

Sammlaren

Tidskrift för forskning om
svensk och annan nordisk litteratur
Årgång 140 2019

I distribution:
Eddy.se

Svenska Litteratursällskapet

REDAKTIONSKOMMITTÉ:

Berkeley: Linda Rugg
Göteborg: Lisbeth Larsson
Köpenhamn: Johnny Kondrup
Lund: Erik Hedling, Eva Hættner Aurelius
München: Annegret Heitmann
Oslo: Elisabeth Oxfeldt
Stockholm: Anders Cullhed, Anders Olsson, Boel Westin
Tartu: Daniel Sävborg
Uppsala: Torsten Pettersson, Johan Svedjedal
Zürich: Klaus Müller-Wille
Åbo: Claes Ahlund

Redaktörer: Jon Viklund (uppsatser) och Sigrid Schottenius Cullhed (recensioner)
Biträdande redaktör: Karl Berglund, Niclas Johansson, Camilla Wallin Lämsä

Inlagans typografi: Anders Svedin

Utgiven med stöd av Vetenskapsrådet

Bidrag till *Samlaren* insändes digitalt i ordbehandlingsprogrammet Word till info@svelitt.se. Konsultera skribentinstruktionerna på sällskapets hemsida innan du skickar in. Sista inlämningsdatum för uppsatser till nästa årgång av *Samlaren* är 15 juni 2020 och för recensioner 1 september 2020. *Samlaren* publiceras även digitalt, varför den som sänder in material till *Samlaren* därmed anses medge digital publicering. Den digitala utgåvan nås på: <http://www.svelitt.se/samlaren/index.html>. Sällskapet avser att kontinuerligt tillgängliggöra även äldre årgångar av tidskriften.

Svenska Litteratursällskapet tackar de personer som under det senaste året ställt sig till förfogande som bedömare av inkomna manuskript.

Svenska Litteratursällskapet PG: 5367–8.

Svenska Litteratursällskapets hemsida kan nås via adressen www.svelitt.se.

ISBN 978-91-87666-39-1

ISSN 0348-6133

Printed in Lithuania by
Balto print, Vilnius 2019

skriver att hon är medveten om maktdimensionen av Tonys relation med doktor Iller och att han har uppenbart negativa sidor – han inleder en kärleksrelation med sin allt sjukare patient, ser till att hon hamnar på sinnessjukhus och förnekar därefter att de har haft en relation. Men Jakobsson understryker att hon vill undersöka komplexiteten i relationen, vilket bland annat innebär att hon lyfter fram hur doktor Iller står för en lyckad sexualupplysning i samband med Tony. Även om Tony tvingas underkasta sig brutala behandlingsmetoder under sin vistelse på sinnessjukhuset innebär vistelsen också ett skevande av livslinjen som visserligen medför förlust men som också problematiserar kvinnoblivandet: ”Kroppens queera temporalitet öppnar för alternativ användning av tid och rum och den gestaltas ambivalent, som förlust men också möjlighet att undkomma svåra problem som relaterar till att bli kvinna” (119). I de exempel Halberstam tar upp i sin bok väljer karaktärerna i allmänhet själva negativitet och radikal passivitet, och de har därmed en viss agens. Jag upplever att Tony har relativt lite makt och agens i romanen och att hon befinner sig mer eller mindre i händerna på män med makt omkring henne – i synnerhet doktor Iller, men även fadern och läkarna på sjukhuset. Jag hade velat veta hur Jakobsson ser på makt och agens i relation till skevande och motstånd i skildringarna av Tonys vistelse på sinnessjukhuset. Kan skevandet vara subversivt även om Tony saknar makt och agens?

Frågorna om hur skevandet av livslinjen förhåller sig till makt och motstånd är komplexa, men relationen mellan queer negativitet, motstånd och hopp om en bättre framtid har diskuterats inte bara av Halberstam, utan även av andra queerteoretiker, som Sara Ahmed och José Esteban Muñoz. Jakobsson hade kunnat knyta an till den diskussionen och gå till botten med vad skevandet av livslinjen verkligen innebär, snarare än att stanna vid att konstatera att det äger rum och hur det går till. Ett annat exempel där jag gärna sett ytterligare teoretisk fördjupning och problematisering är kring ”sjukdoms-genus”, ett begrepp som Jakobsson lanserar i Judith Butlers efterföljd för att beskriva hur patienternas kroppar på sinnessjukhuset blir obegripliga: ”Det är genus påverkat av patienternas sinnessjukdom och vistelse på sinnessjukhuset där de är frihetsberövade. Sjukdomen och sjukhuset ’stör’ patienternas genus, gör det instabilt och obegripligt, vilket främst tar sig skevt åldersmärkta uttryck” (113–114). Jakobsson talar framför allt om att obegripligheten kommer till uttryck genom ålder – kropparna

