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Variation på götiskt tema.  
En studie i C.J.L. Almqvists *Sviavigamal*



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ABSTRACT ::: ALMER, JOHAN, 2000. VARIATION ON A GOTHIC THEME. A STUDY OF C.J.L. ALMQVIST'S *Sviavigamal*. SWEDISH TEXT WITH A SUMMARY IN GERMAN.

This dissertation is a study of *Sviavigamal* (1849), the most extensive work of »Gothicism» fiction by Carl Jonas Love Almqvist (1793-1866). It is a work of »Gothicism» in the sense of dealing with the glorified mythical world of pagan Scandinavia, more specifically with the Old Norse legend about the settlement of the Æsir and the Vanir in Sweden. The original and traditional versions of this legend are found in the Icelandic saga-writer Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* and *Heimskringla*, both written in the 13th century. From the 17th century onwards this legend has formed the basis for several later works of poetry and historiography in the »Gothicism» tradition, which, for nationalist reasons, identifies Swedish culture with Old Norse and early Gothic culture.

Almqvist thus uses the same mythical material as Snorri and his nationalist followers in Sweden, but he interprets it in an entirely different and much more ironic way, which implies a critical attitude towards conventional nationalism. The main concern of this study is Almqvist's method of rearranging and reinterpreting nationalist myth and legend in order to present his own picture of the origins of Sweden. By analysing the text of *Sviavigamal* the dissertation defines Almqvist's highly original version of Gothicism and explores its æsthetical and ideological implications.

Chapter I introduces the unifying theme of the work: Genesis or Creation. The origin of Sweden and Swedishness is a traditional theme of Gothicism which Almqvist reinterprets. The presentation of this theme leads over to his relations to Gothicism tradition more generally and to his literary composition of the text.

Chapter II describes the settlement of Odin in Sweden as a particular motif within Gothicism tradition. The two basic motifs of *Sviavigamal*, settlement and prophecy, are analysed and compared to the same motifs in Vergil's *Æneid* and Snorri's *Edda*.

Chapter III discusses the poetics of fiction implied in *Sviavigamal*, a poetics based on the idea of Irony as a unity of jest and seriousness.

Chapter IV contains an analysis of the work's composition, including its narrative function, dominating theme and motifs, sequences of subordinate motifs, and the function of time.

Chapter V deals with some individual Norse myths, how they are transformed by Almqvist, and their function within the work.

Chapter VI analyses the social ideology of *Sviavigamal* as a variant of Utopian Mysticism, a religious and political philosophy which Almqvist has defended in theoretical works from the same period as *Sviavigamal*.

*Keywords: Gothicism, Theme, Motif, Irony, Transformation, Utopian Mysticism.*

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