

— Anna Nygren, »A special place in the heart: Human-animal affection in Lena Furberg's *Stallgänget på Tuva*«

— A B S T R A C T —

This article examines emotions in girls' relationships with horses as portrayed in Lena Furberg's cartoon *Stallgänget på Tuva* (*The Stable-Gang at Tuva*). Published in the comic *Min Häst* (*My Horse*) between 1996 and 2008, the cartoon is an example of the literary genre of the horse book and a broader culture of (fictive and non-fictive) girl-horse-relations. Show-casing a series of sequences from the cartoon, the article suggests various ways to understand the human-animal bonds in relation to other kinds of relationships, to notions of what relationships are and can be and to extant social structures, such as sexism, racism, and capitalism. In the analyses theories from the fields of feminist theory, critical animal studies and practical knowledge are employed. Haraway's notion of »companion species« is of particular importance. The article also discusses how the reader's emotions could be interpreted and touches briefly on the subject of fiction and reality, and how the borders between these are reformulated in relation to the horse book reader.

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■—Anna Nygren—■

■—A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE HEART: Human-animal affection in Lena Furberg's

Stallgänget på Tuva—■

■— As a child, I loved horses. I loved them and I was frightened of them. As a result, I read horse books. During certain periods of my childhood I read one or two horse books a day, together with children's magazines about horses. I felt I could not stop. What appealed to me were the very strong emotions described: the extreme anger, the undeniable love, the jealousy, the sorrow. The texts put into words emotions I hardly dared feel on my own. The girls in the books (they were almost always girls) had no one to trust but their horse. I felt the same; I had no one to trust but my horse, which in my case was a fictive horse. So they, we, built alliances, not with other human beings but with horses and with horse books.

Lena Furberg's (1957–) cartoons in the comic *Min Häst* (*My Horse*) were, and remain, an important part of this alliance and culture of girl-horse relations. In an interview in a special issue of the journal *Bild & Bubbla* dedicated to her work, Furberg relates how adult readers spontaneously tell her about the importance of her cartoons in their lives – as children and as adults.¹² *Stallgänget på Tuva* (*The Stable-Gang at Tuva*) is one example of Furberg's popular cartoons. Published in *Min Häst* between 1996 and 2008, it tells different stories of a group of girls that spend all their free time in a stable. The cartoon opens up for ideological as well as existential questions. Several episodes have a radical political potential, showing how girls in their relations with horses protest against patriarchal and capitalist structures. Simultaneously, the relations are governed by the girls' own premises. In this article I wish to highlight the complexity of the girl-horse-relation, the political potential it may have and the power structures it may both reproduce and reveal.

The horse book genre has long endured quite a low status in literary and academic contexts. It has, in the words of Kristin Hallberg, been seen as »mass literature for girls mad about horses«.³ A similar tendency has been registered in the attitudes towards horse riding compared to other sports in different Swedish contexts. Horse riding receives less attention and respect in media, and the general view of girls interested in horses is often patronizing.⁴ More recent studies have strengthened the value and reputation of the horse book genre,

and the same goes for the sociological interest in horse-girl cultures. The majority of the works have focused on gender aspects of the genre and community. Susanna Hedenborg's works on gender roles in human-horse-cultures in a historical perspective – especially her analysis of stable culture and work on horse books from the twentieth century – are relevant for the project in this article; this while Hedenborg focuses more on the community aspects of the stables and the relations between humans and this particular stable culture compared to other parts of society, than on the relation between girl and horse.⁵ Hilde Haugen's doctoral project »Hestens effekt på ungdoms mestringstro, selvfølelse og sosiale kompetanse« in turn examines how young people's interaction with horses can have a strengthening and therapeutic effect.⁶ Furthermore, the anthology *Över alla hinder* (ed. Hedén, Matthis & Milles) in a series of essays describes different aspects of horse-human relationships, combining a historical perspective with a discussion of girl- and womanhood in stable culture.

In this article, I will continue on the path of gender focus, but also combine it with theories from the fields of Critical Animal Studies and Practical Knowledge, and focus the gender discussions on posthumanist feminist theories, using mainly Donna Haraway's works concerning »companion species« in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and *When Species Meet* (2007). I will also employ aspects from the anthology *Kentaurer. Om interaktion mellan häst och människa* (edited by Bornemark & Ekström von Essen), which has a Practical Knowledge perspective, for an understanding of the physical relation between girl and horse.

