

antal tyska arbeten från det senaste decenniet och vill pröva dem på nordiska förhållanden. Här märks det att flera av bidragsgivarna har haft problem. Den viktigaste svårigheten är förstås att ordet dilettant är så negativt laddat. Det är knappast utgivarnas mening att ge periodens verksamheter en nedvärderande etikett. Av flera skäl hade det känts naturligare att tala med tidens ord om "amatörer", "kuriösa" eller "virtuoser" – "dilettant" verkar vara det minst frekventa. "Amatör" kallade man sig gärna, i alla fall i Sverige, alltså "älskare av vetenskaper" och liknande. Älskarrollen innehåller också ett *etos* som är viktigt att fånga in, ett förhållande antingen i platonsk mening till forskning, sanning, skönhet och liknande, eller ett förhållande med innebörden älskare av fäderneslandet och det nyttiga. Man kan vidare fråga sig om hur mycket av detta *etos* som är hämtat ur den klassiska universitets- och skolvärlden och som kan uppfattas om inte överflyttat så åtminstone besläktat med begrepp inom den lärda utbildningen, vid disputationen och så vidare. Men här sker naturligtvis förändringar över tid. Ett citat från kemisten Jöns Jacob Berzelius 1821: "Den halfva kunskap, den lärde fördömer hos dilettanterna, var någon gång den högsta lärdom." Här är det gemensamma ordet fortfarande "lärde" och man kunde snarare utgå den lärda kulturens bärkraft. Eller också begreppen "bildad" och "bildning". Det känns som en lucka längre fram i antologin att det humboldtska bildningsidealet helt saknas (liksom Humboldt i registret), vidare att professionaliseringen av forskningen och vetenskapen som ett yrke med William Whewell vid samma tid inte heller av någon tagits upp till behandling. Det är inte minst genom den engelska filosofen som "amatör" – och "dilettant" får sin negativa laddning. Den motsättning som är den förblivande är förstås då amatörprofessionell, om dem som befinner sig utanför och innanför universitetsposition. Saken är ändå inte entydig eftersom "amatör" fortfarande (som väl är) rymmer högre kvaliteter.

Motsättningen mellan amatör och proffs i till exempel idrotten är markerad, men amatörer kan mycket väl slå världsrekord! Min poäng är alltså att dilettantbegreppet inte riktigt räcker för att göra rättvisa åt vetenskaper och konster under den period som boken täcker.

Men det är en antologi som ändå säger mycket. Naturligtvis genom att uppmärksamma hur vetenskap och kultur fungerade, och inte bara nationellt, utan hur mycket som samspelar mellan de nordiska länderna. Antologin visar också i god mening på det meningsfulla med att föra samman nordiska forskare av i dag. De har mycket att säga varandra.

Gunnar Broberg

Kristina Fjelkestam, *Det sublimes politik: emancipatorisk estetik i 1800-talets konstnärsromaner* (Stockholm: Makadam, 2010). 224 pp.

'Oh, you women in all countries and social positions—listen to me, with the same emotion that I live through!' (Madame de Staël, *Réflexions sur le process de la reine*, 1793. My translation). Kristina Fjelkestam's aims in *Det sublimes politik: emancipatorisk estetik i 1800-talets konstnärsromaner* (Sublime politics: emancipatory aesthetics in nineteenth-century *Künstlerromane*) are to develop a political perspective on the sublime within the field of aesthetics, and to connect the discipline to the broader area of cultural theory. Mary Mothershill chooses to begin her article on the sublime in *A Companion to Aesthetics* by quoting a definition of the term in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1997, p. 407): '[s]o distinguished by ... impressive quality as to inspire awe or wonder, aloof from ... the ordinary.' Methodologically, Fjelkestam has been inspired by Raymond Williams's three-stage model, which holds that texts are to be studied in three different perspectives: formally (intra-textually), historically (contextually),

and theoretically. These three perspectives constitute the basis for the disposition of the book. *Det sublimas politik* starts with a chapter on theory, followed by one on form, and ends with a section dealing with historical examples from world literature. This last section forms the bulk of the book and contains analyses of three important works from different linguistic regions: France, Germany, and the USA.

