barock och humanism," på barockinslag i Lindegrens diktning, men han riktar inte enbart in sig på den formella sidan, utan framhäver också en moralisk likhet med barocken. Forssell pekar framför allt på likheter med John

Donnes lyrik, medan Bernt Olsson, i uppsatsen "Lindegren, Ekelöf och barockpoesien", drar såväl formella som tematiska paralleller mellan Lindegrens dikter och svensk barocklyrik.

Ingen har emellertid uppmärksammat likheterna mellan den kärlekssyn som finns i fyrtiotalet och som kommer till uttryck hos poeter som Hillarp och Lindegren och den kärlekssyn som förekommer hos en barocklyriker som John Donne. Vennberg vill i sin anmälan av *Sviter* placera Lindegrens kärleksdikter i romantikkategorin och ställer den därmed i motsättning till barocken, eftersom han talar om en utveckling från barock till romantik hos Lindegren. John Donnes dikt "The Canonization" (The Metaphysical Poets 61f.) har icke desto mindre flera gemensamma drag med det svenska fyrtiotalets kärlekslyrik:

For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love,  
Or chide my palsie, or my gout,  
My five gray haire, or ruin'd fortune flout,  
With wealth your state, your minde with  
Arts improve,  
Take you a course, get you a place,  
Observe his honour, or his grace,  
Or the Kings reall, or his stamped face  
Contemplate; what you will, approve,  
So you will let me love.

Alas, alas, who's injur'd by my love?  
What merchants ships have my sighs drown'd?  
Who saies my teares have overflow'd his ground?  
When did my colds a forward spring remove?  
When did the heats which my veines fill

Adde one man to the plaguie Bill?  
Soldiers finde warres, and Lawyers finde out still  
Litigious men, which quarrels move,  
Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, wee'are made such by love;  
Call her one, mee another flye,  
We'are Tapers too, and at our owne cost die,  
And wee in us finde the'Eagle and the Dove;  
The Phoenix ridle hath more wit  
By us, we two being one, are it,  
So, to one neutrall thing both sexes fit.  
Wee dye and rise the same, and prove  
Mysterious by this love.

Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,  
And if unfit for tombes or hearse  
Our legend bee, it will be fit for verse;  
And if no peece of Chronicle wee prove,  
We'll build in sonnets pretty roomes;  
As well a well wrought urne becomes  
The greatest ashes, as halfe-acre tombes,  
And by these hymnes, all shall approve  
Us *Canoniz'd* for Love.

And thus invoke us; You whom reverend love  
Made one anothers hermitage;  
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;  
Who did the whole worlds soule extract, and  
drove  
Into the glasses of your eyes,  
So made such mirrors, and such spies,  
That they did all to you epitomize,

Countries, Townes, Courts: Beg from above

A patterne of your love!

John Donnes dikt har blivit flitigt kommenterad inom forskningen. Cleanth Brooks analyserar dikten utförligt i boken *The Well Wrought Urn. Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, och Murray Krieger gör en analys, som till stor del följer Brooks', i boken *The New Apologists for Poetry*. Flera andra forskare har också uppmärksammat "The Canonization", men den följande diskussionen av dikten bygger huvudsakligen på Brooks' och Kriegers analyser (Brooks 11–18, Krieger 12–18). Dikten utgör ett försvar för diktjagets och hans älskades kärlek, ett försvar som lyfter fram det faktum att deras kärlek inte skadar någon. Kärleken ställs till en början i motsättning till världen: den person som ifrågasätter jagets kärlek uppmanas att ägna sig åt världsliga företeelser som att skaffa rikedom och ära åt sig själv, till exempel genom att delta i hovlivet och betrakta kungen där eller genom att göra affärer och titta på hans ansikte på mynten ("Or the Kings reall, or his stamped face"). Också det petrarkiska bildspråket i den andra strofen bidrar till att framhäva kontrasten mellan kärleken och världen, eftersom kärleken här inte, som hos Petrarca, har någon inverkan på världen: kärleks-suckarna sänker inga skepp och tårarna orsakar inga översvämningar.

Döden uppträder i den tredje strofen. Här liknas de älskande vid ljus (tapers), som "at our owne cost die". De sägs också ha örnen och duvan inom sig, och de brinnande ljusen och fåglarna förenas i bilden av Fågel Fenix, en brinnan-

de fågel. Men Fågel Fenix återuppstår ur sin egen aska, och på samma sätt får de älskande nytt liv: "Wee dye and rise the same, and prove / Mysterious by this love." I poesi från 1500- och 1600-talen representerar döden ofta orgasmen, och om döden förstås på det sättet också här blir Fågel Fenix en bild för hur de älskande dör och återuppstår i kärleksaktens höjdpunkt. Att ordet "mysterious", som kan ha religiösa konnotationer, används om detta skeende ger det dessutom en transcendent aspekt.

Diktens titel, "The Canonization", syftar på den kanonisering som helgon genomgår. Dikten innehåller flera referenser till denna process, och Brooks vill till och med se helgonet som diktens grundläggande metafor (11). Kärleken ställs i de första stroforna i motsättning till världen. På samma sätt som helgonet avsäger sig världen och hänger sig åt kärleken till Gud tycks alltså de älskande avsäga sig världen och gå upp i kärleken till varandra – de sägs till och med vara varandras eremitboningar. Det talas också om "legend", vilket på Donnes tid syftade på ett helgons liv. Dikten handlar emellertid inte om helgon, utan det är de älskande som jämföras med helgon genom sin kärlek: "Us *Canoniz'd* for love." Brooks lyfter fram en paradox i dikten, nämligen den att de älskande avsäger sig livet och världen men ändå uppnår ett rikare liv. Den sista strofen skildrar hur världen krymper samman och återspeglas i den älskades ögon, och Brooks kommenterar detta såsom följer: "The lovers in becoming hermits, find that they have not lost the world, but

have gained the world in each other, now a more intense, more meaningful world." (15)

De älskande dör och återuppstår i kärleksakten; de avsäger sig likt helgonet världen och får i gengäld tillgång till en mer meningsfull värld, och de sågs dessutom vara "[m]ysterious by this love." Allt detta förmedlar en syn på kärleken som något som kan leda till samma känslor och upplevelser som religionen, och i detta påminner kärlekssynen om den som återfinns i det svenska fyrtiotalet. Det finns emellertid en väsentlig skillnad, nämligen det faktum att Donnes dikt är skriven i en annan tid än Hillarps och Lindegrens. Kristendomen var fortfarande dominerande, och den sekulariseringsprocess som Polhemus talar om hade inte ägt rum. Därför kan kärleken knappast ses som ett alternativ till religionen hos Donne på samma sätt som hos Hillarp och Lindegren, utan det är snarare så att kärleken och religionen kan ge uttryck för samma sak, att den ena sortens förening blir en metafor för den andra, som Brooks uttrycker det (18). Polhemus resonerar rimligt med avseende på att kärleken blir ett alternativ till religionen i den litteratur som uppstår i kölvattnet av sekulariseringsprocessen. Däremot kan kärleken framställas på ett likartat sätt också före sekulariseringen. Kärleken får ju en transcendent aspekt också hos Donne, och det språk med hjälp av vilket detta förmedlas blandar sexuell och kristen symbolik, precis som hos Hillarp och Lindegren. Polhemus nämner visserligen att "erotic faith" inte är ett helt nytt fenomen, men han lyfter främst fram dess starka

genomslag i samband med sekulariseringen, och han uppmärksammar inte heller anknytningen till Donne.

Synen på kärleken i det svenska fyrtiotalet har alltså huvudsakligen sina rötter i 1800-talet, åtminstone när det gäller tanken på kärleken som ett alternativ till religionen, men i sättet på vilket kärleken framställs finns det också beröringspunkter med barockens lyrik, representerad av John Donne. Som tidigare nämnts har flera forskare redan uppmärksammat likheter mellan fyrtiotalet och barocken, men genom att utgå från en marginaliserad kvinnlig fyrtiotalslyriker blir det möjligt att upptäcka andra likheter. Könsperspektivet ger på så vis inte bara nya sätt att se på det svenska fyrtiotalet – med den nya bilden av fyrtiotalsismen förändras till viss del relationen mellan fyrtiotalet och andra litteraturhistoriska perioder och det uppstår nya sätt att se på historisk kontinuitet och förändring.

## Källor och litteratur

- 40-talslyrik. Utgiven av Erik Lindegren & Karl Vennberg. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1946.
- 40-talslyrik. Utgiven av Bengt Holmqvist. 2 uppl. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1951.
- Björklund, Jenny. *Hoppets lyrik: Tre diktare och en ny bild av fyrtiotalismen: Ella Hillbäck, Rut Hillarp, Ann Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg*. Diss. Uppsala 2004. Stockholm/Stehag: Symposion, 2004.
- Brooks, Cleanth. *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947.
- Bränström Öhman, Annelie. *Kärlekens ödeland: Rut Hillarp och kvinnornas fyrtiotalismodernism*. Diss. Umeå 1998. Stockholm/Stehag: Symposion, 1998.
- Bäckström, Lars. *Erik Lindegren*. Rev uppl. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1979.
- Cullhed, Anders. *"Tiden söker sin röst": Studier kring Erik Lindegrens mannen utan väg*. Diss. Stockholm 1982. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1982.
- Forssell, Lars. "Mannen utan väg: Barock och humanism." *Femtital* 5 (1951): 5–11.
- Hillarp, Rut. *Solens brunn*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1946.
- . *Dina händers ekon*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1948.
- . *Båge av väntan*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1950.
- . *Bloodförmörkelse*. Stockholm: eget förlag, 1951.
- . *Sindhia*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1954.
- . *En eld är havet*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1956.
- . *Kustlinje*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1963.
- . *Spegel under jorden*. Stockholm: Symposion, 1982.
- . *Penelopes väv*. Lidingö: Salamander, 1985.
- . *Strand för Isolde*. Johanneshov: Naxos, 1991.
- . *Nattens språk*. Lund: Ellerströms, 1995.

- Holmqvist, Bengt. *Svensk 40-talslyrik*. Studentföreningen Verdandis småskrifter 517. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1951.
- Krieger, Murray. *The New Apologists for Poetry*. Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1969.
- Lindegren, Erik. *mannen utan väg*. Stockholm: eget förlag, 1942.
- . *Sviter*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1947.
- Lysell, Roland. *Erik Lindegrens imaginära universum*. Diss. Stockholm 1983. Bodafors: Doxa, 1983.
- Olsson, Bernt. "Lindegren, Ekelöf och barockpoesien." *Diktaren och hans formvärld: Lundastudier i litteraturvetenskap tillägnade Staffan Björck och Carl Fehrman*. Red. Rolf Arvidson, Bernt Olsson & Louise Vinge. Malmö: Allhem, 1975. 77–95.
- Polhemus, Robert M. *Erotic Faith: Being in Love from Jane Austen to D. H. Lawrence*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- The Metaphysical Poets*. Urval och utgiven av Helen Gardner. Rev uppl. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966.
- Vennberg, Karl. "Från barock till romantik." *Aftonbladet* 4.12.1947.

## Fotnot

- <sup>1</sup> juni 2004 disputerade jag på avhandlingen *Hoppets lyrik. Tre diktare och en ny bild av fyrtiotalismen. Ella Hillbäck, Rut Hillarp, Ann Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg*, och den här publicerade uppsatsen uttrycker några av grundtankarna i denna avhandling. Diskussionen om kärlekssynen hos John Donne saknas emellertid i avhandlingen.



Jenny Bonnevier

## **Drawing a Line: Science Fiction or Fantasy? The Case of Ursula Le Guin's *Always Coming Home***

The title of this article might lead you to believe that I will spend the next few pages actually "drawing a line" between science fiction and fantasy. I am happy to inform you that this is not the case. What I will do is to examine some of the feminist epistemological issues that I believe to be at stake in the drawing of such a line, and do a reading of *Always Coming Home* that highlights these issues.

Ursula Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* was published in 1985. Interestingly, a review in a non-sf journal (presumably by a critic not well-versed in the ins and outs of sf theory) claims that the text has "covert science fiction elements" (Crow 236). Written about a book that is actually published as science fiction this is a somewhat remarkable statement. This generic confusion points to the fact that if the science of science fiction is understood as the presence of technological gadgets then the reader does not but gradually discover it in *Always Coming Home*. Indeed, there is not all that much to be discovered; technology is not a prominent feature of the book. Put quite simply, the

reader expects certain sf props to appear, when they do not the text's genre identity is put in question. But *Always Coming Home* treads the borderlands of sf in other, and much more profound, ways. In what follows I will attempt to explore that borderland area.

Science fiction is a genre formed or engendered in an age of scientific positivism and, as Carl D Malmgren puts it, "firmly grounded in a discourse that assumes the validity of a scientific epistemology" (Malmgren 9). And, by partaking in that discourse it also enacts, writes, and continuously constructs it. And as has been demonstrated repeatedly, this scientific discourse is thoroughly gendered. It relies on the binary oppositions of active/passive and male/female for some of its most pervasive metaphors and conceptualizations. Although this criticism has often been dismissed as irrelevant to scientific methodology and the production of scientific knowledge, feminist epistemologists insist on its utter relevance. And this is my position here. The source of my interest is the way in which feminist sf writers, of

which Le Guin is one, have engaged with the genre, and thereby the scientific discourse on which the genre relies.

Now, when I call attention to the line between fantasy and science fiction, I do so because it has been the line demarcating the borders not only of sf but also of rationality and of a cognitive approach to history advocated for instance by Darko Suvin in the landmark *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. This is the case in many genre definitions in sf theory, and also in popular perception of fantasy as centrally concerned with magic and strange worlds and creatures to which natural laws do not apply. Just as space ships and aliens are seen as central sf hallmarks, certain "props" are closely associated with fantasy. These would be, for example, magicians, feudal societies of a distant, imaginary past, and perhaps the occasional dragon. On both these levels, the theoretical and the popular, *Always Coming Home* dances, not at the edge of the world, but at the edge of the perceived border separating sf from fantasy.

When women writers, many of whom were feminists, ventured into the genre in significant numbers during the 70s, some parts of the sf community responded with sometimes cloaked, sometimes open, aversion. When trying to articulate what was perceived to be happening, the sf community tapped into familiar scientific discourse, and the term "hard sf" became increasingly common. With a noticeable element of nostalgic longing for the Golden Age, the term

focuses the importance of "real science" and careful extrapolation. The binary that brings out this meaning is "soft sf." Echoing the distinction between soft and hard science this terminology does of course partake in the gendered meanings of these words, associating soft not only with "not-real-science" but also with women. And implicitly as well as explicitly devaluating them.

One strikingly explicit example of the gendered use of the terms is Charles Platt's construction in a 1989 article in *Science Fiction Eye*, "The RAPE of Science Fiction". He describes a new generation "who used the props of science fiction (aliens, time travel, starships) without any real interest in plausibility as their predecessors had known it. A new 'soft' science fiction emerged, largely written by women: Joan Vinge, Vonda McIntyre, Ursula Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Kate Wilhelm, Carol Ermshwiller. Their concern for human values was admirable, but they eroded science fiction's one great strength that had distinguished it from all other fantastic literature: its implicit claim that events described could actually come true." (7)

As is noted several times under the entries of "hard sf" and "soft sf" in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* what is seen as hard or soft is arbitrary and internally illogical. To me, this is related to the fact that it is a gendered phenomenon, and in many ways a response to a challenge to the genre that is more felt than understood. This is why, despite the fact that many

male sf writers can in fact be held guilty of Platt's charges, and that quite a few women writers are highly concerned with plausibility, "soft" sf still remains gendered female.

Some feminist critics have rejected what could perhaps be called the excessive "softness" of *Always Coming Home*, disparagingly describing the book as "feminised" (Jones 200), claiming that in it, "a woman's traditional domestic sphere is glorified" (Jones 202). Feminists certainly have reason to be wary of anything that speaks of the natural woman, the nurturing mother etc, and it becomes easy to reject "soft" and place oneself squarely on the side of "hard." But in doing that, one is of course validating both the categories and their hierarchical order, and thus reproducing the system one wished to undermine. *Always Coming Home* is certainly concerned with human values; it is certainly soft rather than hard in these terms. But as I read it, this softness constitutes a powerful engagement with the sf genre.

When I explore the paths that *Always Coming Home* takes in the borderlands of science fiction and fantasy, I will look at three different ways of demarcating that border, three different definitions of sf. The first definition is found in Samuel Delaney's discussion of "the subjunctivity of sf." "Subjunctivity," as Delaney puts it "is the tension on the thread of meaning that runs between word and object" (quoted in Russ 16). According to Delaney sf is the literature of what *has not happened* and it is distinguished from fantasy (again

this appears to be a crucial line to draw) which is the literature of what *could not have happened*.

Already in the first sentence of *Always Coming Home* Le Guin addresses the subjunctivity of her text. And she does so in a beautiful balancing act that stretches the boundaries of sf subjunctivity. "The people in this book," we learn "might be going to have lived a long, long time from now in Northern California." According to Delaney "events that have not happened include those events that might happen: these are your predicative tales." In this sense, then, *Always Coming Home* would be a predicative tale. But *Always Coming Home* is set not in the future, but in the past. Only not our past, but the past of a distant future. Thus, another variant of the subjunctivity of sf is included, for "[e]vents that have not happened in the past compose that sf specialty, the parallel-world story" (quoted in Russ 16).

But when these two "subjunctivities" are combined, something else happens. An event that has not happened is one thing. However, events that might have happened are something slightly different, the phrase blurs the line between real and not real; the moorings are loosened, so that the relation of the story to our "zero-world" grows somewhat uncertain. By, in effect, creating an imaginary past through combining two sf subjunctivities, Le Guin is challenging the genre boundaries in a highly sophisticated manner. She is simultaneously treading the borderlands of fantasy by quite simply evoking the asso-

ciations of most readers of "past," and particularly an imaginary past, with fantasy. Combined with the non-technological society of the Kesh and a certain mythological or perhaps fairy-talish feeling that suffuses the story, for quite a few readers, the path must already have crossed the border.

The two subjunctivities Le Guin engages with here would not be relevant in Kesh thought. To them "the kind of narrative that tells what happened is never clearly defined by genre, style or valuation from the kind that tells a story like what happened" (*Home* 500). And the kind of narrative that tells a story *like what happened* includes what we would call realistic fiction as well as myth and fairy-tale. There are epistemological implications of Le Guin's challenge to the subjunctivity of sf since the difference between the modes of Kesh language and narrative and ours lies in "where you stop, on what grounds you stop, and say, Reality goes no further" (*Home* 500). For what is real in turn determines what we believe are areas of knowledge, even what we perceive to be possible to know, to be cognitive about, so to speak.

The second definition demarcating the borders of sf is Kim Stanley Robinson's statement that sf is "an historical literature [...]" In every sf narrative, there is an explicit or implicit fictional history that connects the period depicted to our present moment, or to some moment of our past." (Robinson, as cited in Clute and Nicholson, the entry "Definitions of sf"). Sf as an histo-

rical genre is also central to Suvin's definition of sf as a cognitive literature. In contrast to myth and fantasy which are "outside time," or "lifted out of time," sf's historicity, its strings to our "zero-world" is what makes it possible for it to confront that world cognitively (Suvin 20 and 21).

As you will remember, *Always Coming Home* begins by addressing the temporal relation of its world to our temporal reality. By loosening the knots that tie the Valley to us in time, and then evocatively telling us that "the past after all can be quite as obscure as the future," (First Note) Le Guin foreshadows Valley-conceptions of time. In Kesh language the grammatical category Sky mode, which indicates unreality or the imaginary, is used for all future *and* past tenses.

The relationship between our world and theirs is a point in question within the book itself. We encounter an editor who appears sometimes in comments upon her own editorial practices or her translation of Kesh texts, sometimes in source notes. There is also the persona of Pandora, who in some ways seems to be identical with the editor, but who also appears to be more of both an author figure and of a character in the book. This Pandora/editor/translator is quite clearly passing between our reality and the Valley's. These moves between the worlds appear to be spatial rather than temporal. "The period in which we live... appeared in Valley thought as a remote region, set apart from the community and continuity of human/animal/earthly existence" (153). This is typical of Kesh thought, for by

them "neither chronological nor causal sequence is considered an adequate reflection of reality" (153). Looking for a "historically minded person," Pandora is met by confusion. Finally giving up, Pandora comments: "It's hopeless. He doesn't perceive time as a direction, let alone a progress, but as a landscape in which one may go any number of directions, or nowhere" (171).

The blurring of the temporal relationship between the Valley and Civilization, between the story and our "zero-world" are then loosened as a consequence of the Kesh view of time, and history. This is a pervasive element of the novel, setting the parameters for the moves of the editor/Pandora person, not only as the Kesh perceive them, but as they are conveyed to us as readers, as when she "Finds a Way into the Valley through the Scrub Oak" 239. This relationship of course seriously fails to conform to the conceptions of sf alternative realities or histories. The subjunctivity of the text, its narrator/editor/translator, and the variety of narrative forms are all predicated on a view of time that does not conceive of history as linear, or perhaps not even temporal. Does that, then, make it into a cognitive failure, a failure as sf? Does it turn it into fantasy?

It can certainly be read as if it does. Whatever challenges the boundaries we set up for rationality (for relating to time in a particular way is, in fact, a prerequisite for conforming to ideals of rationality) run the risk of being perceived not as challenges but as falling outside the category completely, as failing. I find it much more intriguing,

however, to read *Always Coming Home* as engaging with the idea that there are other ways of knowing time, of writing history, that are not centered around progress, around time as an arrow.

The genre sf of the "pulp magazines" came into being in the spirit of a Western science that views its own methodology as progressive *per se*. In this view, scientific methodology ensures a critical approach to the world that will produce knowledge which, in its turn, will promote happiness, and in time give us the perfect society. Even when most of the genre left that rhetoric behind, the validation of sf, based on its scientific approach or methodology (rather than its scientific subject matter), has continued as one prominent strand of sf definitions. As Robert Scholes puts it, sf "develops its arbitrary parameters with a rigor and consistency that imitates in its fictional way the rigor of scientific method" (Scholes 102). This definition constitutes the third and final border between sf and fantasy in my discussion.

In the Valley, science as we know it does not seem to exist. It would appear as if in Le Guin's vision, the institutions, methodologies and bodies of knowledge that we would recognize as science are so bound up with the notion of progress and control that they are not, cannot be, compatible with the pacifist, ecologically sound and non-patriarchal society of the Kesh. Certainly, there is the possibility for anyone so inclined to study physics or mathematics at the information and communication centers called Exchanges. That

study however, does not have an impact on Valley life. It is neither a source of metaphors for ideal rationality and knowledge, nor a resource for technological inventions and "progress."

The paradigm of knowledge as an absolute good, and the scientific pursuit to know more, to expand, to progress, to conquer as heroic, is replaced by one which asks why we need to know. It sees existence, not progress, as its center. In epistemological terms, then, *Always Coming Home* stresses knowledge as existing in a social context, where morality and ethics is seen as involved in every epistemological question. Just as many other feminist texts such as *Woman on the Edge of Time and Door into Ocean*, it insists on the social and therefore moral and ethical, rather than the narrowly epistemological, nature of such questions. In this way, parallel to the project of many feminist epistemologists, Le Guin's novel expands the area of what can be considered as epistemologically valid questions.

The book can in many ways be described as an anthropology of the future, containing as it does passages such as "What They Ate," "Dramatic Works," and "Some Notes on Medical Practices." It also discusses the making of meaning. The idea of progress was part of anthropology from the conception of the discipline in a discourse that assumed a line of development from lower to higher stages and that one stage inevitably led to the next. This model is one of Le Guin's main targets in *Always Coming Home*. As

in so many of her other works advanced technology coexists with "primitive" cultures.

Using the metaphor of an archeological site, Le Guin also addresses the making of anthropological meaning, the construction of "scientific" knowledge:

I found, at last, the town I had been hunting for. After digging in several wrong places for over a year and persisting in several blockheaded opinions – that it must be walled, with one gate, for instance – I was studying yet once more the contours of my map of the region, when it dawned as slowly and certainly as the sun itself upon me that the town was there, between the creeks, under my feet the whole time. And there was never a wall; what on earth did they need a wall for? What I had taken for the gate was the bridge across the meeting of the creeks. (3)

The block-headed opinions of the "I" of this text are of course not signs of individual slow-wittedness. On the contrary, they are the preconceived notions, the paradigm, that tells us what to look for. It lets us understand the world we meet, but also restrains the ways in which we can understand it. Here, the realization finally comes to her, the strange patterns have perhaps met her eyes so many times that they become recognizable as meaningful. Interestingly, the gate that would separate the observer from the culture she intends to observe turns out to be not a gate but a bridge.

In its radical questioning of the boundaries of sf, as well as the limitations of our perception of

historical time and the potential of science and science fiction, *Always Coming Home* could perhaps be dismissed as having moved "out of time," and out of the area which can be cognitively accessed. And to some critics this would make it toothless as a critique of society or an exposure of ideological fallacies. However, I would claim that *Always Coming Home* can be read as an attempt, not wholly successful, but nonetheless compelling, to challenge the fallacies of the epistemological discourse of sf and sf criticism commonly rely on. And at least if you, as I do, take some comfort in the belief that to venture somewhere in your mind can be the first step of a venture that might take you further than you thought possible, then *Always Coming Home* provides hope as well as a challenge. If, as Le Guin writes "What was and what may be lie, like children whose faces we cannot see, in the arms of silence" and "all we ever have is here, now" (First Note), then it is both our hope and a challenge that "'Always,' says the Archivist of Wakwaha. 'Right through Civilisation, we have lived in the Dream time" (172).

## Works cited

- Clute, John and Peter Nicholls, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1995.
- Crow, Charles L. "Review." *Western American Literature* 21. 3 (1985): 235-36.
- Jones, Gwyneth. *Deconstructing the Starships: Science, Fiction, and Reality*. Liverpool: Liverpool U P, 1999.
- Le Guin, Ursula. *Always Coming Home*. 1985. London: Grafton Books, 1988.
- Malmgren, Carl. *Worlds Apart: Narratology of Science Fiction*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U P, 1991.
- Platt, Charles. "The RAPE of Science Fiction." *The Science Fiction Eye* 1. 5 (1989): 45-49.
- Russ, Joanna. *To Write Like a Woman: Essays in Feminism and Science Fiction*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U P, 1995.
- Scholes, Robert. *Structural Fabulation: An Essay on Fiction of the Future*. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1975.
- Suin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven: Yale U P, 1979.





Marta Ronne

## **“The Mind and Body Problem” Academy, Gender and Power In Women’s Contemporary Dissertation Novels**

*But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction – what has that got to do with the mind and body problem?*

So you might paraphrase the opening sentence of *A Room of One’s Own* by Virginia Woolf, a feminist classic addressing the relationship between women’s narrative and them getting a ‘room of one’s own’ (i.e. enough space for undisturbed intellectual activity). The paraphrase refers to the relationship between the representation of the intellectual in women’s 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction and their limited access to the dominant masculine discursive praxis within Academia.

This relationship is the main subject of this paper, as I will be addressing the question of gender and academic careers within the Western system of higher education, as depicted by contemporary female writers in so called dissertation novels. I have two themes. The first is the representation of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century academic woman. The second theme is women’s literary contributions to the genre of university novels. My

question is whether, and in what way, late 20th-century women writers were aspiring to renew the traditional narrative and stylistic pattern of university fiction.

My readings concern two contemporary American dissertation novels: *The Odd Woman* by Gail Godwin (1974) and *Mind-Body Problem* by Rebecca Goldstein (1983).

This article was inspired by a short passage in Hilary Radner’s essay on literature and Culture Studies, called “Extra Curricular Activities. Women Writers and the Readerly Text,” published in *Women’s Writing in Exile* 1989. In her readings Radner is using the term dissertation novels, that is, works of fiction she defines as “novels about women writing dissertations written by women who have written dissertations” (Radner, 257). The definition suits the two writers presented above, both of them combining successful academic careers with writing fiction.

Gail Godwin, the author of a number of highly praised novels as *The Perfectionists*, *Glass People*, *The Finishing School*, *The Odd Woman*,

*Violet Clay and The Good Husband*, as well as of a number of short stories and essays (*Dream Children, Mr Bedford and the Muses*), received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Iowa. She has been awarded numerous times both for her teaching at Columbia and Vassar and for her achievements as a writer.

Rebecca Goldstein, the author of *Mind-Body Problem, Strange Attractors, The Dark Sister and The Late-Summer Passion of a Woman of Mind*, earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from Princeton University before she returned to Barnard, her former college, where she taught for ten years.

What Hilary Radner does not seem to be aware of in her reading of women's dissertation novels is the fact that they belong to the 200 year-old genre of university fiction (often referred to as *university novels*). The university novel, being a kind of *Bildungsroman*, was for a long time regarded as a male-dominated genre in the Western literary tradition. Although female writers had been contributing significantly to the genre since the beginning of the 20th century, it was not until women became more established in Academia that female university novels began to challenge both the literary tradition as such and the predominant view of the academic as a male genius.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly to Radner's definition of dissertation novels, university fiction can be defined as short stories or novels about academics written by former graduates (or by writers having at least

some experience of Western institutions of higher education). Still, it should be observed that although dissertation novels as defined above belong to university fiction, they are of an unusual kind, due to the fact that university novels usually are stories of disappointment and are seldom written by authors who themselves have made successful academic careers. People writing university fiction may be assumed to be graduates or former undergraduates who, because of their disillusionment with the narrow-mindedness of academic discourse, make their characters perceive the university in a critical or sarcastic manner. That is for example the case with David Lodge's Berkeley novels. This far, that rough narrative pattern can be applied on both men and women authors despite their different ways of treating the subject. While men's novels about male academics usually are about restless minds, women's novels often represent female characters torn between the gendered premises of the academic discourse on one hand, and the limits of their own gendered bodies on the other.

That is why I decided to apply the term "mind and body problem," which is also the title of Rebecca Goldstein's novel, on my readings of Godwin and Goldstein. Here it should immediately be stated that I will not engage in a theoretical discussion of the mind and body problem, which is one of the most intellectually challenging philosophical issues concerning the nature of the human mind. As the subject is as old as the history of Western philosophy itself,

and thus cannot be presented here, I will only mention a couple of the best-known theories. According to Plato's dualist view of soul and body, these were two wholly separate and different units with no substantial and natural connection. On the contrary, Aristotle regarded body as matter and soul as form, where the soul is a function of an organized body, i.e. inferior to it. In Descartes' interpretation, the human being consists of soul and body, where the body fills a certain space alongside all other bodies, while the soul is intelligent and immaterial. Descartes also argued that the mind was united with the body but not determined by it. In opposition to the dualist view of body and soul, materialist theories claim that a human being is nothing but her body, and that all functions of human mind are material phenomena. That concept goes back as far as Lucretius, Darwin and La Place. A combination of Cartesian dualism and Darwinian materialism gave rise to 20<sup>th</sup> century behaviourist theories.<sup>2</sup>

Rebecca Goldstein, whose own dissertation on philosophy dealt precisely with the mind and body problem, has also shown how the term can be used in a more down-to-earth context, without losing its original implications. Gail Godwin does the same in her novel. Both authors bring up the aspect of the *gendered* human body that limits the space within which the mind may operate.

*Carnal Pleasures of a Lonely Self*

Renee Feuer, the main character in Goldstein's *The Mind-Body Problem*, is an ambitious Barnard

graduate, aspiring for a doctorate in philosophy at Princeton. The subject that occupies her is, of course, "the notoriously impenetrable mind-body problem" (Goldstein 15). In the course of the first semester, she soon gets convinced that she does not fit into the intellectual standard of the philosophical department: "Not just my views of the intellectual were being challenged, but, more personally and painfully, my view of my own intellectual worth" (13). The experience is certainly familiar to many new-mended doctoral students, especially to many female ones:

The past few years I had gotten used to thinking of myself as an intellectual. I had assumed that certain properties of mind and body were entailed by this description and had designed myself accordingly. It's hard to discover you've constructed yourself on false premises. (13)

Obviously, I had little idea of what the philosophical enterprise was about. [...] I had come to believe in my philosophical ability and had been planning my life on the assumption of its existence. At college, once I made up my mind to work, nothing but praise and success had come my way. These had entered my bloodstream, never causing much of a high, but I needed them like a drug. Withdrawal was excruciating. My faultily [sic] constructed self crumbled. I thought, therefore I was. If I was not a thinker, what was I? (15-16)

However, the narration held in first person, Renee delivers not only the self-critical story of her own failure, but also her critique of Princeton

philosophy-school marked by pettishness and endless hair splitting:

Every time I hazarded a statement someone would hurl a counterexample at it, or else accuse me of meaninglessness or metaphysical tendencies. I couldn't get anything past them. [...] (13)

The field had made the "linguistic turn" and I ... had not. The questions were now all of language. Instead of wrestling with the large, messy questions that have occupied previous centuries of ethicists, for example, one should examine the rules that govern words like "good" and "ought". My very first seminar, given by a prominent visitor from England, who's field, they told me, was metaphysics, was on adverbs. The metaphysics of adverbs? From Reality to ... adverbs? (13–14)

It was confusing that philosophy had become the most anti-philosophical of all academic fields, not only refusing to consider any of the mysteries of existence (which is a position I can understand) but adamantly denying that there are any (which is a position I cannot understand). (15)

Her interest for metaphysics being wholly out of place in the Princeton school, Renee decides to seek carnal pleasures instead. She thus decides coolly to use her body as compensation for her intellectual failure, in a world where she knows a pretty female still will be forgiven for not being clever: "Sometime around April of my first year I stopped doing any work and occupied myself instead with seducing various graduate students

[...]. If I couldn't find any affirmation of my worth in the mind, I would seek it in the body" (16). If the body cannot be set to suit her intellectual purpose, she is determined to prove that "there are other faculties of the person besides those of *res cogitans*" (16). She finds herself "quite prepared to follow the venerably old feminine tradition of being saved by marriage" (12). Here follows a humorous account of her love affairs at Princeton, and, later on, of her marriage with the world-famous mathematical genius Noam Himmel.

Still, her goal is not to replace intellectual activity with family and children. Her choice of her "rescuing hero [...] the great Noam Himmel", whom she seduces rather with her body than with her mind, has a purely intellectual purpose (12). So, as a fact, she uses her carnal beauty in order to satisfy the ambitions of her mind: "For the man had an extravagance of what I was so agonizingly feeling the lack of: objective proof of one's own intellectual merit" (12).

