

Female Citizenship in Scandinavian Literature in the 1840s

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IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT FEMALE CITIZENSHIP in the 1840s? More than half a century would pass before Scandinavian women enjoyed in the 1840s? More than half a century would pass before Scandinavian women enjoyed political citizenship: women won the right to vote in Finland in 1906, in Norway in 1913, in Denmark in 1915, and finally in Sweden in 1919/1921. Women's civil rights improved only slowly and fitfully from the mid-nineteenth century, and organized women's movements were not established in the Nordic countries until several decades later on. Still, women were citizens. Debate over the meaning of the concept of citizenship, which had begun during the French Revolution, continued well into the twentieth century. In fact, the conditions for citizenship were codified in Swedish law as late as 1858; in the 1840s the concept of citizenship was still in the making.¹ Debate over the issue took place not only in parliaments and in the press, but in literature – the one public space to which women had access. And female authors did raise their voices on the matter.

In this article I will focus on four female writers: one Norwegian, Hanna Winsnes (1789–1872); two Swedes, Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865) and Emilie Flygare-Carlén (1807–1892); and one Finn, Sara Wacklin (1790–1846). However, the fiercest debate over women's citizenship in Sweden and Finland in the 1840s was actually instigated by a man. Carl Jonas Love Almqvist's *Sara Videbeck (Det går an)*, issued in 1839 and featuring an independent woman glazier, left its mark upon *The Duchess of Finland (Hertiginnan af Finland)*, published a decade later in 1850 by Zacharias Topelius, another male pioneer of women's rights. Therefore, I will also briefly comment on Almqvist's novel as well as Topelius's. My aim is to examine how the content of female citizenship is construed. Since contemporary ideas about femininity were intimately connected to the nineteenth-century distinction between the private and the public spheres, the question of content must be approached through spatialization. In order to clarify *what* the notion implies, it's imperative to ask *where* female

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¹ Ebba Berling Åselius, *Rösträtt med förhinder. Rösträttsstrecket i svensk politik 1900–1920*, Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2005, p. 24. See also Ulla Manns, *Upp systrar, väpnar er! Kön och politik i svensk 1800-talsfeminism*, Stockholm: Atlantis, 2005.

citizenship is enacted.

In *Borderline Citizens*, historian Kathryn Gleadle studies mid-nineteenth-century British women's experiences of political subjectivity. "Women's rights as citizens were continually in the process of construction and were always vulnerable to challenge and dismissal", Gleadle contends.² Women's political authority and sense of inclusion in public affairs could vary considerably depending on their location. The family setting, the parochial realm, and the public sphere provided different and often contradictory opportunities for women as political actors, and the boundaries between the private and the public were blurred, as, for example, when an entire family network was involved in political campaigns or collaborations in support of an MP. Furthermore, progressive as well as conservative thinkers promoted women as moral agents and considered moral education foundational for societal change.³ The political potential of the domestic sphere was explored by female Scandinavian authors. In their introduction to *Space, Place and Gendered Identities*, Kathryn Gleadle, Kathryn Beebe, and Angela Davis note that the "spatial turn" during the last decades has moved from acknowledging place as a factor in the production of gender, to focus on "the social and political use of space", that is to say, how practices transform space.⁴ This insight will prove crucial for recognising female citizenship in literature.

Political practices are also at the heart of political scientist Ruth Lister's influential study *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (1997/2003). As many feminists have pointed out, the putatively abstract citizen of modern-day democracies – a concept coined in classical antiquity, referring to free men – still presupposes a male body. Nevertheless, the very same republican tradition provides a means of feminist re-articulation in the emphasis on participation in public affairs as a civic duty. To do justice to women as political actors, Lister argues, the notion of citizenship as status needs to be complemented by one of citizenship as practice.⁵ This reformulation of the concept has proved fruitful for analysing historical material. Historians Christina Florin and Lars Kvarnström, struggling to make visible women's citizenship in nineteenth-century Sweden, stresses that the focus on practices does not restrict analysis to particular places or institutions, but allows for the inclusion of all kinds of actions intended to bring about societal change, "actions directed towards the public sphere".⁶ However, in order to grasp Fredrika Bremer's idea of women as political actors more fully, we need to address yet another aspect. I will argue that citizenship as status and as practice is insufficient for an understanding of Bremer's notion of female citizenship, since she makes a distinction between the act committed and the inner attitude

² Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens. Women, Gender, and Political Culture in Britain 1815–1867*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Kathryn Beebe, Angela Davis & Kathryn Gleadle, "Introduction", in Kathryn Beebe & Angela Davis (eds.), *Space, Place and Gendered Identities. Feminist History and the Spatial Turn*, London & New York: Routledge, 2015, p. 8.

⁵ Ruth Lister, *Citizenship. Feminist Perspectives*, 2nd ed., Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁶ Christina Florin & Lars Kvarnström, "Inledning", in Christina Florin & Lars Kvarnström (eds.), *Kvinnor på gränsen till medborgarskap. Genus, politik och offentlighet 1800–1850*, Stockholm: Atlas, 2002, p. 19. My translation.

towards the act. Citizenship as *morality* is comprehensible against the backdrop of the Lutheran idea of general priesthood and nineteenth-century Protestantism's stress on religion as inner conviction rather than as manifested in ritual action.