Fjelkestam's main studies deal with three central *Künstlerromane* (artist's novels) written by and about women in the nineteenth century. Chapter four is dedicated to Germaine de Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807), chapter five to Fanny Lewald's *Jenny* (1843), and chapter six to Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* tetralogy (1868–1886). Here Fjelkestam wants to show, by pointing to illustrative examples from their literary works, the authors' conscious use of the sublime as a means of effecting political change and emancipation. *Det sublimas politik* is an interesting project, indeed.

Fjelkestam opens the chapter on the sublime (p. 11) by drawing parallels between the feeling of discovering that your handbag hangs on your shoulder the moment you thought you had forgotten it, and the feeling of exaltedness—*sublimis*—that occurs when the awareness of that fact conquers the initial panic. This experience contains both 'semiotic and existential dimensions', Fjelkestam continues. The issue of semiotics will be dealt with further on.

The notion of the sublime (in the modern sense) emerged in Boileau's French translation of Longinus, and was eventually introduced into the field of aesthetics when the term was developed by Alexander Baumgarten in his thesis on poetry in 1735. Mothershill discusses some of Longinus's ideas about the nature of the sublime, where the following is of particular interest here (1997, p. 408): 'Nature as well as art affords instances of the sublime: mighty rivers, in contrast to little streams; Mount Etna in eruption, the sun, the stars—all

are astonishing.' Yet, Fjelkestam continues (p. 12), the focus of the problem of the sublime shifted from the question of 'What sublime qualities does the object have?' to 'Which effects do the so-called sublime objects have on the subject's reason and feeling?' (My translation.). In Western culture, the answers to these questions became important elements in nineteenth-century dramatic landscape painting and literature.

The issue of being a 'subject' becomes significant in connection with another notion within aesthetics: that of 'genius'. The quality of genius, as will be illustrated below, was not granted to all; there were important exceptions—women. For instance, Rousseau firmly stipulated that the "'men have genius'", women have not', as Fjelkestam shows (p. 15). This order of things is well illustrated in the story of the emergence of the famous portrait Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun painted of Germaine de Staël as Corinne (*Portrait de Mme de Staël*, 1808–1809), as I have accounted for in *An Inquiry into Cultural Semiotics: Germaine de Staël's Autobiographical Travel Accounts* (2007). The fact that Germaine de Staël commissioned a portrait of herself as her protagonist in *Corinne* shows that she wanted to establish connections between the character and herself. By doing so, the emancipatory and political aspects of Corinne, aspects that Fjelkestam discusses further on in terms of the sublime, mirror the author herself. As Mary Sheriff argues in *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (1996, pp. 256–257):

The place of the genius, that singular creation of nature, was reserved for men and gendered masculine. [...] Woman, Nature, and Genius are merged in Vigée-Lebrun's image, which recalls her collapsing of the boundaries between natural 'feminine' reproduction and 'masculine' cultural production in her written and painted self-portrayals as artist-mother. Staël does not

blend into the landscape, rather she stands out from it, massive and sublime.

The above captures nicely the continuous discussion in *Det sublimas politik* on gender and the sublime. Fjelkestam writes (p. 17): 'If aesthetics was a woman, its central analytical idea, the sublime, was a man.' The beautiful contains qualities such as fragility and tininess, in contrast to the sublime, which is characterised by the powerful and big, Fjelkestam continues. Here we can add that the notion of the sublime was incompatible with female beauty. Sheriff explains (1996, p. 257): 'Neither smooth, nor little, nor delicate, nor weak, Madame de Staël is not beautiful, so she cannot be "woman". She is a woman, so she cannot be sublime.' In fact, Vigée-Lebrun's portrait turned out to be too controversial even for Germaine de Staël, who had a copy made by the local painter Firmin Massot (1766–1849). The gaze was lowered, and as Sheriff points out (1996, p. 261):