The narration here is on several levels. The first one, so wonderfully entertaining, is the main character's earnest account of her existential choices. The narrator's voice, being Renee's own, is pretty much aware that the conflict between intellectual ambitions and carnal love is as old a dilemma as women's modern history itself. A closer reading of Goldstein's text shows however how skillfully she can play with the issue of body, in order to discuss both philosophy and gender.<sup>3</sup> Here it is the mind that rules the body – an interesting contribution to the issue of body-

mind problem. Renee's choices are a set of different "situations", or "acts", created to make her survive within the limitations of gender, as she is very much aware that *female bodies as matter are bodies that matter*.

Also in *The Odd Woman*, the conflict between body and soul is the main subject, although pictured in quite a different way.<sup>4</sup> To Jane, intellectual activity is the only thing that makes her feel safe, the walls of the college protecting her from the uncomfortable awareness of being a female. She is constantly torn between intellectual ambitions on the one hand, and longing for love and for being perceived as 'feminine' on the other. The motif is as old as women's university fiction itself. Her love affair with Gabriel Weeks, a married art-historian and twenty years her senior, starts as a mutual intellectual fascination between Jane, then a graduate student, and Gabriel, an established academic.

While Renee Feuer in Rebecca Goldstein's novel fully affirms her own taste for sexual pleasures, Jane Clifford is feeling uncomfortable with her body and with her fantasies about men. The very thought of her male students being sexually interested in her makes her feel distressed in the class-room, as she knows that this will undermine her authority as a teacher. On the other hand, her self-confidence diminishes even more when a New York taxi-driver tells her that she "would be a nice-looking woman if she'd fix herself up a little" (Godwin 228). His suggestion that she then

"would be really attractive to men" keeps echoing in her ears for days afterwards (228).

To me the conflict that haunts Jane through the whole story seems also very close to Plato's dualist view of soul and body as two separate units. Jane's long-lasting existential dilemma culminates with a sudden feeling of being totally separated from her carnal self. In the final part of the story, in the scene at Saks warehouse, Jane makes a desperate effort to "make herself up". Then she suddenly gets a glimpse of herself in a mirror, a female who at first seems like a total stranger to her. The female does not belong among other "ordinary" middle-class females. As a matter of fact, she belongs nowhere.<sup>5</sup>

She caught sight of a woman in a brown imitation-suède coat whose skirt dipped at least two inches in the back. The woman was rather slump-shouldered and had a strained, uncertain expression on her face. Jane would never follow such a woman in Saks to see where she would get off. The woman clearly did not belong in Saks at ten on a weekday morning. The woman was, of course, herself. (311)

In the following fragment, Jane is suddenly deeply shocked by the notion of her 31-year-old body having aged and lost its beauty while she was busy wasting her life on what now seems like a meaningless intellectual activity. Then she comes to the conclusion that all intellectual ambitions and her concerns about wrinkles are meaningless, as her mortal body is only one among millions of other mortal bodies. If destroyed by an

earthquake, or a Holocaust, the material remains of herself would not keep any sign of her personality, nor of her activity. She tries to distance herself from her own body and she starts to study it as an anonymous object:

She could see front and back of: female, white, age app. 30–33, height 5’6”, weigh app. 120–125., eyes blue-green, hair light brown, mole on upper inside quadrant of the left breast.

If she were found murdered [...] all identification stripped away, these words would suffice, for all intents and purposes, to describe her. A few policemen and detectives and a medical examiner would stand in a cold room with tiled walls, gazing down at her, on a slab, and this is what they would see.

Not a professor, not a schoolteacher, not a “lady pedant”.

Not a “bookworm”, an intellectual.

Not a woman in Saks, slightly past her prime [...].

Not a mistress, not a daughter, not a granddaughter, not a friend of several other women.

Not an “ego”, or a “personality”, or an “oddball”; not even a “flux” or “process.”

Simply: white female, 30–33, 5’6”, 120–125, blue-green, light brown, mole on left breast. (318–319)

Seeing her body as an abstract thing, “yet unbroken, composed of millions of Jane-pieces” (319) she suddenly perceives all the other women surrounding her in the same way. Their ritual of “making themselves up”, shopping and grieving about their wrinkles seems to her as meaningless as her own concerns:

They could buy everything in this store if they had enough money and credit. But the pieces of themselves were on loan and must eventually be returned. Jane imagined their bewildered faces, looking up from the various counters, should a voice suddenly boom from a hidden loudspeaker: “LADIES; REMEMBER: THE PIECES OF YOURSELVES ARE ON LOAN.” (321)

### *Free Minds and Lonely Bodies*

To Jane Clifford her career as a college teacher in English literature is of great importance. She firmly believes that existential questions may be answered by studying literature and by “[l]earning from the words and expressions of others, other human beings who wanted answers just as badly as you do now” (Godwin 18). It does not even seem to bother her that the literary canon she worships almost exclusively consists of white male authors of the Western world. Arguing with one of her students about the meaning of literary studies, she tells him that “literature is the collection of the best expressions of [...] universal emotions and thoughts”, and that “the study of literature is based on the best that has been known and thought – and felt – in the world”(17). Thinking about the meaning of human life in the scene at her grandmother’s funeral, she suddenly imagines her own life as a narration: “If my life were a book, I would like it to make sense to the careful reader, she thought. However sadly or happily «l» ended, the reader would say, «Yes, this existence felt its acts as irrevocably necessary»”

(45). Only then does she realize that turning her life into a well-done narrative is not necessarily the same as being happy.

The motif of Jane reading the novel by George Gissing, called *The Odd Women*, is crucial to the whole story. Jane, feeling 'misplaced' and 'odd' herself, is seeking for patterns among unmarried, pioneering Victorian middle-class women.<sup>6</sup> As Kerstin Westerlund has observed, *The Odd Woman* continues the "invention of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ideas that an unmarried woman is 'odd'" by making Jane Clifford's 'oddness' representative of her own generation. (Westerlund 79). Both as unmarried and as involved with a married man Jane is as 'odd' as many other women of the early 70s (Westerlund 79). The discussion of love, marriage and the heroine's quest for identity beyond gender patterns has thus been primarily perceived by some critics as Godwin's contribution to the feminist debate of the 70s.<sup>7</sup> If read as an academic novel, *The Odd Woman* becomes more than a debate of women's lives during a period of great social transformation in America. The way Godwin depicts the academic woman's "oddness" and exile within both the academic and the non-academic world makes the novel turn into a discussion of the female intellectual self.

At the end of the story, Jane leaves Gabriel and goes back to her independent and lonely life as a college teacher. The closing scene almost duplicates the opening one. This way the story of one week in Jane Clifford's life, where the account of the past 31 years is given in a retrospective,

becomes a closed circle. According to Westerlund, the heroine's "development towards the final insight that one's integrity is not to be sacrificed in a relationship" is the main theme of the novel (Westerlund 78-79).<sup>8</sup>

Renee Feuer, who tries to get intellectual fulfillment by marrying a genius, ends up by divorcing him. The story of her year-long marriage to the famous mathematician is about constantly being asked how it feels to be married to a genius, a situation that Renee finds more and more odd in the course of time. Her marriage ends with a failure, as the genius proves to be incapable of treating her as an intellectual equal, their love life also being nonexistent from the very beginning. At first wholly prepared to give up sex in marriage, as well as to regard herself as intellectually inferior to her husband, Renee ends up in total loneliness of body and soul, and after two love affairs she finally decides to get a divorce. The short love affair with the physician Daniel Korper makes her feel both attractive and clever again, but, similarly to Jane Clifford in *The Odd Woman*, she will lose her lover who does not intend to marry her. Both Jane and Renee learn what it means to be 'The Other Woman' and both will eventually refuse to continue the affair on the man's premises.

Like Jane Clifford, Renee once again becomes an independent college woman. She decides to go on with her doctoral studies at the price of loneliness and disillusionment. The story of the unsuccessful marriage, as well as the one of Jane

Clifford's love affair, are both about Western women's intellectual ambitions being incompatible with heterosexual love and marriage.

### *Stigmatising Bodies, Liberating Minds*

To the three characters mentioned here, their mind and body problem is as much about intellect and love as it is about class. Jane Clifford's physical traits, and especially her nose, inherited from her German grandmother Edith, constantly remind her of her kinship with her Southern upper class, and with generations of other southern "belles". It also encourages her female relatives to constantly remind her of her being a spinster. Here Jane's intellectual skills help her to break up from her background, and to realize, that she only could live a life of a Southern upper-class wife and mother if she "had been allowed a lobotomy first" (Godwin 135). She takes her scholarship as an opportunity to break both with her origins and with her stepfather, a *déclassé*, who has been treating her badly and whom she detests. In a way, Jane remains a Southern upper-class woman in soul, combining her origins with academic profession. Still, the conflict between body and mind can in Jane's case be interpreted symbolically as seeking for her own independent self and struggling against the Southern ideal of womanhood. The retrospective narrative includes the story of Jane fainting at school, when forced to sit still in ten minutes as well-bred young Southern ladies were expected to do. Jane herself recalls the event as "a kind of protest, her body's rebellion

against an act she had not chosen, which was being forced upon her" (139). As Westerlund observes, mentioning *en passant* a trace of a mind and body problem in the narrative on Jane's inner struggle, Jane's body and mind remain separated as long as the body expresses "her still subconscious unvoiced feelings of protest" (Westerlund 81). "During the course of the novel body and mind become more integrated and Jane's sub story of repressed rebellion is finally expressed," Westerlund concludes, emphasizing the heroine's inner development from an unconscious to a fully determined rebel (81–82).

Renee Feuer, a daughter of a Jewish *chazzen* (cantor) and born in Westchester, New York, often gets into an identity crisis when Jewish men give her "the highest praise of which the Jewish male is capable: You don't look at all Jewish" (Goldstein 209). This never makes her happy, as to her, the difference between a "*shiksa*" and a Jewish woman is like "between a Saltine cracker and a piece of Sacher cake" (209). Nor does she ever consider the possibility of getting a *goyim* (non-Jewish) lover herself.

Despite her American identity, Renee remains very sensitive to the difference between her own Polish-Jewish origins, and the German and Hungarian Jews, whom she accuses of behaving presumptuously (229–230). Regardless of Renee's deep affection for her father, she is resolved to break with the conservative Jewish lower middle-class, where boys are supposed to go to school and "read" (i.e. study the Talmud) while



girls are expected to marry, and where marriages get arranged by match-makers. When she leaves for Barnard, she starts a new, independent life of a secularized and intellectual Jewish woman.

As I have been trying to show in this article, the representation of intellectual women in university fiction by Godwin and Goldstein is focusing on the conflict between intellectual ambitions and the gendered body. The reading makes a pessimistic experience, which is the very point of the genre. To us female academics the novels are of certain importance, as they address the issue of the intellectual self often in conflict with the dominant discursive praxis within Academia on one hand, and with the gendered world outside the university on the other. As John Mepham states in his essay on “the intellectual as heroine”: “This figure of pessimism and failure offers to the intellectual a model of self with which to identify, as one version of self, one way of relating to one’s own categories and meanings” (Mepham 26).<sup>9</sup>

## Bibliography

Auerbach, Nina. “Women on Women’s Destiny: Maturity as Penance.” *Romantic Imprisonment*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 83–91.

Brownstein, Rachel M. “Gail Godwin: The Odd Woman and Literary Feminism.” *American Women Writing Fiction: Memory, Identity, Family, Space*. Ed. Mickey Pearlman. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1989. 173–184.

Godwin, Gail. *The Odd Woman*. 1974. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994.

Goldstein, Rebecca. *The Mind-Body Problem*. 1983. New York: Penguin 1993.

Mepham, John. “The Intellectual as Heroine: Reading and Gender.” *Image and Power. Women in Fiction in the Twentieth Century*. Eds. Sarah Sceats and Gail Cunningham. London & New York: Longman, 1996. 17–28.

Radner, Hilary. “Extra-Curricular Activities. Women Writers and the Readerly Text.” *Women’s Writing in Exile*. Eds. Mary Lynn Broe and Angela Ingram. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989. 251–267.

Said, Edward W. *Representations of the Intellectual*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

Westerlund, Kerstin. *Escaping the Castle of Patriarchy. Patterns of Development in the Novels of Gail Godwin*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia 73, 1990.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One’s Own*. 1928. London: Penguin 1991.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> I have addressed the genre and its premises in my own dissertation *Två världar – ett universitet. Svenska skönlitterära universitetsskildringar 1904–1943. En genusstudie. (The Gendered Worlds of the University. Swedish University Fiction 1904–1943, Uppsala 2000.*
- <sup>2</sup> On the issue see for example: Aristotle. *De Anima*. Ed. and trans. R. D. Hicks. Essex: Prometheus Bks, 1991; Swinburne, Richard. *The Evolution of The Soul*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; *The Philosophy of Mind: Classical Problem – Contemporary Issues*. Eds. B. Beakley and P. Ludlow. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992; Scruton, Roger. *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey*. London: Vintage, 2004; Lowe, Jonathan E. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Among numerous feminist approaches to the philosophy of mind let me just mention a few: Probyn, Elspeth. "This Body Which Is Not One: Speaking an Embodied Self." *Hypatia* 6, no. 3 (1991): 111–124; Spelman, Elizabeth V. "Women as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views." *Feminist Studies*, 8, no. 1 (1991): 25–53; Haslanger, Sally. "Feminism in Metaphysics: Negotiating the Natural." *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*. Eds. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 107–126; James, Susan. "Feminism in Philosophy of Mind: The Question of Personal Identity." *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*. Eds. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 29–48; Young, Iris Marion. "Lived Body vs Gender: Reflections on Social Structure and Subjectivity." *Philosophy of Body*. Ed. Michael Proudfoot. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003. 94–111.
- <sup>3</sup> The way Goldstein approaches the question of gender and academic discourse reminds in some way of that in Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. Between the lines of informative – and theoretical – discussion of a purely philosophical issue, she lets her heroine experience the practical problem of her (gendered) body being in conflict with her ("stubborn") soul. Still, no purely feminist discussion is ever present. As Edward Said observed about Woolf: "That combination of vulnerability and rational argument provides Woolf with a perfect opening through which she can enter her subject, not as a dogmatic voice providing the ipsissima verba, but as an intellectual representing the forgotten 'weaker sex', in a language perfectly suited for the job" (Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* 34). Goldstein's heroine does no longer belong to any "forgotten sex", nevertheless the issue she is discussing in her novel is delicate; can a single graduate claim that an approved philosophical discourse was wrong only because she does not accept its arguments? And can she do it as a woman?
- <sup>4</sup> In her dissertation on Gail Godwin, Kerstin Westerlund summarises the main theme of the story as the heroine's "development towards the final insight that one's integrity is not to be sacrificed in a relationship, no matter how sublime the

encounters.” (Westerlund, *Escaping the Castle of Patriarchy* 78–79).

In the story of Jane feeling odd as a woman among other academics, and odd as an academic among “ordinary” and “feminine” women we have to do with an aspect of what Radner observes in her essay: “. . .the academic woman as subject is created through a double movement of exile, exile from the community of male intellectuals and exile from the community of the feminine” (Radner, “Extra-Curricular Activities. Women Writers and the Readerly Text” 257).

<sup>6</sup> The novel by Gissing was most recently republished in 2000. It is about two ‘odd’ i.e. unmarried women in the Victorian society who struggle for becoming self-supporting and independent. Also see Auerbach, “Women on Women’s Destiny”, pp. 90–91 and Westerlund, *Escaping the Castle of Patriarchy*, pp. 78–79 and 97–98.

<sup>7</sup> Westerlunds suggests (with minor reservation) that Godwin should be regarded as a representative writer of the feminist debate of the seventies, as many of the issues treated in her novels could in many ways be labelled women’s issues. (Westerlund 33). Although she regards Godwin as closest to liberal feminism (Westerlund 33), a description Godwin herself unwillingly agrees with, Westerlund also finds “a touch of radical feminism” in the ending of *The Odd Woman* because of the main protagonist’s struggle for independence (37). An older work by Rachel Brownstein labels Godwin more explicitly as a feminist writer (Brownstein, “Gail Godwin: *The Odd Woman* and Literary

Feminism” 177), while Godwin herself has expressed an unwillingness to be regarded as a part of the Second Wave feminist movement. (Westerlund, 33–35).

<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, Westerlund observes herself that *The Odd Woman* as well as Godwin’s other novels “straddle the gender of *Bildungsroman* and novels of manners”, which corresponds with my interpretation of the novel (35).

<sup>9</sup>The aim of this paper has been only to present a couple of the most important issues that I am planning to address in a bigger project on Anglo-American writer’s representations of the intellectual and gender in 20<sup>th</sup> century academic novels. The issues of mind and body, as well as of ethnicity, gender and academic identity certainly deserve a deeper analysis, also from a feminist philosophical perspective and in relationship to the Anglo-American academic culture.



# Part 2

## Genre Invention



Anna Linzie

## **Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas and *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas***

In *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* (1970), Richard Bridgman says: “One possibility is sufficiently heretical that no one has dared advance it directly; but there have been hints that Alice Toklas composed her own autobiography” (209). He is referring of course to *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, published in 1933 and subsequently canonized as a modernist masterpiece.<sup>1</sup> I am going to discuss a few issues in relation to this text which can be said to follow upon the paradoxical situation that Bridgman indicates, but I am not going to try to “resolve” the question. The crisis or paradox itself is the point.

There have been hints that “she” composed “her own” autobiography. Consider heresy. Consider the outrageous possibility, impossibility, that the woman whose name figures in the title of the text also wrote it. Why would it take courage to say that Alice B. Toklas wrote the book named as her own autobiography? There is a striking gap in discourses of literary history and in Stein criticism: the lack of sustained attention

to Toklas as indispensable to Stein’s literary production, as a cultural laborer, and as a writer of her own books. Each Stein text passes between the two women on its way to publication. Toklas is the interface between the inside and the outside of Stein’s world, just like she is the indispensable conduit through which Stein’s text passes to become legible and publishable – to become “writing.” My critical agenda entails an insistent shifting of the critical perspective, centering Toklas and pushing Stein slightly off-center, as well as conceptualizing the Stein-Toklas sexual/textual relationship as being fundamentally *reciprocal*.

As we all know, Gertrude Stein is the official author of *The Autobiography*. At the same time, while Stein may have been author-ized in literary history and criticism as its indisputable author, the text is spoken in the name and voice of Toklas, Stein’s partner in business and romance. Only the very last paragraph “reveals” Stein as the author, while the text in its entirety relentlessly provokes the question: Whose autobio-

graphy is it? Throughout, “she” and “I” are fused or confused in a way that brings to mind the use of “shy” as a non-unitary lesbian pronoun in “Patriarchal Poetry” (1927).<sup>2</sup> The question that I would like to raise but not necessarily answer concerns the potential for a new direction in Stein criticism. Is it possible to suspend the regime of either/or in our analysis of the text and instead articulate the prospect of a radically non-unitary *and* non-binary lesbian autobiographical subject along the lines of “shy” (she/I)?

I suggest that the category of authorship in *The Autobiography* can be fruitfully troubled and modified if the emphasis is shifted over from Stein to Toklas, through a strategic privileging of contradictions and reversals in the Stein-Toklas legend generally and in this texts in particular, and if Toklas’ refusal to step forth as author even in “her own” autobiography is rearticulated as a paradoxically negative form of “agency.” Toklas’ function in the text (as in life) is not dispensable. If Toklas is ignored, there is no core or interior to be found, since she, by patrolling its borders, enables the very existence of the interior. This is true of Stein’s literary production and reputation as a whole. Toklas cannot be *evaded*, not even by the literary critic in search of an essence uncorrupted by the presence of the “other woman.” Instead, I consider the ambiguity concerning authorship which characterizes *The Autobiography* as text an urgent invitation for the critic to fully engage with Toklas. In other words, I argue that the authorial ruse is not just

a joke contained by Stein’s “own” text, but that it also pertains to the *production* of this text in the specific context of the domestic, sexual, and literary coupling of Stein and Toklas.

At first glance, *The Autobiography* may seem coherent and unitary compared to Stein’s more experimental works, but the contradictions that can be found in various critical accounts of the Stein-Toklas relationship are in fact enacted in the text. The dominant version, foregrounding Stein the genius at the expense of Toklas the wife, co-exists with an alternative and very different rendering of the “same” structure, namely the story of Toklas as indispensable. As my title indicates, I would like to talk about *The Autobiography* in relation to *both* women that can be imagined “behind the text,” so to speak, not just Stein but also Toklas. I insist upon bringing critical attention to Toklas, because even as “her” autobiography is among the most important works of literary modernism, *she* herself represents a striking absence in literary history. Toklas hardly ever figures in criticism except as the preempted and depersonalized category of the “other woman” in relation to Stein. The problem is that critics who applaud Stein for speaking in a subversive dialogic lesbian voice, typically *still* define *The Autobiography* as the product of a single authorial – authoritative – imagination, despite the fact that the concept of a non-unitary lesbian subject position would seem to call for a deconstruction of the myth of the solitary author.



The point is certainly not to simply argue that Toklas *did* write or co-write her own autobiography, to advance directly the heretical possibility that Bridgman mentions. As most Stein critics have pointed out, there is no way to know the extent of Toklas's contribution to the writing of *The Autobiography* beyond the customary editing and typing she did for all Stein works. But the same critics have proceeded to approach the text as if it is on the other hand possible to know that *Stein* and Stein alone wrote it. Of course, knowing and knowledge in relation to texts depend on the active construction of literary history and the active authorizing of authors. Precisely therefore, it might be possible and it might be desirable to suspend the regime of dominant knowledge for a moment, to dwell in the uncertainty or crisis that Bridgman identifies, to risk heresy, but *still not settle the question*. The prospect of a non-unitary lesbian autobiographical subject must necessarily displace the logic of either/or.

The categories of autobiographical truth and authorial identity are inextricably intertwined. What is particularly interesting about *The Autobiography* is its partial fit into dominant categories of truth and identity. The text both invokes and revokes the generic markers of autobiography, simultaneously establishes and cancels truth effects, and alternately launches and punctures the autobiographical "I." My argument is that Toklas, by means of the gift of her own autobiography as well as a certain confu-

sion of the categories of presence and absence (sometimes downplaying her own presence in Stein's life and work to the point of an authorizing absence) also authorizes (enables) Stein to be an author.

In relation to an autobiographical tradition which presupposes heterosexuality, *The Autobiography* both conforms to and undermines generic conventions and expectations. Due to "double-speak" on many levels, readerly and critical expectations of "straight" autobiography are let down. At the same time, the emphasis in literary criticism on a lesbian sexuality as something supposedly "missing" from the text can be seen as a smokescreen which prevents us from looking directly at the real scandal of *The Autobiography* – the inscription on the textual level of the lesbian couple, and the concomitant challenge to "straight" *textual* and authorial structures and expectations of autobiographical truth. The assumption that the issue of a lesbian sexuality is conspicuously missing from this text is ultimately based on a certain conventional model of autobiography as the full account of someone's life, a realist discourse where person and persona seem to merge, and the textual level is transparent in favor of the content.

At the same time, the myth of Stein and Toklas is important to my discussion in the sense that it introduces the issue of a certain division of labor. Legend has it that Stein did the writing, the driving, and very little else during 40 years of marriage to Toklas, while in *The Autobiography*,

the narrator's rationale for letting Stein write an autobiography for her is directly relative to the fact that she takes care of the house, the garden, the sewing, the dogs and the practicalities of Stein's writing, and therefore she cannot find time to write her own autobiography. Toklas's inability to write, then, is a question of labor. This would seem to challenge but also in a sense re-articulate the genius/wife distinction at the heart of the text. Genius begins to look less like an essence, more like a privilege. The real trick of *The Autobiography* may be that while it thwarts the reader's expectations for an autobiographical or even straight-forwardly biographical account of Toklas' life, it offers instead a subdued but sustained story of her labor, her indispensability and her sexual/textual relationship with Stein, partly hidden by the tall tale of Stein's genius.

The official story of the Stein-Toklas division of labor is relevant to my discussion in relation to the controversy over the authorship of *The Autobiography*, which has been called "Alice Toklas's first 'dictated' book" by Lawrence Stewart (120). Other critics have contested rumors that Toklas wrote, or co-wrote, *The Autobiography*. Catharine Stimpson, for instance, prefers to leave the traditional rendition of the Stein-Toklas writing pact intact: "I believe that Toklas' typing, appraising, and editing often became a mild rewriting, but to call Toklas the writer, rather than the frame that kept the writer within bounds, would be excessive" (137, n. 25).

The debate over authorship goes on, seven decades after the publication of *The Autobiography*. The "scandal" of collaborative autobiographies resides in the act of disregarding, "twisting" or exceeding the autobiographical contract, defined by Philippe Lejeune as follows:

The device of the autobiographical contract results in facilitating a confusion between the author, the narrator, and the "model" and in neutralizing the perception of the writing, in rendering it transparent. This fusion takes place in the autobiographical signature, at the level of the name on the title page of the book.

[...] the autobiography composed in collaboration [...] introduces a flaw into this system. It calls to mind that the "true" is itself an artifact and that the "author" is a result of the contract. The *division of labor* between two people (at least) reveals the multiplicity of authorities implied in the work of autobiographical writing, as in all writing. Far from imitating the unity of the authentic autobiography, it emphasizes its indirect and calculated character. (187–188)

In accordance with Lejeune's theory of the scandalous effects of cheating the system, the question of authorship was raised in relation to *The Autobiography* even before publication: "I did a tour de force with *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and when I sent the first half to the agent they sent back a telegram to see which one of us had written it" (Stein, *Transatlantic Interview*, quoted in Johnston, 603, n. 16). This reaction is only

to be expected, of course, since the agent was still unaware of the reversal of the ending, where the authorial ruse is revealed. The same effect on readers was presumably repeated in the serialization of *The Autobiography* in the *Atlantic Monthly*, which began in May, 1933. Not surprisingly, the text in its entirety caused a stir when it was published on September 1, 1933. It was a huge immediate success, and received a massive amount of positive attention, but it also caused some controversy.<sup>3</sup> A supplement to *transition* magazine, aptly called “Testimony against Gertrude Stein,” treats Stein “as if she were a criminal on trial” (Adams, 9).

The controversy has been impossible to resolve ever since, and that is only to be expected. The very point of *The Autobiography* is to invite these questions, and to withhold the answer. That is why it is often seen as a challenging text, a “mock-autobiography” which pulls a trick on the reader. Georgia Johnston says: “The joke is on the reader who believes that genre definitions control a writer and, therefore, that Toklas is really the author” (595). Leigh Gilmore puts it this way: “If we ask: ‘Whose autobiography is it?’ Stein challenges the answer such a question seeks, as well as the assumptions that produce it” (63).

I agree that *The Autobiography* is a text that challenges the reader. However, most critics, like Johnston and Gilmore in these quotes, recoil at the uncertainty that characterizes *The Autobiography* and refuse to leave it open, even as they admonish the reader for wanting to settle the

question. By re-inscribing Stein as the solitary Author in control of the text and its challenges, they foreclose the possibility of a radically different authorial category, the prospect of a truly non-unitary lesbian autobiographical subject.

Critics who re-affirm Stein’s position as the Author in relation to *The Autobiography* are in a sense responding to a crisis at the heart of the text itself: the instability of the wife/genius distinction. Wives by definition exist only in relation to another person, while genius is traditionally seen as a singular and isolated position. Stein insists that she is a genius, but in her life and work, and especially in *The Autobiography*, she was always part of a pair. After the publication and success of *The Autobiography*, the figure of Stein-as-popular-writer depended on the merged voices of Stein and Toklas, that is, on the partial collapse of the wife/genius distinction. Laurel Bollinger says: “The wife/genius classification is thus unstable, slippery, always containing the possibility that Stein may slide from the genius pole to the wife pole where she will be silent and silenced” (227).

*The Autobiography* was written for a popular audience, and Stein was deeply uneasy about its popular appeal. At the same time, *The Autobiography* enabled her to create herself as a genius. At the time of its publication in 1933, Stein was well known locally as an art collector, salon hostess and avantgarde writer among expatriate Americans, artists, writers, and wannabes in Paris. However, she was still relatively unknown among the general public, and her literary work was lar-

gely unpublished and poorly understood. *The Autobiography* made Stein widely famous and above all made possible the publication on a large scale of many of her less accessible works. For a long time, largely thanks to *The Autobiography*, Stein was among the few female writers and the *only* female autobiographer, straight or lesbian, who received extensive critical attention. However, *The Autobiography* has historically occupied a troubled position in relation to feminist and lesbian criticism. It has been argued that Stein's appropriation of Toklas's voice is violent and troubling, in Julia Watson's words an act of "ventriloquist' silencing of Alice in the text" (400).

However, recently some critics have claimed that Stein in *The Autobiography* creates a "double" lesbian autobiographical subject to replace the singular, unitary "I" of generic convention. In relation to this interpretation, objecting to Stein's experiment on ethical or political grounds would be not only reactionary but also homophobic and heterosexist. The way in which Stein "appropriates" Toklas is justified by Gilmore in terms of a lesbian economy of gifts and exchange, so that *The Autobiography* is a lover's gift from Stein to Toklas. However, in Gilmore's version Stein is *still* in control of the text as the solitary Author of its challenges, and Toklas remains the "other woman," although recognized by Gilmore as lesbian. I would like to turn it around so that it is possible to say that *Toklas* offers her name and her voice to Stein as a gift, a privilege, authorizes Stein to perhaps write but

above all author *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

In the famous ending of *The Autobiography*, the ventriloquist ruse is revealed to the reader. Stein is teasing Toklas, suggesting titles for her autobiography – "My Life With The Great, Wives of Geniuses I Have Sat With, My Twenty-five Years With Gertrude Stein." These titles obviously name the paramount hierarchical division between great and not great, Genius and wife, Stein and Toklas. "[T]hink [...] what a lot of money you would make," Stein goes on (341). The reference to money is not a casual one. Elsewhere, Stein refers to her style in accessible, "inferior" books such as *The Autobiography* and the sequel *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937) as her money-making style. Venturing into the money-making genre of autobiography could destabilize the hierarchical structure that elevates Stein as genius in relation to lesser writers and also in relation to Toklas. Stein deflects this danger through a famous twist at the end of *The Autobiography*, where she quite simply reveals "Toklas" in the text as a product of her own imagination, a fictional character. The last few lines of the text read as follows:

About six weeks ago Gertrude Stein said, it does not look to me as if you were ever going to write that autobiography. You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. I am going to write it as simply as Defoe did the autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. And she has and this is it. (342)  
In a reading which centers the "ventriloquist"

image, this move allows Stein to say everything she wants to say about her own genius and other people's flaws and failures, but in Toklas's voice, so that she is somehow removed from both the swaggering and the gossip. At the same time, she names herself the author of *The Autobiography* as a clever literary experiment, something more than a deliciously gossipy memoir for the masses. This is the brilliant move that has qualified *The Autobiography* for the category of great literature, and therefore a semblance of gender neutrality. At the same time, this is the move that has historically discouraged feminist and lesbian readings of the text.

Is *The Autobiography* – in Watson's terms – a problematic “ventriloquist” silencing of Alice” by Stein? Not necessarily, I would say, and my reasons for saying so are not primarily the ones typically offered in Stein criticism: for instance, that Stein is experimenting with a doubled lesbian voice which is not to be confused with the oppressive silencing of women and wives in heterosexual discourse. In this construction, Stein is still in charge as the solitary Author, and Toklas remains the passive “other woman.” I have been trying to suggest that it is possible to imagine another direction for critical engagement with *The Autobiography*, a direction away from the problems of re-authorizing Stein as the Author of the text and its ventriloquism.

I would like to return to the name, the name “Alice B. Toklas” as it is possibly offered to Stein as a gift and detached from the “identity” of the

historical person. Autobiography has been seen as the prolonged *naming* of a person. Presumably, in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Stein names her partner. But one page into the text, the narrator “Toklas” indicates that her true self is *the one that Stein writes*. The Toklas voice says: “In the story of Ada in *Geography and Plays* Gertrude Stein has given a very good description of me as I was at that time [before I met Stein]” (4). The ending of *The Autobiography* connects back to the initial circumscription of Toklas as *Stein's literary creation*: “I am going to write it for you. ... And she has and this is it” (342).

It is not surprising, given this framework for Toklas's “own” autobiography, that Stein has been accused of treating her partner like a ventriloquist's dummy. However, it is significant that Toklas herself in her life and in her own writing carefully avoids establishing a named identity for herself. According to Timothy Adams, Toklas “disguised” herself so often “that self-effacement and deliberately mistaken identity can be considered Alice's basic metaphor of self” (5–6). Let us consider the implications of self-effacement and a deliberately mistaken identity as we return to the question of *The Autobiography*: Whose autobiography is it? Not only “who is the author” but who enjoys authority? In relation to these questions, there is a need for further attention to the way in which solitary authorship is destabilized from inside *The Autobiography* itself, as well as an extended consideration of the context of production.

The crux of the matter is the question of agency, one of those deeply problematic categories at the center of recent battles between humanist and poststructuralist, feminist and deconstructionist positions. Neuman argues that “the question is how ... woman can achieve agency, rather than self-silencing, through autobiography” (3). I find it difficult, in relation to *The Autobiography*, to speak of Toklas’ agency as the opposite of self-silencing, and this is where the text very clearly refuses to be claimed unproblematically for a traditionally feminist reading. Instead, the category of agency could perhaps be said to reside in the double-speaking operations of deliberate (self)silencing and disorderly discourse, and in the quiet yet forceful resistance to readerly expectations for a “straight” account, in both senses of the word, and in relation to both genre/textuality and gender/sexuality. Ironically, then, investing the way in which Toklas hides her “real self” not only behind a “deliberately mistaken identity” but also behind Stein the genius with a negative form of agency may make a provisional critical recovery of her possible.

If we assume for a moment that Adams is correct when he talks about Toklas *deliberately* disguising or effacing herself, and if we pay attention to a great deal of biographical evidence suggesting that Toklas objected forcefully to any and all attempts to “reveal” her own and Stein’s secrets to the world, *The Autobiography* can be constructed as something very different

from a violent appropriation. It could be argued that Toklas’s authority – or authorship – is present *precisely* to the extent that she “herself” seems absent from “her own” autobiography. This – Toklas’s own contribution to the composition of the text being a certain reverse discourse of “deliberately mistaken identity” or “shyness” – could then be the provisional basis for a possibly heretical re-consideration of the non-unitary lesbian autobiographical subject of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

## Bibliography

- Adams, Timothy Dow. "She Will Be Me when This You See': Gertrude Stein's Mock-Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas." *Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association* 6.1 (1980): 1–18.
- Bollinger, Laurel. "'One as One not Mistaken but Interrupted': Gertrude Stein's Exploration of Identity in the 1930s." *Centennial Review* 43.2 (Spring 1999): 227–258.
- Bridgman, Richard. *Gertrude Stein in Pieces*. New York: Oxford UP, 1970.
- Doody, Ulla E., with William Rice. *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises*. 1923–1934. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2003.
- Gilmore, Leigh. "A Signature of Lesbian Autobiography: 'Gertrude/Altrude.'" *Autobiography and Questions of Gender*. Ed. Shirley Neuman. London: Cass, 1992: 56–75.
- Johnston, Georgia. "Narratologies of Pleasure: Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*."

