

## Abstract

On the images of women portrayed by women writers of the Swedish romantic age, ('*Om jag får be om ölost*'. *Kring kvinnliga författares kvinnobilder i svensk romantik*). By Eva Borgström. Anamma förlag, Box 7260, 402 35 Göteborg  
Doctoral dissertation at the Department of Literature, University of Gothenburg  
Swedish text with summary in english. 272 pages. ISBN 9187894009

The central subjects of this thesis are the way in which the women authors used the esthetics of romanticism, and their approach to the poetics of the dominant literary movements of the time. The thesis is composed of three studies, each of which aims to capture one of the turning points of early nineteenth century images of male and female, focusing on a few of the most important women authors of that time. Each study establishes a dialogue on the images of women in the women's texts contra either those of their male fellow authors, or those presented in contemporary criticism. The women's work provides the focus and has determined how the questions addressed have been formulated. In order to be able to write within the bounds of the esthetics of romanticism, women had to deal with the androcentric mythology of gender. In the texts which have been studied here, the women authors reshaped the artistic myths of the romantic age and its images of the female so that women, too, were given a domicile in the world of literary creativity. They worked with the conceptual apparatus of the male and the female, and endowed stereotypes and established metaphors, motifs and esthetic approaches with new artistic potential.

The first study, "Women and Gothicism" revolves around the uses made of the male/female distinction in Gothicism. In the women's texts studied here - *Gefion*, 1814, by Eleonora Charlotta d'Albedyhll, *Ragnar Lodbrok*, 1853, by Thekla Knös and *Trälinnan (The Bondmaid)*, 1840, by Fredrika Bremer - questioning the androcentrism of Gothicism stands out as a step towards establishing a poetic universe in which women and the female also have a right to reside.

The second study in this thesis, "Euphrosyne and the bounds of the female nature" the confrontation is between different interpretations of complementary ideals of the sexes. Julia Christina Nyberg's (Euphrosyne) saga "The lovely Cunigunda", 1828, focuses on the relationship between life and the arts. In her saga, she portrays the patriarchal culture's view of women's nature as a straitjacket for female creativity.

C.J.L. Almqvist's novel *Det går an*, 1839, gave rise to the most heated public debate on the sexes of any nineteenth century work of Swedish literature until the morality debates a few decades later. Fredrika Bremer, Malla Silfverstolpe, Carolina von Platen, Wilhelina Stålberg and Sophie von Knorring took part in this debate, and their contributions have been described by scholars as anti-emancipatory and reactionary. The third study in this thesis, "Women authors' responses to *Det går an*" takes a polemic stance in relation to previous scholarship, claiming that the women authors' texts should rather be seen as taking an ambivalent stance towards Almqvist's utopia of love.

Key words: Romanticism, women authors, ideology of gender, Gothicism, Eleonora Charlotta d'Albedyhll, Thekla Knös, Fredrika Bremer, Julia Christina Nyberg (Euphrosyne), C.J.L. Almqvist, Malla Silfverstolpe, Carolina von Platen, Wilhelina Stålberg, Sophie von Knorring