är åldersmässigt osammanhängande – men skriver också att sjukdoms-genus är klasskodat och att patienternas begär tar sig djuriska uttryck. Här hade jag önskat en djupare diskussion av hur begreppet sjukdoms-genus kan förstås i relation till Butlers resonemang kring genus, som ju vilar på en binaritet som utgår ifrån föreställningen om kön. Hur representationerna av patienternas åldersuttryck förhåller sig till en föreställd könsbinaritet är inte något som Jakobsson diskuterar närmare i det här avsnittet, även om hon säger sig bygga vidare på Butlers teori om genus.

Dessa invändningar till trots är *Jag är kvinna* en gedigen och läsvärd avhandling som bidrar med nya infallsvinklar på Krusenstjernas författarskap och som dessutom präglas av mycket god akribi. En av avhandlingens största styrkor är att den visar hur queerteorin har ett bredare användningsområde och kan användas på ett produktivt sätt för att analysera även heterosexuella företeelser. På så vis öppnar avhandlingen nya perspektiv också bortom Krusenstjerna-forskningen. Den väcker också spännande frågor om skev- och queerhet i relation till makt och motstånd – frågor som visserligen inte besvaras i avhandlingen, men som kan och bör inspirera till fortsatt forskning inom detta område, där Jakobssons studie är ett pionjärbete.

Jenny Björklund

Lars Liljegren, *The Taming of a Viking: August Strindberg, Translation and Post-Victorian Censorship*. Linköping Studies in Arts and Sciences 754; Studies in Language and Culture 31. Department of Culture and Communication, Linköping University. Linköping 2018.

This thesis investigates how the translation and further reception of August Strindberg in the United Kingdom and also (albeit to a slightly lesser extent) in the United States had a very slow and difficult start—mainly or partly owing to the restrictive effects of the Obscene Publications Act from 1857. This censorial environment compelled the early translators to “tame” the “Viking,” who ended up looking and sounding disappointingly un-Viking-like in English.

More specifically, the study focusses on one narrative work by Strindberg, namely, his two-volume collection of short stories *Giftas* (1884 and 1886), and its first English translation, which was pub-

lished almost three decades later under the title *Married* (1913). This translation was done by one Ellie Schleussner, then a relatively unknown translator, who worked not from the Swedish directly, but from an intermediary German translation by Emil Schering. Schering's German translation remained fairly close to Strindberg's original, so the "taming" can be said to have occurred between this German intertext and Schleussner's rewriting of it in English. Until the publication in 1972 of Mary Sandbach's translation of *Giftas* (which was done directly from the Swedish), Ellie Schleussner's translation actually remained the only one in English of this work.

As the author explains in the Foreword and then once more in the Epilogue to his thesis, sounding a clear note of displeasure, Schleussner's version is still very much present today. It is still for sale (for instance, on Amazon) and is still occasionally passed off as the real thing in English, sometimes even by scholars. This is problematic inasmuch as the pressures of censorship resulted in Ellie Schleussner giving a toned-down rendering of Strindberg's radical ideas and outspoken style. We may reasonably assume that Schleussner would have liked to produce a more direct and plain-spoken image of Strindberg's stories, but some sort of compromise had to be found between her ambitions to introduce the full Strindberg to English readers, on the one hand, and the dominant moral laws and the internalised taboos in English publishing, on the other. Be that as it may, looking at Schleussner's compromise, and keeping in mind Strindberg's reputation for being a provocative, radical and sexually explicit writer of naturalist literature, readers of this translation would have wondered more than a century ago, and may be wondering today (if they fell for the marketing strategies of Amazon), what all the fuss was about and where the ferocious Viking has gone.

Lars Liljegren's thesis, which contains more than three hundred densely printed pages, develops these ideas in far greater detail than a brief synopsis can even begin to do justice to. While being presented as a contribution to Translation Studies, his analysis proceeds in a constant dialogue with a wide range of theoreticians, historical contexts and comparative perspectives in a decidedly interdisciplinary effort, with history and literary history but perhaps even more so sociology standing out as privileged partner disciplines. Chapter one, "Introduction" (3–12) gives a general first idea of

the work's various materials, objectives and frameworks.

