



Seminar

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*To Edit Strindberg Again:
On the National Edition of
August Strindberg's Collected Works*

Thursday, 29 January, 6:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
www.swedishcollegium.se

The seminar will be followed by a reception.
Please contact rsvp@swedishcollegium.se no later than 26 January to sign up.

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ABOUT GUNNEL ENGWALL

Gunnel Engwall's early research was directed towards corpus-based computational linguistics. In her doctoral dissertation, *Fréquence et distribution du vocabulaire dans un choix de romans français* (Stockholm 1974), she studied the vocabulary of twenty-five best-selling novels from the 1960s. In addition to the dissertation and a frequency dictionary, *Vocabulaire du roman français (1962–1968) Dictionnaire des fréquences* (Stockholm 1984), she has published more than a dozen scholarly articles in this field.

With the sensational discovery of the original French manuscript of August Strindberg's *Le Plaidoyer d'un fou* in Oslo in the early 1970s, Engwall began studying various linguistic aspects of that novel and also of other texts that Strindberg wrote originally in French. These studies have resulted in thirty publications, e.g. the edited volume *Strindberg et la France* (Stockholm 1994) and the articles "L'essai 'Les Petits' d'August Strindberg en français" (*Deshima* 2013) and "Strindberg, journaliste français" (*Études germaniques* 2013).

Gunnel Engwall is the former Vice Chancellor of Stockholm University and the former President of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. Since 1992 she has chaired the board of the National Edition of August Strindberg's Collected Works and has participated in the publication of seventy of the seventy-two volumes of that edition. Among other things, she has edited Strindberg's French manuscript of *Le Plaidoyer d'un fou* and the French essays published in *Vivisektioner II* in this edition.

Gunnel Engwall has been decorated with several French orders: la Légion d'honneur, les Palmes académiques and l'Ordre du mérite. She is a Foreign Member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters.

During her year at SCAS, Engwall examines and evaluates the general principles for textual editions of literary works, with a particular focus on the lessons learned from the publication of the National Edition of August Strindberg's Collected Works. In this endeavour, she is joined by Elena Balzamo and Ann-Charlotte Gavel Adams.

ABSTRACT

The Swedish author and polymath August Strindberg (1849-1912) was a prolific writer. He wrote more than 150 works (dramas, novels, poems, fairy tales, essays, etc.). He is today the most influential Swedish author, whose plays are still staged all over the world and whose novels have been translated to a large number of languages. In Swedish, his collected works were published between 1912 and 1921 in 55 volumes by the literary critic John Landquist. Already some decades later, after the publication of the last volume, it was argued that there was a need for a new edition. The proponents pointed to (1) the recent research and knowledge of Strindberg's authorship, (2) the new manuscripts available, and (3) the need to publish his work closer to his original intentions, i.e. without censorship, editorial revisions, misprints, etc. After long discussions and negotiations leading to joint financing from several sources, the project was started in the late 1970s, and the first volume *The Red Room* was published in 1981. Since then another seventy volumes have been published with *The People at Hemsoe* as the last text volume in 2012, and an index volume in 2013.

However, since the National Edition is not only a popular edition but also a scholarly one, each volume is supplemented by a commentary volume presenting principal issues in relation to the published text. So far forty-two such commentary volumes have been published on the internet, and the last one is planned for publication during 2016. In addition to the commentary volumes, all the text volumes will be available electronically at www.litteraturbanken.se.

During the past forty years the project has gradually been able to take advantage of the new technologies with regard to publication and to text databases. These new opportunities have also

influenced and changed the editorial processes. However, the need to edit the texts themselves with accuracy and rigour has remained the same throughout the project. In order to meet this condition, the project has engaged around thirty volume editors and several hundred specialists. It has been run by a board with representatives from different areas (the research community, the financiers, and the publisher), an editorial committee and editorial staff. At the end, the project is estimated to have cost about 150 million Swedish Crowns.

During the seminar, I will present the background as well as the guidelines of the edition. My focus will be on (1) the financial constraints, (2) the principles established by the researchers, and (3) the problems encountered along the road. Due to the wide range of genres in Strindberg's authorship (dramas, novels, essays, diaries, scientific texts, etc.), the principles had to be both general and specific, varying with the type of text. In such an extensive project, inevitably unforeseen problems have arisen. Special problems occurred in relation to Strindberg's French texts in a Swedish edition and how to translate them into Swedish. On the basis of some examples I will demonstrate the applied principles and the complications encountered. I will open up a discussion on the chosen solutions and alternatives for the purpose of learning from the work on the National Edition of Strindberg's Collected Works for future editorial projects.