Scholars of masculinities Jørgen Lorentzen and Claes Ekenstam suggest that citizenship and manliness were exchangeable concepts during the nineteenth century. They summarize their argument as follows: "the citizens' different qualities [...] together constituted the national character, that is, the nation's political abilities were intimately connected to the individual citizens' (the men's) ability to cultivate their innate and acquired properties".⁷ Contemporary women writers insisted that women's contributions to the nation were at least as important as men's; the female citizen's qualities needed to be taken into account as the moral, economical and political capital of the nation. The following analysis will begin with a discussion of citizenship as a vocation before moving on to highlight the older, eighteenth-century concept of "the useful citizen" and examine the relation between the imagined citizenship on the one hand, and household and market economies on the other. Brief comparisons will be made with female citizenship as treated by Almqvist and Topelius, followed by a concluding discussion of citizenship as morality.

Citizenship as vocation: Fredrika Bremer

Bremer, a forerunner of the Swedish women's movement, is most famous for *Hertha*, the paradigmatic emancipation novel of Swedish literature, issued in 1856. However, her novels of the 1840s are equally concerned with female citizenship, particularly *Brothers and Sisters* (*Syskonlif*), published in the revolutionary year of 1848. At the end of the novel, the nine siblings inaugurate an ideal society, inspired by utopian socialism but with liberal elements.⁸ The siblings share a strong desire to make a contribution to the community, as expressed most eloquently by Gerda:

How beautiful it must be, how glorious, Augustin, to live and suffer for our native land, for our religion, for humanity, or for something which benefits and ennobles.⁹

Hvad det måste vara skönt, kännas stort, Augustin, att lefva, att lida för sitt fosterland, för sin religion, för menskligheten eller något som gagnar, som förädlar den!¹⁰

Gerda envies the martyrs "who struggle and die for truth and right".¹¹ Though previously mocked for longing to make a contribution, she has found support in the Icelandic sculptress Lagertha, who is work-

⁷ Jørgen Lorentzen & Claes Ekenstam, "Inledning", in Jørgen Lorentzen & Claes Ekenstam (eds.), *Män i Norden. Manlighet och modernitet 1840–1940*, Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 2006, p. 11. My translation.



Figure 1: Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865) painted in 1843 by John Gustaf Sandberg (1782–1854), source Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

⁸ On Bremer's reading of the utopian socialists, see Eva Heggstad, *En bättre och lyckligare värld. Kvinnliga författares utopiska visioner 1850–1940*, Stockholm/Stehag: Symposium, 2003, p. 33–58; Carina Burman, *Bremer. En biografi*, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 2001, p. 249–260.

⁹ Fredrika Bremer, *Brothers and Sisters. A Tale of Domestic Life*, vol. I–III, transl. Mary Howitt, London: Henry Colburn, 1848, II: p. 58.

¹⁰ Fredrika Bremer, *Nya teckningar ur hvardagslifvet. Syskonlif*, vol. I–II, Stockholm: L.J. Hjerta 1848, I: p. 267.

¹¹ Bremer, *Brothers and Sisters*, 1848, II: p. 58.

ing on a statue of the Old Norse norns, inspired by Grundtvig. Gerda continues:

I know that there is a life beyond that of housekeeping, even for women, a life, an activity for thought, as noble, as beneficial as the other; that there is a parental character higher than the common one, and that is as regards [sic] – the children of the mind!

And something of this kind, Augustin, I feel should have been my calling [...]¹²

[J]ag känner att det gifves ett lif utom det husliga, äfven för qvinnan, ett lif, en verksamhet för idéer, så ädelt, så välgörande som något, att det finnes ett moder- och faderskap högre än det vanliga, och det är för – – andens barn! . . .

Och något sådant, Augustin, känner jag, hade varit min kallelse [...]¹³

In *Brothers and Sisters*, Bremer develops the idea of “spiritual” parenthood. The spiritual mother is, in Bremer’s words, “the guardian, the teacher, the nurse, who often is more a mother than she who bears the name” (“vårdarinnan, läkarinnan, fostrarinnan, som ofta är mera moder, än den som bär namnet”), not only for those closest to her, but for the entire nation and, by extension, for mankind.¹⁴ As several scholars have pointed out, some decades later this idea inspired Ellen Key’s concept of “social motherhood”.¹⁵ Here, I would like to draw attention to the fact that Bremer articulates citizenship as vocation. Gerda’s brother responds to her exclamation: “The natural disposition is a vocation of God [...].” (“Naturanlaget är en Guds kallelse [...].”)¹⁶ It is even a “duty to follow its bent” – obviously, provided it is “noble”.¹⁷

Luther divided society into three estates: *ecclesia* (the church), *politia* (the state), and *oconomia* (the household). The “general priesthood” is the idea that every individual has a vocation, even though it is pursued in different estates of society. The domestic site and parenthood were attributed a high status, but women were supposed to restrict their vocation to domestic activities. Inger Hammar has analysed Bremer’s concept of citizenship as grounded in, yet also critical of, the Lutheran doctrine of the general priesthood, and has situated her ideas in relation to the resistance which they met with from conservatives in political debate. Hammar draws the conclusion that Bremer legitimised philanthropic activity in the public space as an extension of the private sphere.¹⁸ And yet, Gerda in *Brothers and Sisters* makes the opposite move.

Gerda feels that Luther has slightly misunderstood God’s purpose in creating womankind – “there is a life beyond that of housekeeping, *even for women*” (my italics) – and this feeling is supported by nineteenth-century anthropology, in which one’s natural disposition is a vocation. She therefore breaks off the engagement with a

¹² Bremer, *Brothers and Sisters*, 1848, II: p. 59 f.

¹³ Bremer, *Syskonlif*, 1848, I: p. 268.

¹⁴ Bremer, *Brothers and Sisters*, 1848, I: p. 57; Bremer, *Syskonlif*, 1848, I: p. 45.

