

God dag, min läsare!

Bland berättare, brevskrivare, boktryckare och andra
bidragsgivare i tidig svensk veckopress 1730–1773

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Abstract

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Title: *God dag, min läsare! Bland berättare, brevskrivare, boktryckare och andra bidragsgivare i tidig svensk veckopress 1730–1773*

English title: *Good day, my reader! Among narrators, letter writers, printers and other contributors in early Swedish weekly press 1730-1773*

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The thesis deals with the early press of 'moral weeklies' in Sweden during the period 1730 to 1773, focussing on media technological conditions and the uses of the epistolary form. This genre, which initially followed the pattern of the English *Spectator*, emerged in the 1730s with nine journals produced in Stockholm. These were the first periodicals in Sweden that aimed to entertain as well as instruct. The study begins with the aim of finding explanations for their sudden emergence, by looking into the cultural and technological conditions of the period; such as printing, distribution, censorship practices, and potential audiences (chapters 3–6). The fall of autocracy and the rise of an early parliamentarianism provided the background. Stockholm attracted printers and book dealers, and a new generation of literati made careers in the state administration. Among these were several of the journals' editors, as well as potential readers.

In the next part (chapters 7–8), the extensive and varied use of the epistolary form in these weeklies is analysed, as serving different purposes. A closer examination and interpretation is made of the epistolary material in *Sedolärande Mercurius* [Didactic Mercury] (1730–1731), edited by Carl and Edvard Carlsson, and *Then Swänska Argus* [The Swedish Argus] (1732–1734), edited by Olof Dalin. In *Sedolärande Mercurius* a number of letters explore the theme of problems with foreign trade; and in *Then Swänska Argus* satires in epistolary form paint a picture of ideas from abroad posing a threat to social life, and especially to married life.

The last part (chapters 9–10) follows these trends further in time, by looking into the uses of the epistolary form in a couple of journals in the latter half of the 18th century: *Bref Om Blandade Ämnen* [Letters about a variety of subjects] (1754), edited by Carl Christoffer Gjörwell; and *Brefväxling* [Letter Exchange] (1772–1773) by Catharina Ahlgren. *Brefväxling* in particular differs substantially from the journals in the 1730s, a fact that is discussed in terms of a transition from oral culture to a more literary one, new trends in epistolary rhetoric, and the gender of the narrator. The methods used in the study are archival research and textual analysis.

Keywords: *Sedolärande Mercurius*, *Then Swänska Argus*, *Bref Om Blandade Ämnen*, *Brefväxling*, early periodicals, Spectator-genre, moral weeklies, epistolary form, letters to the editor, letter writing practices, eighteenth century literature, Carl Carlsson [Carleson], Edvard Carlsson [Carleson], Olof Dalin [von Dalin], Carl Christoffer Gjörwell, Catharina Ahlgren, coffee houses in Stockholm, handwritten newspapers, Eva Insenstierna