

In the Delightful Garden of Horror
The Gothic tradition in the Swedish nineteenth century novel

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ABSTRACT

The main object of consideration in the thesis is the Gothic tradition in the nineteenth century Swedish novel. The importance of the Gothic tradition in different types of Swedish nineteenth century novels is demonstrated through textual analysis of novels from different periods of this century.

The Gothic novel as a genre is described and its narrative technique, themes, settings and characters discussed, based on a selection of English, German and French Gothic novels written in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The genre 'model' serves as a basis for the analysis and identification of the Gothic influence in the Swedish nineteenth century novel.

The introduction of the Gothic novel in Sweden during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is described, and the influence of the Gothic novels written in other languages than Swedish on readers and writers in Sweden is discussed.

English, German and French Gothic novels were translated into Swedish in the early nineteenth century. These novels greatly influenced the Swedish writers of the time. The conventions and narrative technique of the Gothic novel were used in all types of fiction and by all kinds of authors.

The novels of the 1840s saw the most prolific use of Gothic conventions and narrative technique. This influence is exemplified through analysis of *Rosen på Tistelön* (1842) by Emilie Flygare-Carlén, *Gabriële Mimanso* by C.J.L. Almqvists and *Svarta handen* by Carl Fredrik Ridderstad.

In the late 1840s the literary debate had a profound influence on the Swedish novel and initiated a split between commercialized popular fiction and the literary novel. This development is illustrated by the Gothic novel *Hin Ondes hus* by Aurora Ljungstedt and the better known novel *Singoalla* by Victor Rydberg.

Rydberg made several revisions of *Singoalla* between 1857 and 1894, progressively shifting the novel towards higher literary quality. These changes also illustrate the development of the literary novel in the late nineteenth century and lead up to Selma Lagerlöf's famous ghost story *Herr Arnes penningar*.

Finally, the possible existence of a Swedish Gothic tradition is discussed as well as the different ways Gothic conventions and narrative technique were used in the Swedish novel throughout the nineteenth century.

Keywords

Swedish nineteenth century novel, Gothic novel, Narratology, Sociology of literature, Romantic novel, Introduction in Sweden, Criticism.