¹⁵ See for example Claudia Lindén, *Om kärlek. Litteratur, sexualitet och politik hos Ellen Key*, Stockholm/Stehag: Symposion 2002, p. 354; Anna Bohlin, *Röstens anatomi. Läsningar av politik i Elin Wägners Silverforsen, Selma Lagerlöfs Lövensköldtrilogi och Klara Johansons Tidevarvskäserier*, Umeå: Bokförlaget h:ström, 2008, p. 90.

¹⁶ Bremer *Brothers and Sisters*, 1848, II: p. 60; Bremer, *Syskonlif*, 1848, I: p. 268.

¹⁷ Bremer, *Brothers and Sisters*, 1848, II: p. 60.

¹⁸ Inger Hammar, “Kvinnokall och kvinnosak: Några nedslag i 1800-talets debatt om genus, medborgarskap och offentlighet”, in Christina Florin & Lars Kvarnström (eds.), *Kvinnor på gränsen till medborgarskap. Genus, politik och offentlighet 1800–1850*, Stockholm: Atlas, 2002, p. 116–148; Inger Hammar, “Den svårerövrade offentligheten. Kön och religion i emancipationsprocessen”, in *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift* 1998:2, p. 16–28. See also Maria Södling, “Luthers frihet – och kvinnornas”, in *Svenska Kyrkotidning* 2017:6, p. 164–169.

despotic man – the ubiquitous villain of the nineteenth-century novel – and travels to America with her brother to sing Swedish folksongs in public concerts. In other words, she leaves the household and chooses a life in public space. Like Lagertha's statue, this is portrayed as a contribution to society: artistic endeavours make useful citizens. In Gerda's case, her usefulness is summarized by an American newspaper article which declares that the songs spring from Scandinavian nature and "out of the people's own, genuine, loving, foreboding life" with an "original power [that] purifies and elevates the heart of the civilized world" ("ursprungskraft [...] som renar och upplifvar den civiliserade världens hjerta").¹⁹ According to Bremer's fictional American journalist, the family values conveyed by the songs are especially appealing to Americans because they "strengthen the foundation-pillars of society" ("samhällets eviga grundpelare").²⁰ Gerda's leap into public space does not take the form of an extension of domestic space to include the neighbourhood. Rather, she crosses the ocean and utterly transforms public space itself. As a moral agent in public space, she performs the morality-safeguarding function of the home, and in doing so, reshapes the public as a family. As we shall see, this move goes both ways: the domestic site is likewise transformed into a public space.

Another of Bremer's characters makes a similar move beyond the family, but this time from civilisation into the wilderness. In Bremer's novel *Life in Dalecarlia: The Parsonage of Mora* (1 Dalarna, 1845), the excellent Miss Lotta moves from her aristocratic family's home in Stockholm to a remote part of the province of Dalecarlia, where the road ends just short of the Norwegian border. Miss Lotta is popularly known as "the Major" because she has been endowed with a strong body and moustaches, something which makes her realise from an early stage in life that, while she will never be an "agreeable lady" ("behagligt fruntimmer"), she may well become "an able manager of the house" ("en dugtig hushållsmenniska").²¹ Unfortunately, her brother has lost her inheritance in a swindle, but she works herself up by housekeeping and sets up a successful business in the wilderness. She also takes in a physically disabled young male relative whose condition is much improved by baths in the river, a relief which allows him to stop complaining about an "ailment, which no longer hindered him from being a useful and a happy man" ("sjukdom, som icke längre hindrade honom att vara en nyttig och lycklig menniska").²² This happy outcome encourages the Major to expand her enterprise and take in more young people in similar situations and train them to become useful citizen.

In Swedish novels of the 1840s, a national cartographic project can be seen unfolding, one in which borders in different ways actualize

¹⁹ Bremer, *Brothers and Sisters*, 1848, II: p. 230; Bremer, *Syskonlif*, 1848, II: p. 18 ff.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; Bremer, *Brothers and Sisters*, 1848, II: p. 231.

²¹ Fredrika Bremer, *Life in Dalecarlia: The Parsonage of Mora*, transl. William Howitt, London: Chapman and Hall 1845, p. 153; Fredrika Bremer, *Nya teckningar ur hvardagslivet. I Dalarna*, Stockholm: L.J. Hjerta, 1845, p. 159. On Bremer's own journey to Dalecarlia and the reception of the novel, see Carina Burman, *Bremer. En biografi*, 2001, p. 244–249; Gunnel Furuland, "Författare som resenärer och resenärer som författare. Fredrika Bremer och H.C. Andersen i Dalarna", in Gunnel & Lars Furuland, *Resenärer i Dalarna – från Carl von Linné till Göran Palm*, Mora: Stiftelsen Bonäs Bygdegård, 2007, p. 19–46. On trans as a motive in 19th-century Swedish literature, see Sam Holmqvist, *Transformationer. 1800-talets svenska translitteratur genom Lasse-Maja, C.J.L. Almqvist och Aurora Ljungstedt*, Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam förlag, 2017.

²² Bremer, *Life in Dalecarlia*, 1845, p. 158; Bremer, *1 Dalarna*, 1845, p. 162 ff.

the significance of citizenship. In *Life in Dalecarlia* the wilderness on the borders to Norway becomes a site where bodies that do not fit societal norms are provided with a space to exercise citizenship. The border intensifies the citizenship's promises of happiness and inclusion to the individual.²³ Furthermore, although the wilderness is often conceived as the very opposite of the home, the spatial practices of the Major – providing food supplies and educating responsible citizens – transforms the wilderness into a domestic space. The public concert scene and the trackless forest are turned into arenas for female citizenship through the practices by which morality is established in the home.