her skin is smoother, her hair neater, her features more generalized, and her eyes notably less emphatic. The powerful, muscular arms, so conspicuous in Vigée-Lebrun's portrait, are now more hidden, and the muscles covered with a small off-the-shoulder sleeve. In other words, the elements that made her a sublime figure in Vigée-Lebrun's work have been erased. In the copy the distinguished writer is a distinctly more modest and pleasing woman.

After discussing a gendered sublime, Fjelkestam moves on to deal with yet another aspect of the sublime: the 'bad' aspect. In Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757/1759), one finds an encapsulating distinction between the beautiful and the sublime (Burke quoted in Shelley's '18th Century British Aesthetics'. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2010, p. 15): '[t]he ideas of the sublime and the beautiful

stand on foundations so different, that it is hard ... to think of reconciling them in the same subject, without considerably lessening the effect of the one or the other upon passions.' Fjelkestam (pp. 22–23) begins her discussion on the basis of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), accompanied by a reading of *A Philosophical Enquiry*, and draws on a classical example in the former work in which the female beauty of Marie-Antoinette is contrasted with the subversive and bad masses. In one of Burke's later texts on the French Revolution, *Letters on a Regicidal Peace* (1796), the sublime is further gendered and linked to the hideous and the revolutionary. In this definition of the sublime, the term is given the sense of a ghostlike 'her'. This Fjelkestam illustrates with a fine example from the history of art, namely Eugène Delacroix's *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (1830), depicting the July Revolution in 1830 – an image also suitably forming the cover of the book.

In Kant, too, Fjelkestam (pp. 30–31) proceeds, the sublime is gendered. In Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), the beautiful is defined as a concrete object's harmonic form, while the notion of the sublime, in contrast, is defined as the absence of form and boundaries. 'The sublime', Fjelkestam writes (p. 30), 'must be related to thought and principles, which raises us above purely sensuous (female) corporeal connections'. This gendering of the sublime is more obvious in an earlier work of Kant, *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764), where the beautiful is 'found in the "attractive" sex, the female, while the sublime is incarnated in the "noble" sex, the male', Fjelkestam (p. 31) concludes.

Schiller, too, dealt with the relation between man's corporeal nature and the ability to reason, encapsulated in his notion of *Spieltrieb* (play instinct), where this opposition is overcome. Fjelkestam (pp. 35–36) emphasizes the political dimensions of the *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*

(1795), in which Schiller was influenced by his disappointment over the development of the French Revolution. Schiller thought that the solution to the political problems of the world could be found in aesthetics, since it is by way of beauty that one attains freedom.

Jeffrey Barnouw, in "Aesthetic" for Schiller and Peirce: A Neglected Origin of Pragmatism' (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, Oct.–Dec., 1988), stipulates that this thought in Schiller is reminiscent of the American philosopher and semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce, who developed aesthetics within the framework of pragmatism. *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* was one of the first philosophical works Peirce read, and in a letter to Lady Welby published in *Semiotics and Signifis* (Peirce, 1977 [1908], p. 77) he wrote: 'As to the word "play", the first book of philosophy I ever read [...] was Schiller's *Asthetische Briefe*, where he had so much to say about the Spiel-Trieb; and it made so much impression upon me as to have thoroughly soaked my notion of "play", to this day.' Barnouw (1988, p. 609) describes Schiller's influence on Peirce as follows:

Aesthetics so conceived is a discipline governing the deliberate formation of habits of feeling which should inform our responses, our readiness to act in particular ways given particular circumstances. This is the main respect in which Friedrich Schiller's conception of aesthetic education as cultivation of the capacity of feeling [...] should be seen as an influential model for Peirce.