My aim in this article is to examine different aspects of emotions between girls and horses as portrayed in selected sequences in *Stallgänget på Tuva*, and to suggest various ways to understand them in relation to other kinds of relationships, to ideas of what relationships are and can be, and to social structures. I will examine how the love for horses is portrayed in Furberg's work and analyse it in terms of love for the individual horse and for horses as a species. I will also touch upon bigger questions such as what kinds of relationships are possible between girls and horses. Moreover, I am interested in examining how horses of different breeds are treated and if there are parallels to how humans are treated, especially in relation to racism. Finally, I will also discuss the question of reading horse books and how the reader's emotions could be interpreted. I will touch briefly on the subject of fiction and reality, and how the borders between these are partly reformulated in relation to the horse book reader.

The concept of *affect* is separated from *emotions* and *feelings*. *Affect* is used to describe pre-personal bodily states and intensities; *emotion* in turn communicated cultural qualities,

and *feelings* the subjective experiences of these qualities.⁷ The phenomena that this article focuses on are emotions and feelings.

Three more general approaches to the theme are important to understand my take on the genre, the stories, and the relationships. Firstly, to understand the genre of horse books and magazines and its relation to its readers and in part the relationship between girls and horses within the narratives, I make use of the term »dream girls« coined by literary theorist Helen Asklund.⁸ The term refers to girl readers who for practical, economic or other reasons do not have any physically real relation to actual horses. They read about horses, dream about horses, yearn to know everything about horses, but they are seldom or never present in a stable. Asklund contrasts these girls to »riding girls« (going to riding schools once or several times a week, but not owning their own horses) and »stable girls« (spending all their time in the stables, with the horses, either owning their own horse or passionately taking care of other peoples horses). In this context it is the dream girl-position that interests me, since it concerns a kind of vicarious love that is extremely strong, though virtual, and impersonal in the sense of involving not only *one* horse, but *all* horses (though the dream girl can certainly have an affection for a particular fictive or physical – but ever absent – horse).

Donna Haraway, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of the practical and physical experience of living with non-human animals when writing and theorizing about them.⁹ Physical closeness to the non-human individuals fosters an antidote to the mass of abstractions and symbols connected to horses and other non-human animals within art and the humanities – from romanticism to surrealism, from psychoanalysis to (portions of) post-humanism. Working in the field of Practical Knowledge, Jonna Bornemark, Ulla Ekström von Essen, and Petra Andersson take a similar stance. They also highlight what they consider a risk with the posthumanist perspective, namely that when the dichotomy of human-animal is turned into a continuum, the underlying power structures in the relations are made less visible – as one must properly recall that it is still the human writing and theorizing about the relationship.¹⁰ I read the horse book genre in general and *Stallgänget på Tuva* and *Min Häst* in particular as potential spaces where these two positions, the dream-abstract-virtual-literary and the physical-practical, intersect and where the borders between the fictive, the biographical, the virtual and the physical are blurred – mostly through how emotions work in the cartoons.

I also wish to emphasize, with Andersson, Bornemark, Ekström von Essen, and Haraway, the importance of viewing the relationship between girl and horse, or human and non-

human as mutual but not equal.¹¹ This entails highlighting the agency of the non-human actants and paying attention to the unequal power structures structuring the relationships. These power structures are also part of the way horse books and horse culture among girls has been theorized from a feminist point of view. The girls' ability to handle the larger animal; to control the riding and care-taking situation; to be (mentally and physically) strong and active; and to take on the role of leader has been a signal traits of writings about horse books that emphasize the empowering perspectives in the genre.¹² In this article, I hope to show the ambiguous and ambivalent position the girl in question typically takes in relation to the horse – in terms of power and agency as well as regarding (re) presentation, physicality/non-physicality and emotional connections. I agree on the importance of pointing out the power differences between the horse and the human, but at the same time I am of the opinion that a posthumanist deconstruction of the humanist exclusive position, and a turn from dualism to a concept of interspecies continuum, is an affirmative way of questioning the same power differences.

— DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOVE —

Emotions that are given ample room in *Stallgänget på Tuva* are love, sorrow, and fear – often blended together, blurred and in complicated, seemingly illogical combinations. When the horse Jasmin dies, the girl Petra, who owns Jasmin, first becomes extremely sad. She does not want to remain in the stables and so be reminded of Jasmin. Jasmin has her own and very special place in Petra's heart – but she has also made Petra love all horses. After some time Petra changes her mind concerning being in the stables:

— »But then I thought of the wonderful years Jasmin gave me ... How she made me love not only her, but all horses!«
 »And of course I couldn't throw away Jasmin's gift to me!«¹³

I read this as two different kinds of love, the particular and the universal, which are separated and yet also a part of each other. The human emotion of love towards horses is at the same time exclusive, between one horse and one human, and very broad, between one human and all horses. Thus the personal love furnishes a path toward an extended love and solidarity with another species. In this way the love for an individual being makes a broader political alliance possible. Haraway describes something similar in relation to her love of dogs: »I got curious, and I fell in love. [...] I fell in love with kinds as well as with individuals.«¹⁴ She further explains the concept *companion species*, which she uses to examine the nonhuman-human

relationship: »Companion species also points to the sorts of being made possible at interfaces among different human communities of practice for whom 'love of the breed' or 'love of dogs' is a practical and ethical imperative in an always specific, historical context.«¹⁵ This way of understanding can be applied also to the community described in *Stallgänget på Tuva*. The love of an individual renders it almost impossible not to love also the kin, the kind, the breed and the species, and this love informs and enriches the whole of life in the most tangible ways. Writing from a posthumanist feminist perspective, Rosi Braidotti argues in *The Posthuman* (2013) that »the point about posthuman relations [...] is to see the inter-*relation* human/animal as constitutive of the identity of *each*. It is a transformative or symbiotic relation that hybridizes and alters the 'nature' of each one and foregrounds the middle grounds of their interaction.«¹⁶ This corresponds to the way Jasmin changes Petra, and how Petra's love for Jasmin at once transforms her and re-constructs her. Similarly, Haraway refers to the bio-anthropologist Barbara Smuts, who through concrete meetings with baboons, and a kind of »becoming-with« the baboons, allowed her research project to extend to the non-human, and herself to engage with the other.¹⁷ Petra lets herself be changed by Jasmin. This could be regarded as the result of a human-animal alliance, a close and loving relationship of the sort that Helena Pedersen, with reference to Carmen Dell'Aversano, calls »radically subversive«, because it decentralizes the human from the position of a subject taken for granted.¹⁸

The different theoretical perspectives that I have brought up so far have several similarities – but also harbour important differences. Braidotti is clearly negative to the concept of anthropomorphizing as a way of »extending humanity into the non-human«. ¹⁹ Andersson on the other hand, sees (a certain degree of) anthropomorphizing as necessary when it comes to understanding horses. She argues that the relationship between horse and human (referring to physical relations, not literary ones) on behalf of the human is situated between anthropomorphizing and estrangement. In her view it is not possible to fully understand the animal-other, but rather than letting the fear of anthropomorphizing prevent her from seeing similarities and make the horse into a stranger, she assumes that the horse she spends time with is not completely incomprehensible to her.²⁰ The relationships in *Stallgänget på Tuva* linger on the border between anthropomorphizing and estrangement. Sometimes the horse is portrayed as an incomprehensible stranger to the girl (and this sometimes means that the relationship has to end) and sometimes the horse is more comprehensible than other humans, or even more comprehensible than the girl is to herself.

In Furberg's cartoon, love is also intertwined with the emotion of fear. When the girl Lina is injured in an accident she

gets scared. First and foremost it is horse jumping that scares her: »But ... jumping? Lina's stomach tied itself up in tight knots.«²¹ It is a physically manifested feeling of fear. But at the same time it is impossible for Lina to stop loving horses. Her love becomes impractical, and thus forms a contrast to the kind of interest in horses that only focuses on riding (what Asklund calls characteristic of the riding girls).²² Lina's love is a contradictory and complicated love since the horse-girl-relationship is constituted by, or expected to be formed through, riding. It is a love filled with fear, with physicality, fantasy and longing.