*Modern Fiction Studies* 42.3 (Fall 1996): 590–606.

Lejeune, Philippe. *On Autobiography*. Ed. Paul John Eakin. Trans Katherine M. Leary. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989.

Neuman, Shirley, ed. *Autobiography and Questions of Gender*. London: Cass, 1992.

Stein, Gertrude. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933). New York and Toronto: Random House, 1993.

—. “Patriarchal Poetry.” *The Yale Gertrude Stein*. Selections with an introduction by Richard Kostelanetz. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1980: 106–146.

Stewart, Lawrence D. “Hemingway and the Autobiographies of Alice B. Toklas.” *Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual* 1970. Washington DC: NCR/Microcard Eds, 1970: 117–123.

Stimpson, Catharine R. “Gertrude/Altrude: Stein, Toklas, and the Paradox of the Happy Marriage.” *Mothering the Mind: Twelve Studies of Writers and Their Silent Partners*. Eds. Ruth Perry and Martine Watson Brownley. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984: 122–139.

“Testimony against Gertrude Stein.” Henri Matisse, Tristan Tzara, Maria Jolas, Georges Braque, Eugene Jolas, and André Salmon. Pamphlet #1, supplement to *transition* 23 (1935).

Watson, Julia. “Unspeakable Differences: The Politics of Gender in Lesbian and Heterosexual Women’s Autobiographies.” *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*. Eds. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1998. 393–402.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Stein, Gertrude. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933). New York and Toronto: Random House, 1993. From now on I will refer to this text as *The Autobiography*.
- <sup>2</sup> “Let her let her try/Let her be shy./Let her try/Let her let her try to be let her try./Let her try./Just let her try./Let her try./Never to be what he said” (“Patriarchal Poetry,” 121).
- <sup>3</sup> For information on the publication history of *The Autobiography*, see, for instance, Dydo, *Language*, 546–547.





Petra Ragnerstam

## ***Lucy Church Amiably*: Nonsense and the Production of Meaning**

It is a well-known fact that Modernist literature is much about breaking literary and genre conventions. Traditionally, such breaks have been analyzed as an aesthetic moves made to improve or advance literature as such. However, such breaks have other, more far-reaching consequences. In Gertrude Stein's writing, breaking genre conventions implies breaking not only narrative coherence, structures of meaning and received ideas about meaning and representation at large, it most importantly means challenging language as such. Gertrude Stein's *Lucy Church Amiably* places itself at the centre of the major issues of literary theory in that it ventures to topple the idea of language as a functioning system of communication. And what does such a break imply? Is nonsense merely a frivolous game, or are there more serious implications behind its practice? Situating a text on the verge of different genres, on the verge of literariness per se, and on the verge of language as a functioning system, becomes political move. The question is what such a political move implies, and in what ways *Lucy Church*

*Amiably* can be considered a political, and more precisely, a feminist text.

The whole idea constituting *Lucy Church Amiably* is its nonsense. And writing this article it became painfully evident to me how difficult it is to discuss a nonsensical text (that runs over 240 pages at that)—a text whose whole enterprise is to destruct or deconstruct language and meaning. This becomes evident in most criticism on *Lucy Church Amiably* as well. The need for recognizable structures of understanding influences much readings of *Lucy Church Amiably*. Attempts have been made to interpret *Lucy Church Amiably* as a "conventional" novel that produces a fictional world, and a coherent communicative content. However, since it does not produce a textually recognizable world, or a fictional world which can be recognized as a distorted version of the "real" in an expanded form of verisimilitude, such interpretations are difficult to accomplish. Such readings become paradoxical since they rely on generic conventions which obviously are missing or overtly avoided. In any attempt to analyze the

“content” of the novel, clues to character and plot must be found within the text itself, within the internal sphere of reference, which in *Lucy Church Amiably* is very scarce. By providing very little information, and almost no reference concerning time, place and character, such a reading becomes practically impossible, which in turn indicates that if any meaning of the novel is to be found (if it ought to be found), it must be found elsewhere. Nonetheless, in his book *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* from 1970 Richard Bridgman tries to analyze the text’s “content” as a separate category, which proves to be difficult. The internal references that Bridgman tries to explain are for instance the names Simon Therese and John Mary and their internal relation in the fictional world: “Some details are provided about them. Simon Therese was the youngest of ten children, for example, and John Mary had a brother James Mary” (Bridgman 191). This is a correct observation, but since this is practically the only thing we do get to know about them, it seems a rather futile approach, proving the resistance that the novel offers to interpretations that are dependent on a coherent content. The problem is that Bridgman accepts these names as characters without questioning their function as pieces of language in a nonsense text. Thus, he never asks the fundamental questions about language and communication that the text itself asks through its use of nonsense.

The meaning/s founding a nonsense text must lie elsewhere, rather than in the very “content” of the text. The main crux when confronting a non-

sensical text like *Lucy Church Amiably* is how to interpret the function of language as a whole, and how to theorize the subject’s relation to language—which of course is no minor or frivolous task. And the answer one gives to the questions concerning language and subjectivity most certainly situates the interpretation within the political field.

In accordance with my ideas that the political aspects of the novel are intrinsically connected to its nonsense, some interesting interpretations of *Lucy Church Amiably* have been made. However, when this novel is discussed in theoretical, critical, and in feminist circles, it is often analyzed as a nearly perfect example of anti-representational writing. Maubrey-Rose, who has written the only book-length interpretation of the novel, claims that the text, being anti-representational, also refuses to enter a phallogocentric, rational discourse. In accordance with feminist and much postmodernist and postcolonialist theories, language is seen as a prisonhouse which perpetuates hegemonic structures. The theoretical response to this notion is to find a way to move “outside” or “beyond” the confines of language, or even to transcend it. A text like *Lucy Church Amiably* thus allows the critics to revel in the incomprehensiveness of the text. The nonsense constituting the text becomes a guarantee that *Lucy Church Amiably* avoids all the hegemonic, phallogocentric, discursive structures that are cemented in and produced by language, since it practically is unreadable. However, such a stance is easy to visua-

lize ideally but more difficult to construct practically, as we shall see. What we get is a situation where counter-hegemonic or counter-discursive linguistic practices are named off-handedly, without close inspection of the consequences of such claims.

My argument in this article is that Maubrey-Rose's theoretical position proves to be impossible to uphold even in a text like *Lucy Church Amiably*, no matter how politically appealing that stance may appear. To create coherence out of a nonsense text seems to form a major part of the reading experience itself, no matter the narrative obstructions or the reader's own objections to such ideas of coherence. Maubrey-Rose proves this herself the moment she makes the text into a spatial image. The book's full title is *Lucy Church Amiably: A Novel of Romantic beauty and nature and which Looks Like an Engraving*. Focusing on the title Maubrey-Rose analyses the novel as an engraving and even makes a sketch of it. This, of course, is a way of making sense out of apparent nonsense, which in fact shows that the text isn't anti-representational at all.

Rather, nonsense belongs to a genre established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which does have generic conventions to follow. In his book *The Philosophy of Nonsense* Jean-Jacques Lecercle argues that nonsense is precisely a play with meaning and that it is this play which has to be analyzed:

[t]he strong perlocutionary effect of nonsense texts will be ascribed to a powerful affect, the

need to understand what not only passes understanding but also forbids understanding by withdrawing sense. The deep-seated need for meaning, which nonsense texts deliberately frustrate in order to whet it, will be accounted for in terms of the non-transparency of language, of the incapacity of natural languages reasonably to fulfil their allotted task of expression and communication. (*Philosophy* 3)

A nonsense text's deliberate frustration of sense is consequently not a complete withdrawal of sense, but a way to entice the reader into exploring the possibilities of sense (and nonsense). Thus sense is not absent in nonsense texts. Rather, sense becomes a consistent and productive partner to nonsense. Sense in nonsense texts becomes like a return of the repressed:

For instance, we shall soon recognize in the negative prefix a form of Freudian denial, which rejects meaning at the cost of evincing a strong fascination with it—nonsense texts need meaning, at least as much, and perhaps even more so, than meaningful texts (a law of compensation is operating here: the more tenuous the meaning offered by the author of the text, the greater the reader's need and desire for full meaning). (*Philosophy* 115)

One of the major issues to be discussed in this article is therefore the relation between structure and meaning in language as a theoretical and linguistic problem and lack of such structure and meaning (and perhaps even chaos) in language. The issue to be raised continuously is language as a closed non-referential system of significa-

tion. Because *Lucy Church Amiably* plays with language as a system of signifiers, *Lucy Church Amiably's* relation to structures of signification, meaning and interpretation and the ways in which language operates without such structures will be the main focus of attention here.

At the heart of the nonsense presented in *Lucy Church Amiably* is a theory of the sign, a theory which can be explicated through Ferdinand de Saussure's generative linguistics. What becomes imperative in Saussure's theory of language and signification for the interpretation of nonsense in *Lucy Church Amiably* is the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified, the arbitrariness of the sign. According to Saussure, there is no logical, intrinsic or natural relation between a signifier and a signified. A signified does not produce a signifier, since a signified has no precedence over the sign itself. The concept does not exist as a presence; it is not given; it is not natural. It is only a play of signifiers. Thus, a sign is a play of signifiers that we perceive as representing a presence, a concept, in its absence. Although his is a radical theory of language opening up for a radical questioning of traditional, commonsensical ideas about language's naturalness, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* take the idea of the arbitrariness of the sign one step further. This step provides interesting directions for the understanding of *Lucy Church Amiably*.

What Deleuze and Guattari's theories do is to open up for another, more disconcerting, function

of language: "Language is neither informational nor communicational. It is not the communication of information but something quite different" (*Thousand* 79). This seems to be central to *Lucy Church Amiably* because of its unwillingness to provide either. What Deleuze and Guattari challenge is the idea that language is based on constants. Linguists forget the function of the "assemblage," a Deleuzian term which points to the variable factors in language, and to the fact that language is not made up by a finite set of structures, but rather by limitless possibility: "Linguistics is nothing without a pragmatics (semiotic or political) to define the effectuation of the *condition of possibility* of language and the *usage* of linguistic elements" (*Thousand* 85). It is the theoretical understanding of the idea of "usage" and "limitless possibility" that is crucial to *Lucy Church Amiably's* deployment of language. The novel could be said to consist of a radical use of the possibilities of language in practice.

Thus, the agrammaticality which structures *Lucy Church Amiably* at every instance, points precisely at the variable nature of language without having to point towards a "beyond" of language. Instead it shows how what we consider to be "proper" language is not stable or guaranteed, "uprooting them from their state as constants" (*Thousand* 99). Therefore, rather than arguing that "[t]he atypical expression constitutes a cutting edge of deterritorialization of language," where it "causes language to tend toward the limit of its elements, forms or notions, toward a near side or

a beyond of language” (*Thousand* 99) it would be possible in a text like *Lucy Church Amiably* to say it shows that this is precisely part of the uses of language. It plays precisely with the possibilities of language, not with its “beyond.” *Lucy Church Amiably* consequently proposes a “failure” of language, a failure that is converted into a possibility. Language is not a closed logical system. A word or a sign is always arbitrary, which means that “normal” language also contains this possibility of “failure,” only that we do not perceive it as such due to our belief in language as a communicative system.

With this theoretical framework, consequently, it is possible to argue that *Lucy Church Amiably* indeed is incomprehensible, it is unreadable and nonsensical in the most radical of ways. However, this does not mean that it is not part of language as a signifying system—because it most certainly is. It merely points to the fact that the way we traditionally view language as a logical, ordered and benign system created by individuals for individuals may be naïve. Instead, *Lucy Church Amiably* shows that language can do anything, and be anything at any time. What I want to do in this article is to look into one of the main areas constituting *Lucy Church Amiably*'s nonsense but also its inherent structure, namely repetition. It is through repetition that the relation between chaos and order can be theorized adequately since repetition brings out the problematic nature of the sign as variation in structure where “[i]t is the variation itself that is systematic, in the sense in which musi-

cians say that ‘the theme is the variation’” (*Thousand* 93), as Deleuze and Guattari have it.

One way of approaching the text would be to argue (something which also has been argued with some force about modernist writings) that the text is purely poetic and that most of the words, sentences and paragraphs can be seen as poetic fragments partly connected to a whole. It could also be argued that rhythm, sound and phonetic orchestration is what constitutes the book. This turn towards the poetic structures of language, the orchestration of signifiers (rather than its content) can be connected to Stein's ideas of representation, in which she wants to get rid of the idea of an object of representation, or a sense of material reality that would be different from the linguistic expression. Rather, the linguistic expression itself is material reality. Does she then want to empty words of their semantic content? In one sense, Stein's theory suggests that words should be experienced as signifiers. Words should be experienced only as they stand in the text as textual constructs. Since nouns (and adjectives) simply name the thing (or the concept), Stein wishes to do away with the concept altogether, and only keep the form. Thus she tries to get rid of our naturalized and commonsensical ideas of what a word is and what it names. A word only names itself, as a “continuous present” (*Composition as Explanation* 17), as Stein puts it.

Despite the validity of these interpretations, however, I would argue that it is as a novel that its relation to avantgarde aesthetics, and its simulta-

neous construction of chaos and structure, can be properly problematized. Acknowledging the book's apparent difference from a traditional novel form, and continuously taking this difference into consideration in my interpretation, I still aim at showing how those differences function as different precisely because of their relation to something familiar. By making the text far removed from literary conventions, it simultaneously forces the reader to explicitly rely on such conventions in order to be able to read *Lucy Church Amiably* at all. Even if the connection to the novel form isn't unproblematic, to say the least, there are in *Lucy Church Amiably* certain generic features that I would characterize as repetitions of traditional novelistic traits. Not only is the book's physical presence novelistic, it is divided into 48 chapters, where the first chapter proper is called: "The Novel, Chapter 1." The novel, with its full title, also points to a literary framework, which forms the interpretative basis for the text. And I would argue that it is the literary background that makes it readable as a novel. Like many modernist works of art, there is a surface structure that links it to other texts rather than to a referent or a sense of "reality," creating a different kind of signification.

In the beginning of the book there is a classic narrative opening, a promise to the reader of events to come, that points to the text's indebtedness to other stories, while simultaneously pointing at their obvious differences:

*In this story there is to be* not only white black tea colour and vestiges of their bankruptcy but also well

wishing and outlined and melodious and with a will and much of it to be sure with their only arrangement certainly for this for the time of which when by the way what is the difference between fixed. (13, my emphasis)

Having pointed out that the text in fact can be characterized as a novel, one issue still remains to be settled: What holds *Lucy Church Amiably* together, what is it that makes it possible to plot a novel like this, especially since I just have argued that the text has no content? One problem that immediately arises is that plot is temporal. Maubrey-Rose and other critics seize on the fact that the novel is extremely a-temporal in its appearance. This is partly what makes it resemble an engraving rather than a novel. This a-temporality, I would argue, is produced by repetition. It is produced by each narrative instance where repetition appears, from word level up to a structural level, producing a lack of plot. Repetitions are in this sense disrupting the narrative structure. However, I argue that they are simultaneously producing the only narrative thread there is, providing the reader with plot elements, as Peter Brooks calls them in *Reading for the Plot*.

It becomes clear already at the beginning of the text that it is impossible to give a coherent or practicable theory of repetition as it materializes here. Although Giles Deleuze's theories of repetition as the disruptive power of difference in language are considered to be constitutive to any analysis of repetition, there are far too many forms of repetitions in this text to be generalized in any way. It is interesting that repetition here ultimately crea-

tes coherence by an extreme variation of repetition. The variation itself is consequently crucial for the different kinds of meaning produced. Thus, it is impossible to say that Stein's use of repetition in any general way opposes meaning. Rather, it constructs meaning and comments on various forms of meaning.

Sometimes a page should be studied visually before reading it. In fact, some pages demand it, as the long quote below. Such pages reveal how repetition forms the text as a whole. The words repeated produce visual patterns of repetition, varying from very hard to very soft curves, as here, where the letter 'y' in 'very' and 'pleasantly' forms the first part of the quote:

*Lucy Church she is to.*

Lucy Church is to be more than more than more than not more than one in every four hundred. There are four hundred there very pleasantly. So they said in the course of conversation very pleasantly and showing both very pleasantly offered very pleasantly showing very pleasantly offered very pleasantly sitting very pleasantly one every year very pleasantly for three days very pleasantly and to be returned very pleasantly to following Sunday very pleasantly very pleasantly of course very pleasantly as well very pleasantly as well very pleasantly it is true that Lucy Church does make it better very pleasantly does make very pleasantly it better very pleasantly.

Pleasantly sounds pleasantly and which when and whenever it does does differ from from it.

That is with it with it if if is is it is it in despair and

is it is it is it in in despair of being opposite to it separated form it and being being observing of it as it was with with it as a screen of to be to be certain to be looking at it but it is not as far away form it from it and behind and behind behind believe and believing it to be at a distance of a river and is a river made to be in place of it established when there and disapproval. Made it made it be made it be made it be made it be made it be. It is by and Bertha Bertha says they made it Bertha says they made it Bertha Bertha Bertha says they Bertha Bertha Bertha Bertha they they may may may Bertha may may day March and April and may may day. Bertha Bertha march and april and may may day may day is on the day and if on the day if on the day. If on the day. If Bertha Bertha if Bertha if Bertha Bertha on the may may day. (218-219)

This quote also shows that the entire text is structured around what I call serial repetition, creating a distinctive expression. Such a monotonous repetition of one word without any variation whatsoever makes the word point back at itself. Since it doesn't open up for interpretation it becomes self-contained. It becomes self-reflexive. What is produced is a strong sense of the surface of the word itself, creating a materiality of language. This, I would argue, could be seen as part of a theoretical endeavour to narrow the gap between language and life, not by making the text explicitly about material conditions, or by making art more contemporary, but making language itself into a material condition.

When words are repeated in a series with a slight variation around them, on the other hand, I

would argue that this slight variation creates a contextual difference that promotes a definition of the word in question. By saying the word as many times as possible, a structural contour is delineated for the word, making it into a concept: "From the standpoint of white white like a cloud a white cloud white like the snow white snow white like the white sun white sun white like the lily a white small lily that is like embroidery, white like anything made white which is readily white and not often changed to an other colour." (64) By repeating certain semiotic and semantic structures, this passage, although it makes little coherent sense, still produces an almost obtrusive experience of the word "white." Such a textual experience, in turn, is what makes the text "mean." It is therefore interesting that many critics create a hierarchical differentiation between rational meaning and nonsensical madness or chaos. In *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering* Ellen E. Berry, for instance, argues that Stein's text is structured around semiotic approximation rather than semantic differentiation, producing the metonymic, anti-representational, feminine discourse that Maubrey-Rose also refers to. To me, there seems to be an over-evaluation of the semiotic in such a construction. I would argue that the function of repetition here shows the point where semiotic approximation merges with semantic meaning. The moment semiotic approximation is produced, so is semantic depth—only that semantic depth gets a new meaning in a text like *Lucy Church Amiably* since it relies on the play of signifiers as the foundation for meaning. The

problem of avoiding meaning in language is something which Gertrude Stein herself also has commented on:

I took individual words and thought about them until I got their weight and volume complete and put them down next to another word and at this time I found out very soon that there is no such thing as putting them together without sense. I made innumerable efforts to make words write without sense and found it impossible. Any human being putting down words had to make sense of them. (from "A Transatlantic Interview" 1946. Quoted in Jo-Anna Isaak 29)

In *Lucy Church Amiably*, there are other similar repetitions that in similar ways produce meaning out of nonsense, but where the variations around the repeated word are more elaborate and also more clearly signifying, something I call extended variations of repetition. Such instances also show how poetic structure turns into novelistic meaning. These kinds of repetitions can be said to function on a textual rather than on a strictly linguistic level, where the reoccurrence of certain words, without coherence or order mind you, creates recognition which itself produces meaning. And this kind of repetition, I would argue, is what makes it possible to begin to make novelistic coherence out of repetition, to plot the text. And more so than anywhere else, such repetitions are part of the entire interpretation of the text. One such constitutive phrase is "there is no difference" which is one of the most striking and prevalent repetitions in the entire novel. At times, the expression appears at



practically every page, signifying its importance, and I quote a couple of instances: “There is no difference hurriedly,” (24) “There is no difference between account and accounting and recount and recounting,” (38) “There is no difference between safety and century” (20). The incoherence between the different uses of the words is bewildering to say the least. Even more perplexing is the obvious nonsensical appearance of the comparison. In order to make a comparison by differentiation the two concepts must be relational. Here, however, the statements seem completely out of bounds since they claim a lack of difference between two concepts that are not even comparable. This basic structure for the function of “difference” is also elaborated in the novel, in phrases like: “There has never been a suspicion that there is a difference between open and closed” (59). This is of course is the same thing as saying that there is no difference between open and closed, which indeed seems nonsensical since we “know,” that not only is there a difference, they are in fact dichotomies. However, since it is said with a certain amount of authority, there appears to be meaning to be extracted from such a proclamation. This use of the concept of difference is further elaborated by statements like “There is a difference between a name and where they went to have lunch” (60) and “There is every difference between John Mary and Simon Therese in perpetuity” (73). The nonsensical absurdity inherent in the former statements are opposed by the commonsensical absurdity in these. This makes the repetition of the

phrase deconstruct any attempt at meaning in the text creating the linguistic chaos that is so easily identifiable in the text.

However, as the use of the word “difference” coheres with the forms of extended repetition as described before, it becomes clearer how the concept functions in the text: “What does he say he says that after all it is not only that mountains differ differently and meadows differ differently and rivers differ differently and bells differ differently and poplars differ differently but also that paper differs differently and allowance differs differently and their continued fragrance differs differently” (82). Having encountered such similar constructions during 240 pages, it becomes apparent that repetitions do signify, be it in a specific way. Many of the statements do have separate meanings that can be deduced from each statement. However, considering the amount of such statements and the structure of the entire text it is not only impossible, but also futile to try to make sense or to interpret each separate account on difference. The interesting thing that happens is that all the variations dissolve, and the only thing that remains is the concept of difference itself. So the basic construction “there is no difference” in fact turns out to connote difference. Again, rather than deconstructing the narrative plot, repetition forces the reader to construct coherence out of incoherence, making all incoherent forms “mean.” By stating constantly that there is no difference between various concepts and ideas, by using nonsensical comparisons, obvious opposites, and confusing re-

petitions, only difference itself remains.

The use of difference as one of the most important concepts is also interesting in relation to difference as a structural phenomenon. The idea of difference is elaborated by the constant flow of words in parts of the novel where a lack of grammatical coherence produces actual difference:

Derange the service so he said and not fishing so he said and solved with pleasure so he said and golden rod and was very visible and in great abundance and not now and by the time and with it diminishing and might be when as seen so and so much as and as much with and whether whether repeated he ever went to be nearly very much advised as to their being very nearly at once favourable suitable to their joining their delight in with within estimate and allusion to pond lilies. (66)

It is in comparison with such passages of total difference that it becomes all the more clear that the *concept* of difference, with its repetitive function, in fact is a way to create identity in the text, not difference.

The repetitions discussed just now construct the surface and the readability of the text as a whole. In this rather shortened exposition I hope to have made clear the extreme variety of repetition in *Lucy Church Amiably*, and the different functions of these repetitions when it comes to establishing meaning on a textual level in the novel. However, repetition also has a meaning-creating effect that is crucial to the construction of the plot, in a wide sense of the word. Thus, some repetitions are

central components in establishing the general setting. It is on this level of the text where it becomes evident that the textually radical part not is disconnected from discursive signifying practices, but clearly is linked to bourgeois literary conventions. It is also here that the textual experiments become interesting not only textually but also ideologically. *Lucy Church Amiably* is in many ways far removed from traditional representation, and it could be questioned, as I mentioned before, whether it is a novel at all. However, as one reads through the 240 pages there are structures and plot-elements which clearly positions it within a literary tradition. This is done in many ways, but repetition plays an important role.

The first and most crucial form of repetition can seem absurd to talk of as repetition. This is so only because of its integrated function in the novelistic form. The repetition I am referring to is the repetition of proper names. It is also here that the title of the novel becomes crucial as a bearer of meaning, having a woman's name as its main component, pointing at other such titles: *Moll Flanders*, *Pamela*, *Evelina*, *Camilla*, *Emma*, *Ruth*, *Jane Eyre*, *Agnes Grey*, *Daisy Miller*, *Mrs Dalloway*, to mention a few. The bourgeois woman has a principal role in the traditional realistic novel, which I think is central to the function of the woman's name in the title of this novel. The bourgeois woman as a novelistic expression especially in the great woman novel of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century is something that forms a backdrop to the name *Lucy Church*. Thus, the title positions the text within a realistic novel tradi-

tion dealing with the bourgeois class, and more specifically with a bourgeois woman, Lucy Church.

However, the names that appear in the novel are used in various ways and have different functions, just as the other forms of repetitions in the text. First of all we have a sporadic reiteration of names that do not seem to follow the plot of the novel, appearing in clusters at a time: "Holmer Athur Elmer and Barber all wear aprons and usually they are lost as to a chalice and with it a chance to be used in succession as if as they wish" (11) Here, unfamiliar names appear in a cluster in a context which seems not only nonsensical but also trivial. Clusters of names like these, I would argue, are impossible to systematize. However, such repetitions are what makes some parts of the text "mean," and other parts insignificant. By producing a backdrop of names, other names are foregrounded, especially the names of the three main characters, Lucy Church, John Mary and Simon Therese. Thus, the novel has managed to create characters out of nonsensical repetition. Thus, it becomes clear that I do agree with Bridgman that the names signify characters. However, it is as characters in a textual/linguistic universe rather than a fictional universe that they become meaningful components.

Once we have established that there are names in the novel, names that appear to be characters, it becomes crucial to see what the characters do, what "place" they inhabit, in order to analyze the ideological "space" that is produced. By repeating natural phenomena; waterfalls, hills, val-

leys, fields, woods, mushrooms, oxen, cows, goats, sheep, chicken, et.c., the place as a pastoral idyll is established:

The beauties of nature hills valleys trees fields and birds. Trees valleys fields flocks and butter-flies and pinks and birds. Trees fields hills valleys birds pinks butter-flies clouds and oxen and walls of a part of a building which is up. In cutting box wood there is no danger as box is a shrub which has a very agreeable odour. (47)

The idyll is furthermore constructed by constant repetitions of "niceties" such as: "Lucy Church is very impressed by having been very much and very pleasantly surrounded by what she feels and felt to be very much what is desirable and that is pleasantly" (69). The pastoral is combined with a bourgeois setting by an extended use of a repetition of a single situation: that of arrival and departure. Although these repetitions in many ways are disconnected from the actual characters they still provide the situation in which the characters are placed. Thus, the situation rehearses a chief characteristic not only of the pastoral, but also of the classic realist novel where much action revolves around geographical transportation. In this text, however, it is unclear if the characters ever go away or reach their destination: "And so if it were possible it was possible to go away" (63). This seems to be a strategy to hold on to the very moment of transportation itself, in order to produce a literary, but also ideological space for the novel. Therefore, it foregrounds the situation itself, making the situ-

ation as a trope stick out, again stressing the text's relation to conventions. The generalizations point at a set of conventions, making the trip not singular but commonplace. Ian Watt argues in his influential book *The Rise of the Novel*, that particularity and singularity are two of the most important concepts in the novel's rise as a dominant literary form. This separates *Lucy Church Amiably* from realist novels, while simultaneously putting it in a special relation to it, a relation of variation in structure, since the realist novel works by singularity and originality rather than abstraction. Furthermore, this generality points to the commonplace of what is described as singular in realist fiction, making it a comment upon realist fiction itself.

The bourgeois setting is further emphasised by the repetition of conversation, for example: "The cause of conversation is this seated on the chair" (69–70), and "There is not much conversation in abundance. How much conversation in abundance" (71). What remains from these various repetitions of conversation is in fact conversation in abundance. What is produced by this reiteration of the word conversation is a notion that there is a lot of conversation going on, polite nonsensical conversation, which in the right ideological setting, that is bourgeois society, (or more precisely, the bourgeois novel) is considered normal. Here, of course, it is defamiliarized. Consequently, in *Lucy Church Amiably* repetition constitutes a defamiliarization, a defamiliarization which in fact simultaneously is its only familiarity,

its coherence. Thus it becomes impossible to argue that the defamiliarization produced here simply supplies a critique of the concepts and situations repeated. Rather, the use of repetition shows that there is dialectical relation between resistance of, and dependence upon, not only the concepts themselves, but also their ideological cargo. This literary construction makes Stein's text a nearly perfect example, not of anti-representational writing, but rather of how representation always stays within conventions, literary and ideological. Thus it cannot be argued that *Lucy Church Amiably* by repeating certain concepts and structures simply is parodying its literary past. Considering that the relation in no way is straightforwardly ironic or that the text in any way can be said to point directly (and only) to one particular text makes the relation much more complex. In order to come to terms with these differences, Jean-Jacques Lecercle in *Philosophy of Nonsense* differentiates between parody and pastiche, arguing that pastiche is used for texts where "the ascription of authorship is blurred or impossible, where the parodic distance is even greater—pastiche is the parody of a parody, where the style, the clichés, the slips of the pen are recognised as somehow 'other,' but no name can be given to this other" (170). The most apparent problem of calling a text like *Lucy Church Amiably* a pastiche is that it hardly resembles what it imitates. However, since the novel does not merely reverse and distance itself from the literary form it uses, which would imply a parodic relation, but is

much more ambiguous in its relation to it, I would argue that *Lucy Church Amiably* is a pastiche of the bourgeois novel where the construction of the bourgeois woman is central. What I want to draw from this differentiation between parody and pastiche is that *Lucy Church Amiably's* relation to its intertextual others is not radically or fiercely antagonistic. Thus, despite its avantgarde aesthetics, which in many ways most radically breaks with its literary past, it simultaneously uses this past through pastiche, which makes the relation much more ambiguous and paradoxical. Consequently, the novel never clearly distances or criticizes the female protagonist, Lucy Church, as a representation of the bourgeois woman. On the whole it is not even possible to argue that it distances itself from the petty bourgeoisie. The conversational pleasantry constitutes the entire text, making it seem extremely avantgarde textually but simply amiable ideologically. The novel also ends by repeating the two most common conversational pleasantries in the text, leaving the reader with an agreeable and amiable (if slightly absurd) sensation: "They like it they say how do you do. Very well I thank you" (240).

## Bibliography

- Stein, Gertrude. *Lucy Church Amiably*. 1930. New York: Something Else Press, Inc., 1969.
- Berry, Ellen E. *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering: Gertrude Stein's Postmodernism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.
- Bridgman, Richard. *Gertrude Stein in Pieces*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. London: The Athlone Press, 1988.
- Isaak, Jo-Anna. "The Revolutionary Power of a Woman's Laughter." *Gertrude Stein Advanced: An Anthology of Criticism*. Ed. Richard Kostelanetz. Jefferson, N.C., London: McFarland, 1990.
- Lecerle, Jean-Jacques. *The Philosophy of Nonsense: The Intuitions of Victorian Nonsense Literature*. London, New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Maubrey-Rose, Victoria. *The Anti-Representational Response: Gertrude Stein's Lucy Church Amiably*. Diss. Uppsala 1985. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia 59. Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1985.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Trans. Wade Baskin. London: Fontana, 1974.
- Stein, Gertrude. *Composition as Explanation*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1926.



Anna Nordlund

## **”Selma Lagerlöfs ’Outcast’ Novel: a Novel of Ideas Concerning Her Aesthetics”**

Selma Lagerlöf (1858–1940) is generally considered one of Sweden’s few world-famous and canonical novelists. During her lifetime she was enormously popular and became the most widely translated Swedish author of her time. Working as an elementary school teacher, Lagerlöf made her literary debut in 1891 with the novel *Gösta Berlings saga* (*The Story of Gösta Berling*). In a literary career spanning four decades, Lagerlöf created subsequent masterpieces such as *Jerusalem* (1901–02), *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa* (1906–07: *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*), *Kejsarn av Portugallien* (1914: *The Emperor of Portugallien*) and *Löwensköldstrilogin* (1925–1928: *The Löwensköld Cycle*).

Lagerlöf was a highly esteemed public figure. In 1909 she became the first Swede and the first woman to receive the Nobel Prize for literature and in 1914 she was the first woman to be elected to the exclusive group of eighteen authors and scholars comprising the Swedish Academy. Until her death in 1940 at the age of 81,

Selma Lagerlöf was increasingly considered a national icon, a beloved “Great Storyteller.”

Despite her fame and success, however, Selma Lagerlöf’s status as an important artist within the literary canon has always been problematic. Her artistic appropriation of local legends and folklore of Värmland into her narratives contributed to her reputation as the “Great Storyteller.” A captive of her public persona, Lagerlöf has often been read as drawing on mere inspiration and intuition, passively transmitting folkloristic narrative treasures hidden in the depths of the Swedish people. This patronizing myth of Lagerlöf as a moralizing and entertaining “natural” storyteller obscured the conscious aesthetic and narrative experimentation of her works, their emotional depths and audacity.

In this essay Lagerlöf’s lesser-known 1918 anti-war novel *Bannlyst*, (1918: literally “banned” but translated 1920 as *The Outcast*)<sup>1</sup> will serve a kind of *mise-en-abyme* of the entire Lagerlöf canon as well as the legend surrounding its author by foregrounding its internal and external

fault lines and contradictions, its courage and compromise, its narrative experimentation and self-censoring, its magical-realist audacity and its “great storyteller” caution. Issues of excess and containment in its compromised creation explains why *Bannlyst* as a novel of ideas has often been dismissed on false premises within a realist genre convention of what would characterize a successful 20<sup>th</sup>-century novel: A unified narrative perspective; an invisible and omniscient narrator; concrete and precise descriptions; authenticity in scenic composition; and psychological credibility, opposed to indirect and retrospective narration; narrative ellipses and gaps; departures from compositional unity and balance; and an overuse of allegory and anthropomorphization. Hence the aim is to explore whether *Bannlyst* could actually be perceived as a novel of ideas concerning Lagerlöf’s own views on her aesthetics opposed to the main discourse of realism.