Chapter two, "Theoretical Points of Departure" (13–49) presents the theoretical framework in greater detail. The concepts of agent, shift and procedure are explained. The thinking that underlies Descriptive Translation Studies is introduced, and reasons are given why Gideon Toury's concept of translation norms is not going to be used in this study: Liljegren prefers to embrace the sociological turn in Translation Studies to make it easier to conceptualize the translator's agency. Sociologically inspired concepts such as habitus, agency, networks, OPP's ("obligatory passage points") and multiple translatorship are introduced. This chapter moves beyond Translation Studies by including an account of how Reception Theory and Imagology can contribute to the project. Work by Denise Merkle and others on translation and censorship is discussed. The concepts of relay translation and retranslation are shown to be relevant to the case study of *Giftas* and its English translations, as the various texts present a complex genealogical tree.

Chapter three, "August Strindberg in National and International Contexts" (49–84) introduces Strindberg and his international afterlife, with a special focus on Scandinavia, France and Germany. France was the first country Strindberg set out to conquer; he was relatively successful in this, partly through the effective network of Maurice Prozor. Emil Schering—Strindberg's main translator into German—played a similarly important part as a central agent and mediator for the successful introduction of Strindberg's work into the German-speaking world, and beyond.

Chapter four, "Strindberg in Anglo-American Translation" (85–123) traces the entry of Strindberg into English. Compared to France and Germany, this was a much slower and more difficult process in Britain and to a slightly lesser extent the United States (where the Scandinavian immigrant communities and the somewhat more liberal ideology were a help). Much of the chapter is devoted to discussing the reasons for this late response and the obstacles to be overcome by Strindberg to achieve his current—relatively recent—status as a world author in English. The chapter uses unpublished correspondence to reconstruct the narrative of how Ellie Schleussner came forward in 1910 and was accepted as a Strindberg translator.

Chapter five, "*Giftas* and *Married*: An Unhappy Marriage" (124–145) zooms in on the dissertation's

core corpus, *Giftas*, which is contextualised against the background of Henrik Ibsen's role and other sources for (and targets of) the work, as well as of contemporary views on the woman question in Sweden. The chapter comments on the massive controversy that the book caused and ends by giving a general description of *Giftas*, *Heiraten* (Scherling's German translation, which serves as Schleussner's source) and *Married* (the translation at the heart of this thesis).

Chapter six, "*Giftas* and *Married*" (146–189) then proceeds to provide a detailed comparative textual analysis of Strindberg's *Giftas* and Schleussner's *Married*. The analysis first zooms in on some of the translational, non-obligatory shifts that have taken place in "Asra", Schleussner's translation of "Dygdens lön", the collection's most renowned or notorious short story. It becomes clear how much the formulation of Strindberg's naturalist message (human beings, men and women alike, follow their instincts and procreate, as they are essentially animals) is moderated and loses its "obscene" and provocative edge. The analysis moves on to the other stories in *Married* and presents a typology of linguistic strategies employed by the translator to achieve this mitigating effect. As the thesis shows, potentially shocking material—sexual or intimate descriptions, naturalist discourses, criticism of the Church, and negative descriptions of women—is likely to be subjected to censorship. Five types of censorial shifts are distinguished: evasive circumscription (polite circumlocution); downtoning (using a somewhat synonymous but less provocative expression); de-focussing (using a vaguer, less specific expression); addition (the adding of a "softening" expression); omission (the complete deletion of what is offensive). Explicit language has a greater chance of escaping such euphemistic rephrasing or outright omission when the text somehow expresses a critical attitude towards what is being described. The case of *Giftas* and *Married* is then compared with English translations of two allegedly provocative and naturalist plays by Strindberg from the same period: *Fadren* (1887) and *Fröken Julie* (1888). This comparison remains somewhat inconclusive in that these two plays turn out to be far less "shocking" than *Giftas* and changes made by the translators are less striking than those made by Schleussner.

Chapter seven, "Translation Outcome: A Network-Inspired and Imagological Perspective" (190–231) attempts to account for the factors pro-

ducing the translation outcome that has been described. Censorial laws in Britain and the United States around 1913 receive special attention. As demonstrated by the very different fates of publishers such as Henry George Bohn and Henry Vizetelly (the unfortunate publisher of Émile Zola, among others), there were successful and not-so-successful ways of using the margins allowed by the 1857 Obscene Publications Act, as well as by several other less official censorial networks that had to be dealt with, such as booksellers, critics, librarians, morality leagues, the postal service, and so on. Schleussner seems to have had an effective understanding of the limits of literary representation in post-Victorian Britain, staying as close as she could to Strindberg but making all the concessions needed to avoid rocking the boat and risking censorial suppression.