Aesthetics for Peirce is a normative science, Barnouw continues (1988, p. 613), and thereby a discipline for the deliberate formation and improvement of habits.

For Peirce as for Schiller aesthetics is precisely meant to overcome the coerciveness of experience within and for the expe-

rience. Aesthetics then not only contains the emphatic dualism of good and bad but points beyond the brute oppositions of Secondness to mediation, the development of concrete reasonableness in the world.

What does it mean to point 'beyond' Secondness to 'mediation' (to the realm of ideas, or Thirdness)? Peirce writes in his essay 'Pragmatism' from 1907 (Peirce, 1963, paragraph 5.469 in *Collected Papers*) that Secondness is: '[b]rute actions of one subject or substance on another, regardless of law or of any third subject; thirdly comes 'thirdness,' or the mental or quasi-mental influence of one subject on another relatively to a third.' We will not dwell on Peirce's terminology here, however interesting it might be in this connection. Something though will be said about thirdness. Thirdness incorporates signs; it is the realm of ideas, of thoughts and *habits*. Habits, broadly defined, are the ways we act in the world, in accordance with the norms and values in the world we take for granted: the *lifeworld*, to use the term once developed by Husserl within phenomenology. The notion of habits is fruitful here. Through the prism of habit formation, the political and emancipatory strategies used by the female authors in *Jenny*, *Corinne*, and *Little Women* might be connected to the socio-cultural context in which they emerged. The study of the *Künstlerroman* might thus benefit from the broader philosophical perspective provided by Peircean pragmatism and aesthetics in order to link the literary-political strategies to the their contexts, and thereby illustrate the tension between the work and socio-cultural norms.

Artistic genius was in *theory* connected to the male (as we have seen in the example of Vigée-Lebrun's portrait of de Staël). But, as Fjelkestam notes, historians of literature have erroneously concluded that the genre, which at the end of the eighteenth century emerged under the name *Künstlerroman*, only denoted male

characters. Madame de Staël's *Corinne* is usually used to illustrate the primary exemption to that rule. For Fjelkestam (p. 40), the question of genre is important because it forms part of her main point: to use genre as a cultural theoretical analytical tool. Thus, the choice of genre might be regarded as an 'answer or solution to questions and tensions within both aesthetics and politics'.

Germaine de Staël's *Corinne*, for instance, demonstrates very well Fjelkestam's (p. 43) summary remark on how the difference between women's *Künstlerromane* and men's is likely to be found in: '[t]he narration of the conflict between art and love, devotion and family. Love destroys the main characters in women's artistic novels, while men's show how artistic ventures ruin them.' If one compares this with Fjelkestam's account (p. 48) of the female artist in the nineteenth century, an interesting paradox emerges, namely the fact that the woman artist was not regarded as a real woman. Again, the case of Germaine de Staël forms an interesting example. When *Delphine* was published in 1802, the reviews published in the Napoleon-friendly press were harshly critical, not only of the work itself, but perhaps even more so of the author. Madelyn Gutwirth in *Madame de Staël, Novelist: The Emergence of the Artist as Woman* (1978, p. 287) writes:

Another time, in a somewhat gentler vein, the Emperor told of asking Talleyrand in genuine disbelief, 'what is this hermaphrodite?' Talleyrand faithful for once to his old friendship with Mme de Staël, replied, 'She is a very witty woman who writes just as she speaks.' Yet when *Delphine* was published, with its singeing portrait of the arch-hypocrite Mme de Vernon in whom all Paris recognized him, Talleyrand could not resist that famous riposte that all of Paris delighted in, 'It seems that Mme de Staël has written a novel in which both she and I are travestied as women.'