*Bannlyst* represents an author at mid-life struggling to voice her outrage about the First World War, yet refusing to be co-opted into the progressive women’s anti-war movement. The years of the war were a long period of silence in Lagerlöf’s otherwise regular production. The few short stories that she published and the surviving sketches of stories express a creative crisis and the onset of doubt. There is a constant search for a narrative voice that could speak up against the war.

Throughout the war years, Lagerlöf was con-

stantly aware that some voices of protest, particularly from the women’s suffrage and anti-war movements, were stifled or censored while simultaneously often regarded as naïve and inconsequential. In the peace movement’s protests, she saw women taking a politicized responsibility for human life, but personally she declined to take part actively, to the great disappointment of many intellectual women, such as Ellen Key and Elin Wägner. Contrary to her colleagues Key and Wägner (as well as to the preceding generation of female authors), Lagerlöf always kept her distance from official political rhetoric. She rarely gave speeches in any other form than allegorical stories. Thus once again “the storyteller” as a public persona was enforced by Lagerlöf’s own use of an aestheticized political idiom.<sup>2</sup>

During the war years, Lagerlöf began to doubt the effectiveness of her authorial image, although she still remained reluctant to embrace a more conventionally political discourse.<sup>3</sup> However, *not* to speak up against the war would mean letting her feelings die and letting the inspiration disappear. A poem, probably dated February 1918, when she had started to work on *Bannlyst*, laments the separation of body and mind during the years of war and as a consequence the loss of inspiration. The poem describes how mind and body fuse together again when the author to whom they belong has come to terms with not being a realist in her approach to the atrocities of war.<sup>4</sup>

After writing this poem, and thus coming to



terms with her means of writing, Lagerlöf over the course of a few months completed the writing of her new novel. *Bannlyst* might be considered Selma Lagerlöf's most disturbing work. Two competing discourses of narrative consciousness clash within the novel: rationalist realism represented by the authoritarian Lutheran minister Rhånge, and uncontained supernaturalism represented by the repressed servant girl Lotta Hedman.

The minister Rhånge's outlook on the world as a normative objective representation is challenged by Lotta Hedman's magical interpolations. Excessive displays of emotions are laid out side by side with realistic, goal-oriented narrative to function as a manifesto of ideas against the war. The thought behind *Bannlyst* was to create a new taboo. If people could be made to feel the same feelings of disgust toward the killing of living people in war as toward the eating of dead human flesh, then all wars might be avoided.

The hero of the novel, Sven Elversson, is an English gentleman in his late twenties. He returns to his native Sweden after a British polar expedition. His English parents adopted him when he was nine years old but have now rejected him, after rumours spread that Sven and his crewmates, shipwrecked and starving in the Arctic, ate the flesh of a dead comrade.<sup>5</sup> Wishing to hide from the world, Sven returns to his biological parents, Joel and Thala, farmers on the island of Grimön on the west coast. Denounced during a church service and banned by the local minister

Edvard Rhånge, Sven becomes an outcast and object of fear and disgust among the local population. Rhånge's beautiful, young wife Sigrun, however, forms a friendship with the ostracized Sven, based on their mutual loneliness and estrangement.

The intention behind *Bannlyst* of creating a new taboo ended up being modified and defanged in the final version. Lagerlöf's influential friends Valborg Olander and Sophie Elkan were so upset by the banned hero Sven Elversson's cannibalistic crime, that Lagerlöf finally surrendered to their advice. In the last moment she modified the idea of the novel by deleting the word "äckel" (disgust) where she could, and by adding to the plot a letter, in which Sven's dead comrade confirms that Sven is not guilty of the cannibalism the others in the polar expedition committed. Also, Lagerlöf hesitated over whether to have the minister's wife Sigrun return to her husband after her adulterous affair with Sven or to leave her and Sven in a more open ending.<sup>6</sup> The author desperately wanted to get this book published. *Bannlyst* finally reached Swedish bookstores in the middle of December 1918, only a little more than a month after the armistice was signed on November 11.

Admittedly, *Bannlyst* is not one of Lagerlöf's greatest artistic creations. Critics have long struggled with evaluating its eclectic, disparate elements and its apparent lack of narrative cohesion; they have been unwilling to read the novel's "unclassical" narrative eclecticism and uneven intermixture of generic elements as the product of very

conscious artistic choices and creative engagement that in turn undermine mimetic conventions of narrative realism.

*Bannlyst* could be read as a savage allegorical critique of Sweden's position vis-à-vis the great powers during the First World War and of failures of perception in the representations of the waging of war. But critics who have engaged the work as a "peace" novel have tended to dismiss its apparently superficial moral outrage at humanity's inability to prevent mass killing and destruction.<sup>7</sup>

Their eyes pecked out by seagulls, the thousands of floating corpses from the Battle of the North Sea that wash ashore near the novel's end bring home the reality of the war to Sweden itself and horrifically shatter any self-satisfied national sense of purity, moral neutrality, and unwillingness to "see." The novel's anti-nationalist, anti-isolationist allegory cannot only be read as Lagerlöf's attempt to voice her outrage at the horrors of modern war and at Swedish indifference and blindness, but require attention to her attempt to break out of the box of genteel national romantic writing in which she had been long confined. Within the framework of aesthetic values based on thematic and narrative coherence, *Bannlyst* has been dismissed, but it should be read as Lagerlöf's creative re-engagement that undermines the mimetic conventions of narrative realism. *Bannlyst* raises concerns about the nature of reality and its apparent failures to represent the corporeal perceptions of war and mirrors Lagerlöf's own struggle with wishing to live in ignorance of

the atrocities of the war while also wishing to use her artistry to fight against them.

At the beginning of the novel, Sven, the Swedish-born outsider who has been a member of an English expedition, brings some kind of horrible contagion back with him inside Swedish national borders. The minister Rhånge's initial attempt to accept Sven equals Sweden's official declaration of neutrality on August 3, 1914. Significantly, the 1906 government had legislated against anti-militarism, and conservative politicians as well as King Gustav V and his German wife Queen Viktoria made no secret of their support for Germany, at the time closely allied to Sweden historically as well as economically and culturally. When the war broke out on August 2, 1914, the country was divided into the conservatives' pro-German claims for "active neutrality" (that is "neutrality" regarding Germany as the more innocent part in the war making) and more liberal and labor-oriented entente-friendly claims for "real neutrality" (that is "neutrality" regarding Germany as the aggressor).<sup>8</sup> The first sermon that Rhånge delivers in the novel demonstrates how the "real neutrality" Rhånge had proclaimed in having Sven's parents accept their son's return after the rumours of his cannibalism now turns to "active neutrality". Rhånge accepts Sven's existence in the county when he is living with his parents on a remote island but would never accept him as an active parishioner. Sven is condemned by the church just as any English intervention in Sweden's affairs would have been, but the German

provocation inherent in the invasion of Belgium had great support among the majority of the Swedish upper-class.<sup>9</sup>

With Rhånge's condemnation of Sven in church, the parishers start mistreating him in the name of disgust. But Sven proves to be more gracious and righteous than any of them. Rhånge's spiritual charisma gradually fades after he condemns Sven. He falls into rages and depression before he realizes that he has to renegotiate his beliefs in spiritual powers and taboos.

Lotta Hedman's supernatural sight appears as a cultural corrective. A prophetess from the rural north of Sweden, Lotta's haunted visions, irrational compulsions, and public oratorical outbursts configure her as a kind of madwoman-outsider. Her initial appearance on the train a third of the way through the novel signals a disorientingly abrupt change in the text's tone and direction. Dressed in black, shy and inhibited, she nonetheless directs a rapid-fire, half-mad, half-rhapsodic monologue to a fellow passenger, Sven, that slowly attracts the attention of other passengers as well. When she finally finishes her proclamations of the end of the world after the Great War, she starts talking about her love for Sigrun and her belief, confirmed in supernatural sights, that Rhånge is a man capable of killing Sigrun's soul.

Later, when Lotta has helped Sigrun escape from her raging husband by pretending she have died from a contagious infection, Lotta involuntarily experiences a astral projection during which she leaves her body and witnesses the world from

high in space. As a result of the proximity of the uncanny real and magical vision, Sigrun's escape from her husband through a dead woman's body leads to Sven's house. This reunion ultimately releases Rhånge from his curse. He sees Sigrun's and Sven's declared love, and in the grip of intense sensations and emotions he manages to turn away from killing Sven out of hatred and jealousy. He thus also regains his spiritual powers, which sanction Sigrun to love and live with Sven. Thus he is now able to see through, and even work against, traditional thinking.

Lotta's presence, voice, and vision constantly threaten the novel's realist conventions and narrative stability. She is the consistently uncontrollable and destabilizing element in this fictional universe, one whose excessive inner visions and prophetic powers keep exploding outward and keep creating unexpected dislocations on the levels of plot and formal coherence.

Contemporary critics of *Bannlyst* struggled with resisting the novel intellectually and surrendering to it emotionally, while at the same time hinting at something indefinable and inexplicable in the work that nonetheless seized them. While much subsequent criticism of the novel has focused on its inadequacies and its dissatisfying hybridity, most critics have dismissed the affective mysteries at its core, its strange, emotional lure.<sup>10</sup>

The first chapter in itself – in which Sven's father prepares his mother for the fact that their long-lost son Sven will come back as a contami-

nated creature – illustrates how two narrative discourses will intersect in this novel.

While the husband retells an anonymous newspaper story of some North Pole explorers, his wife's thoughts wander off in directions other than the husband intended. She pays attention to how witty he is, how nicely he constructs his speech, just like a preacher, but how useless that gift has been in their day-to-day life. Not until her husband makes a connection to a dream he has had and introduces the name of their lost son, Sven, does she see how the story told in the newspaper connects to her own life.

From now on the narrative moves in a new direction. Depersonalized facts about a failed North Pole expedition fade away and a trauma in this woman's life begins to unfold. The husband loses the narrative grip he took from the reality of the newspaper. He has to invent an alternate version, just as Lagerlöf always gives an alternative to a realist picture of the world, to achieve the purpose he had set out. Only then does his wife begin to listen, and through his story she goes through an emotional redemption preparing her to welcome her banished son back home.

With *Bannlyst* Lagerlöf initially wanted to achieve a taboo against war by focusing on the arbitrariness in modern civilization's disgust with cannibalism as opposed to its acceptance of the intentional killing in war. Lagerlöf thus points in the same direction as the anthropologist Mary Douglas did almost fifty years later in her influential study of the rules of pollution and purity as

approaches to the symbolic patterns and rituals of both primitive and modern societies.

When waves of swollen corpses of young men float ashore after the Battle of the North Sea, people begin to reevaluate Sven's crime. His brother Joel, a seaman who has encountered thousands of corpses floating at sea, now sick in despair asks Sven for forgiveness. Sven reminds him of the time he and his mates forced him to eat a serpent. With an eye-witness accuracy Lagerlöf goes on to describe the sights Joel has witnessed.

The communal disgust toward Sven is re-directed towards the corpses resulting from the battle and the prior taking of life. *Bannlyst* thus offers a new, more adequate perception of the ultimate disgust of warfare than the conventional descriptions of the battles as a contest mainly between the Germans and the British offered in contemporary newspaper reports. The two major national newspapers in Sweden at the time, the liberal *Dagens Nyheter* and the conservative *Svenska Dagbladet*, reported routinely on the war through the propaganda headquarters in Berlin, London, Paris, and Amsterdam with conservative accounts giving considerable attention to Berlin and great sympathies for the Germans.<sup>11</sup> The newspaper-reports described hand-to-hand combat and slaughter, shooting, shelling, or blasting as "protection" or "defense of comrades" and always in national, never individual, terms.

Despite more or less successful attempts to create disgust and as a consequence a taboo

against the ultimate results of warfare in the deliberate shelling, cutting, burning and drowning of other humans, *Bannlyst* is nonetheless also in parts a defanged compromise between a radical political allegory and a rather conventional melodramatic romance. Although the novel's compromised, conventional resolution and its occasional hackneyed moments are evident weaknesses, its magical realist detours, its surreal moments of horror, witchcraft, and supernatural uncanniness deserve belated investigation and recognition. In constructing this novel, Lagerlöf negotiates a tortuous middle ground between sufficiently savage metaphors for an outrage about the Great War (cannibalism, floating corpses, disgust, hereditary curses) and a fear of alienating her adoring public. As I read this compromised novel it expresses the author's own dividedness – her frustrated sense of her own captivity and containment within a public persona and her intense desire to break beyond those constraints as an artistic and political voice.

### **Bibliography:**

- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London, New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Franzén, Nils-Olof. *Undan stormen. Sverige under första världskriget*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1986.
- Holm, Birgitta. *Selma Lagerlöf och ursprungets roman*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1984.
- Huntford, Roland. *Scott and Amundsen*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979.
- Isaksson, Ulla och Erik Hjalmar Linder. *Elin Wägner: Dotter av moder jord*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1981.
- Karlsson, Maria. *Känslans röst. Det melodramatiska i Selma Lagerlöfs romankonst*. Eslöv: Symposion, 2002.
- Lagerlöf, Selma. *Bannlyst*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1918.
- . *The Outcast*. Trans. W. Worster. London: Gyldendal, 1920.
- . *Troll och människor*. Samlade skrifter 16. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1926.
- . *Från skilda tider*. Vol 2. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1946.
- . *Brev*. Ed. Ying Toijer-Nilsson. Vol 2. Lund: Selma Lagerlöfsällskapets skrifter, 1969.
- . *Du lär mig att bli fri. Selma Lagerlöf skriver till Sophie Elkan*, ed. Ying Toijer-Nilsson, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1992.
- Lagerroth, Ulla-Britta. *Körkarlen och Bannlyst: Motiv och idéstudier i Selma Lagerlöfs 10-talsdiktning*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1963.
- Nordund. "Corpses, Curses and Cannibalism. Containment and Excess in Selma Lagerlöf's *Bannlyst* and its reception." *Scandinavian Studies* 76 (2004): 181–202.
- Wägner, Elin. *Selma Lagerlöf*. Vol 2. *Från Jerusalem till Mårbacka*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1943.

### **Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> Translated by W. Worster, (London: Gyldendal, 1920). I have italicized title translations actually existing in English editions.
- <sup>2</sup> Most famous of her allegorical "story telling" speeches are her Nobel speech from 1909 and her suffragette speech "Hem och stat" from 1911, both

published in *Troll och människor* 1.

<sup>3</sup> In the Lagerlöf collection at Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm, there are several versions of a conventional speech for the peace movement, with regard to the women's peace Sunday in June 27 1915. Lagerlöf did not sign the published speech and it is disputable whether she wrote it. See also See Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, *Körkarlen och Bannlyst: Motiv- och idéstudier i Selma Lagerlöfs 10-talsdiktning*, (Stockholm: Bonniers förlag, 1963): 427–428.

<sup>4</sup> The poem was published after Lagerlöf's death in *Från skilda tider* 2, (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1946): 17–20.

<sup>5</sup> Lagerlöf claimed to have read in Swedish media about a British polar expedition, disgraced after rumors of cannibalism spread. Letter to Sophie Elkan, 21 October 1918, in *Du lär mig att bli fri. Selma Lagerlöf skriver till Sophie Elkan*. Ed. Ying Toijer-Nilsson (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1992): 474. Most probably Lagerlöf was generally influenced by the media attention given to polar expeditions and their struggles. The Norwegian Roald Amundsen and the Englishman Robert Falcon Scott started competing expeditions to the South Pole in 1911. According to Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, Lagerlöf was possibly referring to the A. Greely expedition of 1881–84, accused of cannibalism, and to the American explorer, Frederick A. Cook, who was celebrated as a hero in Copenhagen in July 1909, but shortly afterwards disgraced when another American polar explorer, Robert Peary, claimed that Cook never went all the way to the North Pole. See Lagerroth (1963): 367–368. See also Roland

Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979): 215–223.

<sup>6</sup> Letters to Valborg Olander, 14, 24, 28 October 1918, Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm. Sophie Elkan, 28 October 1918, in Ying Toijer-Nilsson (1992): 476. Kaja Hansen, 5 April 1919, in *Selma Lagerlöf Brev* 2. Ed. Ying Toijer-Nilsson (Lund: Selma Lagerlöfsällskapetets skrifter, 1969): 152. See also Lagerroth (1963): 343, 391–395.

<sup>7</sup> For further discussion of the reception of *Bannlyst* see Anna Nordund, "Corpses, Curses and Cannibalism. Containment and Excess in Selma Lagerlöf's *Bannlyst* and its reception", *Scandinavian Studies* 76 (2004): 181–202.

<sup>8</sup> In the letters between Selma Lagerlöf and her close friend Sophie Elkan there is evidence that Elkan, who had a lover in Belgium, from the beginning of the war was entene-oriented, whereas Lagerlöf focused the atrocities from both sides.

<sup>9</sup> See Lagerlöf (1992): 413–414, 416, 423–424, 437, 459–462, 466, 469–470. See further Nils-Olof Franzén *Undan stormen. Sverige under första världskriget* (Stockholm: 1986): 133, 138.

<sup>10</sup> Through Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytical theory of abjection Birgitta Holm has so far made the most ambitious analytical attempt to interpret the emotional lure. In a recent dissertation, Maria Karlsson uses the writings of Stanley Cavell to argue that the melodramatic modes of expression often used by Lagerlöf are inefficient in *Bannlyst*.

<sup>11</sup> I have looked through *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* with particular attention to the battlefi-

elds around Champagne, Neuve-Chapelle and Ypern in February and March of 1915, the sinking of Lusitania on May 7 1915, the battle of the North Sea on May 31 and June 1 in 1916 and the battle-fields around Cambrai-S:t Quentin and Amiens on March 21 and April 1918





Helena Wahlström

## **“A Little Liberation” or Just Transportation? Female Picaresque and Anne Roiphe’s *Long Division***

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a large number of female authors engaged in a genre that can loosely be termed “liberation novel.” The novels deal with a protagonist’s quest for personal and sexual fulfillment, and with her coming to consciousness about her position as a woman in the gender(ed) culture of the United States. The recent publication of several studies on 1970s literature by women, such as Maria Lauret’s *Liberating Literature: Feminist Fiction in America* (1994), Charlotte Templin’s *Feminism and the Politics of Literary Reputation: The Case of Erica Jong* (1995), and Lisa Maria Hogeland’s *Feminism and Its Fictions: The Consciousness-raising Novel and the Women’s Liberation Movement* (1998), signals a need to deal with the generation of texts and authors that participated in shaping the second wave of the women’s movement.<sup>1</sup> While Ellen Cronan Rose claims that feminist scholars in the 1990s should “theorize and historicize today’s novels rather than memorialize a feminist high renaissance of the 1970s” (375), Hogeland rightly points out that we must

not miss the intermediate step; it is also vital that “the high renaissance of the 1970s [is] theorized and historicized” (xi).

It seems evident that the literature of the 1970s must be dealt with in order to provide historical and ideological background to more recent female-authored and/or feminist fictions, and indeed to all fiction, after the general breakthrough of feminism in the 1970s. The studies by Hogeland *et al* make it clear that this genre of literature sets before itself a rather formidable project, and that, at least for a limited period of time, it also accomplishes a great deal when it comes to raising consciousness (Hogeland), and posing radical questions concerning gender politics (Lauret).

Notably, definitions of the novelistic genre vary among critics, depending on their focus; Lauret’s feminist fiction becomes Hogeland’s consciousness-raising fiction. Certainly, many of the novels produced at the time of the 1970s can be categorized as women’s, feminist—or at least feminism-informed—and consciousness-raising. In addition,

the liberation novel has also often been described in terms of modern bildungsroman (Fromkorth, Hoover Braendlin). They often involve a focus on the female protagonist's psychological development, or "growth" towards a final resolve, a feature typical of the bildungsroman. However, in this exploration of a particular novel from the era I will argue that the protagonists' trajectories more often describe a circular movement typical of the picaresque genre; instead of closure there is a repetitive pattern according to which the protagonist starts over and over.

To illustrate this claim, I want to explore how elements of the traditional(ly male) picaresque genre are picked up by Anne Roiphe in *Long Division* (1972), looking specifically at how these elements undergo change as they are applied to the adventures of a female protagonist, and in what ways the protagonist's journey between numerous men (husband, lovers) aligns itself with, and departs from, traditional patterns of the picaresque genre. By appropriating the picaresque genre in the 1970s, female authors simultaneously claim space for the expression of female experience and for the possibilities of female authorship. In the process, the genre is transposed in order to accommodate the trajectory of the female picara. Furthermore, the added dimension of the "typically American" road-narrative will also be brought to bear on my discussion. I will above all look at ways in which the generically determined political differences between traditional picaresque and American road narra-

tive complicate issues of subversion and liberation.

The term picaresque has been variously defined, sometimes denoting very loosely any literature that presents a hero—or rather antihero—who undertakes some form of journey during which he plays several disparate roles in his encounters with various characters and adventures, while at other times referring only to the literature of the Spanish renaissance. However, while the loosest application of the term seems too broad to be useful, the other alternative seems overly restrictive. The stricter definition also runs into trouble rather immediately, for it does not allow for historical genre development, nor can it encompass the fact that the picaresque genre, almost upon its inception, has a tradition of transmutation, as is evident in the fact that many novels usually brought up in studies of the genre are parodies of the form itself.<sup>2</sup>

It seems, therefore, to be most helpful to view the genre as determined by a number of specific criteria, but to keep an open mind as to how these criteria or narrative elements figure in the fictional text. Although it is notable that Claudio Guillen, like most other critics, views the picaresque genre as exclusively male, I find his precise yet flexible approach particularly helpful.<sup>3</sup>In addition to the criteria already mentioned, such as the overall theme of the journey and the many roles enacted by the picaro, Guillen delineates the picaresque genre as follows:

The picaresque novel is a pseudo autobiography [...]. The narrator's view is partial and prejudiced [...] the picaro is an ongoing philosopher, [is] a constant discoverer and rediscoverer, experimenter and doubter [...] each person or action is for him a possible "example." [...] Most often these novels tend to be *romans à thèse*, or rather à *antithèse*, for they are often parodic [...] the novel is loosely episodic, strung together like a freight train and *apparentely* with no other common link than the hero [...] the use of recurrent motifs, circular patterns, and incremental processes is particularly frequent in the picaresque. The first person form supplies an additional framework. (81–85, emphases in the original.)

An important element in the picaresque genre is that the hero is an orphan—his identity is unknown or mistaken, his family history is opaque, or his parents have neglected him utterly and belong in the very lowest stratum of society. The picaro typically becomes a social climber, has his adventures in different social spheres, but finally settles down in a solidly upper-middle to upper class position, often also in marriage. Other prevalent picaresque elements are: the wealth of concrete detail or "exaggerated realism"; the negative experience of sexuality; the gradual moral degradation of the hero; encounters with mad projectors; public humiliation and embarrassing exposure; scatological scenes; and encounters with the imaginary and the absurd.<sup>4</sup> These criteria, taken together with the journey motif and the many roles that the protagonist

must play in the course of the journey, begin to provide a framework for reading the genre.

Many women's novels<sup>5</sup> in the 1970s incorporate the motif of the journey. Often, the protagonist is a married woman grown tired of her marriage, and of her husband, who is presented as restricting her freedom, and as overly aligned with society's ideals of married-womanhood. Whether the protagonist's trajectory is constructed as a movement of departure from the husband only, or as one of departure and return, the journey itself constitutes a substantial part of the narrative in the novels.

However, the journey motif takes a specific turn, for the mobility of the protagonist is played out against numerous male characters who represent various modes of masculinity (which in turn represent a variety of life choices). It is thus predominantly men, and the masculinities they embody, that constitute the protagonist's adventures, or "examples," in the typical woman's novel of the period.<sup>6</sup> Men, then, often figure as the "many masters" that the picara encounters throughout her journey.<sup>7</sup>

Although there are many journeying women in the fiction of the 1970s, it is true that the "Woman of the Road" [...] has been a fairly invisible 20<sup>th</sup>-century post-war traveller, seldom or never spotted in *critical* discourse" (Enevold, 405, emphasis added). While a few critics have noted that there is a picaresque quality to novels like Lisa Alther's *Kinflicks* and Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*, there is as yet no extensive study of

these and other women's novels of the 1970s as picaresque texts.<sup>8</sup> In *Kinflicks*, the protagonist journeys between highschool boyfriends Joe Bob and Clem, via lesbian lover Eddie, on to husband Ira and would-be lover Hawk. Each of the male characters represents a certain lifestyle, a certain attitude to women and sexuality, and a distinct type of masculine behavior. Jong's protagonist is similarly portrayed as travelling between lovers and husbands: like the male characters in *Kinflicks*, Brian, Charlie, Bennett and Adrian in *Fear of Flying* represent various sexualities, various masculinities, and offer the protagonist various roles to play.

Clearly, however, the novels often have much closer affinities with the picaresque genre than the journey motif and the protagonist's shifting roles, even though their cultural context, and their being female-authored, result in specific alterations to the traditional pattern of the genre.

As already stated, Anne Roiphe's 1972 novel *Long Division* is an example of female-authored picaresque. This novel makes use of picaresque genre conventions in slightly different ways than the two texts mentioned above, and applies different emphases, but is interestingly similar in tone (jocular, ironic, self-reflexive) as well as in the way it positions men/masculinities as stops along the protagonist's journey towards supposed self-knowledge. *Long Division* describes the journey southwest of a protagonist, Emily Brimberg Johnson, who is headed for Mexico

together with her daughter Sarah in order to finalize her divorce from a New York artist. It is a "sad journey to end the past, to put a foot in the mouth of the future, and to see America, an educational tour, while we're about it" (8). Many of the elements typical of the picaresque are employed in Roiphe's novel. It is a first person narrative in which the protagonist journeys across the North American continent. There are several encounters with the absurd, especially in "Settlement Tomorrow," a trailer town for old age pensioners; "mad projectors" who attempt to kidnap Emily and her daughter, in order to make them stand in for all the pensioners' absent children and grandchildren.

Unlike the traditional—orphaned—picaro, Roiphe's protagonist, although technically an orphan raised by her grandparents, is not marked by a past that is dubious or unknown, but instead is well aware of her family history. Rather than to discover her personal origins (always part of the project for the traditional picaro), the project of her "educational tour" is to find out about American identity. Thus it is clear from the outset that the protagonist is involved not only in what can be termed picaresque adventure, but also firmly positioned in the tradition of American road narrative.<sup>9</sup>

The America Emily encounters is a Christian revival meeting, the Hershey chocolate factory, a dentists' convention, an Indian Reservation, a run-down black section of downtown Terre Haute, and Settlement Tomorrow. "America" as seen

here is an America on the outskirts. Having escaped both the upper middleclass New York society of her married life, and the “bohemian” life style of her artist husband, Emily and her daughter encounter laborers, law enforcers, and marginal figures in terms of class, race, politics, and age. The marginality of the figures they encounter also mirrors Emily’s own perceived marginality.

Emily experiences her feelings of otherness on several levels. At the Hershey factory, she says, “other families were staring at me peculiarly; a certain hostility was clear. I was the only parent alone with a child. All the others were in groups [...] made up of a male and female and offspring. Like an unnatural mutation, I felt awkward in the normal universe” (17). Roiphe thus stresses the ways in which the heterosexual norm, and the nuclear family norm, serve to “other” those who fall outside its boundaries. However, not only does Emily experience her situation as marked by otherness, but also by physical exposure, linked to (sexual) shame: “Like a pilloried adulteress, or a stockaded petty thief, I felt exposed, my vulnerable pants pinned down” (17). True to the picaresque genre, *Long Division* also incorporates a strong corporeal element,<sup>10</sup> especially related to the protagonist, who repeatedly feels exposed, naked. Urinating alone in the desert at night, she states, “I felt wet and ashamed, ashamed of my waste products, of my naked vagina drying in the chilled night air. No one was looking at me, and yet I felt [...] guilty of transgression; perhaps one simply should not be alone—aloneness itself is

shameful” (140). Again, physical/sexual exposure is linked to Emily’s position as abnormal in a “normal universe,” the result of which is feelings of guilt and shame.

However, there is a consistent tension between the protagonist’s negative feelings of otherness, alienation, and exposure on the one hand, and on the other her wishes for a better future, which she believes she is travelling towards. In a sense, this future involves her own “becoming another,” invariably a transformation linked to a new man, a “better man”: “I’ll find something really new, another way. I’ll be again the free soaring bird of my first sexual moment [...] [I will find] a treasure, a constitution, a declaration of independence, a liberty bell cracked but ringing, and there I’ll wait for a man to come and love me wild” (8). Much later in the narrative, she still has hopes, “if not for love, then at least for freedom, autonomy—expectations of a new tomorrow” (156). And, towards the end of her narrative, she thinks of the “new man” who may wait in her future: “a gentle man [...] a dreamer of good dreams (189). But then her tone shifts: “[s]uch a man, such a love, such a middle-class vision! Who knows what new illusion I am in danger of selling myself!” (189). She is thus represented as aware of the mistake of fantasizing salvation through heterosexual relationships, but also as unable to free herself from precisely this formula for happiness; hence the incongruous linking of a new man with the notion of independence from her husband.

As in the traditional picaresque, the protagonist's geographical movement is paralleled by a movement through social spheres, but as in other women's novels of the period, the social spheres are illustrated by the men the protagonist encounters. Among the men Emily meets throughout her journey are several sheriffs, the old age pensioners at Settlement Tomorrow, a black hustler, some hitchhiking young hippies, a Mexican border police, a dentist, and a young NRA man. We are thus presented with a variety of class, race, and region. Chandler has claimed that the picaro, "in order to live [...] must serve somebody (45). Chandler continues: "he [sic] flits from one master to another, all of whom he outwits in his career, and describes to satirize in his narrative" (46). The male characters in *Long Division* function as the protagonist's many "masters"—they are the reasons for the many roles she enacts. Each man signifies a different physical and geographical space, as well as a different kind of masculinity.

One of the men (a participant in a perodontists' convention) introduces himself to Emily, who thinks: "you and I will make a little liberation, why not?" (79). The man keeps talking about his professional career and his wife, while Emily struggles to reassure and admire him sufficiently to create a relaxed atmosphere:

At last he began to stroke me and I felt surges of excitement [...] I felt my body, no longer cold, but beautiful, mobile, the essence of woman alive in all the right organs [...] I could be animal [...] all the

pleasures of promiscuity could be mine [...] I twisted, turned and moved a long while [...] After a while, I realized H. Moore's penis had remained a small limp tongue with nothing to say [...]. I didn't want the failure to be mine, I tried and tried but after another thirty-five minutes I dropped back on the red bed in exhaustion [...]. "It's because you have bad breath" he said, "bad breath is the one thing that turns me off." (81)

Thus, the "liberated" act of adultery becomes a double bind, for instead of resulting in feelings of freedom, the anticipated "little liberation," Emily is once more disappointed in male (sexual) performance, but also (as with her husband) has to accept the lover's version of herself as bearing the responsibility for his sexual failure.

Although only one man in *Long Division* functions as a lover in the sexual sense, and then not very well, most male characters figure—threateningly or temptingly—in sexually charged situations. When Emily goes to see the Madonna of the Trail statue, for example, a monument memorializing female pioneers, she accidentally stumbles and falls down by the monument: "I went down on the ground, writhing with both pain and embarrassment. My skirt was up too high, I could tell my shins were bruised and bleeding [...] I felt hot hands lifting me up and saw a uniformed state guard in cowboy hat with pistol slung low over his hips" (72). Angered at being wrongly accused by the policeman of "defacing" the statue, Emily threatens to charge him with police brutality. He tells her to calm down, and

backs off “adjusting his gun on his hip the way a lady straightens her stockings after an unfortunate sexual encounter” (73). Although obviously uneasy with the invasive presence of the armed and “hot” state guard, Emily manages to dismantle his threatening aspect by re-gendering his gestures through the reference to stockings.

Nevertheless, examples of threatening male presence abound. At Settlement Tomorrow, “sexual threats” surface in two different senses. The first of these is rather conventional: Emily discovers the male community leader watching her undress one evening, “his face was pressed against the [trailer] window. He was grinning—there was a lascivious, unfatherly look in his eyes as they surveyed my breasts” (154). Soon after this event, three of the old men, the community leader among them, armed with canes and a kitchen knife, force the protagonist to strip in one of the trailers. The development is arrested, however, as one of the female community members enters the trailer and immediately lays the blame for the situation on Emily: “She was really angry, and I felt guilty [...] guilty of bad acts, bad thoughts—Bad!” (160). Thus, Emily’s sense of otherness and victimization is closely linked to feelings of guilt—guilt that above all is tied to the notion of (sexual and personal) freedom, an issue I will have reason to return to shortly.

The second and more absurd sense of “sexual threat” is represented by the loss of sexual specificity. While in the trailer town, Emily is shocked to learn that all “important” sexual organs “like the

penis, the breast, the vagina, shrivel up” and eventually fall off in one’s old age. “Here at Settlement Tomorrow we consider this an important occasion like a birthday or something,” she is told; “We put a little monetary surprise under the pillow of the person. The penis fairy, we call it just for fun, comes and rewards each loser with a gift” (157). To Emily, the idea that gender/sex markers might disappear, and with them—at least conventional—sexual intercourse is very unsettling. The notion that many of the inhabitants of Settlement Tomorrow have undergone this change, also stresses her own sexual vulnerability, for she could be the only woman around whose sexuality is still “intact.”

However, there are also other ways in which sexuality figures as both mysterious and absurd in Emily’s narrative. Interestingly, there is a repetitive thematic element in the text: not less than four times, Emily is offered to buy pornographic pictures, but finds to her great disappointment that she has been handed not snapshots of copulating couples, but, first, a picture of a toilet bowl containing “the traditional floating objects” (17), second, an easter egg presenting a bunny family happily at home in their country cottage, and third, pictures of cars— “Detroit’s wet dreams” (103). On the fourth and last of these occasions, expecting and desiring to find pictures of “Mexican whores,” of “a large brown breast rubbing against a high brown penis” (190), but instead the document turns out to be “a cheap tourist copy of the Declaration of Independence” (190).

She has found the “declaration of independence” she dreamed would be hers at journey’s end, but no “man to love [her] wild.” The event obviously serves as a reminder that she is now about to leave a state of dependency on her husband and enter instead a state of freedom, or independence—the value of which, however, is clearly uncertain.