This kind of love is also connected to »problematic horses«, horses that are not easy to ride, who are diseased, troublesome or violent. A more critical view of the relationship between the girl and the »problematic horse«, could compare this narrative to that of a woman and a »problematic« man, as a sort of female sacrifice and self-destructive caretaking.²³ Andersson's research on academic and non-academic horse girl cultures shows that there is a strong urge among researchers and writers to explain *why* girls like horses and horse riding. The answers to the question is often psychologising and sexualizing. Andersson mentions a number of common responses to such questions, among which are; the interest in horses is a kind of preparation for the girl's heterosexual relation to a man, and; girls do horse riding because it makes it possible for them to practice their female and motherly virtues.²⁴ That the comparison between the love of horses and the heterosexual feminine care-taking can be criticized and problematized, does not need to exclude that there are similarities in the tendency to take care of and hold on to an impossible love (regardless of whether this tendency is seen as innate, learned, a result of oppression, a way of exercising power, make alliances, express sympathy or solidarity or all of the above or something else altogether). The tendency to hold on could also be regarded as non-feminist, at the same time as a negative critique of the tendency could also be problematic from a feminist point of view. In sum, the girl vis-à-vis-problematic-horse relationship could be an example of an ambiguous kind of bond that the girl and the horse share. A love, perhaps, that is as destructive as constructive.

The unpractical love that the fear exposes and that exists in the girls' relations to the so-called »problematic horses« can be put in contrast to a more action-related love that also exists in the stables. This latter love is for example shown when the girl Bea describes what she plans to do when her horse Granis can no longer be used for harness racing: »There was no end to how much fun one could have with horses; riding, driving, training, competing, they could be ones best friends. And one never knows **what** could happen!«²⁵ It is a love that is also aimed

toward what humans can *do* with horses. Here the love for the horse as an individual, a species, a body, mingles with the love for horses as collective embodiments of potential activities and actions. These kinds of love could be regarded as incompatible, but they are still united in the girls in *Stallgänget på Tuva*. So the stable is a place for all feelings, all experiences.

The emotions also lead to actions. The girls in the cartoon – and their readers – feel with the horses. It could manifest itself in a longing for a horse of one's own, but also in anger when facing injustices and cruelty (against horses, but also against other non-human animals) or irritation at how prejudices connected to gender, species, social class or other perceived relevant factors influence how humans treat non-humans. One example of how emotions lead to actions is how the girl Bea's love for the horse Skrållan saves Skrållan's life: »But still ... if Bea hadn't had the courage to lend her heart for a while ... what would have happened to Skrållan? She had probably been sent to the slaughterhouse.«²⁶ Love is described as something hard, something that Bea, and other girls, need the courage to articulate publicly, but that has a great power and a potential to save lives – even though this life-saving opportunity is not equal, but in itself something that influences the power structures in the horse-girl-relationship.

— RACISM AND RIGHTS —

The episode about Bea and Skrållan could be read in the context of racist and capitalist views of horses.²⁷ Skrållan is a racehorse who has not done very well on the racetrack. Thus her owner considers her »worthless«. This makes it obvious how the horse's life is determined by a capitalist structure – something the girls in *Stallgänget på Tuva* fight. The capitalist structure is also a racist structure, since the trotter is regarded as a specific breed, and different breeds are treated differently. Another example shows the discrimination even more clearly. The girls Anna and Linn are looking for a trainer to their horse Queen:

— »Thanks, but I don't work with ex-trotters.«

»I specialize in warmbloods performing in dressage.«

»I ... I have too much at the moment.«

»'Too much'?! Then why is he advertising [for horses to train]?!«

Anna and Linn were both angry and disappointed. This was racial discrimination!!

»I'm going mad!! This is so unfair! Just because Queen has been a trotter!!«

»If they would do this to humans you could report it to the police!«²⁸

Anna and Linn make a connection to racial discrimination and so implicitly construe a connection between how humans and animals are unfairly treated. Writing about her relationship with her dog Cayenne, Haraway makes the same connection between racialization among humans and nonhumans: »One of us, product of a vast genetic mixture, is called 'purebred.' One of us, equally a product of a vast mixture, is called 'white.' Each of these names designates a different racial discourse, and we both inherit their consequences in our flesh.«²⁹ Is this racial discrimination against the horse more of an indirect discrimination of the girl-horse relation, or of the girl, than of the horse? Haraway puts it as follows, connecting a rhetoric of rights with a capitalist structure: »creating demand for »treatment« is crucial to market success. [...] I feel obligated to investigate and buy all the appropriate supplements that ride the wavering line between foods and drugs [...] Dogs in capitalist technoculture have acquired the »right to health,« and the economic (as well as legal) implications are legion.«³⁰ There is a strong intersection between racialized hierarchies and capitalist structures in the description of Queen's situation.