Useful citizens: Hanna Winsnes and Sara Wacklin

Bremer's Gerda, Lagertha and the Major are all useful citizens, contributing to the national wealth according to their different dispositions. The useful citizen, however, is connected to an older, eighteenth-century ideal of citizenship that continues to inform the writings of Hanna Winsnes and Sara Wacklin. Both feature female educators, teaching in or in the immediate vicinity of their homes, as crucial to the welfare of the nation. For Winsnes, however, the foundation-stones for nation-building are the economical wives of clergymen and housekeepers. This comes as no surprise, since Winsnes is the author of an enormously popular cookbook, *Lærebog i de forskjellige Grene af Huusholdningen* (1845), which was republished continuously until 1921 and sold more than 50.000 copies during the nineteenth century alone. Yet, she also wrote short stories and two novels under the pseudonym Hugo Schwarz. *The Count's Daughter* (*Grevens Datter*, 1841) is set in Denmark and has a slightly misleading title in that the central character is actually the count's exemplary housekeeper, Susanne Nørager. Although Winsnes was in many respects in thrall to conservative ideology, in terms of both social class and gender, Kari Melby rightly points out that she made a significant contribution to the professionalization of household management.²⁴ Furthermore, as Jorunn Hareide contends, Winsnes's attitude should be regarded as a defence of women's position in the household economy since it granted them authority as well as financial responsibilities.²⁵ In *The Count's Daughter* the powerful housekeeper is attributed national importance.

Susanne has received a strict upbringing. In accordance with her father's motto that "every person should make himself as useful as possible" ("ethvert Menneske skulde gjøre saa megen Nytte, han kunde"), she has been made to work in her father's shop from an early age.²⁶ Orderliness and accounting skills are qualities that

²³ Anna Bohlin, "Den svenska 1840-talsromanen som nationell kartografi", in *Samlaren* 2016, p. 58–86.



Figure 2: Hanna Winsnes (1789-1872) painted in 1871 by Mathias Stoltenberg (1799-1871).



Figure 3: Sara Wacklin (1790-1846) painted in 1846 by Edla Jansson-Blommérin (1817-1908), source Finnish National Gallery.

²⁴ Kari Melby, "Hanna Winsnes og standsinteressene", in Bente Gullveig Alver & Libeth Mikaelsson (eds.), *KvinneMinneBok til Ida Blom på 60-årsdagen, 20 februar 1991*, Bergen: Senter for humanistisk kvinneforskning, 1991, p. 187–198.

²⁵ Jorunn Hareide, "Saaledes findes der ofte digterisk talent, hvor man mindst formoder det". Hanna Winsnes' kjærlighetsromaner", *Skrivefryd og pennskrek. Selvframstilling og skriveproblematikk hos norske 1800-tallsforfatterinner. En artikkelsamling*, Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk forlag, 1999, p. 46 ff.

come in handy when she becomes housekeeper of the count's manor house after her father falls foul of capitalism by lending money to the wrong persons and then dying from grief. Susanne's heiress in the next generation is her niece Helene, who impresses her future husband, the parish minister, with her excellent ability to calculate butter yields based upon the amount of milk produced. The seduction is completed with her final remark: "what cannot be calculated are God's blessings, [...] always more rich than deserved" ("hvad vi ikke kunne beregne, det er Guds Velsignelse, [...] altid rigeligere end vi fortjene").²⁷ On her very first visit, she immediately inspects his mismanaged outbuildings; after becoming his wife, her shrewdness in farming makes the minister a wealthy man. Economic wealth should be considered not merely as a matter of private happiness, but as a contribution to nation-building.

The shift from royal "subject" to democratic "citizen" was not as straightforward as might be expected. The independent, autonomous citizen of the Enlightenment became a very popular concept early in the eighteenth century, to the extent that different political camps, even royalists, tried to claim the concept for their own purposes.²⁸ Gustav III portrayed himself as "the first citizen" and the Russian tsar Alexander I addressed his new Finnish subjects as "citizens" at the Parliament in Borgø 1809.²⁹ Thus historian Mikael Alm describes the glow surrounding the concept: "Cast in a classical style, the citizen was hailed as the useful citizen, who in patriotic ardour worked for the benefit of the fatherland."³⁰ During the last years of the eighteenth century, the political ideal of citizenship was displaced by an economic ideal: societies for house-holding and agriculture were formed, and farming manuals were issued to enlighten the common people.³¹ Winsnes's notion of citizenship is connected to this economic, useful ideal, and the novel opposes the housekeeper's carefully calculated production of resources and virtue, to the autocratic Danish king, who is unable to calculate how much the state needs to supply in order to feed his subjects.

State governance is a running theme in Winsnes's novel, which contrasts Danish autocracy to Norway's free press and parliament that gave political representation to small farmers (there is no mention of the personal union between Norway and Sweden). Winsnes was a passionate advocate of the Norwegian Constitution, and the novel ends in a tone of disappointment at Denmark's failure to form a constitution – needless to say, her novel was forbidden in Denmark.³² Since the mid-1830s, public debate in Norway was dominated by the struggle over the construction of nationalism: while J.S. Welhaven emphasised Norway's historical ties to Denmark, Henrik Wergeland insisted on a national idea that broke with Norway's Dan-

²⁶ Hanna Winsnes [pseud. Hugo Schwartz], *Grevens Datter. En Novelle*, Christiania: Guldberg & Dzwonkowski, 1841, p. 103. There is, to my knowledge, no English translation of the novel, and the translations are therefore my own.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

²⁸ Bo Lindberg, *Den antika skevheten. Politiska ord och begrepp i det tidigmoderna Sverige*, Stockholm: Filologiskt arkiv 45, 2006, p. 100; Jakob Christensson, *Lyckoriket. Studier i svensk upplysning*, Stockholm: Atlantis, 1996, p. 126–139.