Germaine de Staël's *Corinne* is the nexus of one of the two main lines of female artist's novels in the nineteenth century (the other is Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* from 1856), which emerged in parallel with the question of women's rights. These lines of literary development form, according to Fjelkestam (p. 49), the woman artist as a political personage, something that characterizes what Fjelkestam (p. 50) thinks is typical for female artist's novels, namely the 'combination of the aesthetic and political'. An important difference between *Aurora Leigh* and *Corinne* (which was Barret Browning's reply to Madame de Staël's novel), is that in the former, Fjelkestam writes (p. 56), the protagonist keeps both 'her man and her poetry' in contrast to *Corinne* who loses both – first her man and then her poetry, and as a consequence she fades away in the end. The main part of Fjelkestam's empirical illustrations is concentrated on *Corinne*.

In the chapter on *Corinne*, Fjelkestam (p. 66) wants to show that the experience of the sublime is the vantage point for de Staël's political theory, the politics of the sublime, a theory that might, from around 1802 and onwards, be summed up in one word: Anti-Napoleonism. Her autobiographical *Dix années d'exil* (1820–1821) demonstrates this in many ways. But the latter book (as well as *Corinne*) also shows Montesquieu's influence on de Staël's political stance, which might be best described as constitutional monarchism. Mme de Staël took the name of her protagonist from the poet Corinna, Pindar's rival in ancient Greece. Pindar, according to Aelian's *Various History* (quoted in *Sappho and the Greek lyric poets*, 1988, p. 150), 'was defeated five times by Korinna. To show the judges' bad taste, Pindar called Korinna a pig'. In the introduction to a recent English edition of *Corinne, or Italy*, John Isbell (1998, p. xiii) writes that the *Corinne* character also connects to the French Revolution's revival of an old tradition in which female figures were allowed to embody

abstract concepts, as in the case of *Marianne* symbolising the Revolution.

Fjelkestam distinguishes three main tableaux of the sublime in *Corinne*: the coronation at the Capitoline Hill where she is perceived as an 'individual, as a woman, and as a human being', according to Toril Moi in 'Corinne – kvinnornas grundläggande modernitetsmyt' (*Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift*, 2004, p. 27); the scene at Capo Miseno in connection with the painful separation from Oswald, accompanied by attributes from the Sappho myth (Sappho, according to Plato, was the tenth muse); and 'The Last Song of Corinne', which concludes the third and last volume of the novel.

In Longinus's *On the Sublime* only two women are mentioned: Sappho and the Oracle of Delphi. The links between Corinne and Sappho have already been made, and in the Pythia Fjelkestam (p. 80) finds yet another link between Corinne and the history of women's myths by pointing to the fact that both are famous *improvisatrices*, improvisers. But Corinne connects above all to the Cumaean Sibyl. All this is captured by Vigée-Lebrun in her portrait of Madame de Staël, as mentioned earlier. More specifically, the female genius is linked to the muse and to the public sphere in de Staël's writing when it comes to the literary tradition. An equivalent figure de Staël finds in the sibyl from the tradition of art. This is what Vigée-Lebrun captures, as a reader of *Corinne ou l'Italie*. Corinne's coronation at the Capitoline Hill is described as follows by de Staël: 'The senator took up the crown of myrtle and laurel he was to place on Corinne's head. She removed the turban entwined round her forehead, and all her jet black hair tumbled down in curls onto her shoulders.' The turban as an attribute is recognised from Domenichino's *The Cumaean Sibyl*. During Corinne's second improvisation at Capo Miseno in Naples another attribute appears instead, the lyre, which is linked to pictorial representations of Sappho. The lyre appears in Vigée-Lebrun's portrait of de Staël

as Corinne. In the background of the painting one finds the sibyl's temple in Tivolo, which establishes a link between Corinne and the legend of sibyls. (For the reader interested in further references to Vigée-Lebrun and de Staël, I recommend *An Inquiry into Cultural Semiotics*, 2007, p. 138). Fjelkestam (p. 81) highlights the political implications of de Staël's aesthetic reasonings: the linkage between Corinne and the sibyl, and the sibyl's books in the Capitolium – which had important political consequences – is just one example of this.