“I had been cheated,” states the protagonist on the first of these occasions, “not a thing to brood over—just remembered so I would be wiser the next time” (17). In the words of Guillen, the picaresque “learns, to be sure, but he does not improve” (88). This is true of Roiphe’s picaresque, too, and at this point the appropriated/transposed genre converges with the tradition. *Long Division* is thus also a circular narrative in that the adventures of the protagonist do not lead to development. Instead, each episode ends in the same way, with Emily left feeling foolish, lonely, and frustrated.

While the picaresque traditionally is marked by bawdiness and burlesque, as well as by a strong sexual element, sex in Roiphe’s genre appropriation is at once desired and threatening; the situation of a mother and her daughter is above all one of being *at risk* in US patriarchy. Not only the policeman by the statue, but also the gas station attendant, the old men at Settlement Tomorrow, the various men who sell “porn” to Emily, and the black men in Terre Haute, figure as potentially sexually invasive and threatening. The protagonist’s state of “alone-

ness,” and her continuous move away from marriage figure as the preconditions for the threatening nature of male sexuality.

Also, while the traditional picaresque often ends with the protagonist entering into marriage and middle class life, which is also the case in most women’s novels of the 1970s, in a reversal of the typical scenario, Roiphe’s picaresque ends her narrative one hour before meeting her divorce lawyer. *Long Division* ends, rather disconcertingly, with the words “I had been cheated again” (190). Ostensibly a comment on a final attempt to buy erotic pictures, this is also a summing up of Emily’s failure to take responsibility for her own life, and for her own sexuality—the various passages where male “tricksters” offer her fake pornographic imagery underscore her wish to transgress conventional sexual boundaries, but also her continued reliance on men to define (her) sexuality. The protagonist’s adventures and discoveries, which seemingly bring the plot forward, are clearly paralleled by a status quo, or circularity, which adds ambiguity to the theme of liberation, and perhaps even speaks against female liberation as a viable possibility.

As Janis Stout observes, “[f]rom its inception, the American literary tradition has been characterized to a remarkable and peculiar degree, by narratives and images of journeys. It has been the literature of movement, of motion, its great icons the track through the forest and the superhighway” (3). However, unlike Twain’s Huck Finn and the pro-



tagonists of Kerouac's *On the Road*—the two examples most frequently used to exemplify the American picaresque<sup>11</sup>—Roiphe's Emily does not experience motion as unlimited freedom.<sup>12</sup> As has been pointed out, the male bonding portrayed in Kerouac's novel rests upon the othering of women.<sup>13</sup> Although it can be argued that Roiphe's protagonist views men as "others" she does not herself, as a consequence, inhabit a stable selfhood that is built upon the degradation of such others. Rather than feeling in control of her own destiny, then, she perceives power as external to herself, and perceives herself as a victim. Instead of taking unproblematic pleasure in her freedom of movement, she experiences repetitive instances of restriction, threats, and imposed control. Stout further argues that:

Resort to the picaresque mode is a strategy for maintaining the openness and affirmation of comedy despite a vision of the modern world as a society inimical to individuality and freedom. The drifting hero, outside the rewards of a highly structured society but also outside its demands, is less subject to repressive control than his, or her, more clearly defined and purposive brother and is therefore more at liberty to shape her, or his, own reality. (231)

However, Roiphe's text stresses the ways in which her protagonist is, indeed, subject to the "repressive control" of society, for although she feels that she moves on its margins, she constantly confronts institutions such as the family and the law in ways that serve to re-instate her

within the bounds of society's values. What the novel seems to suggest is that the protagonist's lack of a firm sense of her self (her place, her voice, and her own desire) precludes a liberating sense of possibility, and a voluntary "taking on" of shifting identities. Instead, the roles she plays are imposed upon her by her "many masters." According to Guillen, "the 'unfortunate traveller' soon learns that there is no material survival outside of society, and no real refuge—no pastoral paradise—beyond it. *Social role playing is as ludicrous as it is indispensable*" (80, emphasis added).<sup>14</sup> Although her journey may be liberating in some sense, it also presents the picaresque, again and again, with the brutal realization that she will have difficulties establishing an identity beyond given cultural roles.

Although often incorporating an element of social satire and a critique of bourgeois values, the picaresque genre is at bottom a conservative genre, in that its protagonist tends to finally "settle" in order, marriage, a place with(in), rather than against or completely outside of, society. Thus, the genre often finally confirms the bourgeois values it first set out to satirize, and rests upon a political status quo. The American road novel, meanwhile, even if it is now familiar enough to seem "cemented" in its oppositional stance, is to a much greater extent charged with meanings of freedom from society, unboundedness, and rebellion. Indeed, in Roiphe's text, the protagonist's feelings of otherness link her to the road narrative as much as to the picaresque

genre. In the words of Delia Falconer, in the American “road” narrative “the hero’s excursions are not regarded as legal” for “[s/he is] already judged other” (49), that is, the journey involves social and sometimes also legal transgression, *enabled* by the protagonist’s status as other.

Falconer further emphasizes that American road narratives “privilege multiplicity” over the “immanent” (52) and describe a “certain relinquishment of subjectivity,” for, she argues, “the hero of the road text embraces ‘difference’ at the cost of recognizing that he or she is in Haraway’s words multiple, without clear boundary, frayed, insubstantial” (53). To Falconer, fragmentation of the self carries positive meaning—fragmentation becomes a possibility, is enabling.<sup>15</sup> However, in the context of the female picaresque, the sense of an insubstantial or fragmented self is represented rather as disempowering, and leads to feelings of victimization. Thus, although certain links can be drawn between female picaresque and the tradition of American “road texts,” there is a much more ambiguous element to the selflessness of the protagonist in the redefined picaresque/road text.<sup>16</sup>

Evidently, while most of the criteria Guillen enumerates are applicable to Roiphe’s novel, they are applicable with a twist—for here, the picaresque mode is used above all as a vehicle for questioning traditional assumptions concerning gender and sexuality. The female-authored picaresque describes a geographical journey that is linked to sexual discoveries and experien-

ces in connection with encounters with a variety of masculinities, through which the protagonist’s perception of her own “femininity” must also be questioned. However, it must also be noted that contrary to the traditional picaro, who according to Chandler is “nationless,” transcends national boundaries, and fits equally well or equally poorly in various geographical spaces, the picara in American women’s novels is firmly situated in American culture. Often, the American landscape, its highways and cities, is the setting for her narrative, but even when it is not, as in *Fear of Flying*, the protagonist is primarily struggling with what it means to be a woman in American culture, with American models and ideals of gendered behavior, with an American version of heterosexuality and family. Thus, sexuality and gender intersect with nationality and cultural specificity to create the distinctive form of the female-authored picaresque of the 1970s.

A crucial question is whether a female (feminist) writer “freely [can] adopt a form and adapt it for her own use without in some way expressing a point of view that is inherently patriarchal?”<sup>17</sup> It seems obvious that all forms of artistic expression shaped within patriarchal culture must somehow be influenced by the ideologies of that culture. I hope to have demonstrated that the appropriation of a traditionally “male” literary genre by female authors is not unproblematically subversive. Although such appropriation makes possible representations of protagonists who are mobile, active, and sexually diverse, as well as

the positioning of masculinities as objects, or instruments, in the exploration of female subjectivity and sexuality, the female picaresque in the 1970s is also marked by (sexual) victimization, uncertainty, guilt, and otherness.

Gendered genre appropriation is thus not unproblematic; it presents us with certain irreconcilabilities, as in the case of uncertain or multiple identities, and with some effects that are negative, or at least ambiguous. The 1970s woman's novel clearly stresses that gender revolutions are not easily accomplished. The unresolved tension between the typical protagonist's hope for change and a new life, and the cultural restrictions to which she is subject, signals very clearly an awareness of the boundaries to "freedom" set up in gendered American culture. There is also an obvious ambivalence in, on the one hand the possibility the journey represents, and on the other the impossibility of living independence, or, to speak with Janis Stout, there is "a disparity between infinite hope and limited or marred actuality" (9). Such observations must make us wary of readings of the female travel narrative as necessarily a "celebratory" literary practice. According to Stout, in American literature "the quest is primarily a journey toward, a journey of aspiration rather than rejection, presenting a lone hero and solitary endeavor in an aura of fierce celebration" (89). This line of thought is picked up in many studies on women and the trope of the journey, which results in readings of female journeys as unambiguously positively charged, a picture of

female journey narratives that obviously needs to be problematized further.<sup>18</sup>

At this point several questions beg for attention. In the American (literary) context, how important, or rather, how subversive, or otherwise ideologically significant/effective is female genre appropriation? And where does the female picaresque go after the 1970s? Is the movie *Thelma and Louise*, for example, a natural extension of the female picaresque genre in the 1990s? The journey motif and the placing of men seem to speak for such a reading, but the linear (rather than circular) narrative pattern, the tragic element, and the final closure speak against it. Indeed, if the picaresque genre is supposed to produce a sexually "free" woman protagonist, where can such a woman go in the 1980s and 1990s, a time marked by AIDS, new conservatism, and feminist "backlash"? Perhaps, in more recent narratives, the picaresque elements recede, while "road" elements stay in the picture? And what are the roles of men in more recent fictions of female journeying? Do men "disappear" from such fictions? Clearly, a too-easy equation of mobility with freedom, of transportation with liberation, disregards long-standing (literary) traditions of linking female "freedom" and transgression with experiences of guilt and otherness.

Finally, then, we come to the question whether female appropriation of picaresque and road narrative is a subversive act? It is perhaps not very productive for feminist/gender theorists to always be thinking in terms of subversion. We

need perhaps to think rather in terms of transposition and transplantation, and focus more on the destabilizing potential of fictional representations of gender/culture, than on revolutionary results or total revisions of gender. The female-authored picaresque typically does not offer utopian re-formations of gender, but through its ambivalent treatment of gendered issues it opens up questions concerning gender, mobility, and change that are still valid today—although not necessarily subversive, it can fulfill emancipatory functions.

## Bibliography

- Adams, Percy G. *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1983.
- Alter, Robert. *Rogue's Progress: Studies in the Picaresque Novel*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1964.
- Alther, Lisa. *Kinflicks*. New York: Knopf, 1976.
- Babcock, Barbara A. "Liberty's a Whore: Inversions, Marginalia, and Picaresque Narrative." *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*. Ed. B. A. Babcock. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978.
- Braendlin, Bonnie Hoover. "New Directions in the Contemporary Bildungsroman: Lisa Alther's *Kinflicks*." *Women and Literature*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980. 160–171.
- Butler, Robert J. "The Woman Writer as American Picaro: Open Journeying in Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*." *The Centennial Review* 31 (1987): 308–329.
- Chandler, Frank Wadleigh. *Romances of Roguery*. New York: Macmillan, 1899.
- Enevold, Jessica. "Men and Women on the Move: Dramas of the Road." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 3 (2000): 403–420.
- Falconer, Delia. "Just Sick Enough to Be Totally Confident: Can American Road Novels and Films Find Time for Apocalypse?" *Antithesis* 6:1 (1992): 43–54.
- Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. New York: Stein and Day, 1966.
- Frederick, Bonnie and Susan H. McLeod, eds. *Women and the Journey: The Female Travel Experience*. Pullman: Washington U P, 1993.
- Fromkorth, Birgit. "Lisa Alther's *Kinflicks*." *Women's Studies and Literature: Neun Beiträge der Erlangen*. Eds. Fritz Fleischmann and Deborah Lucas Schneider. Erlangen: Palm and Enke, 1987.
- Guillen, Claudio. "Toward a Definition of the Picaresque." *Toward a Theory of Literary History*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971. 71–106.
- Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*. Eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. New York: Longman, 1998. 696–727.
- Heller, Dana A. *The Feminization of Quest-Romance: Radical Departures*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1990.
- Hogeland, Lisa Maria. *Feminism and Its Fictions: The Consciousness-raising Novel and the Women's Liberation Movement*. Philadelphia: U of Penn-sylvania P, 1998.
- Jong, Erica. *Fear of Flying*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1973.

- Lauret, Maria. *Liberating Literature: Feminist Fiction in America*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Mandrell, James. "Questions of Genre and Gender: Contemporary American Versions of the Feminine Picaresque." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 20 (1987): 149–170.
- Novak, Maximilian E. "Gulliver's Travels and the Picaresque Voyage: Some Reflections on the Hazards of Genre Criticism." *The Genres of Gulliver's Travels*. Ed. Frederik N. Smith. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1990. 23–38.
- Parker, Alexander A. *Literature and the Delinquent: the Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe 1599–1753*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1967.
- Roiphe, Anne. *Long Division*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.
- Rose, Ellen Cronan. "American Feminist Criticism of Contemporary Women's Fiction." *SIGNS* 18:2 (1993): 346–375.
- Stout, Janis P. *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures*. Westport, CONN: Greenwood, 1983.
- Templin, Charlotte. *Feminism and the Politics of Literary Reputation: The Example of Erica Jong*. Lawrence KAN: UP of Kansas, 1995.
- Tucker, Lindsey. *Textual Escap(e)ades: Mobility, Maternity, and Textuality in Contemporary Fiction by Women*. London: Greenwood, 1994.
- Wahlström, Helena. *Husbands, Lovers, and Dreamlovers: Masculinity and Female Desire in Women's Novels of the 1970s*. Diss. Uppsala 1997 (as Helen Eriksson). Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1997.
- Welles, Marcia L. "The Picara: Towards Female Autonomy, or the Vanity of Virtue." *Romance Quarterly* 33 (1986): 63–70.
- Wesley, Marilyn. C. *Secret Journeys: The Trope of Women's Travel in American Literature*. Albany: State University of New York P, 1999.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> My own study *Husbands, Lovers and Dreamlovers: Masculinity and Desire in Women's Novels of the 1970s* (1997) is also part of this trend.
- <sup>2</sup> An early example of this is of course *Don Quixote*. For discussions of the traditions of the picaresque genre, see Robert Alter, *Rogue's Progress: Studies in the Picaresque Novel*, and Alexander A Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent: The Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe 1599–1753*.
- <sup>3</sup> One exception to the rule of male-centeredness is Marcia Welles' "The *Picara*: Towards Female Autonomy, or the Vanity of Virtue." Welles notes the many instances of female picaras in the (male-authored) Spanish literature of the 17th century, stating that "[t]here is no doubt that the *picara* has a past [...]. There is, however, considerable doubt about her future—the heroines are considered examples of the [...] general 'Decline of the Spanish Novel' that afflicted the seventeenth century" (63). Welles thus emphasizes the role of twentieth century critics in disclaiming the female picara.
- <sup>4</sup> See esp. Guillen and Novak, but also Alter, Chandler, Parker, Stout, and Welles.
- <sup>5</sup> I use the term "women's novels" interchangeably

with liberation novels here. Although there are obvious problems with a term like “women’s novels,” it is still useful in that it encompasses the assumed female reader, the female author, and the female protagonist.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Anne Roiphe, *Up the Sandbox!* (1971), Gail Godwin, *Glass People* (1972), Helen Yglesias, *How She Died* (1972), Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying* (1973), Jacqueline Susann, *Once Is Not Enough* (1973), Lisa Alther, *Kinflicks* (1976), and Gael Greene, *Blue Skies, No Candy* (1976).

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, Marcia Welles notes that the female picares of the 17th century, despite their promiscuity, “suffer neither banishment nor death, and although they do marry, their marriages are seriatim [...]. Marriage, then, is not a closure, [and] the matrimonial solution proves to be unsatisfactory [...] because husbands are found to be wanting” (67). It turns out, then, that the freedom of the 1970s mobile woman protagonist has her precedent 300 years back. The tradition of the 19th century novel, with protagonists who typically die for being too “free,” epitomized by Kate Chopin’s Edna Pontellier, is forcefully replaced only in the late 20th century by protagonists who live to tell their tales.

<sup>8</sup> *Kinflicks* has been defined as a picaresque in critical articles (Fromkorth 1987, Braendlin 1980), and *Fear of Flying* has also been discussed in terms of picaresque (Butler 1987). However, these critics soon lose sight of the picaresque problematic. As yet, there is no extensive study of these and other women’s novels of the 1970s as picaresque texts.

<sup>9</sup> For a full-length study of American road narrative, and

its links to the picaresque genre, see e. g. Stout. While Stout notes that “[American novelists] have turned insistently to the old and in a sense primitive mode of the picaresque, with its relative looseness of structure and its openness to the unconventional hero, the hero as outsider or ‘rogue’” (229), she focuses on male authors in her illustrations of such an American tradition.

<sup>10</sup> The corporeal, even the abject, also appears in a scene in a gas station (33), where the fantastic and mythical “sign of the flying horse—a red Pegasus” is contrasted both by the imagined sordid sexuality of the young male attendant, and by the restroom Emily visits, the “overpowering” smell of which speaks of “stale blood, rancid urine, and the scent of a bad deodorant or hairspray [...] a trace of sweat of a body on a toilet seat” (33). The abject also surfaces when the protagonist offers to handle dirty diapers in a laundromat at the Indian reservation (122).

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Fiedler.

<sup>12</sup> It is clear that Roiphe plays on Kerouac’s modern classic, for example in various short references, like the one to “Mexican whores” (Roiphe 190), but also in that her novel opens with positioning the protagonist in motion away from marriage, as well as in the overall thematic focus on mobility, sexuality, and the notion of freedom.

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. Enevold.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, but from a firmly feminist viewpoint, Dana Heller notes that “[r]eading women’s quest-romances, one discovers the limitations that both men and women have had to face in the transformation of normative dialogic structures” (120).

- <sup>15</sup> Falconer echoes the diction and ideas of Donna Haraway, for whom, as for the beats in Falconer's reading, fragmentation in the context of identity is positive. (See Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century.")
- <sup>16</sup> Another obvious difference in Roiphe's text from both the traditional picaresque and the American road novel is the "sidekick" element, which I have chosen not to go into here.
- <sup>17</sup> James Mandrell, "Questions of Genre and Gender: Contemporary American Versions of the Feminine Picaresque" (149). Enevold also asks the question whether "a regendering of the road traveller is at all possible, given the weight of the genre's heavily gendered past" (405).
- <sup>18</sup> For an example of such "celebratory" reading, see Frederick, Bonnie and Susan H. McLeod, eds. *Women and the Journey*. See also Tucker and Wesley.





Part 3  
The Production of Literary History



Ann Öhrberg

## Att skriva kvinnolitteraturhistoria

Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht (1718–1763) var en av det svenska 1700-talets mest framgångsrika författare. Det är kanske inte vanligt att se henne som en föregångare när det gäller att skriva kvinnohistoria, men utan tvivel måste hon räknas hit. I sin berömda emancipatoriska lärodikt *Fruentimrets Försvar* (1761) uppmanar diktajaget den franske filosofen Jean-Jacques Rousseau, som dikten är adresserad till, att i "fordna världen vanka". Historien, "alla tiders bok", ska bevisa att kvinnor är kapabla att tänka och har den känslans och kärlekens eld som gör det möjligt för dem att utträta stordåd (57). Därefter följer en lång uppräkningslista av berömda kvinnor, från antiken fram till Nordenflychts egen tid. Att skriva in kvinnor i historien var för Nordenflycht en viktig angeläget, eftersom hon insåg projektets emancipatoriska potential.

I denna uppsats vill jag ta upp några av de principiella och övergripande problem man ställs inför när man idag skriver kvinnors litteraturhistoria. Men jag vill också lyfta fram de möjligheter som öppnas med ett sådant perspektiv

med utgångspunkt från min avhandling (*Vittra fruntimmer. Författarroll och retorik hos frihetstidens kvinnliga författare*) och i viss mån från mitt för närvarande pågående projekt, "Kön, makt och retorik inom 1700-talets svenska herrnhustism".

*Fruentimrets Försvar* skrevs som ett svar till Jean-Jacques Rousseau, vilken i sin skrift *Lettre à d'Alembert* (1758) gör misogynna utfall mot de kvinnor som verkar i det offentliga. I skriften hävdar han att kvinnor varken kan älska eller åstadkomma konstnärliga och intellektuella verk av värde (se särskilt hans berömda fotnot, 193). Nordenflychts argumentation är varierad: hon angriper Rousseaus resonemang från olika synvinklar. Ett av hennes huvudargument är att hon helt enkelt räknar upp exempel på att Rousseau har fel och dikten innehåller därför en diger kvinnokatalog eller ett gynæceum. Eftersom Nordenflycht väl kände till den klassiska retoriken, och därtill var en skicklig retoriker, visste hon att detta var effektivt. Redan i äldre retorikteori, som hos Aristoteles, rankas exempel (så kallade *exempla*) som slag-

kraftiga argument (kap. 2:20). Det här var inte heller ett nytt grepp i liknande sammanhang, utan hade använts sedan medeltiden av dem som ville visa upp kvinnliga föredömen, till exempel Christine de Pisan, Leonora Christine Ulfeldt, Ludvid Holberg, med flera (för den nordiska gynæceitraditionen se Alenius). Som nämndes ovan har Nordenflycht, liksom många av sina föregångare, ett radikalt emancipatoriskt syfte.

Från gynæceitraditionen går en rak linje in i 1800-talets kvinnohistorieskrivning. En källa för information om kvinnliga författare under äldre tid är de bägge kvinnohistoriska pionjerna Sigrid Leijonhufvud och Sigrid Brithellis biobibliografi över svenska kvinnliga författare, *Kvinnan inom Svenska Litteraturen intill år 1893* (1893). Den här inventeringen blev i sin tur en viktig startpunkt för mitt eget avhandlingsprojekt.

Under senare år har dock den form av litteraturhistorieskrivningar som fokuserar kvinnor ofta kritiserats, inte minst när det gäller framställningar i översiktsverk. Andra försvarar denna typ av projekt.<sup>1</sup> Problemen med att skriva kvinnors historia separerad från mäns kan också synas vara många. De två huvudsakliga problemen med denna typ av historieskrivning är enligt min mening för det första att den bekräftar en del av den logik som enligt Yvonne Hirdman kännetecknar genussystemet: dikotomiseringen, det vill säga att manligt och kvinnligt hålls isär (Hirdman). I värsta fall kan den andra av genussystemets logiker dessutom aktiveras: hierarkiseringen, det vill säga kvinnohistoria (och kvinnohistoriska forskare) värderas lägre än

den så kallade 'allmänna' historieskrivningen. Det andra huvudproblemet är att det visserligen skapas en berättelse där kvinnor lyfts fram ur historiens glömska, men där nya hierarkier skapas då andra grupper och kulturella fenomen osynliggörs. De senare årens forskning och debatt visar att detta problem måste tas på allvar. "Att reducera makten till ensidiga kategorier gör oss blinda för samspelet mellan olika former för över- och underordning." Så skriver Paulina de los Reyes, Irene Molina och Diana Mulinari i introduktionen till *Maktens (o)lika förklådnader*, som också framhåller att detta inte bara är en följd av feminismens "svårighet att förhålla sig till etnicitet (och klass)", utan också har att göra med en alltför oproblematisksyn på makt (22). Nya exkluderingsmekanismer kan följaktligen aktiveras när enbart kön sätts i fokus. "När genus definieras inom svenskheten (eller vitheten) och jämställdhet görs till en arena för kategoriseringar på basis av etniciteten, undrar jag om kvinno- och genusforskningen har fastnat i samma fälla som den dominerande mansforskningen; den att vara normbildande och att etablera normen som vit och svensk. Ur detta perspektiv är svenskheten varken neutral eller 'naturlig' utan uttryck för en position inom en maktstruktur" (de los Reyes 44). Här kan man förstås göra listan längre: när genus definieras enbart inom heterosexualiteten, utifrån friska kroppar, vuxna i produktiv ålder etcetera.

Förutom de principiellt viktiga frågor som ringades in ovan behöver man dessutom ta ställning till en rad andra. När det gäller undersökningar,

eller historieskrivningar, som spänner över längre tidsrymder kan risken bli att en kvinnlig tradition överbetonas, där historiens komplexitet förloras ur sikte. Med enbart kvinnliga aktörer som studieobjekt kan bilden bli endimensionell om konstruktioner av manlighet inte tas med. Inom litteraturvetenskapen kan speciella problem uppstå som hänger samman med synen på det estetiska.

Virginia Woolfs nedvärdering av kvinnliga föregångare är välbekant och den görs på estetiska grunder. I den kända essän *A Room of One's Own* presenterar hon sitt eget gynæceum. Med utgångspunkt från de kvinnliga författarnas villkor målar hon upp en trovärdig bild av fruktlös kamp – med magert resultat. Kvinnliga författare har hela tiden tvingats försvara sig istället för att koncentrera sig på själva saken: att skriva.

One has only to skim those old forgotten novels [böcker skrivna av kvinnor] and listen to the tone of voice in which they are written to divine that the writer was meeting criticism; she was saying this by way of aggression, or that by way of conciliation. [...] It does not matter which it was; she was thinking of something other than the thing itself. Down comes her book upon our heads. There was a flaw in the centre of it. And I thought of all the women's novels that lie scattered, like small pockmarked apples in an orchard, about the second-hand book shops of London. It was the flaw in the centre that had rotted them. (75)

En estetiskt godtagbar kvinnolitteraturhistoria finns inte ännu, utan den vilar som en möjlighet i framtiden hos Woolf. Kvinnan måste skriva sig in i

kanon, vars estetiska fundament hon egentligen aldrig ifrågasätter. Att skriva den kvinnliga litteraturhistorien åligger därför de kvinnliga författarna – inte forskarna. Men när kvinnliga författare väl nått upp till Woolfs kvalitativt satta ribba kommer något att hända. Essän slutar med en vision där den framtida litteraturen, bortom det manliga och det kvinnliga, målas upp.

Vi ser hur den romantiska synen på (skön)litteraturen lever vidare in i modernismen och detta synsätt är till viss del giltigt även i våra dagar, vill jag hävda. Inte sällan har feministiska litteraturvetare, likt Woolf, enbart koncentrerat sig på (till synes universella) estetiska verkningsmekanismer när det diskuterat kvinnliga författares verk. En lättförklarlig strategi inom ett fält som ursprungligen konstituerats och legitimerats genom den romantiska tanken på litteraturen som ett primärt estetiskt objekt och litteraturvetaren som uttolkare av detta objekt. Hayden White konstaterar, i samband med att han diskuterar universitetens undervisning i så kallad "creative writing": "The term *literature* inhabits the semantic field constituted by the nineteenth-century ideology of aestheticism, one effect of which has been to so mystify art in general and literary art in particular as to render the idea of teaching students how to produce them virtually inconceivable" (22). Det är enligt min mening alltså inte enbart de metoder vi använder och de teorier vi lutar oss emot som är viktiga att skärskåda, utan också vilka objekt vi väljer att forska på och inte minst hur vi förhåller oss till vår egen disciplins historia.

Liksom många andra forskare menar jag dock att en del av de risker jag målade upp ovan går att undvika. Att man sätter kategorin Kvinna eller kvinnlighet i centrum för intresset behöver inte med nödvändighet innebära att andra faktorer exkluderas. Snarare kan en användning av maktproblematiserande genusteori och feministisk teori göra att vaksamheten skärps när det gäller att bli varse andra maktgenererande mekanismer än kön; det vill säga hur konstruktioner av kön alltid sker i intrikata samspel med andra element (jfr t.ex. Nordin Hennel, 14). Därtill kan vi konstatera att det finns nog så goda skäl att skriva om kvinnliga författare. Det återstår nämligen en hel del att göra. Kunskapen om kvinnliga författare, särskilt under äldre tider, är fortfarande otillräcklig och förhållandevis lite resurser läggs ned på denna typ av projekt (Nordenstam). Litteraturhistorieskrivning som tar upp kvinnliga författarskap borde därför vara en angelägen uppgift.

Sist men inte minst kan man framhålla att en hel del händer ur både epistemologisk synvinkel och maktaspekt när marginaliserade grupper sätts i centrum för intresset. I sin undersökning om den kubanska religiösa tänkaren från 1700-talet, Cecilia Rodríguez, frågar sig till exempel idéhistorikern Edda Manga: "vad händer om man skriver om någon man annars skulle tendera att betrakta som passiv mottagare av idéer, som om denne ingick i kanon?" (11). I sig innebär detta projekt en utmaning av kanon och de mekanismer som format den, menar Manga

(12). Den feministiska historikern Joan Wallach Scott hävdar att kunskap inte kan ses som ideologiskt ren, eller objektiv och oskyldig. I sitt programmatiska verk *Gender and the Politics of History* tar Scott sin utgångspunkt i Michel Foucaults resonemang om den nära förbindelsen mellan *pouvoir/savoir* (makt/kunskap), och placerar detta begreppspar i fokus när hon diskuterar produktionen av kön.

Gender [...] means knowledge about sexual difference. [...] Such knowledge is not absolute or true, but always relative. It is produced in complex ways within large epistemic frames that themselves have an (at least quasi-) autonomous history. Its uses and meanings become contested politically and are the means by which relationships of power – of domination and subordination – are constructed. (*Gender 2*)

Med hjälp av Scotts syn på förbindelsen mellan kunskap, makt och kön samt citatet av Manga vill jag lyfta fram det som enligt min mening är kärnan i det kvinnolitteraturhistoriska projektet: den utopiska dimensionen. Och med detta är vi åter hos Nordenflycht och Woolf. Det finns, som jag nämnde ovan, såväl en argumentativ och ideologisk som en utopisk potential i kvinno(litteratur)historieskrivning. Historieskrivning är alltid "a heuristic activity, history writing orders the past in relation to the needs of the present and future", som Susan Stanford Friedman formulerar det (12 f.).

Scott varnar dock för att den feministiskt utopiska potentialen inte aktiveras med automa-

tik, även om man anlägger ett genusteoretiskt perspektiv när man skriver "gender history". Själva begreppet "gender" kan rentav vara kontraproduktivt ur feministiskt synvinkel: "Whereas the term 'women's history' proclaims its politics by asserting [...] that women are valid historical subjects, 'gender' includes, but does not name women, and so seems to pose no critical threat" (*Gender* 31). Om vi tolkar Scott här gäller det alltså att ständigt vara vaksam mot att benämningar och begrepp kan förlora sin politiska sprängkraft, men också att den subversiva energin i benämningen Kvinna inte ska underskattas.

I sin undersökning om franska feminismens historia, *Only Paradoxes to Offer. French Feminists and the Rights of Man* återvänder Scott till frågan om feminismens historiesyn. Här betonar hon att den politiska feminismen har en paradoxal dimension. Å ena sidan måste man för att kunna kämpa för kvinnor beskriva Kvinnan. Projektet i sig identifierar kvinnan som det andra könet och bekräftar därmed dikotomiseringen mellan könen. Å den andra sidan kan bruket av paradoxer innebära att en härskande ordning eller föreställning ifrågasätts. Scott påpekar hur redan en av 1700-talets feministiska föregångare, Olympe de Gouges, var medveten om dynamiken som ligger förborgad i denna paradox (*Only Paradoxes* 3 ff.). Effektiviteten i paradoxen som retoriskt verkningsmedel är välkänd. Det är därför ingen slump att Jean-Jacques Rousseau, eller varför inte hans sentida kollega Judith Butler, excellerar i paradoxer. Med hjälp av para-

doxen kan man bokstavligen gå mot ordningen, den dominerande uppfattningen inom ett område (doxan), det vill säga *para doxa* (*Scott Only Paradoxes* 4. Jfr Fjelkestam 29 f. För begreppet doxa se Rosengren 68–77). Samma paradox präglar den akademiska feministiska historiekritikens vill jag hävda.

Som framgår ovan vill jag dock här framhålla den produktiva aspekten av detta paradoxala projekt. Men en sak är utopier och teori, en annan hur man omsätter något i praktiken. För att försöka konkretisera vill jag därför beskriva hur jag själv valt att arbeta och lite om mina resultat. Först tas exempel från avhandlingen upp, därefter kommer en kortare exemplifiering från mitt nuvarande projekt.

Vilka typer av handfasta frågor kan man ställas inför när man skriver om kvinnliga författare under äldre tid? Ett första problem – eller en utmaning – är ofta att så lite är gjort. När det gällde avhandlingsarbetet blev mitt allra första val därför att göra någon form av breddundersökning; helt enkelt för att ha en plattform att stå på. En viktig fråga rörde urvalsprinciperna. Vilka författare skulle tas med? Till att börja med gällde det publiceringsformen. Skulle även de som publicerat sig i handskrift tas upp, eller enbart de som gick i tryck? De förstnämnda skrifterna är svårtillgängliga och göms i arkiv och forskningsbibliotek. Därtill kommer att kvinnor generellt sett är svårare att spåra på grund av de patriarkala arkiveringsprinciper som ofta tillämpas (jfr Malmström). Av arbetsekonomiska skäl följde jag Leijonhufvud och Brithelli i

spåren, det vill säga valet blev att arbeta enbart med tryckt litteratur. Dessutom var jag, likt dessa, inte selektiv i inledningsstadiet. Ambitionen för Leijonhufvud och Brithelli var att ha med så många kvinnliga författare som möjligt av de författare som gått i tryck, oavsett hur mycket eller vad de skrivit.

I avhandlingens primärmaterial ingår de drygt 140 kvinnliga författare som gick i tryck mellan åren 1720–1772, den så kallade frihetstiden. En generös definition av begreppet litteratur gör att sådant tas med som idag inte betraktas som skönlitteratur, till exempel handböcker och politiska skrifter. De texter som analyseras närmare utgörs dock enbart av det Stina Hansson benämner "konstlitteratur". Konstlitteraturen innefattar "i princip [...] alla de texter som utformades med 'konst' – den slags konstfärdighet som lärdes ut av den klassiska retoriken" (3). I avhandlingen arbetar jag med litteratursociologisk metodik och retoriska analyser av texter, där diskussioner av sociala förhållanden paras med textanalys. En viktig fråga är vilken *funktion* olika texter har ur såväl retorisk som könsmässig aspekt. Fokus ligger på två typer av konstlitteratur och författare. För det första behandlas så kallad tillfälleslitteratur, det vill säga den litteratur som skrevs för speciella tillfällen som begravningar och bröllop. Tillfälleslitteraturen utgör den allra största delen av all konstlitteratur från 1600–1700-talet och den dominerar också bland den tryckta litteratur som producerades av kvinnliga författare. För det andra tas

politiska skrifter upp, dels allmänpolitiska, dels kvinnopolitiska. Genom dessa texter blir det tydligt vilka retoriska strategier som kvinnliga författare använde inom den politiska offentligheten, vilken var manligt definierad och dominerad vid denna tid. Därtill är det av intresse vilka frågor de sätter på dagordningen.