When Anna and Catherine take the wounded Queen to the veterinary, it becomes clear that the discrimination also has fatal consequences, since the veterinary does not want to treat Queen. »He didn't even try – he simply ignored us! And – you know why, don't you?!' 'Because to him Queen is only a worthless ex-trotter!'«³¹ The racial discrimination in the horse community described in *Tuva* connects racism to issues of class and capitalism. It is the money that counts. And the breed, the pedigree, is connected to the money. The hierarchy among horse breeds are based on human behaviour and human use of horses. This system of categorisation, hierarchization, makes possible an oppression of both non-humans and humans. In *Stallgänget på Tuva* the oppression causes anger and frustration – emotions that might also affect the reader.

— READING EMOTIONS —

Most experiences described in the cartoon are subjective feelings, one girl's feelings for one horse, or several horses. But I would argue that there are also some more collective experiences at work here, both in the fiction and in the readers reading the comics. It is not only psychologically interesting or explainable emotions that are part of the narrative and the world it creates and the emotions are not only to be understood on an individual level. The collectivity formed by the girls within the fiction and with the (girl) readers is based on common emotions – on the way the human girls feel for the non-human. Furberg also uses different kinds of truth claims and meta-fictive elements – like introducing new characters to the story which have already read the comics, and presenting the

narratives as based on true stories – in a complex way to create a world that includes both physical reality and fictive or virtual stories to place the readers within the fiction and furthermore complicate the relationship and the representation of it.

The emotions between girl and horse are simultaneously strictly personal and part of a greater whole; they are individual and physical, as well as aimed at both real and virtual horses. Much more could be said about the way *these* girls relate to horses (*these* horses and all horses), which could be compared with how humans in other contexts relate to non-humans on an emotional, personal, collective and cultural level. Here, I will touch on the topic very briefly. It boils down to the question of *how humans love non-humans*. This question though, is all too focused on the human part of the relationship and so ignores the way the non-human relates to the human – a perspective that is harder to analyze since it necessarily involves a writing practice that in itself is anthropomorphizing (a point that conversely does not mean that I think it is possible to fully describe the human girls' feelings in words). The perspectives presented by Haraway and Andersson are useful in order to understand the girl-horse-relation in *Stallgänget på Tuva*. Haraway writes about concrete animal and human interactions, how their bodies are, or can be, attuned to each other, and she refers to the ethologist Jean-Claude Barrey, who has studied riders and horses: »Human bodies have been transformed by and into a horse's body. [...] Both embody each other's mind'«. ³² In connection to the narratives in *Stallgänget på Tuva* and other horse books, I would say this state of attunement is both something that occasionally happens and something that the girls desire and long for. The »alliances« between humans and non-humans that Haraway writes about, which are queer and radical in the way they decentralize the human subject, are at the center of the girl-horse-relation and the culture it creates – but not in an non-complicated way, as I have already pointed out. The love for the horse could also be a way of oppressing the same (and other) horses, and the relation, just as every other relation, for example those between humans or groups of humans, can never be equal.

Another important aspect of the girl-horse-relationship in *Stallgänget på Tuva* involves various forms of failure: failure to feel the connection between girl and horse, failure to understand and to care for the other in the right way. Just like the »dream girls« might be said to fail in their love – they do not get the horse they long for – the dreams of the Tuva-girls are not always fulfilled. As the case of the »problematic loves« shows, the stable at *Tuva* is replete with failed relationships, and this is something that probably is familiar to most readers of the cartoon. From my own experience of reading *Stallgänget på Tuva* and other texts in the horse book genre, I would say that