Chapter eight, "The Anglo-American Reception of *Married*: A Network-Inspired and Imagological Perspective" (232–244) continues the same discussion by considering the limited critical responses triggered by the publication of *Married*. The thesis argues that this lukewarm response is caused by a sense of irrelevance and disappointment when readers and (potential) critics found that the short stories in English fell radically short of the image of Strindberg circulating in 1913 as being a "mad Swede" or "bedevilled Viking".

Chapter nine, "Concluding Discussion and Summary" (245–250) draws together the main threads of the analysis. The volume comes with a detailed "Complete Overview and Categorization of Translation Shifts and Procedures" (257–283), which textually documents (text excerpts plus annotations) the analyses provided in Chapter six.

The author has to be commended for this outstanding PhD dissertation, which is a substantive thesis-with-a-thesis. The monograph combines scope and depth and successfully integrates three types of research: conceptual work performed in a critical dialogue with a range of different theoreticians; detailed historical work, based on secondary sources but also on personal archival work; and perceptive close textual readings which use a clearly defined analytical method but never lose readerly alertness to subtle individual details and specificities in the text corpus. The combination of these perspectives enables something like a thick description of the central topic and its multiple contexts to emerge.

The thesis displays a very high level of schol-

arly erudition. That said, some readers may be surprised that no reference is made to Noel Perrin's *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy: A History of Expurgated Books in England and America* (1969, revised 1992), which is a standard work on the tradition of "improving" (expurgating) literary works associated with Dr Thomas Bowdler and his relatives, a tradition which started with his edition of *The Family Shakespeare* in 1807, exactly half a century before the Obscene Publications Act of 1857. Liljegren also fails to engage with an article by Lintao Qi recently published in *Target* (28, 2016:1, pp. 42–60) and dealing with "Agents of Latin: An Archival Research on Clement Egerton's English Translation of *Jin Ping Mei*". This article discusses a British translation of erotic material and censorship (and how to avoid it), and it combines archival research with network theory; both thematically and methodologically, the potential interest of this paper for Liljegren's study speaks for itself. I hesitate to mention as an omission Amy Werbel's *Lust on Trial: Censorship and the Rise of American Obscenity in the Age of Anthony Comstock*, a book that came out from Columbia University Press earlier in 2018, just months before the viva. One cannot reasonably expect Lars Liljegren to have covered this book, but it does deserve a mention here, if only to illustrate that his thesis is part of a vibrant research field.

One admires the precision and elegance of Liljegren's academic English. The phrasing of his ideas is accurate, nuanced and idiomatic throughout. Great attention was given to editorial aspects such as lay-out and referencing. Several typos were picked up after printing and are mentioned in a separate list of errata.

One area where more rigorous copy editing would have been helpful is the way in which information is sequenced in the text. Thus, not all concepts are clearly explained from the beginning or where one would expect them to be defined. For instance, the "Obscene Publications Act" (1857) is referred to several times, but not properly defined until chapter seven. The definition of the Hicklin Test could lay claim to greater attention than the brief footnote to which it is relegated on page 89. Depending on the reader's background, some terms may never become fully clear at all, such as "problematizator", "intressement", "enrolment", "mobilisation". These terms are Michel Callon's; they are fleetingly mentioned on page 31 and then briefly applied on pages 62–63. Similarly, outsiders to Strindberg Studies may wonder what is meant by

the notion of this writer's "noted track-switching" (quoted from Anne Charlotte Hanes Harvey on pages 91–92, but not properly explained).

The text sometimes shows a certain excess of informational redundancy. If one reads the volume from cover to cover, one occasionally notices repetitions that could have been ironed out in a final text edit. Chapter five, "*Giftas* and *Married*: An Unhappy Marriage", would also have benefitted from a tighter structure. Section 5.1, "*Giftas* Contextualized" (124–134) deals with a varied assortment of topics and as a result does not quite show a sharp thematic focus. Section 5.2 (134–137) supposedly deals with "The Swedish Reception of *Giftas*", but it covers only a very short time span of this reception process, and concludes by comparing the two respective volumes of the work, thus delivering at once a bit less and a bit more than what the section title had promised. As to Section 5.3 (137–145) on "*Giftas*, *Heiraten* and *Married*: A General Comparison", one wonders if it would it not have been more logical to include it in the next chapter?