²⁹ Henrika Tandefelt, *Borgø 1809. Ceremoni och fest*, Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2009; Mikael Alm, *Kungsord i elfte timmen. Språk och självbild i det gustavianska enväldets legitimitetskamp 1772–1809*, Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002, p. 116–139

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119. My translation.

³¹ Christensson, *Lyckoriket*, 1996, p. 159 ff.

³² Hareide, "Hanna Winsnes' kjærlighetsromaner", 1999, p. 46 ff.

ish heritage. The readers of Winsnes's novel are introduced to this controversy by a character who calls himself neutral and who enjoys the poetry of both writers. He praises the elegant form of Welhaven's verse, as well as Wergeland's profundity and honest constitutional advocacy. In a spirit of harmony, he wishes to acknowledge and benefit from both parties.³³

In 1904, Ragna Nielsen, a leader of the Norwegian women's movement, expressed disappointment with Wergeland for not having been more outspoken about women's rights, a reticence which she found remarkable given how fiercely he had sprung to the defence of other oppressed groups. Not only that, he was the brother of Camilla Collett, who had been a pioneer of women's rights in the 1850s. However, Dagne Groven Myhren shows that Nielsen was rather hasty in her judgement. In fact, Wergeland included women among the social groups deserving greater legal rights; in his cosmic poems, Eve and Adam are portrayed as equals, and the final vision of the future in his *Mennesket* (1845) predicts equality between the sexes.³⁴ Although Winsnes, unlike Wergeland, never promoted legal reform in relation to women's rights, she had much to say about women's contributions to the nation and female citizenship. In her novels, morality and domestic economy – and, by implication, the national economy – are best managed by female citizens.

The political conditions in which debates over citizenship took place differed greatly among the Nordic countries. Whereas Norway had proclaimed a constitution that was radical for the time, and tried to protect it against Swedish attempts to force Norway into a closer union, the debate in Sweden was dominated by the Liberals' attempts to bring about a representational reform, an ambition which was not realized until 1865, when the estates of the realm were replaced by a bicameral parliament. In Finland, a so-called "political night" (*statsnatten*) prevailed: after 1809, parliament did not convene until 1863, which meant that the Grand Duchy was in reality built and run by officials of the state. In both Wacklin's and Topelius's writings, accordingly, the country's administrators are given prominent roles: chief magistrates, district judges, and writers populate their stories and drive the plots. The 1840s is usually described as the decade in which the Finnish nationalist movement became strong; Sara Wacklin's *One Hundred Memories from Österbotten* (*Hundra minnen från Österbotten*, 1844–1845) is part of a nation-building project. As the title suggests, this work is, strictly speaking, less fiction than memories of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, even though its anecdotes are presented in a more or less literary form. Given the historical setting, it should come as no surprise to learn that Wacklin leans heavily upon the older ideals of the useful citizen and house-

³³ Winsnes, *Grevens Datter*, 1841, p. 225 f.



Figure 4: A lithograph of Henrik Wergeland (1808–1845) from the 1830s.



Figure 5: Sara Wacklin's own sketch over Oulu in Österbotten (1844).

³⁴ Dagne Groen Myhre, "Kvinnens ridder", in Andreas G. Lombnæs & Jahn Holljen Thon (eds.), *Bedre Tidens Morgenrøde... Utopi og modernitet hos Henrik Wergeland*, Oslo: Novus forlag 2008, p. 131–150.

hold economy.

A long section in Wacklin's text can be described as a catalogue of model citizens of Österbotten, their "contributions to promote education in the local community" ("bidrag till bildningens befordrande i orten"), and the enormous number of medals conferred upon these gentlemen for their civic deeds.³⁵ They are all useful citizens – and all male. Women do not receive any medals, as is pointed out by the feminist "aunt Stina", herself "a useful member of society" in her capacities as both school teacher (a capacity she shared with the author) and, since her father's illness, acting postmaster.³⁶ Aunt Stina "goes berserk" at the thought of how easily men are awarded "titles and offices" ("titlar och ämbeten") when in practice women perform all the essential functions of society. Men do nothing but smoke pipes, drink coffee, and take naps, while women are expected, without encouragement, to be

tailor and baker, brewer, butcher, chef, confectioner, coffee-maker, dyer, stocking-maker, candle-maker, gardener, farm bailiff, fire safety officer, and (in small towns) shopkeeper! Moreover, she is supposed to be mother and wife, nanny and teacher, housekeeper and kitchen-maid, nurse, and servant to her husband.

skräddare och bagare, bryggare, slaktare, kock, sockerbagare, kaffekokare, färgare, strumpvävare, ljusstöpare, trädgårdsmästare, gårdsfogde, brandvakt och handelsbetjänt (i små städer)! Dessutom skall hon vara mor och maka, barnskötare och lärarinna, hushållerska och kökspiga, sjukvakterska och sin mans tjänarinna.³⁷

Wacklin's anger at the unequal and unjust division of labour and recognition is further expressed in her portrayal of women as victims of the law and of patriarchal household authority. A lack of civil rights is the reason why women are forced to marry against their will or prevented from marrying according to their wishes: one woman even murders her own children to protect them from a violent, alcoholic father. The most powerful figure of legal injustice, which recurs throughout the work, is "the poor widow". She has responsibilities towards her children but is denied the means to better her situation. How the rest of society treats the poor widow determines the moral value of society and, by implication, the male population's ability to exercise citizenship. The poor widow thus represents the ultimate test of male citizenship. Household economy dominates Wacklin's memoirs but, in stark contrast to Winsnes, she stresses the disadvantages for women's citizenship. In her view, women need their own income and a market economy in order to defend their rights and their lives.