the cartoons could comfort me and empower me at times when my more physical horse-relations were not what I wanted them to be. In a way this situation could be compared to the one analysed in Janice A. Radway's seminal *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1984, 1991). In the second edition of the book Radway is critical of her own work, but still comments on the interesting results from an analysis that combines and compares a focus on the reading as *event* and the text in question. Her work concerns »women who saw themselves first as wives and mothers« and for which the reading of the romances was a sort of emancipatory, social activity, even though the chosen texts in many ways proved to express typically patriarchal narratives.³³ In the same way as their reading of the heterosexual romance can be read in relation to the women's own situation within the heterosexual structures of desire, the horse-book reader's reading of the happy horse-girl relation could be read as a way of through fiction vicariously receiving what one desires but lacks in the real world. What is interesting in Radway's analysis in the present context is the way she connects a particular text to a particular space and a particular audience.³⁴ Of course this unveils some of the patriarchal ideas of universal values and what can gain these values (i.e. stories of women and girls and horses are not of universal interest) – but there is something interesting in the almost separatist construction of the particular group. A particularity that is certainly present in the reading of the horse book genre. The problems of reading genre books – as a scholar or as an »ordinary« reader, as a girl or as her future adult version – are several, connected to analysed and non-analysed affects and reactions, to critical and non-critical positions, to political standpoints, desires and pleasure. Here I will venture only a few comments.

Writing about the chick-lit genre, Maria Nilsson discusses the importance of avoiding a polarized reading that sees the genre as either »traditional« or »subversive«, rather recommending a reading that recognizes the ambiguities in the texts. The tendency to defend the genre and its readers is just as unproductive as the critique of pop culture.³⁵ One way of avoiding this tendency would be to take the emotions connected to the reading and the narratives seriously. An analysis of these emotions, combined with a discourse analysis informed about power hierarchies within the fictions as well as the reader's situation, and in the case of horse books also within the human community of horse lovers as well as its surroundings, would be one way to do this.

When reading about the emotions and the situations creating them, these emotions also impact the reader. And I would argue that the genre conventions of horse books, as well as of youth literature in general, might be said to both be aware of this

affective impact, and to make use of its known or inferred effects by way of how it addresses the readers. How should the girl reader's emotions from reading the horse books be interpreted? When trying to answer this question, my thoughts on the subject have shifted a lot. In *Touching Feeling* (2003) Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes about reading and affect in several interesting ways. In the essay »Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid You Probably Think This Essay Is About You« she reflects upon the influence that the so-called »hermeneutics of suspicion« has had on critical thinking and queer theory. She suggests that a paranoid reading should be considered not the only way of reading, but one of many possible readings.³⁶ A paranoid reading in the context of the horse book genre might suggest that the affection between girl and horse is a way of reproducing the woman-nature bond that a binary world view suggests and furthermore what is expected of female caretaking; a way of incorporating ideas of ownership by making the reader desire to own another being; a way of civilizing girls in to a hard work moral, or a way of strengthening the role of a monogamy in relationships. And the affects that the writers and publishers might be aware of could in the same way be viewed as way of getting the reader caught up in emotions instead of critically reading the texts. This way of reading the genre should not be ignored. However, Kosofsky Sedgwick's way of stressing the importance of non-dualism opens up for a position where this reading could be combined with more reparative ones. A reparative reading would highlight the companionship and alliances described in *Stallgänget på Tuva*. It could also make sense of the way emotions could be used as strengths, as ways of feeling solidarity, motivating action – and in this case opening up readers' minds to non-human relations, suggesting possible ways of resisting gender roles. The emotions I find conveyed in *Stallgänget på Tuva* are, among others, anger, sorrow and frustration at not being understood, and a kind of love that might also make the reader jealous. The feelings are often directed against an adult world, and create an alliance between the fictive girls and the readers, based on recognition – real or imagined.

Kosofsky Sedgwick also presents an interesting view on the position of the reading body. She compares »the lowering of the eyelids, the lowering of the eyes, the hanging of the head« of a reading person with descriptions of attitudes of shame and argues that there is a »force-field creating power of this attitude«. According to Kosofsky Sedgwick this power cannot (only) be understood as the escapism of reading – an escape from »the 'real world' [...] the 'responsibility' of 'acting' or 'performing' in that world« – but as a way of expressing attention and interest.³⁷ The connection to shame might seem farfetched in this context – but I contend it is not really so.

Kosofsky Sedgwick describes how »[w]ithout positive affect, there can be no shame: only a scene that offers you enjoyment or engages your interest can make you blush.«³⁸ And the horse book reader certainly recognizes this: the need to defend horses and her love of horses; horse books and her love for such book, from grownups who find the genre of low quality, from similarly aged boys (and sometimes but more seldom girls) who find the love of horses silly – and how this need to be defensive after a while makes one doubt one's own feelings and taste, hiding the book as well as the bag with riding clothes.