Frihetstida kvinnliga författare skrev alltså även annat, som handböcker (kokböcker och dylikt) och religiösa texter av olika slag. Det som vi idag oftast betraktar som kvalificerad skönlitteratur är dock sällsynt. Detta är den kanske viktigaste orsaken till att svenska kvinnliga författare från 1700-talet inte inlemmats i kanon. Undantaget från detta är Nordenflycht. Över hälften av hennes produktion består visserligen av tillfälleslitteratur, men hon var dessutom den enda kvinnliga författaren i sin samtid som skrev texter i det som brukar betraktas som högre litterära genrer, till exempel versepik, dramatik och lyrik. Föga förvånande tillhör Nordenflycht de ytterst få kvinnliga författare från 1700-talet som inlemmats i kanon. Hur hon sedan beskrivs i de litteraturhistoriska handböckerna är en annan och sorgligare historia. Nordenflycht utgör ett paradexempel på hur kvinnliga författare, när de väl tas upp, misshandlas i litteraturhistorieskrivningen.<sup>2</sup>

Vanligtvis finns en bredd i författarskap under äldre tid. Även därför kan det vara befogat med generösa urvalskriterier. Ett bra exempel på detta är Charlotta Frölich (1698–1770) som var frihetstidens mest produktiva kvinnliga författare till tryckta skrifter näst efter Nordenflycht. Frölich



verkade till stor del i Uppsala och var gift med den dåtida landshövdingen i Uppsala, Johan Funck. Idag är hon glömd, men hon var en uppskattad författare på sin tid. Liksom många av sina författarkollegor var hon en flitig tillfällesförfattare, dessutom skrev hon en historiebok för "gemene man", en andaktsbok och politisk dikt. Frölich är också en kvinnlig pionjär när det gäller vetenskapligt skrivande; hon är den första kvinna som fick sina alster tryckta i Vetenskapsakademiens *Handlingar* (tre uppsatser mellan åren 1741–42). Därtill återfanns en handskriven bok, vilken innehåller diverse dikter och hennes versifierade levnadsbeskrivning.<sup>3</sup>

Charlotta Frölich producerade en jämn ström av skrifter, de flesta var tillfälleskrifter riktade till Uppsalas övre sociala skikt. Alla kännetecknas av hennes ganska karakteristiska stil; hon var ingen yvig retoriker, men en skicklig sådan. Detta är också giltigt när det gäller många av hennes samtida kvinnliga kollegor. Frölich axlade dessutom med sin tillfällesdiktning en representativ roll i landshövdingshushållet då så fordrades. Även hennes make Johan Funck var tillfällesdiktare, men hans produktion minskade efter giftermålet. Det verkar som om Frölich tog över denna uppgift. Liksom för många av hennes kvinnliga kollegor sammanfaller Frölichs litterära produktion till stor del med den tid hon var gift. Det här visar att svängrummet inte alltid minskade för att kvinnor gifte sig. Tvärtom var det så att många kvinnliga författare, likt Charlotta Frölich, representerade sitt hushåll med sin diktning.

Detta är ytterst vanligt bland de kvinnliga tillfällesförfattarna, men är giltigt också för de kvinnliga författare som skrev allmänpolitiska texter. De uttrycker inte bara personliga åsikter, utan deras skriftställningar visar hur de agerade å familjens och släktens vägnar. Kvinnliga författare producerade alltså litteratur till stor del för och inom sina sociala nätverk (Öhrberg *Vittra fruntimmer*, 89 ff.). Nätverkens betydelse under 1700-talet kan knappast överskattas. Ur könsaspekt är det därför väsentligt att lyfta fram hur kvinnliga författare genom sin litterära verksamhet deltar i den distribution och produktion av makt som sker inom ramen för olika nätverk. Exemplet Frölich visar även att en kvinnlig författares position inte enbart kan bestämmas utifrån kategorin kön, utan bör diskuteras lika mycket utifrån social tillhörighet och civilstånd.

Ett andra exempel kan nämnas för att lyfta fram hur viktig den sociala positionen var för författare under denna tid, men också för att exemplifiera de litterära tekniker och auktoriseringsstrategier som kunde användas av de kvinnor som gav sig in i den politiska offentligheten. Elisabeth Stierncrona (1714–1769) var gift med Fredrik Gyllenborg och paret tillhörde frihetstidens politiska och ekonomiska elit. Stierncrona är författare bland annat till en politisk bibelkompilatorisk skrift, det vill säga en text enbart hopsatt av bibelcitater. Skriften har titeln *En Swensks Tankar Öfwer den 22 Junii 1756* och behandlar det rojalistiska kupp-försök som avslöjades den 22 juni 1756, vilket hade för avsikt att utöka kungens maktbefogen-

heter på bekostnad av rådets (regeringens) och riksdagens.<sup>4</sup> När kuppförslöket slogs ned av rådet följde en blodig uppgörelse och många upprorsmän avrättades, även inom adeln. Gyllenborgarna tillhörde de som hade lidit politisk och ekonomisk skada om kuppen genomförts. Följaktligen var Stierncrona inte den enda att agera i släkten Gyllenborg, utan hela nätverket mobiliserades mot kungahuset.

När Elisabeth Stierncrona gav sig in i den politiska debatten hämtade hon sin textmodell från ett område som var välkänt för alla vid denna tid: den religiösa retorikens. Det är en stor mängd bibelcitater som bygger upp hennes 64-sidiga skrift, i genomsnitt har cirka 10–15 bibelställen använts per sida. Stierncrona är inte nådig när hon skriver om kuppmännen, som med hjälp av Bibeln kallas förrädarna: "Äro örnataßlare [viskar i öronen], bakdantare [talar bakom ryggen], Guds föraktare, våldswerkare, högfärdige, stälte, illfundige, okärlige, trolöse, obarmhärtige. Hwilka, äntå the Guds rättwisa weta, at the som sådant göra, äro wärde döden [...]" (18 f.). Också kungen förmanas med hjälp av Bibeln. Även furstar "äro människor" (10) och till och med "the myndige fela" (11). Mot slutet av skriften anläggs dock ett försonande tilltal och Guds välsignelse nedkallas över såväl Sveriges folk som dess konung.

Varför använde Stierncrona bibelcitater? Det finns många skäl till det. Den här typen av bibelkompilatoriska skrifter var inte så svårlästa som det kanske kan tyckas för en modern läsare. Att

komponera ihop nya texter av bibelcitater var något som förekom, inte minst inom andaktslitteraturen. Alla kunde också känna igen och avkoda religiöst utformade politiska budskap, eftersom den politiska ordningen under denna tid var genomsyrad av religiösa föreställningar. Religiösa textmodeller användes följaktligen ofta för att maskera eller förstärka politiska budskap under tidigmodern tid. Stierncrona kunde genom att stöpa sitt budskap i en religiös form söka mandat från den yttersta källan till auktorisering: Gud. Hon är bara en av många kvinnliga författare (eller profeter och visionärer) under äldre tid som använder denna strategi.

Under den religiösa täckmanteln läxar Stierncrona upp kungen och anlägger ett predikotöfall som normalt var förbehållet lärostandet, det vill säga prästerna. Det visar viss djärvhet. Kvinnan ansågs som bekant inte lämpad att tala i det offentliga vid denna tid och Stierncronas agerande ligger klart utanför de ramar som sattes för kvinnor i dåtidens samhälle. Men då måste man komma ihåg två saker. För det första utgavs skriften anonymt, för det andra skrev Stierncrona i första hand inte som kvinna, utan som gyllenborgare. Hon tillhörde eliten. Detta får åter belysa att kön inte alltid behöver vara den viktigaste konstituerande faktorn att lyfta fram när man diskuterar möjligheter till agerande på individnivå.

Men kvinnliga författare författade inte enbart texter som kan knytas till en socialt representativ kultur, eller olika nätverksintressen, utan de verkade också i egen sak. I den gruppen

hamnar de kvinnliga författare som, likt Nordenflycht, argumenterar för kvinnans rättigheter. Ett vanligt tema hos dessa författare är kvinnans möjligheter till intellektuell utveckling, ett annat pläderingen för det ömsesidiga äktenskapet eller den ömsesidiga kärleksrelationen. Här finner vi, förutom Nordenflycht en rad författare. Anna Margareta von Bragner (1702–1772), som författade en tidskrift i vilken hon pläderar för kvinnors rätt till bildning, diskuterar utrikespolitik och för fram radikala upplysningsidéer. Kokboksförfattaren Anna Maria Rückerschöld (1725–1805) skrev ett debattinlägg med krav på öppnandet av flickskolor och Catharina Ahlgren (f. 1734) startade en så kallad fruntimmertidskrift, i vilken hon tar upp relationen mellan man och kvinna (dessa författare och texter tas upp i Öhrberg *Vittra fruntimmer*, kap. III:2 och III:6). Charlotta Löfgren (1720–1784) är en av de tillfällesförfattare som använder bröllopsdiktningen för att föra fram sina åsikter om det ideala ömsesidiga äktenskapet (Öhrberg "At då jag" 54 ff. Jfr Öhrberg *Vittra fruntimmer* 150).

I mitt nuvarande projekt tar jag upp en del av de många kvinnliga författare som skrev religiösa texter inom 1700-talets väckelserörelser: främst fyra av de adliga systrarna Strömfelt (Hedvig, Ottiliana, Christina Catharina och Ulrika Eleonora), men även andra författare, till exempel Maria Boberg, Maria Christina Rydning (g. Molander) och Birgitta Malmstedt (g. Bäcklund) med flera.<sup>5</sup> De tillhörde alla den herrnhutiska rörelsen, en evangelisk väckelserörelse som nått Sverige vid 1730-talets slut. Inom den herrnhutiska offentlig-

heten kunde personer träda fram som normalt sett inte kunde ta till orda i religiösa offentliga sammanhang. Omvändelsen stod i centrum och den som var omvänd hade också rätt att tolka Ordet. Det vill säga, alla inom herrnhutismen hade rätt att uttrycka sin troserfarenhet, oavsett kön, social position, eller ålder. Och i och med det öppnades dörren för kvinnlig litterär medverkan. Därtill var herrnhutismen med grundaren Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorfs ord "ein herzenreligion", en hjärtereligion där känslan hade stor betydelse. I den aristoteliska och kristna traditionens efterföljd sågs kvinnan inom herrnhutismen som extra känslomässigt rörlig och sensibel; kvinnor kunde därmed ha lättare att uttrycka sin troserfarenhet utan förställning. Inom den herrnhutiska rörelsen finner man mycket riktigt en hög författaraktivitet bland de kvinnliga medlemmarna, både i tryck- och handskriftspublikation. Kvinnliga herrnhutare i Sverige skrev brev, religiösa sånger och så kallade levnadslopp (självbiografier).

Kvinnliga herrnhutiska sångförfattare (eller deras manliga kolleger) är föga diskuterade i tidigare forskning, trots att det handlar om ett stort antal författare och verk. Det huvudsakliga skälet är nog att de herrnhutiska sångerna överhuvudtaget har setts över axeln. Dels har de setts som stereotypa, dels har de betraktats som allt för bloddrypande, erotiskt tvivelaktiga och känslomässigt laddade. Sångförfattarna nyttjar nämligen flitigt bruds- och passionsmystiska element för att uttrycka själens förening med Gud. När man läser de herrnhutiska sångerna upptäcker man dock

snart att de bygger på en förhållandevis utvecklad teologisk tankevärld och därtill en lång religiös litterär tradition. För en genusforskare är det också intressant att notera de överskridanden som ibland görs när det gäller kön.

Exempelvis Maria Boberg (1686–1772), använder brudmetaforiken på ett kreativt sätt. I en sång som är daterad till december 1757 och ingår i en handskriven sångsamling står det följande:

1. Af ewig nåd min Gud och Far Mig skapt och skänkt mig lifwet: Och fast min rätt förderfwad war, så står det dock så skrifwet at Gud min Brudgum blifwet: mit namn för honom teknat står Salighet med hans blod och sår, ej blir det ej utskrifwet [utsuddat].

2. Mån mera skäl behöfwas kan det tro Gud är oß goder. Som felen barn så tog sig an, blef blodforwant och Broder. En qvinna blir Guds Moder som Brudgum sin sjelf föda får, och sköta I deß späda år, Ack djupa kärleksfloder.

[...]

(Maria Boberg. Sång nr 529. A578b. Kungliga biblioteket.)

Formmässigt lämnar den här sången kanske en del i övrigt att önska, men det väsentliga ur auktoriseringssynpunkt är hur Guds moder beskrivs. Genom den metonymiska manövern där namnet Maria inte nämns, utan där Guds moder istället kallas "en qvinna", blir denna centrala position tydligare kopplad till alla kvinnor. Denna kvinna/Guds moder är dessutom sin egen brudgums moder. På så sätt

betonas på flera plan kvinnlig medverkan i frälsningsprocessen. Boberg var inte unik när det gällde detta. Inom herrnhutismen finner man stundom rentav försök att tillskriva Gud kvinnligt definierade egenskaper, till exempel genom att man kallar den Heliga Ande för moder, eller genom att man beskriver Jesu vårdande, omhändertagande kvaliteter i termer av moderlighet.<sup>6</sup>

Finns då de kvinnliga författare som tagits upp här med i tidigare litteraturhistorieskrivning? Nordenflycht är, som nämndes ovan, i stort sett den enda som inlemmats i den svenska litterära kanon. Hon finns därför med i varje litteraturhistoriskt standardverk sedan 1800-talets början och diskuteras en hel del inom den litteraturvetenskapliga forskningen, rentav i monografier. De sistnämnda är emellertid i första hand skrivna ur ett biografiskt perspektiv. Den första delen av *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria* tar upp en del av de författare som nämnts här. Nordenflycht får där en grundlig belysning i ett eget avsnitt. Stierncrona nämns kort, (men desto värre anges felaktiga uppgifter om henne, se 231), likaså ett par herrnhutiska sångförfattare, varav den ena är den ovan nämnda Hedvig Strömfelt (199 ff.), samt von Bragner och Catharina Ahlgren (429–439). De två sistnämnda har dessutom till viss del uppmärksamats på senare år som en följd av presshistorieskrivning. Rückerschöld och Frölich är överhuvudtaget inte omnämnda i litteraturhistoriska översiktsverk.<sup>7</sup>

Detta aktualiserar åter en fråga, som är intimt sammanflätad med litteraturhistorieskrivning: Vilka författare ska ingå i kanon? För att kunna göra min

undersökning och få med idag marginaliserade författare breddade jag litteraturbegreppet bortom det som idag betraktas som skönlitteratur. Men risken är då att forskningen marginaliserar sig själv. I slutändan beror det förstås på de frågor vi sätter i fokus. För den som enbart vill undersöka estetiska verkningmekanismer och lyfta fram kvinnliga så kallade *minor classics* är kanske inte den litteratur jag presenterat här alltid det optimala materialet. Däremot ger det rik utdelning om man är intresserad av genushistoria och historisering av litteratur, kulturella representationer av kön, konstituering av kön på aktörsnivå, dåtida retorik, strategier för kvinnlig auktorisering, genusrelationer, distribution av makt, det litterära systemets uppbyggnad, bokhistoria, litteraturens betydelse inom dåtida sociala nätverk, med mera. Med Manga vill jag också hävda att det händer en hel del när man sätter dessa till synes obetydliga och marginaliserade författare i centrum för intresset. Det kan i sig ses som en dekonstruktion av kanon och ger sunda möjligheter till akademisk självreflektion. Hur ser vårt ämne ut? Vad ryms innanför dess gränser? Varför läses vissa författare och andra hänvisas in i glömskan? Hur kan vi historisera våra egna läsningar?

Slutligen kan man konstatera att om vi inte undersöker denna typ litteratur så förstår vi inte heller den kanoniserade. Och när historien skrivs om det som verkligen författades och lästes under olika perioder blir det utan tvivel en annan historia. Då kommer kvinnliga författare från alla århundraden att inta sina givna platser.

## Bibliografi

### *Handskrivet*

Maria Boberg. Sång nr 529. Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket. A578b.

### *Tryckt*

Alenius, Marianne. "Om alla slags berömvärda kvinnopersoner. Gynaeceum – en kvinnolitteraturhistoria." *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria*, del 1: *I Guds namn. 1000–1800*. Red. Elisabeth Møller Jensen m.fl. Höganäs: Wiken, 1993. 217–232.

Aristotle (Aristoteles). "*The Art of Rhetoric*." London & Cambridge Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1959.

Aurelius, Eva Hættner. *Inför lagen. Kvinnliga svenska självbiografier från Agneta Horn till Fredrika Bremer*. Litteratur Teater Film, nya serien 13. Lund: Lund University press, 1996.

Ezell, Margaret J.M. *Writing Women's Literary History*. Baltimore & London: John Hopkins. University Press, 1993.

de los Reyes, Paulina. "Det problematiska systemskapet. Om 'svenskhet' och 'invandrarskap' inom svensk genushistorisk forskning." *Maktens (o)lika förklädnader. Kön, klass & etnicitet i det postkoloniala Sverige. En festskrift till Wuokko Knocke*. Red. Paulina de los Reyes, Irene Molina & Diana Mulinari. Stockholm: Atlas, 2002. 31–48.

de los Reyes, Paulina, Irene Molina & Diana Mulinari. "Introduktion – Maktens olika förklädnader." *Maktens (o)lika förklädnader. Kön, klass & etnicitet i det postkoloniala Sverige. En festskrift till Wuokko Knocke*. Red. Paulina de los Reyes, Irene Molina & Diana Mulinari. Stockholm: Atlas, 2002. 11–30.

- Fjelkestam, Kristina. *Ungkarlsflickor, kamrathustrur och manhaftiga lesbianaer. Modernitetens litterära gestalter i mellankrigstidens Sverige*. Diss. Stockholm 2002. Stockholm/Stehag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposium, 2002.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Making History: Reflections on Feminism, Narrative and Desire." *Feminism beside itself*. Ed. Diane Elam & Robyn Wiegman. New York: Routledge, 1995. 11–53
- Hansson, Stina. *Från Hercules till Swea*. Den litterära textens förändringar. Skrifter utgivna av Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen vid Göteborgs universitet 39. Göteborg: Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen vid Göteborgs universitet, 2000.
- Hirdman, Yvonne. "Genussystemet – reflexioner kring kvinnors sociala underordning." *Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift* 3 (1988): 49–63.
- Leijonhufvud, Sigrid & Brithelli, Sigrid. *Kvinnan inom svenska litteraturen intill år 1893. En bibliografi utarbetad med anledning af världsutställningen i Chicago*. Stockholm.1893.
- Malmström, Rosa. "Bidrag till kvinnobibliografins historia i Sverige." *Nordisk tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen*. 68 (1981): 7–15.
- Manga, Edda. *Gudomliga uppenbarelser och demoniska samlag. En studie av det excentriska idéarbetet i Cecilia Rodríguez tänkande*. Göteborg: Glänta produktion, 2003.
- Nordenflycht, Hedvig Charlotta. *Samlade skrifter*. Utgivna av Hilma Borelius & Theodor Hjelmqvist. Del 3:1. Svenska författare utgivna av Svenska Vitterhets-samfundet XI. Stockholm. 1929.
- Nordenstam, Anna. "Forskning i långsam förvandling. Kvinnliga litteraturhistoriker i belysning." *Tidskrift för litteraturvetenskap*. 3–4 (1993): 76–88.
- Nordin Hennel, Ingeborg. *Mod och försakelse. Livs- och yrkesbetingelser för Konglig Theaterns skådespelerskor 1813–1863*. Stockholm: Gidlunds förlag, 1997.
- Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria*, del 1: I Guds namn. 1000–1800. Red. Elisabeth Møller Jensen m.fl. Höganäs: Wiken, 1993.
- Rosengren, Mats. *Doxologi. En essä om kunskap*. Red. Åstorp: Rhetor förlag, 2002.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *J. J. Rousseau Citoyen de Genève, A Mr. D'Alembert [...] Sur son Article Genève Dans le VIIIe Volume de l'Encyclopédie, et particulièrement sur le projet d'établir un Théâtre de Comédie en cette Ville*. Amsterdam, 1758.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- . *Only Paradoxes to Offer. French Feminists and the Rights of Man*. London & Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- [Stierncrona, Elisabeth, g. Gyllenborg]. En Swensks Tankar Öfver Den 22 junii, 1756. Stockholm, 1756.
- Todd, Janet. *Feminist Literary History. A Defence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.
- White, Hayden. "The Suppression of Rhetoric in the Nineteenth Century." *The Rhetoric Canon*. Ed. Brenda Deen Schildgen. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997. 21–31.
- Williams, Anna. *Stjärnor utan stjärnbilder. Kvinnor och kanon i litteraturhistoriska översiktsverk under 1900-talet*. Skrifter utgivna av Avdelningen för litteratur-sociologi vid Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen i

- Uppsala 35. Stockholm: Gidlunds förlag, 1997.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. 1928. London: Penguin Books, 1974.
- Öhrberg, Ann. *Vittra fruntimmer. Författarroll och retorik hos frihetstidens kvinnliga författare*. Skrifter utgivna av Avdelningen för litteratursociologi vid Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen i Uppsala 45. Diss. Uppsala 2001. Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 2001.
- . "At då jag qwinna är, jag skrifwa vill som kar'. Kön och retorik under svenskt 1700-tal." *Rhetorica Scandinavica* 27 (Sept 2003): 51–67.
- . "Uti din brudgums blod'. Kön och retorik inom svensk herrnhutism." *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift*. 3–4 (2003): 113–127.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> I det följande gör jag, för enkelhetens skull, ingen bodelning mellan den forskning som tar upp individuella kvinnliga författare respektive den historiskskrivning som görs där ur ett breddperspektiv. För diskussioner om kvinnolitteraturhistorieskrivning se t.ex. Ezell 1993; Todd kap. 1–4 och Williams 40–47.
- <sup>2</sup> När det gäller en genusteoretiskt grundad diskussion av de mekanismer som formar kanon hänvisas till Williams.
- <sup>3</sup> För en översikt av Frölichs litterära produktion se Öhrberg, *Vittra fruntimmer*, 393.
- <sup>4</sup> Stierncronas skrift analyseras utförligt i Öhrberg, *Vittra fruntimmer*, 212–223.
- <sup>5</sup> Inom ramen för projektet undersöks även manliga författare, framför allt Magnus Brynolph Malmstedt (Anna Maria Malmstedts (Lenngrens) far).

För en utförligare diskussion av kvinnliga författare inom herrnhutismen och könskonstruktioner i de herrnhutiska sångerna hänvisas till Öhrberg "Uti din Brudgums blod".

- <sup>7</sup> Levnadslopp författade av herrnhutiska kvinnor analyseras i Eva Hættner Aurelius undersökning om kvinnors självbiografier, *Inför lagen. Kvinnliga svenska självbiografier från Agneta Horn till Fredrika Bremer*. Ahlgren träder fram i helfigur i en kommande bok skriven av docent Margareta Björkman.





## **Novellgenren, den kvinnliga författaren och litteraturhistorieskrivningen. Exemplet Cora Sandel**

Novellen som litterär genre har alltid fört en förhållandevis undanskymd tillvaro i jämförelse med romanen. Det är romanen som är den dominerande prosagenren, både i antal verk och i status hos författare, kritiker och läsare. Detta är ett faktum. Det är också ett faktum att kvinnliga författare, som det ser ut i litteraturhistorieskrivningen, har fört en undanskymd tillvaro i jämförelse med manliga författare. I det följande ska jag undersöka ett exempel på en författare som var både kvinna och novellist, den norska författaren Cora Sandel (1880–1974). Vad händer då i litteraturhistorieskrivningen? Hur inverkar genreval och kön på hur det litterära etablissemanget mottar och minns en författare?

### **Cora Sandels liv och verk, en översikt**

1906 reste Sara Fabricius, som var Cora Sandels verkliga namn, till Paris, 26 år gammal, med avsikten att bli konstnär.<sup>1</sup> Hon hade vuxit upp som borgerlig familjeflicka i Kristiania och Tromsø, men hamnade nu i konstnärskvarteren i Montparnasse, omgiven av människor från världens

alla hörn med samma önskan som hon själv – att uttrycka sig konstnärligt. I tretton år arbetade hon med sitt måleri. Hon gick i konstskola, prövade olika stilar, reste runt i Frankrike och Italien och försökte finna sitt eget uttryck. Hon ansågs begåvad, men lyckades aldrig som bildkonstnär, varken i sina egna ögon eller i omvärldens.

1913 gifte sig Sara Fabricius med den svenske skulptören Anders Jönsson, och 1917, mitt under brinnande världskrig, föddes paret Jönssons son Erik. De närmaste åren efter hans födelse tillbringade Sara Fabricius pendlade mellan Paris och den bretagneska landsbygden. De långa perioderna av bortavaro från Paris och plikterna som småbarnsmor avlägsnade henne allt längre från konsten. Den konstnärliga situationen blev out hårdlig, och i Bretagne 1919 slutade hon att måla och började skriva i stället. Senare berättade hon själv: "Jeg elsket å male, jeg blev aldri maler. Tillslott blev den leksaken tatt fra meg, og jeg blev ansatt i kjøkken og barnekammer – sånn kunstnerkoner blir det [...]" (Brev citerat ur Øverland 226). Det är uppenbart att hon gav upp sitt bildkonstnärskap

med bitterhet och det framgår att hon ansåg skrivandet vara en klen tröst. Men det var som författare, under namnet Cora Sandel, som hon skulle komma att bli känd och uppskattad.

1922 debuterade hon skönlitterärt med en novell, "Rosina", i den norska tidskriften *Lørdagskvelden*. Hon använde då för första gången pseudonymen Cora Sandel, men varför hon kallade sig så vet vi inte. 1926 gav hon ut romanen *Alberte og Jakob* på Gyldendal forlag i Oslo. Den blev en succé både bland läsare och kritiker. Sara Jönsson bodde då i Saltsjö Duvnäs utanför Stockholm och förde en kämpande tillvaro: för att få ekonomin att gå ihop och för att få behålla sonen efter skilsmässan några år tidigare. Men hon förde också en kamp med språket och skrivandet, som aldrig tedde sig enkelt och lustfyllt för henne. Dessutom led hon av den uppmärksamhet hon som person väckte efter den prisade romandebuten. Hon lyckades hålla sin identitet bakom pseudonymen hemlig länge, och även efter att hon hade avslöjats förnekade hon ändå inför sina norska släktingar att hon var Cora Sandel, författaren. Under hela sitt författarliv försökte hon sedan hålla sig så anonym som möjligt.

1927 kom den första novellsamlingen, *En blå sofa og andre noveller*. Under 30-talet utgavs de två resterande delarna i Albertetrilogin, *Alberte og friheten* (1931) och *Bara Alberte* (1939), men också ytterligare två novellsamlingar, *Carmen og Maja og andre noveller* (1932) och *Mange takk, doktor* (1935). 1945 kom samlingen *Dyr jeg har kjent*, som bestod av noveller om djur i författa-

rinnans liv – hon var sedan barndomen en hängiven djurvän. Samma år utkom även romanen *Kranes konditori*. 1949 gavs den sista novellsamlingen, *Figurer på mørk bunn*, ut. Den innehåller tre längre noveller med motiv från andra världskriget i Norden. 1958 avslutas författarskapet med romanen *Kjøp ikke Dondi*.

Under sitt långa liv var Sara Fabricius själv sällan bofast. Hon flyttade runt i tillfälliga bostäder och pensionat, bodde ett tag i Sigtuna där sonen gick på internatskola, var periodvis i Norge och planerade att flytta tillbaka dit, något som dock aldrig realiserades. Hon bodde under 1940- och 50-talen i Uppsala och Stockholm. De sista åren i sitt liv framlevde hon på ålderdomshemmet Andreas Ands minne i Uppsala. Sara Fabricius Jönsson dog i Uppsala 1974, 94 år gammal.

## Novellgenren

I dagskritik och forskning används flera benämningar på de korta texter som Cora Sandel gav ut. Några exempel är novell, kortprosa, romanfragment, historia, berättelse och short story. Det är alltså uppenbart att det råder viss begreppsförvirring när det gäller korta prosatexter, och att många olika termer kan användas om samma text. Benämningarnas betydelse har uppenbarligen också skiftat över tid och i takt med genrens förändring.

Det som vi idag oftast kallar novell har sin upprinnelse i 1800-talets tidnings- och tidskriftspress (Oberholzer). Här fanns ett behov av kor-

tare prosatexter och en möjlig inkomstkälla för författare. Subgenrer som detektiv- och kärleksnovellen uppkom och fick fasta mönster, som de sedan behållit i veckotidningspressen fram i våra dagar. Men förutom den rena underhållningsnovellen blir vid den här tiden också den mer litterärt avancerade novellen vanligare, den som visserligen också ofta först trycktes i en tidskrift, men som senare också gavs ut i bokform, i en novellsamling.

Novellens koppling till tidskrifter och veckotidningspress är säkerligen en av orsakerna till att noveller har ansetts som litteratur med låg status av kritiker, förlagsredaktörer och läsare. Kritiker har ofta betraktat novellen som "träning", "formexperiment" eller "förstudier" till mer avancerade litterära arbeten, företrädesvis romaner. Förlagen har varit ovilliga att ge ut novellsamlingar på grund av dålig försäljningsstatistik: även läsarna har alltså tenderat att välja bort genren. Men vissa förändringar kan ändå skönjas i novellens placering på den litterära statusskalan, särskilt i och med modernismens genombrott på 1900-talet. Det medförde en allmän uppvärdering av novellen som framställningsform, kanske främst på grund av modernismens fragmentiserade och splittrade bilder av världen. Att novellen var kort hade förut ibland medfört att den betraktats som en sämre text, men i och med modernismen kom just det lilla formatet att uppfattas som ett tecken på överlägsen förmåga till koncentrerad framställning (Ferguson). Novellen kan följaktligen betraktas som litteratur

med mycket låg status, i sin veckotidningsform, såväl som en högstatusgenre i sin mest elaborerade estetiska form.

För framväxandet av 1900-talets novell har betonats vikten av andra mediers framväxt, som fotografi och film, samt riktningar inom konsten, särskilt impressionismen (Shaw). Även med dramat äger 1900-talets novell ofta likheter, i en okommenterat "sceniskt" berättande och dialog (Stenström). Ytterligare en annan konstform med viss närhet till 1900-talsnovellen är prosadikten (Nylander).

Kvinnliga författares förhållande till novellgenren har undersökts ganska sparsamt. Det feministiska forskare har kunnat konstatera vad gäller kvinnliga författares inställning och "tillgång" till litterära genrer gäller mest deras relativa svårighet att nå framgång inom högstatusgenrerna, lyrik och drama. Romanen blev i stället de kvinnliga författarnas forum. Novellgenrens framväxt kan emellertid liknas vid romanens, och även för novellen är det så att dess "största" och mest inflytelserika författare varit män — som Poe, Tjechov och Maupassant. Men novellen blev också en genre som kvinnliga författare gärna använde. På samma sätt som romanen hade den potential att locka skrivande kvinnor: novellen kunde vara ett forum för att i ett hanterbart format utforska kvinnors erfarenheter och förhållande till sin omvärld i ett nytt och modernt samhälle, vilket har varit frågor "i tiden" under i stort sett hela den moderna novellens historia. Men det är naturligtvis inte ett okomplicerat kon-

staterande. Den amerikanska litteraturforskaren Mary Eagleton, som skriver om genus och genre i antologin *Re-Reading the Short Story*, visar varför förhållandet är mer komplicerat än så:

To say that the woman writer would adopt the short story because of the intimacy of the form, the one-to-one relationship between author and reader, or because of the short story's focus on a manageable, single incident is, on the one hand, to recognise women's social experience in our culture and where that experience may take them in their writing; on the other hand, it is to confine woman once again in the personal, the closely detailed, the miniature. By implication the short story becomes both a lesser form and about all that women can manage. (Eagleton 61–62)

Att betrakta genusberoende skillnader i författares genreval kan följaktligen bli både reduktionistiskt och förenklat. Men man kan förstås också vända på perspektivet, vilket Eagleton gör, och påstå att kvinnliga författare kunde välja en genre som novellen därför att den var föränderlig och svårdefinierad, både form- och statusmässigt. Genrevalet kunde träffas just i hopp om att novellens flexibilitet kunde ge möjlighet att behandla kvinnliga författares frågor på ett nytt sätt (Eagleton). Novellen fungerade då som ett forum för den kvinnliga författaren att finna ett eget och kanske nytt uttryck, såväl form- och språkmässigt som tematiskt.

Att novellgenren skulle vara ett forum för samhällets marginaliserade grupper har länge varit en uppfattning hos många, främst engelsk-

språkiga, novellteoretiker. Man har då tagit fasta på novellernas generellt sett stora intresse för de avvikande, de som inte riktigt finner sin plats i samhället. I många av novellteoriens centrala verk, som Frank O'Connors *The Lonely Voice* (1963) och Ian Reids *The Short Story* (1977), tas detta intresse för det marginella till och med upp som ett genrekonstituerande drag. I dessa verk nämns novellens betydelse för skildringen av barn, koloniala samhällen och avvikare av alla de slag. Men kvinnor nämns inte i dessa novellteoriens standardverk som en sådan marginaliserad grupp. Detta framstår naturligtvis som märkligt i ljuset av att många av novellens företrädare har varit just kvinnliga författare vars noveller har handlat om kvinnors upplevelse av sig själva som marginaliserade, som till exempel Katherine Mansfield eller Victoria Benedictsson – och Cora Sandel.

I det Norge som fick ta emot Cora Sandels noveller på 1920-talet, befann sig novellgenren i en brytningstid. I recensionsmaterialet kring Sandels novellsamlingar finns talrika utrop från kritikerna om behovet av att uppliva och förnya novellgenren på norska. I den kortlivade kulturtidskriften *Arena* utlyste man även en novelltävling 1923, för att främja genrens återväxt. Cora Sandel var en av pristagarna med sin novell "Nr 31".