³⁵ Sara Wacklin, *Hundra minnen från Österbotten*, I-III, Stockholm: L.J. Hjerta, 1844–1845, p. III:50 ff. As far as I know there is no English translation, and the translations are therefore my own.

³⁶ Wacklin, *Hundra minnen från Österbotten*, 1844–1845, p. I: 115.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I:109.

The market economy as precondition: Flygare-Carlén

Whereas the capitalist market economy drives people to their death in Winsnes's *The Count's Daughter*, it is essential for freedom and participation in public life in Flygare-Carlén's writings. Contracts are constantly established in all kinds of relations: debit and credit are weighed against each other in every love affair. The plot of *Pål Värning* (1844) is driven by money, with the reader being kept informed of Pål's financial status at every turn. The precondition for both moral economy and monetary economies is an individualistic market economy: Pål and his fiancée Nora become independent actors in their relationships and in the labour market by virtue of owning their own bodies. Nevertheless, the body becomes the site of a delicate balance of morality and money.

First and foremost, the value of the female body rises and falls depending on the kind of work it offers the market: selling kisses, for instance, undoubtedly lowers her worth. Nora reaches her lowest value when she gives birth to an illegitimate child, even though she emphasises that no financial transaction has taken place. Her value slowly recovers through modest behaviour, teaching poor children, textile production, and waged work at a café in Gothenburg. At the end of the novel, Pål is finally able to appreciate her "true value".³⁸ The only body in the novel portrayed as a completely reified commodity is that of the false Jeanette, who gives every indication of being a prostitute. Nora's triumph occurs when Pål notes that her feet and shoes are just as beautiful as Jeanette's – the moral body presents a beauty that does not deceive, while that of a commodified exterior is a cover for calculating falsehood.

However, in Flygare-Carlén's novel the male body is also required to balance morality and income. Aside from his accounting skills, Pål's honest character is the commodity which he is trying to sell on the labour market. Even so, another opportunity to earn a livelihood presents itself in the form of the rich widow of a book printer who proposes that he marry her. To "sell his fidelity, his freedom and joy of youth" is not an alluring prospect: "'No,' said Pål in his heart, 'matrimony without love will not do!'"³⁹ In Flygare-Carlén's moral economy, the currency of exchange needs to be of the same kind: trust for trust, love for love, body for body. Money for work breaks the logic, putting the moral system at risk, but it is the basis of independent, autonomous participation in the liberal citizen-nation. The balance hinges on owning your own body and being able to take responsibility for its moral value: the body cannot be used as a commodity but must be restored to its life-giving, affectionate use value in a love relationship. In Flygare-Carlén's novel, society is built on



Figure 6: Emilie Flygare-Carlén (1807-1892).

³⁸ Emilie Flygare-Carlén, *Pål Värning. En skärgårds-unglings äfventyr*, ed. Johan Svedjedal, Stockholm: Svenska Vitterhetssamfundet, 2000, pp. 275. As far as I know there is no English translation of the novel, and the translations are therefore my own.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 235 f.

morality, too.

Utopian citizenship: Almquist and Topelius

Shortly before Christmas 1839, a shocking novel appeared in the bookshops: *Sara Videbeck (Det går an)* by C.J.L. Almquist (1793–1866).⁴⁰ It tells the story of young woman who falls in love and *refuses* to marry: she is unwilling to lose her independence, her profession, and her money. Instead, Sara Videbeck proposes to live with her beloved Albert out of wedlock, although he is to rent a separate apartment in the same building so that she will be able to continue her work as a glazier and manage her own household. She abhors the idea of becoming dependent. Although the story is in many respects an excellent example of the new realistic novel, this exemplar of female citizenship was clearly not a reflection of reality at the time. A ferocious debate was ignited, involving male and female writers, on both sides of the Baltic Sea, who accused Almquist of not taking into account real circumstances, of promoting an excessively individualistic ideology, and of not considering the children. Almquist had indeed intended the novel as a utopian model, and during the debate he emphasised this element further. Finally, in 1850, a new edition of the novel was published together with a theoretical treatise titled *The Grounds for the European Malcontent (Europeiska missnöjets grunder)*, which proposed an entirely new organisation of society which, according to Almquist, would be necessary in order for women to achieve full citizenship in terms of education, economic independence and political rights.⁴¹ The fully autonomous citizen Sara Videbeck still lay in the future.

Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898) was among Almquist's admirers and he commented approvingly on *Sara Videbeck* at the time of its publication.⁴² He later became an advocate of women's right to be admitted to the university, and in 1854 he corresponded with Fredrika Bremer, asking for advice about the statutes for the Helsinki women's organization for child-care, of which he served as secretary from 1853 to 1866.⁴³ Pia Forssell has drawn attention to the fact that Topelius's historical novel *The Duchess of Finland (Hertiginnan af Finland, 1850)* can be regarded as part of the debate about *Sara Videbeck* since he emphasises women's legal and social vulnerability in both the preface and throughout the novel. Set during the war of 1741–1743, the novel portrays the main character, Eva Merthen, as an exceptionally striking personality. Even so, by virtue of being a woman she becomes the victim of petty social norms, slander, misunderstandings and legal injustice. In a direct reference to Almquist's novel, her mother warns her that her flirtatious and self-assured con-



Figure 7: Carl Jonas Love Almquist (1793–1866), self-portrait.