— CONCLUSIONS: DIFFERENCE AND SOLIDARITY —

In this article I have attempted to describe a few different entries into the field of emotions in the girl-horse-relationship as represented in Lena Furberg's cartoon *Stallgänget på Tuva*. The main focus has been on girls' feelings for horses, which is also the part of the relation that is described in the cartoon. The relation is mutual, which the cartoon also stresses, but the experiences of the horses are not in focus – a fact that is also part of the bigger question that I have briefly touched on; namely, what can the relationship between a girl, or girls, and a horse, or horses, be? Since this is a complex question, the space of this article has only allowed me to outline a few possibilities toward a further understanding of its parameters.

To conclude, I want to stress the way in which the horse book genre in general, and *Stallgänget på Tuva* in particular, evokes a time and a place where different emotions are intertwined in a complicated way – and this in a fashion that makes any kind of distinction between reproduction of and resistance against norms impossible. Intense emotions affect the ordinary lives and the way of thinking, feeling and acting of the fictive as well as real girls (and indirectly, the horses) involved. As Hedén, Matthis and Milles express it in *Över alla hinder*, life as a horse-loving girl involves the most extreme happiness but also the deepest violations and mockery.³⁹ The world outside the stables does not understand or value the emotions and the knowledge and the life of the horses and girls. This is connected to the way stable culture is feminized (or girlized), which in turn influences the devaluation of horse riding as a sport and of the horse books as a literary genre. This devaluation is certainly a significant part of the horse-girl-lives and the structures affecting it, but I also think that these terms (»sport« and »literary genre«) might be too narrow to express the connection between horse and girl and how the relationships affect the lives of the ones involved and the way they regard life.

The stories in *Stallgänget på Tuva* concern the situated, the specific, the embedded and embodied feelings and emotions between particular girls and horses. But they also touch upon

the universal: the love of all horses, the alliance with another species. I am not always sure what kinds of stories are told. The stories are not purely good, nor are the contexts or the emotions. But they open up for possibilities. Kosofsky Sedgwick writes: »My premise is that touch ramifies and shapes accountability. Accountability, caring for, being affected, and entering into responsibility are not ethical abstractions; these mundane, prosaic things are the result of having truck with each other.«⁴⁰ In relation to the horses drawn and written by Furberg, I wonder, is it possible to touch a fictive horse? To be touched by one, or by many? Several episodes in *Stallgänget på Tuva* are certainly touching, and I would argue that the different kinds of touching have a lot in common in the context of a girl-horse-culture that makes no clear distinction between fact and fiction. The stories in *Tuva* are stories about difference and similarities – between the readers and the fictive characters, between the girls and the horses. And I read them as a possible opening for regarding difference as solidarity, to see hard work and troubled feelings as a kind of love. ■

■ — ENDNOTES —

1 Fanny Bystedt: »Lena Furberg – kvinnan med kärlek till allt hon gör« in *Bild & Bubbla* 191:2 (2012), 59.

2 The issue also contains a cartoon by Maria Wigelius that expresses the influence from Furberg on her own artistic work as well as on her own love for horses. (Maria Wigelius: »En serieuppväxt« in *Bild & Bubbla* 191:2 (2012).

3 Kristin Hallberg: »Hästböcker: En litteratur att ta på allvar« in *Opsis Kalopsis* 2 (2003), 35. All translations from the Swedish by the author.

4 Petra Andersson: »Ingen riktig sport?« in Jonna Bornemark and Ulla Ekström von Essen (eds.): *Kentauren. Om interaktion mellan häst och människa* (Stockholm, 2010), 92 pp.

5 Susanna Hedenborg: »Från *Den svarta hingsten* till *Klara, färdiga, gå*. Stallbackskultur i hästboken under andra hälften av 1900-talet« in *Barnboken* 1 (2006).

6 <http://www.hestogundom.no/> (2015-12-13).

7 See for example Eric Shouse: »Feeling, Emotion, Affect« in *M/C Journal*, 8:6 (2005) and Brian Massumi, »Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgement« in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus* (tr.) Brian Massumi (Minneapolis & London, 1987 [1980]), xvi.

8 Helen Asklund: »Hästflickan i förändring i Linn [sic] Hallbergs och Pia Hagmars hästböcker«, in Eva Söderberg, Mia Österlund and Bodil Formark (eds.): *Flicktion: Perspektiv på flickan i fiktionen* (Malmö, 2013).