The third tableau, 'The Last Song of Corinna', describes the journey of Oswald, his wife (Lucile, Corinne's half-sister whom his father wanted him to marry instead of Corinne), and his daughter to Florence in order to pay Corinne a visit. Corinne refuses to receive Oswald, but is happy to greet Juliette, who is allowed to come every day to learn all the skills from her dying aunt that an improviser could need. *Corinne* might in many respects be classified as an autobiographical novel, as I have argued elsewhere (2007, pp. 21–28), and in naming Oswald's daughter Juliette, de Staël may have been alluding to her intimate friend, the ten-year younger beauty Juliette. de Staël first wanted Juliette to sit as the model for Vigée-Lebrun's portrait of Corinne. Was this an act of politics? Hard to say. But the message was probably important to de Staël: Juliette was to be seen as her successor in life, and this was conveyed by means of analogy in *Corinne*. Fjelkestam (p. 90) makes some interesting observations on this conjunction: the typical question of passing on artistic skills to younger generations in women's artist's novels denotes 'a utopian belief in a better future'.

Before dying Corinne has a young girl, dressed in white, recite 'The Last Song of Corinne'. Fjelkestam (p. 89) points to the sublime in this last melodramatic scene set up by Corinne at the cost of the latter's own life. The sublime act is summed up in de Staël's use of the term *enthusiasm*, which in *Corinne*



denotes the power to create art that transcends the ego. Fjelkestam (p. 92) points to the fact that the term was frequently used in art discussions in the eighteenth century as an alternative to the notion of inspiration, and as 'such it was tightly conflated with the sublime, not only in de Staël's works'. The notion of *enthusiasm* makes Corinne an example of de Staël's theoretical platform, incorporating the formula for change in society – 'the politics of the sublime', Fjelkestam concludes (p. 97). Perhaps de Staël thought that the autobiographical aspects of the novel would make her political project stronger, in the sense that she could act more directly upon the world. In fact, Fanny Lewald's novel *Jenny*, which Fjelkestam analyses in the next chapter ('The Sublime Moment') is also autobiographical.

In Jenny's case it is also question of a sublime song, where, as Fjelkestam (p. 99) puts it, Lewald deals with the issue of being Jewish. The protagonist is asked to sing a song at a gathering, but the performance is received with scorn by the audience. Nevertheless, with her song she proudly defends her origins. Fjelkestam (p. 100) points to this passage in the novel as an example of political sublimity. As research on Lewald has only recently gained momentum, Fjelkestam gives a thorough account of her life and work.

Lewald was very engaged in matters concerning class, gender, and ethnicity. *Jenny* focuses especially on the contemporary discrimination of Jews. Lewald was a well-known author, and her political interest emerged in discussions with her father (as was the case with de Staël) on the topic of the July Revolution in France. Like the protagonist in *Jenny*, as Linda Rogois-Siegel notes in the foreword to Lewald's *Prince Louis Ferdinand* (1988, pp. 13–14), Lewald fell in love with a young student of theology, Leopold Bock, and as a consequence followed in her brother's footsteps and converted to Protestantism – albeit with great grief (she never became a practis-

ing Christian). Her father refused to consent to the marriage, however. *Prince Louis Ferdinand* (1849) was another work influenced by this affair. This latter is a historical novel describing the life and fate of the Prince in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Germany was at war against Napoleon. But there is also another historical figure occupying an important place in the novel, the *salonnière* Rahel Levin (Varnhagen after her marriage in 1814), who held as important a salon in Berlin as de Staël's was in Paris. Levin had, like Lewald and many other Jews at the time, converted to Protestantism. In fact, as I have recounted elsewhere (2007, pp. 105–119), de Staël met and was impressed by her German counterpart in Berlin in 1804. So in that sense de Staël is a common denominator between Lewald and Levin. Hannah Arendt interprets the fate of those Jews who chose to convert in *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess* (1997, p. 138):

In the opacity of foreign places all specific references to yourself are blurred. It is easy to conquer unhappiness when the general knowledge that you are unhappy is not there to disgrace you, when your unhappiness is not reflected by innumerable mirrors, focused upon you so that it strikes you again and again. [...] It is easy to forget yourself when the reason for all your unhappiness, your 'infamous birth,' is not recognized, not observed, not counted.