⁴⁰ C.J.L. Almquist, *Det går an. Hvarför reser du? Samlade Verk 21*, ed. Johan Svedjedal, Stockholm: Svenska Vitterhetssamfundet 1993; C.J.L. Almquist, *Sara Videbeck*, transl. Adolph Burnett Benson, New York: The American-Scandinavian Foundation 1919.

⁴¹ Karin Westman Berg, *Studier i C.J.L. Almquists kvinnouppfattning*, Göteborg: Akademiförlaget Gumperts, 1962, p. 220–327; Anders Burman, *Politik i sak. C.J.L. Almquists samhällstänkande 1839–1851*, Stockholm/Stehag: Symposion, 2005, p. 146–168.



Figure 8: Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898) in 1850, source: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland.

⁴² Pia Forssell, "Inledning", in Zacharias Topelius, *Skrifter V. Hertiginnan af Finland och andra historiska noveller*, ed. Pia Forssell, Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland & Stockholm: Atlantis 2013, p. XXIX.

duct will not do (“det går ej an”, a negation of the titular phrase). The mother is proven right: Eva is humbled and subdued by her misfortunes, and love forces her to settle for “a woman’s natural place” – a plot development that is, as Forssell underlines, deeply conservative.⁴⁴

However, the oppressed woman’s place is depicted as a political site of vital importance for the governance of the realm. After an education provided by her lover, the Russian conqueror, she becomes an important spokesperson for the Finnish people, for whom she acts as both translator and mediator:

She knew how to give every concern its proper weight for the benefit of the country, every complaint its justice, every distress the lively colour that would speak to the General’s humanity.

Hon visste att gifva hvarje angelägenhet sin vigt för landets bästa, hvarje klagan sin rättvisa, hvarje nöd sin lifliga färg, som talade till generalens mensklighet.⁴⁵

Not only do her interventions prove crucial in state matters, she also “sacrifices herself” for her people by means of philanthropic deeds.⁴⁶ Thus, the conservative turn of the plot does not result in female citizenship losing its importance. Nonetheless, Eva is hardly a typical woman; her situation is explicitly an exception, no doubt pointing to the future but presumably not fully realisable in either the 1740s or 1850.

In her ground-breaking study of Almqvist’s views on women, Karin Westman Berg stresses the fact that although Almqvist had expressed radical views on love from an early stage, his views on women were fairly conservative; *Sara Videbeck* marks a sharply liberal turn towards advocacy of women’s legal rights. She also points out that Sara’s independence and industrious resourcefulness under difficult circumstances make her, in Almqvist’s mind, a specimen of the ideal Swede.⁴⁷ The year before, in *The Significance of Swedish Poverty* (*Svenska Fattigdomens betydelse*, 1838) he had argued that the Swedish people’s most distinguishing characteristic was poverty in the sense of being thrown upon one’s own resources. Sara shares these characteristics with another young woman in Almqvist’s novels of the 1840s, namely Ellin in *Three Wives in Småland* (*Tre fruar i Småland* 1842–1843). Ellin is the daughter of a witch and the granddaughter of a religious revivalist, and, at the end of the novel, she herself comes to help with reforming criminals as exemplary citizens in an ideal society.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the entire scheme of the ideal society is worked out by one of the three wives. However, the three wives turns out to be allegories – their status as personifications is spelled out at the end. Thus, Religion has a strong intellect – the plan for an ideal

⁴³ Matti Klinge, *Idyll och hot. Zacharias Topelius – hans politik och idéer*, transl. Nils Erik Forsgård, Stockholm: Atlantis & Helsinki: Söderström & Co, 2000, p. 26, 207, 347; Fredrika Bremer to Zacharias Topelius, 3/3 1854, 8/2 1855, Fredrika Bremer, *Brev. Ny följd II 1853–1865*, ed. Carina Burman, Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 1996, p. 74 f, 116 f.

⁴⁴ Forssell, “Inledning”, 2013, p. XXIX f; Zacharias Topelius, *Skrifter V. Hertiginnan af Finland och andra historiska noveller*, ed. Pia Forssell, Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland & Stockholm: Atlantis 2013, p. 107, 152.

⁴⁵ Topelius, *Hertiginnan af Finland*, 2013, p. 154. As far as I am aware, there is no English translation and the translations are therefore my own.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁷ Westman Berg, *Almqvists kvinnouppfattning*, 1962, p. 220, 279; Anders Burman, *Almqvists samhällstänkande 1839–1851*, 2005, p. 145.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of witches and citizens, see Anna Bohlin, “Magi och nation. Häxor i finsk och svensk 1800-talslitteratur”, in *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier*, forthcoming in 2018. See also Lars Burman, *Tre fruar och en mamsell: om C.J.L. Almqvists tidiga 1840-talsromaner*, Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 1998.

society is her doing – yet she would perish without her friends, Poetry and Practical Life.⁴⁹ Almqvist's female citizens, though vividly imagined, seem to be of a lofty nature – either allegories or utopian models – and not fully recognizable in contemporary life.

In 1897, Ellen Key famously confirmed Almqvist's utopian endeavour by celebrating him as "Sweden's most modern writer"; at the turn of the century Sara Videbeck was still a radical figure.⁵⁰ There is certainly no shortage of utopian elements in female writing from this period, especially not in Bremer's oeuvre, and yet female writers appear to be more concerned than their male counterparts with making visible the ways in which women contribute to the nation and how they might exercise citizenship in the present moment. Legal improvements and political citizenship still lay in the future but Bremer's scheme of citizenship as morality allowed for immediate implementation of female citizenship and the inclusion of women in public affairs: it all comes down to inner awareness and attitude towards one's own actions.