9 Donna J. Haraway: *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago, 2003), 3.

10 Jonna Bornemark & Ulla Ekström von Essen: »Inled-

ning« in Jonna Bornemark and Ulla Ekström von Essen (eds.): *Kentauren. Om interaktion mellan häst och människa* (Stockholm, 2010), 16.

11 Andersson: »Du säger ingenting – men du pratar hela tiden« in Bornemark & Ekström von Essen (eds.): *Kentauren*, 35 pp. Bornemark & von Essen, *Kentauren*, 15.

12 Hallberg: »Hästböcker: En litteratur att ta på allvar«, 38.

13 Lena Furberg: »Jasmin, min fina vackra Jasmin!!« in *Stallgänget på Tuva. Volym 10* (2010), 81.

14 Donna J. Haraway: *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis & London, 2007), 96.

15 Haraway: *When Species Meet*, 134.

16 Rosi Braidotti: *The posthuman* (Cambridge, 2013), 79.

17 Haraway: *When Species Meet*, 23.

18 Helena Pedersen: »Queerforskning och djurstudier: kreativa korsbefruktningar« in *lambda nordica* 4 (2011), 18 pp.

19 Braidotti: *The posthuman*, 79.

20 Andersson: »Du säger ingenting – men du pratar hela tiden«, 32–36.

21 »Men ... hoppa då? Det knöt sig, hårt, i Linas mage.«

Furberg: »Lina Johansson, var god rid!« in *Stallgänget på Tuva. Volym 4* (2007), 14.

22 Asklund: »Hästhickan i förändring i Linn [sic] Hallbergs och Pia Hagmars hästböcker«, 245.

23 In this context, it is also relevant to note that the name Killen in Swedish means »boy«.

24 Andersson: »Ingen riktig sport«, 92–96.

25 Furberg: »Ett nytt år – och en ny kompis!« in *Stallgänget på Tuva. Volym 4*, 76.

26 »Och ändå ... om Bea inte vågat låna ut sitt hjärta för en tid ... hur hade det då gått för Skrållan? Antagligen hade hon gått till slakt.«

Furberg: »Att mista – och att få tillbaka ...« in *Stallgänget på Tuva. Volym 4*, 86.

27 I use a universal term as »racism« here in line with how the situations are described in Furberg's cartoon. I do not claim that this is a correct (or in every possible situation correct) understanding of the term, but it certainly has similarities with Haraways use of it. In that way I argue that the worldview in Furberg's work (which partly reflects the context of *Min Häst* as a whole) can be combined with the one that Haraway and Andersson express. It is a view of the world that recognizes oppressive structures, but sometimes in a universalistic way, e.i. most grown-up horse owners are described as evil, and boys are often described as enemies – and the kind grown-ups (for example parents) and boys are described as exceptions – and there is a strong sense of responsibility among the girls, and (an informal) teaching of good horsemanship – and little questioning of what that means.

- 28 Furberg: *Stallgänget på Tuva. Volym 7* (2009), 46.
- 29 Haraway: *When Species Meet*, 15.
- 30 Haraway: *When Species Meet*, 49.
- 31 Furberg: *Stallgänget på Tuva. Volym 7*, 87.
- 32 Haraway: *When Species Meet*, 229; Vinciance Despret: »The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthro-po-zoo-genesis« in *Body & Society*, 10: 2-3 (2004), 115.
- 33 Janice A. Radway: *Reading the Romance. Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill & London, 1991), 7.
- 34 Radway: *Reading the Romance*, 7.
- 35 Maria Nilsson: »Skeva och queera läsningar av chick lit« in Nilsson & Ehriander (eds.): *Chick lit – brokiga läsningar och didaktiska utmaningar* (Stockholm, 2012).
- 36 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick: *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham & London, 2003), 130.
- 37 Kosofsky Sedgwick: *Touching Feeling*, 114–115.
- 38 Kosofsky Sedgwick: *Touching Feeling*, 116.
- 39 Anne Hedén, Moa Matthis and Ulrika Milles: *Över alla hinder: En civilisationshistoria* (Stockholm, 2000), 8.
- 40 Kosofsky Sedgwick: *Touching Feeling*, 36.
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