När Cora Sandel valde novellen som framställningsform var det emellertid inte med en uttalad vilja att förnya novellgenren, och inte heller uteslutande för att kunna sälja sina alster. Novellen var en form som passade hennes sätt att berätta, ett sätt som bland annat utvecklats ur

hennes konstnärliga arbete med bilden. På samma sätt som hon experimenterade med gestaltningen i sina målningar, sökte hon i skrivandet en framställningsform som kom att resultera i noveller. Merparten av dem behandlar olika aspekter av att vara kvinna i samtidens samhälle. Cora Sandels noveller är således bra exempel på hur en kvinnlig författare kunde använda novellgenren i hennes samtid. Noveller som behandlade kvinnors situation hade visserligen skrivits före Sandel, även i Norge, av exempelvis Sigrid Undset, men Sandel gjorde det på ett nytt sätt, i en ny form, som fångade den nya, moderna tiden. Samtidigt berättade hon om något hennes läsare kände till, om det vanliga, vardagliga livet, på ett sätt som uppfattades som verklighetsnära och realistiskt.

### **Novellernas mottagande i press och litteraturhistorieskrivning**

Cora Sandel debuterade med novellen "Rosina" 1922. Senare samma år publicerades ännu en novell, "Amors veie". Chefen för Gyldendal Norsk forlag, Harald Grieg, tog då själv kontakt med Cora Sandel via hennes kontaktperson i Oslo, vänninnan Ellen Gleditsch, och sände en uppmuntrande hälsning med rådet att skriva en roman: "Jeg er sikker på at hun kan!" (citerat ur Øverland 250). Under åren fram till romandebuten 1926 – och sedan under hela sin författarkarriär – fortsatte hon emellertid att skriva noveller.

1927 gav Cora Sandel ut sin första novellsamling, *En blå sofa*, med en blandning av nyskrivna

och tidigare publicerade noveller. Av förlagskontakterna kan man se att hennes förläggare hellre hade sett en roman som uppföljare till *Alberte og Jakob*, som givits ut året innan. Med den hade Sandel gjort succé, både hos kritiker och läsare, och den sålde mycket bra för att vara en debutroman. Förläggaren var tveksam till om en novellsamling skulle slå på samma sätt. *En blå sofa* visade sig emellertid sälja förvånansvärt bra för att vara en novellsamling och fick tryckas om i en andra upplaga då den första sålde slut. I ett brev från 1929, alltså efter den första novellsamlingen men före den andra delen i *Alberte-trilogin*, skriver Harald Grieg emellertid till Cora Sandel att hon inte bör "sende ut en novellesamling ihøst. De må endelig ikke oppfatte dette derhen at jeg ikke mener at de noveller De har skrevet er gode nok. Jeg [...] mener ubetinget at De bør utgi en novellesamling til, men det vilde være uheldig om der kom 2 novellesamlinger på rad" (NBO 537). 1932, när nästa novellsamling, *Carmen og Maja*, hade kommit ut skriver Grieg som svar på en förfrågan om ekonomiskt förskott:

Skulle den selges så godt at honoraret beløper sig til mere en de 1000 kroner De allerede vil ha fått utbetalt, står også det overskytende til Deres disposisjon. Men det er vel ikke egentlig sansynlig, — noveller er det vanskelig å få til å gå hertilands. (NBO 537)

Han var alltså inte direkt uppmuntrande när det gällde novellerna, av ekonomiska snarare än estetiska skäl. På ett liknande sätt behandlades Sandels noveller av förlaget genom hela hennes författarliv (Øverland 326).

I Sverige gavs *En blå sofa* ut i svensk översättning av Albert Bonniers förlag 1929. *Bonniers Litterära Magasin* hade också publicerat några av hennes noveller. Men nästa novellsamling, *Carmen* og *Maja*, ville Bonniers inte ge ut. Så sent som 1940 skriver Kaj Bonnier till Cora Sandel: "Vad novellsamlingen *Carmen* og *Maja* beträffar, så är det riktigt att den aldrig har blivit utgiven. Det har berott på att, som Fru Fabricius vet, novellsamlingar över huvud taget icke har någon större förmåga att säljas" (NBO 537).

Då Cora Sandels första novellsamling, *En blå sofa*, kom ut 1927, var det alltså första gången hon recenserades som novellist i dagspressen. En observation man genast kan göra i recensionsmaterialet är att den goda kritik som kommit *Alberte* og *Jakob* till del verkar ha fungerat som murbräcka för Cora Sandels författarnamn. Novellsamlingen anmäldes vid sin publicering i flertalet norska tidningar och även i några svenska, och fick överlag god kritik.

Vad anser då de norska kritikerna om novellen som genre? Författaren Ronald Fangen fastslår, i likhet med många andra recensenter, att novellgenren i Sandels tappning inte har mycket likhet med sin veckotidningsvariant, utan är en högt stående genre med sina egna regler och kännetecknen. Samtidigt beklagar han det faktum att det finns så få författare som skriver den här typen av noveller i Norge, "et land hvor novellekunsten ikke har mange og endnu færre gode dyrkere" (*Tidens Tegn*, 23.11.1927). Några recensenter vill även passa på att propagera för den goda novellen

och avgränsa den mot den dåliga, till exempel Hans Heiberg i *Arbeiderbladet*:

Nu er det imidlertid uomtvistelig at den gode novelle hører til den beste, fineste og mest spennende form for litteratur som finnes. Og litt efter litt vil sikkert denne kunstformen slå igjennem her i landet også, for den ikke bare krever meget, den yder også meget. (17.12.1932)

Hos kritiker som Heiberg och Fangen kan alltså spåras ett behov av att avgränsa Cora Sandels noveller mot en sämre sorts noveller, för att på så sätt höja novellgenrens status. Samtidigt konstaterar man att det finns ett tomrum i den samtida norska litteraturen som Cora Sandels noveller kan fylla.

Recensenterna låter sig vidare imponeras av Sandels ovanliga säkerhet som novellförfattare. Ovan citerade recensent, Hans Heiberg, frågar sig till och med om "vi i øyeblikket eier en finere novellist enn Cora Sandel. I flere av fortellingene behersker hun denne kunstarten til fullkommenhet." Paul Gjesdahl utropar i *Tidens Tegn* (22.11.1932): "En ypperlig novellist er hun!" Vål att märka är att dessa utrop gäller Sandels andra novellsamling, *Carmen* og *Maja*, då man redan förväntade sig goda noveller av henne. Då den tredje novellsamlingen, *Mange takk doktor* (1937), kom börjar man också se tillbaka på hennes karriär som novellist och kan konstatera: "Cora Sandel var en ypperlig novellist alt da hun debuterte, – og heldigvis har hun ikke oppgitt novellens kunst, for hun er en av de få her i Norden som dyrker den med – man fristes å si: mesterskap" (Ronald Fangen, *Tidens*

*Tegn* 12.12.1935). Litteraturkritikern och författaren Eugenia Kielland har, när hon behandlar samma novellsamling, svårt att avgöra om det är som romanförfattare eller novellist som Cora Sandel når de högsta höjderna. Slutligen bestämmer hon sig emellertid för att det ändå är ”novelleformen som gir det rikeste facetterte uttryck för den specielle viden Cora Sandel skriver ut fra” (*Morgenposten* 6.12.1935).

Men i flödet av beröm som mötte novellsamlingarna finns även små öar av negativ kritik som kan kasta ljus över novellgenrens vanskligheter. Recensenterna tycks vara överens om en sak i de förbehåll de har, även om de är få: svagheten i Cora Sandels noveller ligger i det antydda och skissartade. Vissa recensenter vill därför inte kalla hennes texter noveller, utan väljer i stället de omskrivningar jag nämnde ovan, som ”fortellinger”, ”skisser”, ”short stories” eller till och med ”kåserier”: ”Omkring halvparten av historiene er ikke noveller i strengere forstand”, skriver således skribenten och dramatikern Helge Krogh om *Carmen og Maja*, ”men skisser og kåserier, ofta gode, skarpe og vittige, men bagatellmessige” (*Dagbladet* 17.12.1932). Just ordet ”bagatell” återkommer också i flera recensioner, som här i den recension C. J. Hambro publicerade i *Oslo-tidningen Morgenbladet* (22.11.32) med anledning av *Carmen og Majas* utgivning: ”Bindet er ujevnt: det rummer rene bagateller, løse skisser ved siden av smaa fint utmeislede stykker, som gir en stemning og en tone.” Han fortsätter:

Det er meget faa i norsk literatur som har dyrket

”short story”-kunsten, og naar man læser ”Carmen og Maja” og ”En gåte” – de to første stykker i bindet – har man virkelig indtrykk av at her har Cora Sandel fundet sit felt, her vil hun kunne skape det ypperlige. Men man læser videre og blir usikker. Der hvor hun forsøker sig på de større emner, strækker hun ikke til – det blir føljeton, aviskjelder, ikke kunst – som i ”Drama i utkant inatt”, ”Et døgn”. – Og nu og da skriver hun uten emne, fordi hun vet at hun kan skrive og skrive godt.

Men i sin recension av den tredje novellsamlingen, *Mange takk doktor* (1937), skriver författaren Johan Borgen så här:

Den nye boken hennes er en samling noveller. Novelle er jo engang blitt betegnelsen på et kortere stykke, men egentlig hører noen av dem, og noen av de aller beste, til den foraktede form som kalles ’skisse’. Det er fragmenter av liv, som begynner tilsynelatende uberegnet, slutter der og der. Man merker aldri teknikken ved hennes fine oppbyggingskunst inni novellen, og derfor er hennes form knapp, hver enkelt av novellene en hård og fast kjerne av noe som stråler ut over hele livet, som radium! (*Dagbladet* 18.12.1935)

Här upphöjs alltså det flera recensenter tidigare klagat över, Sandels skissteknik, till ett bevis på hennes skicklighet i novellkonsten. Man kan fråga sig om orsaken till det är att den ”allmänna meningen” om Sandels senare författarskap var att hon var en god novellist och att recensenterna därför var mildare i sina omdömen, eller om det beror på att recensenterna vant sig vid den

sandelska novellen. Eller också är det rentav så att den nya, mer antydande novellformen blivit vanligare i den norska litteraturen under det knappa decennium som gått mellan Sandels första novellsamling och den här recenserade, varför recensenterna inte längre störs av novellernas vaghet.

Novellernas tematik kommenteras givetvis också i recensionerna. Sandel beröms för sin människokännedom och sin sanningssträvan i tecknandet av enkla människor. Kritikerna konstaterar också att det är vardagen som står i fokus i novellerna, även om vissa recensenter, som Sigurd Hoel, försäkrar att:

ikke et øieblikk kjeder fortellingen oss, ikke et øieblikk ophører den at interessere, ikke et øieblikk virker de jevne mennesker hun forteller om tretende eller ordinære: for om menneskerne er grå og enstonige og fattige, så er skildringen rik; rik på medfølelse, på ironi og på sann dikterisk innsikt. (*Arbeiderbladet* 10.11.1927)

I recensioner som denna finns ett drag av förvåning över att Cora Sandels noveller faktiskt fångslar, trots att de beskriver en så grå vardag och så enkla människor. Men novellerna verkar för några få, mer negativa recensenter, snarare vara ointressanta eller otillräckliga för litterär framställning, till exempel signaturen G. N., som tycker att Cora Sandel skriver under påverkan av "krigshumør":

Produktet er blit derefter. Hendes mennesker er mere *karikaturer* end *typer*; forfatterinden har seilet sig op paa det for kvindelige forfattere farlige

skjær der heter *overdrivelse* og er faldt som *offer* for den kvindelige impulsivitet. Derfor lider hennes noveller av en trivial ensidighet, bristende logik og usandsynlige konklusioner. Læseren blir mere og mere vantro og ender som skeptiker. (*Dagen* 18.11.1927)

Det denne recensent vänder sig emot är inte genren, utan det faktum att Sandel var kvinna och därför, i hans ögon, en sämre författare.

De två novellsamlingar som utgavs på 1940-talet fick också genomgående god kritik. Möjligen kan man uppfatta det som lite märkligt i samband med den första av dem, *Dyr jeg har kjent* (1946), som sedermera nästan har försvunnit ur litteraturhistorien. Det är också den samling som tänjer mest på novellgenrens gränser, då den innehåller sex humoristiskt hållna djurberättelser med självbiografiska drag. De liknar alltså inte alls de noveller som skrevs på 1920- och 30-talet. Ändå är det inga recensenter som vill föra en diskussion om genren i samband med *Dyr jeg har kjent*. I receptionen av den är flertalet bara positiva till Sandels nya, personliga tilltal, och till det lättare, mer humoristiska draget i novellerna. Det framgår också tydligt av recensionerna vilken stor respekt kritikerna har för Cora Sandel som författare. Som ett exempel på det kan vi ta Johan Borgen, som avslutar sin recension av *Dyr jeg har kjent* i *Dagbladet* (22.1.1946) med att beklaga Sandels långa tystnad: "men ytrer hun seg en sjelden gang, om også i de aller minste ord, så kjenner vi hennes tryllepenn, som skriver direkte i vår sjel." Halvdan Hydle menar i sin recension i *Aften-*



*posten* (24.1.1946) heller inte att Dyr jeg har kjent ska betraktas som en lättsam bagatell, utan drar paralleller till andra världskriget:

Cora Sandel har satt hele sitt store talent inn på å fortelle akkurat så enkelt som slike historier skal fortelles. De er såvisst ikke noe resultat av en opprydding i skrivebordskuffen, her er vilje og mening og hensikt bak. Kanskje en klok kvinnes lille apropos til alt som har opptatt verden i de senere år, da mennesket opptrådte som det tåpeligste av alle dyr.

Här ser vi alltså närmast en motsatt behandling av novellerna än i fråga om de första novellsamlingarna. Dem tenderade man att kalla bagatellmässiga trots deras allvarliga ämnen, medan man här läser in en djupare betydelse i, åtminstone skenbart, mer bagatellartade noveller. Här kan man alltså se effekten av den respekt Sandel åtnjöt som novellist.

Även i samband med den sista novellsamlingen, *Figurer på mørk bunn* (1949), är kommentarerna om genren som sådan ganska få. De novellerna är också mer "klassiska" i sin form, de är längre än de tidigare och därför mer utförliga och sammanhållna. Det som kritikerna kommenterar är undantagslöst novellernas gemensamma tema: andra världskriget sett ur kvinnliga gestalters synvinkel. Vad gäller 1940-talssamlingarna visar alltså snart sagt alla norska recensenter sin respekt för en etablerad, populär, men otvivelaktigt kvalitetsstämplad åldrande författare.

Det är således tydligt i den norska kritiken att det var de tre första samlingarna som mötte

reaktioner på novellernas form och stil. De senare får nästan inga kommentarer om dessa aspekter, utan mer om handling, personteckning, tematik och så vidare. Som jag redan sagt ovan, kan detta ha tre huvudsakliga orsaker. Antingen beror det på att 1940-talets noveller ser annorlunda ut på ett sätt som ligger närmare recensenternas generörförväntningar. Eller också har den novelltradition som Sandel skriver inom slagit igenom även i Norge. En tredje orsak kan vara den växande respekten för Cora Sandels författarskap.

I Sverige blev mottagandet av Cora Sandels noveller också positivt. Hon recenserades i några svenska tidningar direkt då *En blå sofa* gavs ut i Norge, men det är först då den översattes till svenska 1929 som hon recenserades i de flesta av de stora tidningarna. Hon bemöts då välvilligt. I recensionerna påminner man om succén med *Alberte och Jakob*, och talar i termer av att "här kommer ett namn, som det är bäst att lägga på minnet för framtidens skull" (sign A. F-r., Alfred Fjelner, SyD 18.3.1929). Man anser också att hon står för en ny linje i litteraturen: "Ett barn av sin rappa tid", kallas hon till exempel i *Lunds Dagblad* (sign E. K. W., Elisabeth Kuylenstierna-Wenster, 16.11.1927).

Flerparten av novellrecensionerna i de svenska tidningarna kom dock på 1950-talet, då nya utgåvor av samlingarna publicerades. De recensionerna visar prov på samma tendens som i det norska mottagandet, att Sandel recenserades med stor respekt och som en etablerad, skicklig novellist.

Det finns dock en viss tendens, särskilt i de tidiga recensionerna från 20- och 30-tal, att även i den svenska kritiken vilja stadfästa novellens värde. Sandels noveller kallas ibland även här något annat än noveller: novelletter eller historier till exempel (Bertil Beckman DN 14.3.1929), men det handlar då mest om den första samlingen. Texterna i de senare kallas mer genomgående än i det norska materialet noveller.

Angående novellens status som genre, frågar sig Olle Holmberg i en recension av *Flykten till Amerika* i *DN* (10.5.1937) varför folk, som "det sägs", tycker mindre om noveller än romaner. Han ser novellen som liggande närmare verkligheten, som mindre fiktiv och med högre sanningsvärde än romanen: "I novellen har man ofta verkligheten mer obearbetad, som stänk och flikar av de öden och miljöer som hota eller tjusa oss alla." *Men att Flykten till Amerika* 1937 kom ut i Bonniers Gula serie, som var vikt för kvalitetslitteratur, fick flera recensenter att höja på ögonbrynen. Signaturen Gvs (Herbert Grevenius) i *Stockholms-Tidningen* menar till exempel att samlingen visst är en bok man kan läsa "om man inte har något annat för sig." Han fortsätter: "Men varför den har fått äran att komma med i Gula serien, som vill ge de mer framträdande sakerna i samtidens litteratur, är svårare att förstå. Det är falsk flagg" (3.6.1937). Det framgår här inte om det är för att det är noveller, och inte en roman, som boken inte bör ges ut i Gula serien, eller om recensenten inte anser att kvaliteten på novellerna är tillräckligt hög. I en

recension i den konservativa kvällstidningen *Upsala* (Henri Desreaux, 9.6.1937) framgår det däremot klart att det är för att *Flykten till Amerika* utgörs av noveller som det är förvånande att de ges ut i Gula serien: "Den norska författarinnan Cora Sandel har vederfarits den ovanliga äran att få en novellsamling införlivad med Bonniers 'gula serie', som ju annars omfattar huvudsakligen romaner och bland dem flera av samtidens främsta." Samme recensent fortsätter sedan att tala om novellgenren:

Noveller av hög kvalitet äro över huvud taget en sällsynt vara i våra dagar. Den en gång så förnäma och uppskattade genren har ju vulgariserats nästan till det otroliga på de senaste årtiondena och en författare som håller på sitt namn, tänker sig gärna för både en och två gånger, innan han ger sig in i den litet för brokiga trängseln på novellernas marknadstorg.

Han menar visserligen inte att Cora Sandel hör till de novellförfattare som bör tänka sig för, eftersom "[h]ennes noveller höra inte till dem, som utbjudas i cigarrbodarna."

Även en annan recension förtjänar här att nämnas. Det är signaturen -ge (Sverker Lönnberg) i *Skånska Dagbladet* som kommenterar novellgenren i allmänhet och *Flykten till Amerika* i synnerhet:

Men i likhet med en del moderna novellister kastar hon läsaren väl brutalt in i en handling utan vare sig början eller slut. Detta verkar en smula sönderslitet och gör att man inte är så benägen för att läsa noveller av detta slag. (13.10.1937)

Dessa recensioner ur två tidningar utanför storstäderna visar att novellen som genre kan sägas befinna sig i en brytningstid under decennierna kring 1930-talet. I det litterära etablissemang, i storstäderna och bland författare och kulturjournalister där, hade den nya novellen slagit igenom och deras genreförväntningar kan mötas av Sandels novellistik. I periferin kunde reaktionerna, som vi sett, dock fortfarande bli något avståndstagande.

En viktig fråga man kan ställa till sig inför den bild av novellernas reception som framkommit ovan, är hur det kan komma sig att Sandels noveller fått så förhållandevis liten plats i litteraturhistorieskrivningen. Det uppseende novellerna väckte och den övervägande positiva kritik de fick borde, kan man tycka, borga för att Cora Sandel skulle fått en mer framskjuten position som novellist när tidens litteraturhistoria skrevs. Om orsakerna till att hennes novellproduktion har fått stå tillbaka kan man bara spekulera. För det första kan det antas att den stora framgång som romanerna fick överskuggade novellsamlingarnas välvilliga mottagande. Cora Sandel blev helt enkelt mest känd som romanförfattare, även om romanerna var få.

För det andra kan man fråga sig om inte författarens kön spelar in. Men i fallet med Cora Sandel kan man inte tala om den effekt som annars ofta drabbar kvinnliga författare, att de sällas bort ur litteraturhistorieskrivningen och därför hamnar i marginalen. Om denna effekt skriver Anna Williams i *Stjärnor utan stjärnbilder*.

*Kvinnor och kanon i litteraturhistoriska översiktsverk under 1900-talet.* Williams visar i sin studie hur kvinnliga författare sällats bort vid skrivningen av litteraturhistorien som den framkommer i 1900-talets litterära översiktsverk, och alltså så småningom hamnat helt vid sidan av samtidens litterära strömningar. (Se också Gunilla Domellöf, *Mätt med främmande mått. Idéanalys av kvinnliga författares samtidsmottagande och romaner 1930–1935* (Hedemora 2001)). Detta är inte fallet med Cora Sandel. Hon inte bara nämns i alla översiktsverk som behandlar litteratur under hennes tid som författare, utan får förhållandevis gott om utrymme. Men hon omskrivs så gott som uteslutande som romanförfattare.

Snarare är det alltså novellgenrens osäkra status som spökar, inte bara hos förläggare och kritiker utan även i litteraturhistorieskrivningen. Noveller värderas inte på samma sätt som romaner och noveller har därför sällats bort ur litteraturhistorien. Trots att Cora Sandel faktiskt var en av dem som förnyade den nordiska novellgenren, och att hon beröms för det i den samtida dagskritiken, nämns hon bara i förbigående som novellist i översiktsverken. Ett exempel på detta är ett av Norges allra nyaste litterära översiktsverk, Per Thomas Andersens *Norsk litteraturhistorie* (Oslo 2001) där romanerna om Alberte behandlas utförligt medan novellerna bara nämns utan vidare kommentar. Detta alltså även om Cora Sandel, som vi sett, under sin samtid ansågs som en av Norges, eller till och med Nordens, ledande novellister.

## Bibliografi

### Otryckt material:

Nasjonalbiblioteket, Avdeling Oslo (NBO):  
Brevsamling 537, Sara Fabricius.

### Tryckt recensjonsmateriale:

Norge

*Aften Posten*. 24.1.1946, Halvdan Hydle.

*Arbeiderbladet*. 10.11.1927, Sigurd Hoel; 22.11.1932,  
sign. C. H. J.; 17.12.1932, Hans Heiberg.

*Dagbladet*. 17.12.1932, Helge Krogh; 18.12.1935,  
Johan Borgen.

*Dagen*. 18.11.1927, sign. G. N.

*Morgenbladet*. 22.11.1932, C. J. Hambro.

*Morgenposten*. 7.11.1927, Eugenia Kielland.

*Tidens Tegn*. 12.12.1927, Ronald Fangen; 22.11.1932,  
Paul Gjesdahl; 12.12.1935, Ronald

Fangen.

Sverige

*Dagens Nyheter*. 14.3.1927, Bertil Beckman;  
10.5.1937, Olle Holmberg.

*Lunds Dagblad*. 16.11.1927, sign. Elisabeth Kuylen-  
stierna-Wenster.

*Skånska dagbladet*. 13.10.1937, Sverker Lönnberg.

*Stockholmstidningen*. 3.6.1937, Herbert Grevenius.

*Sydsvenska dagbladet*. 18.3.1929, Alfred Fjelner.

Uppsala. 9.6.1937, Henri Desreux.

### Övrigt tryckt material:

Domellöf, Gunilla. *Mått med främmande mått. Idéana-  
lys av kvinnliga författares samtidsmottagande och  
romaner 1930–1935*. Hedemora: Gidlund, 2001.

Eagleton, Mary. "Gender and Genre". *Re-Reading the  
Short Story*. Ed. C. Hansen. New York: St. Martins  
Press, 1989. 55–68.

Ferguson, Suzanne. "The Rise of the Short Story in the  
Hierarchy of Genres." *Short Story Theories at a  
Crossroads*. Eds. S. Lohafer och J. E. Clarey. Baton  
Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1989. 176–192.

Nylander, Lars. *Prosadikt och modernitet. Prosadikt  
som gränsföreteelse i europeisk litteratur med  
särskild inriktning på Skandinavien 1880–1910*.  
Stockholm & Stehag: Symposion, 1990.

Oberholzer, Otto. "Kortprosa som litterär genre i histo-  
riskt och poetologiskt perspektiv".

*Kortprosa i Norden. Fra H. C. Andersens eventyr til den  
moderne novelle. Akter fra den XIV studiekonference  
for skandinavisk litteratur i Odense 1982*. Odense:  
Odense universitetforl., 1983. 13–21.

Shaw, Valerie. *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction*.  
London: Longman, 1983.

Stenström, Thure. "Cora Sandels Kjøp ikke Dondi – ett  
drama i romanform." *Berättartekniska studier i Pär  
Lagerkvists, Lars Gyllenstens och Cora Sandels  
prosa*. Ed. T. Stenström. Stockholm: Bonniers, 1964.  
59–73.

Williams, Anna. *Stjärnor utan stjärnbilder. Kvinnor och  
kanon i litteraturhistoriska översiktsverk under 1900-  
talet*. Skrifter utgivna av avdelningen för litteraturso-  
ciologi vid litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen i  
Uppsala 35. Hedemora: Gidlund, 1997.

Øverland, Janneken. *Cora Sandel. En biografi*. Oslo:  
Gyldendal, 1995.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> All biografisk information är hämtad ur  
Janneken Øverland, Cora Sandel. En biografi.

Chatarina Edfeldt

## **The "Other" Feminist The Representation(s) of Feminist Women Writers in 20th century Portuguese Literary History<sup>1</sup>**

Feminismens politiska innehåll och feministen som avskräckande tankefigur figurerar på olika nivåer och används av olika aktörer på det litterära fältet i 1900-talets Portugal. Jag ska i denna artikel kort följa två sammanvävda spår. För det första ska jag granska hur feministisk aktivitet ständigt reduceras till "kvinnoaktivitet" eller utelämnas helt av den hegemoniska kulturen när litteraturhistorien berättas under 1900-talet. Denna problematik tydliggörs främst genom att den litteraturhistoriska diskursen gör olika reducerande omskrivningar av författarinnornas emancipatoriska aktivitet. Flera av Portugals uttalade feminister under 1900-talet var också författare och mina utgångspunkter har varit: Hur representeras<sup>2</sup> deras feministiska aktivitet och hur interagerar feminism och "kvinnlighet" i beskrivningarna?

Det andra spåret handlar om hur "feministen" fungerar som de kvinnliga författarnas negation eller "andre" när det gäller att skapa och legitimera ett litterärt kreativt utrymme. De kvinnliga författarna ställer själva feminism mot "kvinn-

lighet" av taktiska skäl för att öka sitt kreativa utrymme. Även feministerna vid seklets början ställer "falsk" feminism mot "sann" feminism för att öka gehöret och trovärdigheten för den senare. Under hela 1900-talet visar sig kvinnliga författare, forskare och kritiker ovilliga att blanda in begreppet feminism då det skulle kunna reducera deras texters skönlitterära eller vetenskapliga värde.

### *Litteraturhistorien i Sverige och i Portugal*

I enlighet med den situation som Anna Williams beskrivit och benämnt som den "kluvna litteraturhistorien" i sin studie om kvinnor och kanon i svenska litteraturhistoriska översiktsverk under 1900-talet så behandlas också de kvinnliga författarna i Portugals litteraturhistoria, under samma århundrade, i en fåra för sig gentemot de manliga författarna.

I de portugisiska översiktsverken klumpas de kvinnliga författarna, aktiva fram till 1970-talet, ihop i diskursen. Ibland endast nämnda vid namn och utan vidare presentationer återfinns

de i egna avsnitt eller i korta kapitel under rubriker som signalerar deras könstillhörighet. Kännetecknande för dessa beskrivningar av "litteratur skriven av kvinnor" (litteratura de autoria feminina) är att litteraturhistorien inte tillhandahåller någon enhetlig definition av vad för slags litteratur som åsyftas.

Beteckningen "autoria feminina" används framför allt under första halvan av seklet som övergripande term för litteratur skriven av en kvinnas hand. Därmed tas ingen litteraturvetenskaplig hänsyn i förhållande till de genrer, tematik och/eller sociopolitisk inriktning dessa alster uttrycker, något som är brukligt på andra håll i diskursen. På så sätt får "autoria feminina" ibland beteckna ett skrivsätt som i diffusa termer bedömdes kvinnligt i essensen såsom t.ex. den kärlekspoesi som ansågs vara sprungen ur hjärtat utan intellektuell inblandning (1920-talet). I andra fall används denna term för att beskriva den romankonst som i sin socialpolitiska tematik menades agitera för kvinnoemancipationen (1950-talet) eller, slutligen som i det senaste litteraturhistoriska verket, *História da Literatura Portuguesa* (2002) ge uttryck för det skrivsätt som i enlighet med Cixous och Irigaray definierats som "écriture féminine" (1960–70-talet).

Den kvinnliga könstillhörigheten fungerar därmed i den portugisiska litteraturhistoriska diskursen som en litterär taxonomi eftersom den faktiskt används som kategori i dess strukturering och organisation. Men till skillnad från andra taxonomier i litteraturhistorien, såsom litterära

*generationer, skolor* eller *genrer* så ges ingen enhetlig definition av innehållet i "autoria feminina".

Likheterna är många mellan de könsrelaterade förhållningssätt som Williams finner i representationerna av de svenska kvinnliga författarna och de som utmärker de portugisiska författarinnorna i den portugisiska litteraturhistorien. Den manliga författaren utgör norm och den kvinnliga författaren blir marginaliserad och detta upprätthålls i verkens disposition på så sätt att de kvinnliga författarna i huvudsak knyts "till enbart en kvinnlig tradition medan männen knyts till den allmänna litterära utvecklingen" (Williams 174–175). I denna tudelning märks också ordningen att kvinnorna oftare knyts "till känslor och biografiska omständigheter, medan männen har det politiska tolkningsföreträdet och blir innovatörer och idébärande" (180).

Men det finns också i denna problematik en del intressanta skillnader mellan de svenska och portugisiska översiktsverken som i första hand går att härleda till det faktum att den feministiska litteraturkritiken ännu inte fått fäste och konsekvens i Portugal. Till skillnad från den svenska litteraturvetenskapliga kontexten där kanonbildning och litteratur-historieskrivning diskuterats och kritiserats utifrån en rad olika teoretiska utgångspunkter så har dessa kritiska perspektiv lyst med sin frånvaro i Portugal. Det finns inte heller någon motsvarighet i Portugal till den våg av nypublicerade litteraturhistoriska verk som sett dagens ljus i Sverige under de senaste decennierna (Williams). Inte

heller har det skrivits något enskilt verk tillägnat en kvinnlig litterär tradition.<sup>3</sup> Senare delen av 1900-talet har dominerats helt av ett och samma verk, *História da Literatura Portuguesa* (Saraiva & Lopes).<sup>4</sup> Endast ett nytt stort översiktsverk, *História da Literatura Portuguesa* (2002) i sju band, har publicerats senare men i dess disposition och övriga innehåll märks inga försök till någon kritisk omvärdering eller omläsning av tidigare historieskrivningars kanonbildning och litterära taxonomier.

De få feministiska omläsningar som gjorts av kvinnliga författarskap eller litterära perioder under 1900-talet (Abranches, Alonso, Ferreira) har ännu inte funnit sin väg in i de litterära översiktsverken. Avsaknaden av en feministisk kritik i den portugisiska kontexten märks då främst genom att presentationerna av de kvinnliga författarskapen, vilka ständigt behandlats för sig i diskursen, inte utgör en tillräckligt solid berättelse för att de ska föras vidare till nästkommande litteraturhistoriska verk. Endast en handfull<sup>5</sup> lyckas ta sig in i den dominanta diskursens historieskrivning och överleva när nya verk författas.

I sin kvantitativa undersökning visar Williams att de svenska författarinnorna lyckats ganska bra när det gäller att erövra antal sidor i verken. I Portugal tillägnas litteraturen skriven av kvinnor under hela första halvan av seklet inte mer än cirka 1–10 sidor per litteraturhistoria. I ett kronologiskt perspektiv utkristalliseras ett mönster där en "början" på en kvinnlig litterär tradition flyttas längre och längre fram under seklet för varje ny lit-

teraturhistoria som berättas. I den senaste litteraturhistorien, författad under vårt nya sekel, så har i princip alla kvinnliga författare som skrev före 1950 förpassats ut ur litteraturhistorien genom påståendet "att det är först efter 1950 som litteraturen skriven av kvinnor visar upp en generell kvalitet" (Saraiva & Lopes 1029).<sup>6</sup>

En annan stor skillnad mellan mina och Williams iakttagelser kan läsas i ljuset av att den svenska litterära kontexten till skillnad från den portugisiska genomgått en vital feministisk analys under de senaste 30 åren. Då Williams observerar att särskiljandet mellan könen i den svenska kontexten fortgår och till och med förtydligas under 1960–1980-talen så är detta däremot inte fallet i Portugal.<sup>7</sup> I Portugal behandlas de kvinnliga författarna som skriver under 1970, 1980 och 1990-talen könsintegrerat i *História da Literatura Portuguesa* av Saraiva & Lopes.

Emellertid är denna könsintegrering inte problemfri eftersom de rådande paradigmen som styr konstruktionen av litteraturhistorien – i vars process det ingått ett uteslutande av, i det här fallet kvinnors litterära erfarenheter – ännu inte utmanats och ifrågasatts. Exempelvis har genusforskaren Isabel Santos observerat hur den samtida kritiken har svårt att hantera ett framgångsrikt författarskap som Adília Lopes som i sitt poetiska bildspråk använder sig av sin egen kropp och en litterär intertextualitet i kvinnopolitiska termer.

Tydligast framträder bilden av den litteraturhistoriska diskursens svårighet att inkludera litterär erfarenhet som inte bygger på dess traditionella

paradigm när vi söker efter *representationer* av feministisk aktivitet och feministiska författare. Att feminismens idéinnehåll fungerar som diskursens nedtystade punkt märks inte minst i att författare, kritiker och historieskrivare på ett eller annat sätt, under hela 1900-talet, med nödvändighet förhåller sig till fenomenet.

### *Den feministiska diskursens inbrott i den dominerande litterära diskursen*

I samstämmighet med övriga dominerande diskurser i slutet av 1800-talet konstituerade den litterära diskursen i första hand "kvinnan" i en objektsposition. Utav de olika diskurser och praktiker som deltog i kampen om att definiera kvinnans roll i samhället var feminismen den enda diskurs som renderade en subjektsposition<sup>8</sup> för kvinnan i den offentliga sfären. Den feministiska diskursen legitimerar därmed kvinnans symboliska intagande av författaridentitetens subjektsposition.