But let us not make too much of these few formal imperfections. Liljegren is an excellent writer, and reader-friendliness ranks highly in his list of priorities. He certainly manages to make a strong case for his main narrative that the weak reception of *Married* in the English-speaking world was caused by censorship and moral strictures: the 1857 Obscene Publications Act prevented translators from rendering him in English in a manner that could do justice to the image and reputation of Strindberg, which led to disappointment and lack of interest. This is how Liljegren puts it in the Abstract:

The hypothesis is that British readers were disappointed as Strindberg did not live up to the image they had expected to find. As there was state censorship of "obscene" publications in both Britain and the USA at the time *Married* was published, other Strindberg works saw similar changes in English translation. The conclusion is that a combination of these phenomena may help explain Strindberg's relatively belated entry into the Anglo-American canon. (ii)

But the author deserves credit for repeatedly drawing the reader's attention to the fact that "[m]any factors play a part in the way a literary work is received" (241) and for taking on board many other reasons, some of them borrowed from Michael Robinson, to explain why the reception of Strind-

berg in Britain especially was such a slow process. They all look plausible in their own way, as may appear from the following randomly ordered list:

No network: unlike the situation in France and Germany, Strindberg could not fall back on a network of active and well-connected supporters in Britain. Temperament: as illustrated by his unsuccessful contacts with Craig and Shaw, Strindberg had a “bad temper”, which “may have thwarted some of his chances to establish a network of contacts” (103). Audience: unlike the situation in the United States, he could not count on sizeable communities of Scandinavian immigrants who had direct access to the original texts and might have become mediators to facilitate his reception in English. Few Englishmen could read him in the original Swedish (111). Language: while being fluent in French and able to communicate in German (105), Strindberg only had limited English. Residence: he never lived in the United Kingdom (or the United States). Literary movement: compared to France and other countries, “naturalism never had the same impact in Britain” (98). Acceptability of social views: the harshness of Strindberg’s social criticism made him unpalatable to economic and cultural elites in Britain (113, 115). Enemy: a German book by his “old enemy” Laura Marholm-Hansson (111) had been translated into English. Restricted access oeuvre: “to fully understand the scope of Strindberg’s literary talent, having access to all of his writings is essential” and in Britain for a very long time only a small sample of his work was available (114). Foreword *Giftas* missing: Schleussner’s 1913 translation came without Strindberg’s Foreword, which might have improved the image and acceptability of Strindberg somewhat (111–112). Theatrical conventions: British acting styles were less suited to Strindberg’s dramatic work than continental ones (112–113).

The consideration of these wider contextual factors raises the question of causality and determinism. As has been argued by several scholars—see, for instance, Imogen Cohen’s recent article “On Randomness” in *Target* (30, 2018:1, 3–23), we should become much more cautious in our search for explanations. Our brain seems to be wired to see causation and teleology all too quickly, jumping to conclusions where perhaps there is really only chance or randomness. We tend to see straightforward linear causation where there is really an impossibly complex interplay of multiple causes and effects. Fortunately, Liljegren contracted no epis-

temological contamination from the deterministic mind-set of his object of study. Despite his repeated insistence on the role of the Obscene Publications Act, this master narrative does not blinker the author’s view of the wider tangle of cause-effect relationships.

There is, however, one hypothetical causal factor that may have deserved greater critical attention. What if the English simply had no need for Strindberg and thus no interest in him? Recall that *Married* came out three decades after the original; that the translator was an unknown and inexperienced translator; that the publisher (Frank Palmer) was a “small publishing firm” (110); that few reviewers took an interest. To put it provocatively, the English publication of these short stories was a non-event or at least an event of minor importance.

My wording of this hypothesis is too crude. I am emphatically not saying that Strindberg is not an important author, who does not somehow deserve to belong to world literature. I am merely suggesting that there was perhaps relatively little functional need for the ideas and the kind of writing that Strindberg represented in the specific historical configuration of British and American literature in the late Victorian period and the early 20th century. As regards various relevant areas of change and debate in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the English-speaking world (and Britain especially) was already quite self-sufficient, or so it seems. With respect to moral and sexual scandal, turn-of-the-century England already had its fill with Oscar Wilde in the mid-1890s. With respect to debates about religion and/or the relationship man-animal, Britain had seen its fair share of fierce debates between evolutionists and creationists. With respect to the gender question, Britain had a long tradition of feminist work; there was much discussion surrounding the idea of the New Woman in the 1890s, and the suffragette movement was building up in the period under study. With respect to the Scandinavian “modern breakthrough” (51–58), the slot of Nordic-inspired innovation and controversy was perhaps already filled by Henrik Ibsen, who was so well-known that he came to be jokingly called “Henry Gibson” (Inga-Stina Ewbank). With respect to naturalism, inasmuch as there was a need for it, there were the translations of Zola, relatively large in number and sufficiently controversial; furthermore, Britain had Thomas Hardy, George Gissing and George Moore (all duly mentioned by Liljegren), while the United States