'Foreignness is good'; to submerge, to be no one, to have no name, nothing that serves as a reminder.

More importantly perhaps, Levin was a confident of Prince Louis Ferdinand. Lewald met her in Berlin at a performance, and was as taken by her.

It is interesting to note the way Lewald describes de Staël in her historical novel from 1849 (1988, pp. 365–366). There is something of the sublime in it:

Frau von Staël's eyes flashed flames of sacred anger; the Queen, the Prince looked at her, astonished. She seemed to have forgotten her surroundings, and stared vacantly into space. Like a Sibyl who has been compelled by her feelings to reveal all her thought, she now appeared to be examining the past and present in her mind in order to find a clue to the distant future.

As Fjelkestam argues (p. 106), it is not the question of art that is most central in *Jenny*, but the issue of Jewishness. Art retains an important function, however, as the song scene shows. Things seem to have been different for Louisa May Alcott, who portrayed young female artists on several occasions. And Jo in the *Little Women* tetralogy is perhaps the most well known. The chapter on Alcott deals with the popularization of the sublime, which Fjelkestam (p. 130), in contrast to other researchers, does not think weakens the notion: 'Instead, it is about a democratization of sublimity, which [...] prompts compassionate tears and laughter in community rather than fearful existential anguish in solitude. The sublime has thereby not lost its political edge but rather widened it.'

Fjelkestam stresses the importance of genre and the different interpretations it may have over time. As a genre it implies rhetorical devices such as allegory and intense emotional tableaux, as Fjelkestam discusses earlier in connection with *Corinne*. These narrative tools, Fjelkestam proceeds (p. 131), aim to create feelings in the reader and thereby induce political effects. The character of Jo (whose literary career follows a course similar to Alcott's own) suggests such artistic and political aims, Fjelkestam concludes (p. 131). As in *Corinne*, there is the question of passing on artistic skills to the next generation. In the case of the *Little Women* tetralogy, this is done when Jo's sister's daughter Josie eventually becomes an

actress. Josie elaborates a sublime technique as an actress, which is stressed in the novel when a famous actress from the previous generation initiates her in the art of acting and sublimity. The literary development of Jo, which might perhaps be said to be similar to Josie's, is central to the aesthetics of the *Little Women* tetralogy and illustrates the more popular type of sublimity, Fjelkestam concludes. And, in contrast to *Corinne*, Alcott's protagonists are not geniuses.

Fjelkestam's *Det sublimas politik* is truly interesting reading. Her aims in the book, to give a political perspective on the sublime, and to connect the discipline of aesthetics to the area of cultural theory, are achieved. I do, however, regret the absence of a concluding chapter discussing the differences and similarities between the three main works studied, through the prism of the sublime viewed as an analytical tool, such as Fjelkestam has elaborated it. As it is now, the reader is left with some threads still hanging loose. It would be very interesting, indeed, to read a complementary article clarifying the theoretical discussions on the notion of the sublime based on the empirical studies conducted by Fjelkestam in *Det sublimas politik*.

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Sven Fritz, *Jennings & Finlay på marknaden för öregrundsjärn och besläktade studier i fribetstida storföretagande och storfinans* (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets-, Historie- och Antikvitets Akademien, 2010). 236 pp.

Sven Fritz's book about Oregrounds iron should be seen as a complement to other books about De Geers' ironworks and iron exports. In this case study he describes the monopolization of export by exploring the relations between the ironworks and the broad-