Trots att de kvinnliga författarnas alster under hela 1900-talet vittnar om en existentiell problematik märkt av den genusordning som rådde i det patriarkala samhälle de levde och verkade i, är deras ovilja att förknippas med feminism eller ett "kvinnligt skrivande" mycket stark. Majoriteten av dem vill varken bli sammankopplade med en feministisk aktivitet eller med att de skulle skriva en litterär text med kvinnliga markörer. Det har påpekats av andra forskare att detta motstånd i första hand skall förstås i termer av strategiska strävanden från de kvinnliga författarnas sida.<sup>9</sup> Dels handlar det om att undvika en

nedsättande särbehandling av deras litteratur på det litterära fältet på grund av sitt kön. Dels måste oviljan också ses i skenet av den massiva misskreditering fenomenet feminism har utsatts för i den portugisiska samhällsdebatten under hela 1900-talet.

I 1880-talets Portugal ser man i samhällsdebatten tydliga avtryck av den problematik som Karin Johannisson beskriver och benämner som "kvinnoproblemet" i sin bok *Den mörka kontinenten*. "Kvinnofrågan" uppmärksammas som ett samhällsproblem och diskussionerna i det offentliga samtalet rör sig mellan polerna: kvinnoemancipationen och "kvinnosjukligheten" (21). De nya feministiska idéerna från USA och Europa florerade samtidigt med de medicinska rönen som förklarade kvinnan som sjuklig till sin natur. Bilden av kvinnan som i första hand styrd av sina reproduktionsorgan legitimerade synen på henne som olämplig för aktiviteter i offentligheten. Slaget stod om kvinnors rätt till utbildning och vad denna i så fall skulle få för innehåll.

Realisternas ledande författare porträtterar i artiklar den utbildade kvinnan som en glasögonpydd varelse i kort hår och manskläder som i sin könsöverskridande abnormitet väcker löje och förakt.<sup>10</sup> I en analys av epokens institutionella diskurser framträder en bild som visar på hur litet utrymmet för en författare av kvinnligt kön kunde vara i det rådande litterära klimatet, i varje fall om hennes intentioner var att skriva för offentligheten. Hon var dels tvungen att gå emot de sociala konventionerna, vilka även gällde för den nya



kvinnoroll som realisterna i Geração 70 (1870-tals generationen) definierar i det nya positivistiska samhällsbygget. I enlighet med Proudhons<sup>11</sup> teorier tilldelades kvinnan även här hemmets och det privatas sfär. Dessutom var de gifta kvinnorna enligt lagstiftningen tvungna att inhämta sin makes medgivande för att publicera sina alster.<sup>12</sup> Kvinnans in-, eller bättre, överträdelse i offentligheten sågs som en akt hemmahörande i samma region som hennes "sjukliga" kön vilket ledde till att författarinnan såväl som feministen blev anklagade för hysteri och abnormitet.

Trots detta ofördelaktiga klimat för den kvinnliga författaren fanns det långt fler verksamma författare av kvinnligt kön än vad som framgår av litteraturhistorien. Ett faktum som i sig tyder på att den manliga dominansen inte var så allenarådande i sin samtid som nutida historieskrivningar, bland annat den litteraturhistoriska, antyder i och med sitt nedtystande av den "andre" i diskursen.<sup>13</sup> De i "kvinnofrågan" mest radikala kvinnliga författarna återfanns inom tidningsvärlden. Där debatterades feminismens idéer och publicerades författarinnornas alster. Dessa författarskap och den socialpolitiska och litterära kontext de verkade i väntar fortfarande på att skrivas in i litteraturhistorien. 14

#### *Representationerna av sekelskiftets feministiska författare*

Den enda författarinnan från perioden som lyckats inta en bestående plats i litteraturhistorien är Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho (1848–1921).

1886 publiceras *Breven till Luísa, moral, utbildning och seder (Cartas a Luíza, Moral Educação e Costumes)* som består av en samling essäer där hon debatterar en rad olika frågor som anknyter till "kvinnofrågan". Hon skriver utan reservationer in sig i realisternas positivistiska samhällsprojekt och accepterar deras premisser, inklusive bilden av kvinnan som en "sjukling" bestämd av sin biologi och därmed av naturen underställd mannen. I essän "Filosofisk betraktelse över kvinnans emancipation" (*A emancipação da mulher à luz da filosofia*) deklarerar hon sin antifeminism. Hennes starkaste argument emot en politisk och ekonomisk jämställdhet för kvinnan är att hennes sjukliga psyke inte skulle kunna klara av de påfrestningar dessa rättigheter skulle föra med sig. Och hon tillägger att det yttersta tecknet på "kvinnans sjuklighet" är just att hon trots detta faktum kräver en emancipation som skulle innebära hennes egen förgörelse (Carvalho 234–235).

I kontrast till Vaz de Carvalhos författarskap finns bland kvinnorösterna i början av 1900-talet en rad författarinnor som är uttalade feminister och som deltar aktivt i det politiska livet. Två exempel: Ana de Castro Osório skriver 1905 det verk som brukar benämnas som den portugisiska feminismens första manifest, *De Portugisiska Kvinnorna (As Mulheres Portuguesas)*.<sup>15</sup> Hon är också ordförande i den första portugisiska feministiska organisationen, A Liga Republicana das Mulheres Portuguesas, och skriver romaner och novellsamlingar. Virginia de Castro e Almeida sri-

ver romaner, novellsamlingar och ger 1913 ut verket: *Kvinnan, Kvinnans Historia (A Mulher, A história da mulher)*, där hon studerar feminismen i Europa och bl.a. ägnar ett kapitel åt Sverige.<sup>16</sup> Båda dessa författarinnor, och många fler med dem, har en romanproduktion som ägnar sig åt en omformulering och modernisering av "kvinnobilden" och kvinnans samhällsroll. Kvinnan som en sjukling styrd av sina reproduktionsorgan är ersatt med en modern utbildad kvinna som kräver sina ekonomiska och politiska rättigheter i det nya moderna samhällsbygget.

Portugal under 1900-talets första årtionden karaktäriseras av politisk turbulens. Republik införs 1910 och många av de feministiska författarna är republikaner och strider i första ledet för att kvinnans ekonomiska och juridiska rättigheter skall instiftas samtidigt med den nya regimen. När republikanerna väl tagit makten så får dessa stridande kvinnor uppleva hur deras partikamrater sviker sina löften.<sup>17</sup> 1926 sker en statskupp som förpassar Portugal in i ett gradvis allt hårdare fascistiskt styre som behåller sitt järngrepp ända fram till revolutionen den 25 april 1974. Denna fascistiska regim, Estado Novo, inför en repressiv politik i förhållande till kvinnans offentliga rättigheter. Hennes roll i nationen är makans, moderns och systemns och hennes plats är åter igen utslutande i hemmets sfär.

De ovan nämnda feministiska verken blir aldrig återutgivna och de feministiska författarna skrivs in i litteraturhistorien som i första hand barnboksförfattarinnor. I ett av de viktigaste

uppslagsverken från 1978 (Coelho) finner vi Osório och Almeida under rubriken "Infantil". De skrev också barnböcker, och deras roll som pionjärer inom barnlitteraturen skall här inte föringas men deras emancipatoriska litteratur och feministiska aktiviteter får ingen plats i historieskrivningen. I de två senaste uppslagsverken från 1996, respektive 2000 tillskrivs Ana de Castro Osório sin feministiska verksamhet men de andra samtida kvinnliga författarna är bortglömda eller förblir enbart barnboksförfattare också idag.

Däremot ges Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalhos verk *Cartas a Luíza* ut på nytt under hela 1900-talet. I serien "Kvinnobiblioteket" från 1938 ingår den som en instruktionsbok bland andra riktad till kvinnor och det blir uppenbart att verket nu är intressant just för den konservativa kvinnoroll som stipuleras. Vaz de Carvalho tenderar att i hela 1900-talets litteraturhistorieskrivning framhåvas som någon som arbetade för kvinnosaken. Visserligen uttrycks detta i diffusa termer: "hon kan anses som en pionjär inom den kulturella emancipationen för kvinnan" (Lisboa 301) eller "allierad med den nya realistiska medvetenheten om kvinnans position i samhället" (Souto 180).<sup>18</sup> På detta sätt förmedlas uppfattningen att Vaz de Carvalho gjort mer för att förverkliga kvinnans rättigheter än sekelskiftsfeministerna. Rollerna i historien har sålunda blivit omkastade och denna bild, som utvecklades under 50 år av fascistiskt styre, har fortfarande inte ifrågasatts.

Här spelar benämningen av den emancipatoriska aktiviteten en avgörande roll. Eftersom femi-

nism är ett begrepp som innebär fullständig jämställdhet mellan könen, skulle feminism svårligen kunna kopplas till Vaz de Carvalho men däremot till Osório, Almeida och andra samtida kvinnliga författare. Den vaga terminologin öppnar upp för att fylla "emancipatorisk verksamhet" med vilket innehåll som helst. I Vaz de Carvalhos fall ingår den misogynna föreställningen om kvinnan som en av naturen sjuklig varelse.

Man kan givetvis diskutera om det kan vara berättigat att tillskriva henne status som en viktig kvinnlig föregångare eftersom hon både blev kanoniserad i litteraturhistorien och som första kvinna lyckades bli invald i Vetenskapsakademien. Men det faktum att hon faktiskt skapar sitt litterära utrymme genom ett avståndstagande från samtidens feministiska författare och feminismens idéer borde komplicera det hela. När hon intar den "gisslanposition" som den traditionella diskursen tilldelar henne, skymmer hon samtidigt sikten för oss så att hennes samtida mer radikala författarinnor förpassas in i glömskan. Hennes position är inte heller särskilt ifrågasatt bland samtida litteraturforskare med genusinriktning som mest verkar vara tacksamma över att ha ett kvinnligt exempel att visa upp från denna epok. För närvarande, i det senast publicerade litteraturhistoriska verket, är Vaz de Carvalho tillsammans med Florbela Espanca de enda representanterna för kvinnliga författare under perioden 1859–1930 (*História da Literatura Portuguesa*, vol 5 och 6).

Representationen av Vaz de Carvalhos författarskap i litteraturhistorien utgör också ett exem-

pel på hur den traditionella historieskrivningen döljer feminismens betydelse i den emancipationskamp som varit en förutsättning för det mera jämställda samhälle som många finner självklart idag. Att olika historieskrivningar vägrar att tillskriva feminismen och feministerna dess historiska roll – genom utelämnande, reducerande och/eller, som i det här fallet, ombytta roller bidrar till den allmänt ohistoriska föreställningen att feminismen i sin radikalism möjligen skulle gjort mer skada än nytta.

Det är inte bara Vaz de Carvalho som tar avstånd från feminismen i syfte att öka sitt kreativa utrymme utan också de uttalade feministerna använder sig av en demoniserad föreställning om feministen i samma syfte. På så sätt återfinns nidbilden av feministen även i sekelskiftsfeministernas texter, där stort utrymme ägnas åt att polemiserar mot och ta avstånd från den gängse konstruerade bilden av feministen som en hysterisk och maskulin abnormitet. När feminismen skall rättfärdigas sker detta utifrån vad den INTE är. Man talar i termerna av en "falsk" och en "sann" feminism. Falsk feminism är ett rent imiterande av mannen vad gäller hans utseende såväl som hans vanor. Denna nidbild av feministen, som iklädd manskläder med glasögon på näsan gör om mannen till den som tar hand om hem och barn, förekommer så ofta och intar en så central roll i feministernas texter att en undran väcks huruvida "hon" verkligen utgjorde en social realitet. "Dessa kvinnor är inte feministerna utan maskulinister", utbrister till exempel författarinnan Emília de

Sousa Costa 1909 (Silva 16).

I efterhand kan man givetvis ifrågasätta strategin att definiera sig själv i motsats till en "nadbild" av den "andre" eftersom detta förmodligen bidrog till nadbildens envisa reproduktion och fortlevnad.

### *Representationerna av 1940-talets politiskt orienterade kvinnliga författare*

Också en analys av representationerna av de författarinnor som skrev mellan 1900–1950 i det rådande litteraturhistoriska verket i Portugal (*História da Literatura Portuguesa* av Saraiva/Lopes) visar på denna diskurs förträngda förhållande till kvinnopolitisk aktivitet. På en enda sida radas en bråkdel av de kvinnliga författarskap upp som var verksamma mellan slutet på 1800-talet till 1950-talet (Saraiva & Lopes).

De sporadiska omdömen som förekommer är märkta av "kvinnoproblematik" och epitetet "feminin". I inledningsparagrafen talas det om "framväxten av [en] litteratur skriven av kvinnor och frågeställningar som "fastnar" [se *prendem*] vid den sociala och politiska samhällspositionen för kvinnan" (Saraiva & Lopez 1029).<sup>19</sup> Verbet "prenderse" är ett starkt verb i sammanhanget och innebär att tematiken fastnar vid, klänger sig fast vid, kvinnans position. De feministiska författarna tilldelas korta beskrivningar som "aktivt kopplade till kampen för den kvinnliga emancipationen" (Saraiva & Lopes 1029) och "vars romaner och noveller anger den civila beroendeställningen för kvinnan" (Saraiva & Lopes 1029).<sup>20</sup> Ordet feminism nämns inte överhuvudtaget utan är nedmonterat till

"kvinnoproblematik". Alla de nämnda kvinnliga författarna är reducerade till denna "kvinno-" eller "feminina" problematik. Maria Archer och Maria Lamas, båda verksamma på 1940-talet, tvingades båda i landsflykt för sin politiska och feministiska litterära produktion och samhällsaktivism men om detta nämns inget.

Några närmare beskrivningar av deras litteratur eller dess socialpolitiska och litterära kontext finns inte. Det sätt på vilket "kvinnoosidan" reduceras och bildar svans till kapitlet som tar upp socialrealism markerar att "kvinnofrågan" ses som ett särintresse. Litteraturen är skriven av kvinnor för kvinnor och därmed är dess emancipatoriska problematik inte nödvändigtvis intressant för den dominerande kulturen. Mönstret är detsamma som i den svenska kontexten, vilket Williams observerar: "Om en könsproblematik gestaltas betraktas den som kvinnlig och förs inte fram i den allmänna diskussionen om tidens politiska och estetiska frågor. Kvinnorörelsen är inte en allmänpolitisk angelägenhet utan en kvinnoangelägenhet" (Williams 181).

Det till synes paradoxala inträffar att ovanstående kvinnliga författare skrivits in i denna litteraturhistoria just för att deras tematik innehåller ett politiskt engagemang samtidigt som deras politiska budskap reduceras i litteraturhistorieberättelsens struktur.

### *Representationerna av De tre Mariornas bok*

Det avslutande exemplet, som får illustrera hur feminism fortfarande idag inte är accepterad i

den litteraturhistoriska diskursen är *representationerna* av den världskända bok som publicerades i Portugal 1971, *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, av Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta och Maria Velho da Costa kända som de tre Mariorna. Denna bok finns översatt till svenska med titeln: *De tre Mariornas bok. Nya portugisiska brev*, utgiven av Forum 1976. Boken är av uttalad feministisk karaktär och orsakade en stor skandal i det samtida portugisiska samhället. Den fascistiska regimen åtalade författarinnorna för sedlighetsbrott och anklagade deras bok för att vara pornografisk och stridande mot den allmänna goda moralen. Processen blev långdragen och de friades först i och med revolutionen i april 1974. Boken översattes till en rad olika språk och både boken och författarna blev kända i västvärlden. *Novas Cartas* är en rik och nyskapande bok såväl tematiskt som estetiskt.

I sina gestaltningar och utforskanden av den kvinnliga sexualiteten och av olika kvinnorepresentationer i samhället, såsom modern, dottern, älskarinnan, etc. ifrågasätter den litterära texten kvinnans underordnade roll i samhället. I verket förs också en komplex litterär diskussion om intertextualitet och den kvinnliga litterära traditionens utrymme för konstnärlig kreativitet. Men också på den rent estetiska nivån ger verket exempel på genrebrott, kaotisk struktur och ett ifrågasättande av själva språkets fallogocentriska logik och struktur.

I det litterära uppslagsverket *Dicionário de Literatura Portuguesa* (Machado) reduceras

verkets politiska innehåll till att vara en "livro data-do" (daterad bok). Det vill säga i de olika representationerna av romanen tillskrivs inte längre *Novas Cartas* sin feminism i den meningen att innehållet generellt kritiserar det patriarkala samhället såsom det ser ut i västerlandet, utan dess samhällskritik knyts till Salazarregimens samhälle: "dess erotism fungerade som en provokation mot Salazarregimens censur" (152) eller "en politisk akt av symbolisk vikt mot Salazarregimen" (51).<sup>21</sup> Dock uttrycker författarna, vid ett flertal tillfällen, i klartext att kvinnans underordnade roll i det patriarkala samhället inte i första hand är knutet till den politiska regim som har makten. Förutom att verkets feministiska karaktär är reducerad i dessa beskrivningar nämns heller inget om dess estetiska värde eller dess viktiga roll som inspirationskälla och föregångare till senare litteratur.

Den portugisiska litterära diskursen har fortfarande stora problem med att införliva *Novas Cartas* i sin kanonbildning och historieskrivning. Verket studeras inte i skolorna och kluvenheten inför verket visar sig t.ex. i att dess nuvarande *representationer* skiljer sig milsvida åt i kvalitet. Utanför Portugals gränser röner *Novas Cartas* fortfarande stort intresse, vilket inte minst syns i antalet träffar på internet och i publicerade nyutgåvor. Exempelvis publicerade Library of Congress nyligen en lista "A world of Books 2000" där de samlar ett klassiskt verk från varje land som ska inspirera till läsning och det utvalda verket från Portugal blev *Novas Cartas*.

I Portugal valdes det också nyligen (2002),

av Fernando Pinto Amaral för Instituto Camões räkning, till ett av de 100 främsta portugisiska verken publicerade under 1900-talet.

Allt detta samtidigt som *História da Literatura Portuguesa*, publicerad av Alfa 2002, endast presenterar verket i denna korta passage: "Maria Teresa Horta, medverkade i den feministiska pamfletten *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (1971)" (460). Och nog är det märkligt att det senaste litteraturhistoriska verket, nedtecknat i vårt nya sekel, reducerar *Novas Cartas* till en pamflett och därmed fullständigt lyckas negligera detta verk i sin historieskrivning?

Kanske är det så att den ökade integrering av kvinnliga och manliga författarskap som den litteraturhistoriska diskursen i Portugal visar upp sedan 1970-talet, indirekt kan bero på en avsaknad av en feministisk litteraturkritik. Men en analys av diskursens problem att integrera kvinnlig litterär erfarenhet, i det här föreliggande fallet i form av feminism, visar på denna integrations brister. Dessutom skulle de ännu inte utförda feministiska omläsningarna och rekonstruktionerna av en kvinnlig litterär tradition ha kunnat hindra diskursen från att tysta all representation av kvinnliga författarskap före 1950.

## Bibliografi

- Abranches, Graça. "Verlernen um zu sprechen: Politik und Poetik portugiesischer Frauen im 20 Jahrhundert." *Portugiesische Literatur*. Ed. Henry Thorau. Frankfurt am Main, 1997. 204–235.
- Almeida, Virgínia de Castro e. *A Mulher: História da mulher, A Mulher Moderna, Educação*. Lisboa: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1913.
- Alonso, Cláudia Pazos. "Becoming Visible: Women Writers from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century." *Women, Literature and Culture in the Portuguese-Speaking World*. Ed. Alonso. UK, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996. 21–37.
- Alonso, Cláudia Pazos. *Imagens do Eu na Poesia de Florabela Espanca*. Lisboa: Casa da Moeda, 1997.
- Barreno, Maria Isabel, Maria Teresa Horta, & Maria Velho da Costa. *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*. 1972. Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1998.
- Burr, Vivian. *An Introduction to Socialconstructionism*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Carvalho, Maria Amália Vaz de. *Cartas a Luísa, Moral, Educação e Costumes*. 1886. Porto: Editora Educação Nacional, 1938.
- Coelho, Jacinto do Prado. *Dicionário de literatura: literatura portuguesa, literatura brasileira literatura galega, estilística literária*. 5 vols. Porto: Livraria Figueirinhas, 1978.
- Ferreira, Ana Paula. *A Urgência de Contar, Contos de Mulheres dos anos 40*. Lisboa: Caminho, 2002.
- Fjelkestam, Kristina. *Ungkarlsflickor, kamrathustrur och manhaftiga lesbianer: modernitetens litterära gestalter i Sverige*. Stockholm: Stehag, 2002.
- História da Literatura Portuguesa*. Vol. 5, 6 och 7.

- Lisboa: Publicações Alfa, 2002.
- Johannisson, Karin. *Den mörka kontinenten*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1994.
- Lisboa, Eugénio. *Dicionário Cronológico de Autores Portugueses*. 6 vols. Lisboa: Publicações Europa-América, 1985–2001.
- Machado, Álvaro Manuel. *Dicionário de Literatura Portuguesa*. Lisboa: Presença, 1996.
- Martins, Oliveira. *O Repórter II, Obras completas*. Lisboa: Guimarães Editores, 1957.
- Ortigão, Ramalho. *Obras Completas, As Farpas VI*. Lisboa: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1947.
- Osório, Ana de Castro. *As mulheres portuguesas*. Lisboa: Livraria Editora Viuva Tavares Cardoso, 1905.
- Perkins, David. *Is Literary History Possible?* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- Santos, Isabel Almeida. "Fode ou morre! Feminino e masculino em Irmã Barata, Irmã Batata, de Adília Lopes". *Universidade Aberta, Mestrado em Estudos sobre as Mulheres*. 2002.
- Saraiva, António José & Óscar Lopes. *História da Literatura Portuguesa*. 1955. Porto: Porto Editora, 2001.
- Silva, Maria Regina Tavares da. *Feminismo em Portugal na voz de Mulheres escritoras do início do séc. XX*. Lisboa: CIDM, 1992.
- Souto, José Correia do. *Dicionário da literatura portuguesa*, Porto, 1989.
- Williams, Anna. *Stjärnor utan stjärnbilder, Kvinnor och kanon i Litteraturhistoriska översiktsverk under 1900-talet*. Södertälje: Gidlunds förlag, 1997.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Artikeln har kommit till inom ramen för mitt avhandlingsprojekt där jag analyserar *representationer* av den kvinnliga författaren tillsammans med konstruktionen av den portugisiska litteraturhistorien som diskurs. Min korpus utgörs av litteraturhistoriska verk samt uppslagsverk över författare och litteratur från 1900-talets Portugal. Utgångspunkten har varit att i diskursens struktur och *representationer* finna svar på varför författarinnorna är så dåligt – i både kvantitativ och kvalitativ bemärkelse – *representerade* i de portugisiska litteraturhistoriska översiktsverken under 1900-talet.
- <sup>2</sup> Jag använder här *representation* i enlighet med termens betydelse inom Culture Studies och Socialkonstruktivism och lånar dess definition av Kristina Fjelkestam: "En representation i kulturanalytisk mening både beskriver och producerar kulturella föreställningar, och termen benämner därmed en ömsesidigt konstituerande rörelse mellan uttryck och verklighet" (Fjelkestam 11). Jag har valt att beteckna de berättelser som presenterar författarinnorna i verken för *representationer* och vill med det poängtera litteraturhistoriernas fiktiva berättelsekaraktär.
- <sup>3</sup> Här måste nämnas att två nya uppslagsverk över författare och litteratur publicerats och att de förmodligen kan tolkas in i detta sammanhang som ett svar på den förtroendekris som det "narrativa litteraturhistoriska verket" har gått igenom i förhållande till sin förmåga att representera det förflutna. Som Perkins påpekar i sin studie *Is Literary History Possible* så är det snarare det encyklopediska verket

som i och med sin fragmenterade berättarstruktur är den genre som bäst återger mångfalden i svunna tiders litteratur. Däremot så är det tyvärr de narrativa historieskrivningarna som fortfarande används i undervisningen såväl i grundskolan som på universiteten.

- <sup>4</sup> Första utgåvan publicerades 1955 och verket har sedan utkommit i 17 reviderade upplagor. Verket är ca 1100 sidor och i den senaste upplagan (17, 2001) behandlar 13 av de 190 sidor som täcker 1900-talet, kvinnliga författarskap, det vill säga 8 %.
- <sup>5</sup> Dessa författarinnor är: Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho under perioden 1880–1920, Florbela Espanca och Irene Lisboa från 1920–1940, Natália Correia och Sophia de Mello Breyner från 1950.
- <sup>6</sup> I original: "Em conjunto, será quando tratarmos da década de 50 que, sobretudo em prosa, encontraremos uma decidida qualificação literal geral dessa autoria feminina" (Saraiva & Lopes 1029).
- <sup>7</sup> Vilket Williams bl.a. tror kan "vara en följd av den essentialistiska genusforskningen som blomstrade under 1970-talet" (Williams 152).
- <sup>8</sup> Vivan Burr använder termen "Subject position" för att beteckna den plats, bestämd av diskursen, där en individ kan inta rollen av ett subjekt: "Discourses provide us with conceptual repertoires with which we can represent ourselves and others. They provide us with ways of describing a person, such as 'feminine', 'young' and 'disabled'. And each discourse provides a limited number of 'slots' for people. [...] These are the 'subject positions' that are available for people to occupy when they draw on this discourse. Every discourse has implicit within it a

number of such 'subjects positions', and these obviously have implications for the person who is located within them" (Burr 141).

- <sup>9</sup> Bland andra Magalhães, Isabel Allegro de. *O Tempo das Mulheres*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1987. s. 497. Och Owen, Hilary. "Um quarto que seja seu", *The Quest for Camões's sister*. *Portuguese Studies no 11*. 1995. s. 191.
- <sup>10</sup> Referenser till några av Ramalho Ortigãos och Oliveira Martins artiklar finns i min bibliografi.
- <sup>11</sup> Den franske filosofen Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (socialist och anarkist), vars teorier om samhället och familjen hade ett stort inflytande på hur realisterna i 1880-talets Portugal utformade sitt samhällsprojekt.
- <sup>12</sup> Denna lag åberopas ofta av forskare inom olika ämnen när kvinnans förtryckta position i sekelskiftets Portugal skall påtalas. Men samtidsröster antyder att denna lag var förlegad och "löjlig" redan i sin samtid, vilket tyder på att den inte längre var i bruk (Osório 1905).
- <sup>13</sup> Det är viktigt att komma ihåg att även de historiska diskurserna representerar en bild av sin samtid där de hegemoniska processerna redan lämnat sitt avtryck i form av en uteslutning av den "andres" erfarenhet.
- <sup>14</sup> Dessa kan man läsa om i Leals, Ivone. *Um Século de Periódicos Femininos*. Lisboa: CIDM, 1992.
- <sup>15</sup> Verket har hittat sin väg till Kungliga bibliotekets samlingar i Sverige.
- <sup>16</sup> Hon beskriver den svenska emancipationsrörelsen, tar upp Fredrika Bremer, Selma Lagerlöf och Ellen Key (Almeida 187–200).
- <sup>17</sup> Se Esteves, João Gomes. *A Liga Republicana das*



*Mulheres Portuguesas. Uma organização política e feminista (1909–1919)*. Lisboa: CIDM, 1999. Studien ger en utförlig presentation av den politiska aktiviteten, deras olika handlingsprogram, medlemmarna, samt problematiserar turerna kring de svikna löftena, bland annat rösträtten vilken inte kom att infrias.

<sup>18</sup> I original: "pode considerar-se, em certa medida, uma pioneira no movimento de emancipação cultural da mulher". (Lisboa , vol 2, 301) och "ligada a nova consciência realista da vida portuguesa relativa à posição social da mulher" (Souto 180)

<sup>19</sup> I original: "Um dos aspectos do alargamento temático ligado a uma nova representação da vida portuguesa é constituído pelo desenvolvimento da literatura da autoria feminina e sobre questões que se prendem com a posição social e política da mulher" (Saraiva & Lopes 1029).

<sup>20</sup> I original: "activamente ligadas a lutas de emancipação feminina e social" (Osório) och "cujors romances e contos denunciam a dependência civil da mulher portuguesa" (Archer) (História da Lit. Port. 1029).

<sup>21</sup> I samtliga fall som boken nämns i Dicionário de Literatura Portuguesa, sägs dess kritik i första hand vara riktad mot Salazarregimen. I original: "funcionou, com o seu assumido erotismo, como uma verdadeira provocação contra a censura salazarista." Och "funcionou, com um acto político de importante valor simbólico contra a censura salazarista" (Machado 152, resp. 51)



# Contributors

Susan V. Donaldson teaches in the English Department at the College of William and Mary in Virginia (U.S.A.), where she has been a member of the faculty since 1985. She is the author of *Competing Voices: The American Novel, 1865–1914* (1998), which won a Choice “Outstanding Academic Book” award, and nearly three dozen articles on southern literature, culture, and the visual arts. With Anne Goodwyn Jones she co-edited *Haunted Bodies: Gender and Southern Texts* (1997), and she has also guest-edited two special double issues of *The Faulkner Journal*, one on sexuality (1993/1994) and the other on masculinity (2000). In addition, Michael Zeitlin and she have co-edited three single issues of *The Faulkner Journal* and a forthcoming special double issue of *The Faulkner Journal* on “Faulkner, Memory, History.”

AnnaCarin Billing’s field of research is Scandinavian 20<sup>th</sup> century literature and gender theory. She received her Ph.D. in literature in 2003 with a dissertation on the Norwegian au-

thor Cora Sandel (1880–1974), *“Hvad er sannhet?” Studier i Cora Sandels novellistik (What is Truth? Studies in Cora Sandel’s Short Fiction)*. In the dissertation she examines Cora Sandel’s short stories concerning stylistic as well as thematic structures, using gender theory. Her latest project is about the Swedish poet Harriet Löwenhjelm and her poetry’s connection to the literary tradition in Sweden around 1900, also from the point of view of gender theory. AnnaCarin Billing is currently working as lecturer in literature at Mälardalens högskola in Västerås and Eskilstuna.

Jenny Björklund took her Ph.D. from the Department of Literature, Uppsala University, in 2004, with a thesis called *Hoppets lyrik. Tre diktare och en ny bild av fyrtotalismen. Ella Hillbäck, Rut Hillarp, Ann Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg (The Poetry of Hope: Three Poets and a New Conception of the Swedish Modernist Movement of the 1940s. Ella Hillbäck, Rut Hillarp, Ann Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg)*. She is working as

a teacher and a researcher at Uppsala University, and her current project examines the theme of female homosexuality in Swedish literature 1922–2005.

Jenny Bonnevier received her Ph.D. in English, American Literature, from Uppsala University in 2005. In her dissertation, *Estranging Cognition: Feminist Science Fiction and the Borders of Reason*, she explores feminist epistemological issues in the works of three science fiction writers: Ursula Le Guin, Suzy McKee Charnas, and Joanna Russ. Her research interests thus include feminist theory, epistemology, and science fiction as well as questions of (female and sexual) identity and ideology critique. Bonnevier has spent one year as a Fulbright Visiting Researcher at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Chatarina Edfeldt holds a Ph.D. in Portuguese Literature from Stockholm University. She teaches Portuguese literature and gender theory at the Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, Stockholm University. Her doctoral dissertation *Uma história na História (A History in History)* examines discursive aspects and practices concerning recognition and marginalization of literature written by women writers in 20<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese literary history.

After completing an M.A. degree in English and Philosophy at Syracuse University, New York, Anna Linzie took her Ph.D. in American Litera-

ture at the English Department, Uppsala University, in 2004. Her dissertation, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas: Almost the Same but not Quite/not Straight in the Toklas Autobiographies* (forthcoming in 2005 at University of Iowa Press), deals with the three autobiographies of Gertrude Stein's partner Alice B. Toklas and reconsiders the Stein-Toklas sexual/textual relationship through a strategic focus on Toklas as a writer and cultural laborer in her own right. Her research plans for the near future include further inquiries into the double-voiced dynamics of various writing relationships, the generic challenges of liminal autobiographies, and the ways in which the domestic realm enters the realm of art and literature.

Anna Nordlund received her doctorate in Comparative Literature at Uppsala University 2005 with a dissertation entitled *Selma Lagerlöfs underbara resa genom den svenska litteraturhistorien 1891–1996* (The Wonderful Adventures of Selma Lagerlöf through Swedish Literary Histories 1891–1996). She was a Fulbright visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley in 1999–2000. She was director of undergraduate studies at the centre for Women Studies, Uppsala University, in 2001.

Petra Ragnerstam is working as a researcher (founded by the Swedish Research Council) at the Centre for Gender Studies, Lund University. Her current project examines voice as a theore-

tical and political dilemma in American drama. Her study includes a number of plays by American playwrights from Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller to Lorraine Hansberry and David Mamet. Petra Ragnerstam took her Ph.D. at the English Department, Lund University in 2003. Her thesis is titled *Language Subject Ideology: The Politics of Representation in Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse, Djuna Barnes's Nightwood and Gertrude Stein's Lucy Church Amiablely*.

Marta Ronne has a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. Her doctor's thesis, *Två världar ett universitet. Svenska skönlitterära universitetsskildringar 1904–1943. En genusstudie (The Gendered Worlds of the University: Swedish University Fiction 1904–1943)*, published in 2000, is a comparative study of Swedish university fiction published by female and male authors 1903–1943. Her latest project examines women students in Sweden and their strategies while getting established in the discipline of literary studies between 1900 and 1940. Her present project deals with gender and literary critique in Sweden 1930–1970.

Helena Wahlström works as assistant professor in English at Gävle University College, and also teaches Gender Studies at Uppsala University. Her Ph.D. thesis in American literature was *Husbands, Lovers, and Dreamlovers: Masculinity and Female Desire in Women's Novels of the 1970s* (1997). Recent work focuses on repre-

sentations of masculinity in John Irving, Paul Auster, and Gloria Naylor, and a current project explores meanings of parenthood in contemporary American texts.

Ann Öhrberg is a teacher and researcher at the Department of Literature, Uppsala university. Her dissertation, *Vittra fruntimmer. Författarroll och retorik hos frihetstidens kvinnliga författare (Swedish Women Writers 1720–1772: Rhetorical and Sociological Perspectives)*, published in 2001, deals with Swedish authors during the eighteenth century from gender, rhetorical and sociological perspectives. At present she is working with a research project in comparative literature and rhetoric, financed by the Swedish Research Council: "Gender, Power and Religious Rhetoric in the Swedish Eighteenth-century Moravian Movement."

