

## Talking back strategies in Swedish Feminist Comics

*Anna Nordenstam und Margareta Wallin Wictorin*

Since the early 1980s, Swedish female comics artists have been engaged in gender issues, including equality, sexuality, body, relationships, etc. Comics with these topics are published in fanzines, daily newspapers and comics albums. Over the last ten years the field of feminist comics has expanded extensively and been very successful in Sweden. Feminist comics artists such as Liv Strömquist have been well reviewed in the press and received literary awards. Strömquist has even been awarded an honorary PhD from Malmö University. She is also very well known in the public arenas for her podcasts and participation in TV programs. With her visually and verbally ironic style, Strömquist's comics album are examples of what bell hooks (1980) refers to as a talking back strategy.

This paper argues that talking back is a strategy that has been frequently used in Swedish feminist comics all the way back to the 1980s, to discuss the gender power structures of the patriarchy. Visually and verbally, these feminist comics renegotiate the construction of gender and love relationships (Chute 2010). Furthermore, the paper argues that there have been historical changes during the last thirty years within the field of feminist comics, and that these are related to changes in the Swedish debate on equality. The paper analyses three eminent Swedish comics works published between 1988 and today. These are *Den kvinnliga mystiken* (The feminine mystique, Inger Edelfeldt 1988), *Prince Charles känsla* (The feeling of Prince Charles, Liv Strömquist, 2010), and *Omlopp* (Circulation, Julia Hansson, 2017). The analysis of these works shows different ways of using irony and satire for talking back regarding constructions of gender and relationships.

### Kurzbiographie

Anna Nordenstam is professor in Swedish and Education at Luleå University of Technology and associate professor in Comparative Literature at University of Gothenburg, Sweden. She has published articles about gender and comics such as "Feminism och serier. Serietecknaren Liv Strömquist / Feminism and comics. Comics artist Liv Strömquist.", in Hermansson, K. et al (eds.), *Liv, lust & litteratur*, Makadam publishing house, 2014.

Margareta Wallin Wictorin is associate professor in Art History and visual studies and senior lecturer in Culture studies at Karlstad University, Sweden. She has published articles and chapters with postcolonial and feminist perspectives on comics.

Together Nordenstam and Wallin Wictorin have a project about Swedish feminist comics and satire, and have recently published the chapters "The Future in Swedish Avant-Garde Comics", in Ursini, F. Mahmutovic, A & Bramlett, F, (eds.), *Visions of the Future in Comics: International Perspectives*. P. 211-228. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2017, and "Högerideologi som dansbandsmelodi. Politisk satir i svenska feministiska serier./Right wing ideology as dance music:



Gesellschaft für Comicforschung

Political satire in Swedish feminist comics” in David Gedin (ed.) De tecknade seriernas språk – uttryck och form. Stockholm: Gedin & Balzano förlag, 2017, s. 167-185.