

BIRGITTA WISTRAND:

Elin Wägner i 1920-talet. Rörelseintellektuell och internationalist

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Birgitta Wistrand's dissertation on Swedish author and public intellectual Elin Wägner illustrates the broad scope of Wägner studies in the 21st century. It complements Boel Hackman's thorough biography *Boel Hackman om Elin Wägner* (2005); Anna Bolin's *Röstens anatomi: Läsningar*

av politik i Elin Wägners Silverforsen, Selma Lagerlöfs Lövensköldstrilogi och Klara Johansons Tidevarvskåserier (2008); and Helena Forsås-Scott's *Rewriting the Script. Gender and Community in Elin Wägner* (2009).

Wistrand's approach involves close contextual study of Wägner's substantive authorial and editorial contributions to the Swedish journal *Tidevarvet* as well as Wägner's literary production from that decade (five novels and two short story collections). This is a focused study of an overlooked decade in Wägner scholarship.

The dissertation seeks to investigate from sociological and literary perspectives Wägner's international engagement and her importance in introducing major international figures like Gandhi to Swedish public life. Wistrand applies the term "movement intellectual" (*rörelseintellektuell*) to Wägner's multiple roles and commitments during this decade, including her furthering of international theories of pacifism and feminism. A particular focus includes outlining how Wägner incorporates these international influences into her different columns and contributions for *Tidevarvet* and thus effectively presents them to a Swedish audience for the first time. Wistrand also comprehensively discusses Wägner's role for the Fogelstad group, a part of the National Organisation of Liberal Women, and the previously overlooked contributions of this group to Swedish intellectual discourse. Her research will surely prove valuable to others interested in this group.

Wistrand's work contributes in substantial ways to broadening the field of Wägner studies. I find particularly interesting Wistrand's discussion of Wägner's often overlooked so-called *Smålands-romaner* (novels set in the province of Småland). Wistrand posits that these novels take the New Woman approach of earlier novels like *Pennskaftet* (1910; *Penwoman*, recent translation by Sarah Death) in new directions by emphasizing how middle-aged female characters understand social constructions of love, marriage, divorce, and religion. This dissertation also includes two substantial and informative chapters on the social, political, and literary contexts of the 1920s. Wistrand's dissertation makes a significant contribution to Wägner studies. It also indicates how productive a recent turn toward interdisciplinarity has been for Swedish literary studies, particularly as conducted at Uppsala University's Centre for Gender Research under the dynamic leadership of Margaretha Fahlgren.

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