ABSTRACT


The thesis presents the manuals for women published during the first half of the nineteenth century in Sweden. It investigates the strategies of persuasion implemented in the material and its proximity to the popular novels of the period. The thesis then specifically relates the manuals to the works of the popular Swedish author Marie Sophie Schwartz.

Since reading aloud was the primary form of reading during the nineteenth century, the texts are treated as rhetorical constructions. The thesis identifies and explores three of the most significant rhetorical strategies used to convince women of the veracity of the ideology of complementary gender roles. It demonstrates how the message of womanhood’s genuine condition, i.e. the texts’ propositio, is repeated, strengthened and recycled, how positive and negative exempla are used to emotionally involve and convince women and how the image of the speaker, with emphasis on the speaker’s ethos, appears as a carefully calculated construction.

One of the most popular novels in Europe of the time was the “moral novel” Elise, eller Qvinnan i sin fullkomlighet (Elise, or Woman in Her Perfect State) by Karoline von Wobeser. It had three printings in Sweden (1800, 1807 and 1815) and inspired an imposing body of texts. The thesis investigates the ways in which the strategies of persuasion which characterized manuals of manners reappeared in von Wobeser’s popular novel.

Marie Sophie Schwartz (1819-1854) was one of the most popular writers of thrilling love stories during the second half of the nineteenth century. The thesis analyzes a number of her works including three of her novels, Mannen af börd och qvinnan af folket, en teckning ur verkligheten (“The High-Born Man and The Woman of the People, a Story from Life”, 1858), Emancipationssvarnen (The Emancipation Mania, 1860) and En fång mans hustru (The Wife of a Vain Man, 1861), two of her short stories, Förtal (The Slander, 1851) and Författarinna och hennes man (The Authorress and Her Husband, 1864) and two of her manuals of manners for women. In these analyses, Schwartz’ use of the manual of manners genre and its strategies of persuasion are investigated. An increasing resistance within her own texts is also uncovered through the appearance of disobedient women who go unpunished. Indeed, the ethos of well-intentioned speakers is shown to be undermined, thus calling into question the stories’ central message.

The strategies explored in the thesis are shown to anticipate popular genres for today’s women in which, as in the stories of Marie Sophie Schwartz, shifts of perspective are achievable within the framework of the ideology of complementary gender roles.

Translation: Robert Lyons

Key words:
women’s literature, 19th century, complementary gender role ideology, manuals of manners, Johan Heinrich Campe, Johan Ludwig Ewald, rhetorics, Marie Sophie Schwartz, romantic reading, soap opera

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