could boast Jack London, Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser (not mentioned). When it comes to innovation in the theatre, that was arguably provided in sufficient measure by several Irish writers: think of Oscar Wilde, of what was going on in the context of Irish nationalism (William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, Seán O'Casey and J.M. Synge), and, of course, of G.B. Shaw (whose important role the thesis duly emphasizes and through whose work Ibsen could exert considerable influence). More generally, the Modernist wave of innovation was about to break over English literature. Last but not least, I would like to mention the genre of the short story, a genre that remains rather under-discussed as such, as an emerging genre, in this thesis. Let us not forget that Britain was building up its own tradition here, also welcoming short-story writers from abroad (Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, Henry James, with James Joyce and Katherine Mansfield just around the corner), while the United States was already leading the way here (Edgar Allen Poe, Jack London, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce, O. Henry, and dozens more). So, here again, we seem to have a literary niche where *Giftas* might have fitted but which was already occupied by talented and high-profile writers.

The study of translations that were never made or that remained of secondary importance is no less intriguing an area of cultural history than that of high-profile influential translations—and one that poses specific methodological difficulties of its own. While not all aspects of the case could be fully examined in this study of the tamed Viking, Liljegren's PhD thesis is therefore to be welcomed as a significant contribution to Translation Studies. It is testimony to the quality and interest of Liljegren's work that it also reaches out to readers in Strindberg Studies and Scandinavian Studies, as well as to scholars in Comparative Literature and English literature, actually making one question the ultimate significance of these very disciplinary distinctions.

Dirk Delabastita

Victor Malm, *Är det detta som kallas postmodernism? En studie i Katarina Frostensons och Stig Larssons diktning*. Lunds Universitet. Lund 2019.*

Begreppet postmodernism, som redan för två decennier sedan tycktes ha förlorat mycket av sin attraktions- och förklaringskraft för humanvetenskaperna, har på senare tiden dykt upp allt oftare i kulturdebattens skyttegravar, där det som regel tjänar som vagt invektiv för allt som är fel i samtiden. I ljuset av detta framstår det som välbehövligt att forskningen försöker kasta ett nyktrare ljus över begreppet och dess användning. I en svensk kontext är ett av dessa som bekant 1980-talslitteraturen, till vilken Victor Malms doktorsavhandling återvänt. Den bär titeln *Är det detta som kallas postmodernism? En studie i Katarina Frostensons och Stig Larssons diktning*. Det är en volym av ansevärd omfattning – den väger in på 780 gram, strax under femhundra sidor, uppdelade i tre huvudkapitel omgivna av inledning och avslutning. Inledningen ger en översikt över syfte, material, tidigare forskning, centrala begrepp, samt teoretiska och metodologiska utgångspunkter. Den följs av ett kapitel som etablerar studiens huvudsakliga kontext, postmoderniteten. Sedan ägnas studiens två författare ett omfattande kapitel vardera, varefter avslutningen levererar en summering, knyter ihop trådarna och gör en utblick.

Det första kapitlet – kallat "Inledning", kort och gott – börjar med ett konstaterande: den dominerande litteraturhistorieskrivningen hävdar att den svenska litteraturen blev postmodern på 1980-talet. Denna förmodade vändning innebar slutet på 1970-talslitteraturens politiska engagemang, och i stället gjorde en språkfilosofiskt medveten estetik entré, med bland andra just Frostenson och Larsson. Den här standardberättelsen tar avhandlingen som sin uppgift att nyansera, problematisera och "kritiskt granska" (21). Avhandlingens syfte formuleras såhär: "att avlämna analyser och tolkningar av Frostensons och Larssons författarskap", vilka kommer att "föregås och ramas in med en diskussion av den historiografiska associationen mellan dem och en svensk postmodernism" (11). Den tes som drivs är att termen postmodernitet "kan fungera som en meningsgivande kontext genom vilken både poeternas specificitet och

* En mer kortfattad version av denna text har tidigare tryckts i *Respons* nr 4 (2019), 44–46.