

”Fosterländska bilder”

Den svenska historien i 1800-talets illustrerade läromedel, historieböcker och romanfiktio

Fil. lic. Anders Nodin

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Abstract

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This study aims to examine the field of various forms of illustrated literature published during the 19th century, which deal with Swedish history. Illustrated literature is put into different but concurrent contexts, such as the world of educational ideas in school, the strive to raise the standard of adult education in the population, and the experience of reading novels. Discussions about the view on and the effect of facts and fiction, empiric applications and narrative, as well as explanation and illustration by texts and pictures, hold a central position.

The liberal patriotic ambitions to educate the nation can be seen as an encounter between different strata in society, where the initiative came from certain people and groups of interest, which were usually motivated by firm philanthropic belief. Per Adam Siljeström and Carl Georg Starbäck can be mentioned as examples. They were themselves convinced participants in the area of school or adult education. A purpose with historical learning was that to make the past familiar, partly to eliminate barriers of knowledge, partly hierarchal distance in the search for national unity and consensus.

A few decades into the 19th century historical volumes of prints and illustrations successively appeared, such as *Fosterländska Bilder 1520-1632*, by Carl Wahlbom. In these, it is the pictures that are the main feature. The texts function more as accompanying explanations, even though they can be quite extensive. A common factor in most of these works is that the pictures are made directly for the books. Picture and text belong together contextually, but the pictures carry comprehensible messages even without the text, and make up their own successive narrative structure.

During the last decades of the 19th century, a clearer division between literature for adults and young readers can be discerned. This is approximately at the same time as the frequency of illustrations increased. Within the field of historical fiction a great variety of cheap, illustrated novelettes appear. One popular example is *Gula brigadens hjältar*, written by Nils Hydén and illustrated by Einar Torsslow. The illustrations differ in technique and flavour depending on what should be expressed. Some have a monumental, almost ”eternal” character while others are more on-the-spot accounts related to the situation.

Illustrations can be illuminative and be dependent on a text from the point of view of content. They can also be included to enhance an aesthetic expression and occasionally be more or less coincidental in flavour. But often picture and text are equal in importance. They are different forms of expression, which together create something in a way that could not have been accomplished separately.

KEYWORDS: 19th Century, visual studies, word & image, illustrations, graphics, swedish art, popular culture, history, education, historical novels, liberalism, patriotism

Anders Nodin, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, P.P. 200, SE-405 30 Göteborg