Citizenship as morality

Female citizenship is enacted in the kitchen, on the farm and in the school-room in Winsnes and Wacklin, on the labour-market in Flygare-Carlén and on the concert scene and in the wilderness in Bremer. For Winsnes, the household economy is the cornerstone of women's contribution to the nation whereas, for Wacklin, the household economy engenders legal injustice and distress. For Flygare-Carlén the market economy provides an ambivalent but necessary prerequisite for the autonomous, independent female citizen. Regardless of the economical model, the female citizen transforms the public space into a place for the production of morality, and conversely, the home is portrayed as a political site, which brings about societal change. Bremer articulates the idea of citizenship at home as a question of attitude, of inner conviction. She makes a distinction between aiming for merely the individual or for the general.

Bremer's novel *A Diary* (*En dagbok*, 1843) opens with the main character, Sofia, stating her civil status:

Independent in fortune and position in life, I can now, after a captivity of many years, enjoy freedom, and at thirty years of age follow merely my own will.⁵¹

Oberoende till förmögenhet och lefnadsställning för jag nu efter långa års fångenskap smaka friheten, och vid trettio års alder följa blott min egen vilja.⁵²

After an application to the king, Sofia has attained civil citizenship. Unfortunately, she falls in love. If she marries, she will lose her free-

⁴⁹ C.J.L. Almqvist, *Tre fruar i Småland. Samlade Verk* 25, ed. Lars Burman, Stockholm: Svenska Vitterhetssamfundet 1998, p. 435 f.

⁵⁰ Claudia Lindén, "Den hemliga länken. Almqvist, Key, Skansen och rösträttsrörelsen", in Anders Burman & Jon Viklund (eds.), *Almqvistovaria-tioner. Receptionsstudier och omläsningar*, forthcoming 2018.

⁵¹ Fredrika Bremer, *New Sketches of Every-day Life: A Diary. Together with Strife and Peace*, vol. I–II transl. Mary Howitt, London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844, p. I: 2.

⁵² Fredrika Bremer, *En dagbok*, utg. Maria Wahlström, Stockholm: Svenska Vitterhetssamfundet, 2009, p. 1.

dom and her husband will become her guardian in the legal sense, but what worries her most is the prospect of losing her “sense for the general” (“förlora sinnet för det allmänna”).⁵³ She complains that “the exclusive love of one human being would be too mean an object for a human life, for the citizen of a divine kingdom” (“uteslutande kärlek till *en människa* vore ett alltför ringa mål för ett människolif, för en medborgare af ett gudomligt rike”).⁵⁴ Her future husband strongly disagrees:

Because true love is that which, while it unites two beings with each other, unites them only the more closely with social life and with humanity; right marriages consecrate people for a higher and a richer world; the right home is that where the fear of God rules like an invincible spirit, and all members of it, each one according to his strength and according to his gifts, is made useful for the great home of the world.⁵⁵

Ty den rätta kärleken är den, som i det den förenar två varelser med hvarandra, med detsamma förenar dem djupare med samhälle och mensklighet, det rätta äktenskapet viger människan in i en högre och rikare verld, det rätta hemmet är det, där gudsfruktan herrskar, som en osynlig ande, och gör alla dess medlemmar verksamma för det stora världshemmet, hvar och en efter sin kraft och gåfva.⁵⁶

Bremer bluntly declares that anyone who fails to see this is “A LITTLE STUPID!” (“*lite dumt!*”)⁵⁷ Indeed, modern feminist theory has been, in Bremer’s words, a little stupid in missing the fine distinction between devotion to one individual and devotion to humanity *through* the individual. According to Bremer, all family members may be “useful for the great home of the world”. Depending on your attitude, the home can close the door to public affairs or open the door to politics taking place at home. After Simone de Beauvoir’s famous slaughter of the housewife, the private has been doomed to immanence and the public sphere declared the only path to freedom.⁵⁸ The way in which nineteenth-century writers grasped the home as a site for politics has been made invisible.

Lister’s reformulation of citizenship as practice will not bring out Bremer’s distinction either. To be sure, the place is not the determining criterion, but nor is the action. Raising children may restrict the view to the private – and lose the quality of citizenship – or open the view to the general, “great home of the world”. When Sofia at the end of the novel decides to marry and prepares to take care of her future husband’s children, she thereby loses her legal status but not her moral citizenship. Her contribution to the nation will count, regardless of her legal status. Where male writers such as Almqvist, Topelius and Wergeland, promoted legal reform by means of a utopian and visionary imagining of a future female citizen, female writers insisted on making visible the contributions made to the

⁵³ Bremer, *A Diary*, 1844, p. I: 197; Bremer, *En dagbok*, 2009, p. 108.

⁵⁴ Bremer, *A Diary*, 1844, p. I: 197; Bremer, *En dagbok*, 2009, p. 107.

⁵⁵ Bremer, *A Diary*, 1844, p. I: 198.

⁵⁶ Bremer, *En dagbok*, 2009, p. 108.

⁵⁷ Bremer, *A Diary*, 1844, p. I: 198; Bremer, *En dagbok*, 2009, p. 108.

⁵⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *Det andra könet* [*Le Deuxième Sexe*, 1949], transl. Adam Inczedy & Eva Gothlin, Stockholm: Norstedts, 2002, p. 522–536, 577–625. On the women’s movement and the public sphere, see for example, Joan B. Landes, “The Public and the Private Sphere: A Feminist Reconsideration”, in Joan B. Landes (ed.), *Feminism, the Public and the Private*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 135–163.

nation by contemporary, ordinary women. In order to do justice to nineteenth-century female writers' ideas about female citizenship, we need to recognize citizenship as morality.