

Abstract

Anna Nordenstam: *Begynnelse. Litteraturforskningens pionjärvinnor 1850–1930*. [Beginnings. The Pioneering Women in Swedish Literary Historiography, from 1850 to 1930.], ISBN: 91-628-4689-2. Dissertation in Swedish with an English Summary, 298 pp. Department of Literature, Göteborg University, Sweden, 2001.

The present thesis is on the subject of beginnings, when Swedish women first entered the literary field and began to write about literature and to address the gender perspective. The first phase began when Sophie Leijonhufvud (married name Adlersparre) and Rosalie Olivecrona established the journal *Tidskrift för hemmet* (*The Journal of Domestic Life*, 1859), one of the main Swedish women's fora for intellectual development and dissemination of literature. The second phase began when Hilma Borelius (1869-1932) was the first woman in Sweden to defend a Ph.D. dissertation in the discipline of aesthetics, history of art and literature, at Lund University in 1909. Hence, there were two beginnings in the literary field, both relating to dissemination of literature, and addressing the gender perspective, where the main figures were intellectual women.

Part I of the thesis, "Higher education for the spirit", is a study of the origins, launch and reception of *Tidskrift för hemmet*. It also contains examples of various pseudonyms and signatures for different kinds of dissemination of literature, which provided Leijonhufvud with freedom of expression. *Tidskrift för hemmet* spoke out against a biological view of gender. The example given here is an article against Clarke's *Sex in Education* (1873). Another beginning distinguished in the present thesis was the publication, in *Tidskrift för hemmet* in 1873, the same year Swedish women were first permitted by law to obtain degrees in higher education from Swedish universities, of the first history of women's literature in Sweden.

Part II of the present thesis, "The Academy", provides a description and analysis of Borelius' activities as a literary research scholar in the academic field as well as in the field of women's culture. In her career, she was active in double fields simultaneously, and implemented double strategies. She applied a gender critical perspective primarily in her work outside the academy. In the academy she wrote about male authors, in the field of women's culture about female authors. They were, however, interrelated fields, and knowledge was also passed between them. Although Borelius may be regarded as having had quite a successful career, analysis of the minutes of faculty section meetings and legislation provide a more ambivalent picture.

In conclusion, the two beginnings that are the focus of this dissertation indicate that women complied with the rules of the literary field at the same time as they made a new contribution by examining it through the prism of the gender perspective. The thesis concludes with a brief look at the subsequent period.

Keywords: literary historiography, literary field, gender, feminist criticism, sociology of literature, *Tidskrift för hemmet*, S. Adlersparre, R. Olivecrona, H. Borelius, pioneer, turn of the twentieth century.