



Seminar

ELENA BALZAMO

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*Translating and Editing "Unfinished" Writings:
August Strindberg's Diaries and Letters*

Tuesday, 10 February, 11:15 a.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
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S W E D I S H
C O L L E G I U M
for ADVANCED STUDY

ABOUT ELENA BALZAMO

Elena Balzamo is a literary scholar and translator. She studied Nordic literature at Moscow State University and ethnology and folklore at Tbilisi State University. In 1987, she received her Ph.D. from l'Université Lille III for her research on Scandinavian folk- and literary tale. She has published a number of folktale collections both in French and Swedish.

Balzamo's second research field concerns the sixteenth-century history of ideas; her work has resulted in books and articles, among these are *Olaus Magnus: Carta marina* (2005); *Olaus Magnus: Die Wunder des Nordens* (with R. Kaiser, 2006); and *Den osynlige ärkebiskopen: Essäer om Olaus Magnus* (in print).

Her third research area is Swedish literature, in particular August Strindberg. It includes both the translation and editing of Swedish classics (C. J. L. Almqvist, A. Strindberg, Hj. Söderberg and Hj. Bergman) and scholarly studies, such as *August Strindberg: visages et destin* (1999), *Den engagerade skeptikern: Hjalmar Söderberg och politiken* (2001), *Cahier de l'Herne August Strindberg* (2000), *Skriftdon och papper, brefkort, frimärken: Fyra essäer om Strindberg* (2012); and *'Je suis un vrai diable!' Dix essais sur Strindberg* (2015).

Between 2003 and 2008, Balzamo taught at the École pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, where she received her HDR (Habilitation à diriger des recherches) in 2008. She is presently leading a translation seminar in Paris.

Balzamo has been awarded several prizes for her translation and research: the Swedish Academy Translation Prize (2001), Bourse Jean Gattegno (2009), the Sévigné Prix for her edition of Strindberg's letters (2011), the Order of the Polar Star for the promotion of Swedish culture (2012), and the Swedish Academy Prize for the promotion of Swedish culture abroad (2013). She is *doctor honoris causa* of Umeå University, a Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and of the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture, Uppsala.

During her year at SCAS, Elena Balzamo is working on the general principles for textual editions of literary works - in particular the National Edition of August Strindberg's Collected Works - in close collaboration with Gunnel Engwall and Ann-Charlotte Gavel Adams.

ABSTRACT

The way from manuscript(s) to print edition is never simple, and the problems one encounters can be both specific for the given text and concern larger entities, such as Collected Works of a given author. I have chosen to take up one particular topic, representing an extreme case, which can serve as a magnifying glass allowing us to grasp the complexity of the task and its theoretical implications. I shall talk about editing private writings, "unfinished" texts, which sometime are even not intended for publication. They have a particular status: sometimes the author expressly wishes them to be published after his death, sometimes he expressly forbids their publication; in most cases though he gives no instructions at all, leaving it for others to decide if and how the manuscript(s) should be edited. Private writings are commonly of two types: diaries and letters. In Strindberg's case we have both: his very special *Occult Diary* and a huge amount of letters. Their publication presents two main problems: they are cryptic, i.e. referring to a largely unknown extra-textual reality, and they are linguistically flawed, i.e. contain spelling, grammar or syntax errors. In Strindberg's case a third point should be added: they are multilingual. It goes without saying that *translating* of private writings is still more problematic than "simple" editing. In my lecture I propose to examine in detail some problems connected with Strindberg's letters: their multifunctional aspect, the question of selection, of organizing the chosen material, translation, commentary, etc. Hopefully such an analysis might project an indirect light to the present Collected Works edition and contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of tasks the editors had to cope with while working on it.