

**AVHANDLING I LITTERATURVETENSKAP**  
ADORNO, DELEUZE OCH LITTERATURENS MÖJLIGHETER

Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen vid humanistiska fakulteten, Göteborgs universitet, kommer att försvaras offentligen i Stora hörsalen, Humanisten, lördagen den 7 juni, kl 14 av

ANDERS JOHANSSON

ABSTRACT

**DISSERTATION IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE: ADORNO, DELEUZE AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF LITERATURE**

This dissertation aims primarily to demonstrate, through a series of case studies, how the philosophers Theodor W. Adorno and Gilles Deleuze might assist academic literary criticism in a situation of crisis. The author argues that literary criticism harbours an unresolved inner conflict between theory and non-theoretical reading. A way out of the crisis, a way to increase the external relevance of literary criticism, would be to benefit from this conflict, and thus bring forth literature as a drama between text, history and experience; as something more, that is, than just a text.

The objects of the five case studies are Jorge Luis Borges' short story "La secta del Fénix" ("The Sect of the Phoenix"), Vilhelm Ekelund's aphorisms (primarily from *Elpidí*), the theatre production *Sju tre* (*Seven Three*) by Lars Norén, Astrid Lindgren's children's books about Pippi Långstrump (Pippi Longstocking), and three rock songs by Bruce Springsteen. In spite of the differences in character, they are united by a recurrent formal logic: an initial unity of meaning is dissolved through an immanent becoming, which, however, results in the rise of a 'new' unity on another level. While it is difficult to explain and do justice to this transformation with a hermeneutical approach, Adorno and Deleuze are well equipped to conceptualise the aesthetic object in its becoming.

In the concluding chapter the discussion about the recurring traits, and above all the similarities and differences between Adorno and Deleuze, are continued. Adorno's notion of the "appearance" of the work of art, and Deleuze's idea of the artwork's "aesthetic plane of composition" are at the center of this discussion. These concepts are important components in their respective notions of the artwork as a container of an experience of a possibility that differs from the existing situation. To combine these notions proves difficult for several reasons, but Deleuze's attempt to establish the possibilities of literature in an immanent virtuality is finally presented as an interesting option to renegotiate Adorno's theory.

*Keywords:* Theodor W. Adorno, Gilles Deleuze, form, becoming, possibility, virtuality, appearance, immanence, Jorge Luis Borges, Vilhelm Ekelund, Lars Norén, Astrid Lindgren, Bruce Springsteen.

Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen, Göteborgs universitet, Box 200, 405 30 Göteborg.  
Göteborg 2003, ISBN 91-973636-9-3, 368 pp. Language: Swedish, summary in English.  
Distribution: Glänta produktion, Box 311 20, 400 32 Göteborg, Sweden.