



”Här kan jag äntligen tala”

Tematik och litterär gestaltning
i Åsa Nelvins författarskap

av

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Akademisk avhandling

Avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i litteraturvetenskap,
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ABSTRACT

Öhman, Marie (2007). "Här kan jag äntligen tala": Tematik och litterär gestaltning i Åsa Nelvins författarskap. ("Here I can finally speak": Themes and Literary Expression in Åsa Nelvin's Writings.) Written in Swedish with an English summary. *Örebro Studies in Literary History and Criticism* 6.

The subject of this thesis is Swedish author Åsa Nelvin's writings. Five books are at the center of attention: The children's books *De vita björnarna* ("The White Bears") (1969) and *Det lilla landet* ("The Little Country") (1971), the two novels *Tillflyktens hus* ("The House of Refuge") (1975) and *Kvinnan som lekte med dockor* ("The Woman who played with dolls") (1977), and the cycle of poems *Gattet* ("The Inlet") (1981). The overriding aim of the thesis is to characterize Nelvin's literary works and her over-all literary enterprise.

A major part of the thesis is devoted to textual analyses, the purpose of which is to identify fundamental themes and literary strategies in Nelvin's works. Also treated is the author's development from being a prose writer to becoming a lyric poet. In addition, the thesis examines how Nelvin's writings relate to the cultural climate of the 1960s and 1970s; it deals with the reception of her works, and the question whether literary ideals and conventions have had any impact on her writings.

Nelvin is generally associated with the emancipatory tradition of female autobiographers in the 1970s. Her works are considered to engage in psychological and/or gender issues and to be openly autobiographical. This thesis partly argues against that view by asserting that the fundamental concern of Nelvin's works is the experience of being and the creation of meaning. The textual analyses show that Nelvin's writings in the main deal with existential matters such as time and death, art and eternity. They also show that the autobiographical elements in her works are not primarily directed towards the construction of womanhood or therapeutic confession. They rather serve as an aesthetic and meta-literary function, drawing attention to questions concerning the construction of the text (and life), and differences or correspondences between phenomena like fiction and reality.

Key words: Åsa Nelvin, existentialism, modernism, lyrical strategies, the absurd drama, autobiography.