The Poem as Concert: Lidner, Oxenstierna and the Unity of the Long Poem

Alfred Sjödin
Comparative Literature, Center for Languages and Literature, University of Lund
Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Sweden
Email: Alfred. Sjodin@ litt. lu. se

Abstract This article addresses the problem of literary unity as it is posed by two late eighteenth century long poems, "Året 1783" by Bengt Lidner and *Skördarne* by Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna. By investigating the relations between poetry, poetics and practical criticism, it seeks to document a situation in which new poems failed to achieve the kind of unity found in the epic poem. Instead, the poems are valued in terms of their ability to seamlessly weave together disparate material. The article then describes the reception of these poems during the romantic period, when literary unity was primarily understood in terms of "lyric" unity. What was at stake in the fragmentary unity of these poems, wedged as it were between the two paradigms of poetics?
Key words literary unity; the long poem; poetics/aesthetics; mimesis

The view of poetic unity is one of the key issues that divide a neo-classical poetics from a romantic aesthetic, in Sweden as elsewhere. During the late eighteenth century we find a production of long poems that seems wedged between these two conceptions—the one dominant and the other not yet fully emerged—and that in a way could be read as a challenge to them both. They represent the import of innovative English models (for example, the poems of Young and Thomson) on a Swedish literary scene where neo-classical orthodoxy had been strengthened during the course of the century. There is a certain tension between the way these poems relate to the outside world, and the ideal of unity that governed neo-classical poetics. When the question of unity takes a subjective swerve during the romantic period, much of this tension, and the reason for its existence, is displaced. I would like to approach this problematic group of texts by studying the interplay between poetic practice, poetics and criticism. First, a detour through the genre terminology of Swedish neo-classicism will be necessary.

The Long "Poëme" as an Alternative to the Epic

In 1797 the Swedish Academy, guardians of literary orthodoxy and the center of the official Swedish cultural production, announced a prize for the best "*poëm* to the muses of the theatre". The attached preliminary plan shows that a quite thourough description of the subject was desired. The art of acting in general, the relation between

tragedy and history writing, the way the passions portrayed on the stage would influence the beholders, how comedy could teach by amusing: these were all deemed important parts of the subject to be treated.[1] This plan was supplied in order to give guidance to aspiring poets, but it was also stressed that: "The mode of representation, the order of the parts and the dress of the words are for the Poet to choose, as well as the genre and the verse form."[2] Apparently, the academy demanded a poem of some length, but hardly an epic or even a narrative poem. What should not go unnoticed is the word "poëm(e)", which is not fully as general a term as it might seem. As Lennart Breitholtz has shown, this french loanword was used during the eighteenth century as an alternative to the native terms "skaldestycke" and "skaldedikt" (roughly "poet's poem", or possibly "bardic poem"). The exact meaning of these words is difficult to pin down, but it seems that they were generally used to indicate a longer, serious poem with the intention not just to amuse but also to instruct.[3]

It should also be noted that the French word "poëme" was not synonymous with "poem" *tout court*, but derived from more specific usages such as "poëme dramatique" or "poëme épique". During the classical age in France, a true *poëme* usually meant an epic one, but in the eighteenth century the term would eventually accommodate large-scale descriptive and didactic works as well, as has been demonstrated by Dominique Combe.[4] The somewhat amputated word "poëme" (without a specifying adjective) could thus signify a poem of a certain length, seriousness and ambition, but that would not be subject to the more detailed prescriptions for an epic or a dramatic poem.

In this way, the not very revealing terms "poëm" or "skaldestycke" allowed for a certain degree of experiment: descriptive and didactic poems, and some poems of mixed genre, are given this label. We should not be misled by the fact that these were sometimes lumped into the genre of the "didactic poem". The didactic poem, though of increasing popularity, had to a large extent escaped rigid codification by neo-classical poetics. This is mainly due to the fact that its discursive rather than mimetic character was hard to square with the neo-classical view of art as an imitation of nature.[5] When treated by poetics it was usually recommended that the dry precepts of the didactic poem should be relieved by inset narratives or by a more descriptive style of presentation.[6] This implies mixing genres and literary techniques, and from this perspective we can see similarities between seemingly different works. As Richard Terry has written of the English long poems of this kind, these are "poems indeed whose very family resemblance derives in good part from their defiance of genre."[7] The word "poëme" figures on the front page of Gustaf Fredrik Gyllenborg's *Essay on the art of poetry* (*Försök om skaldekonsten*), a didactic poem, but it was also used of Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna's descriptive nature poems in the vein of James Thomson's *The Seasons*.

Whatever the proportions between discursive or mimetic presentation, it is obvious that these poems do not conform to the idea of unity derived from epic composition. Neo-classicism had turned into dogma the recommendation of Aristotle (*Poetics* 1451a) that the fable should represent a single, complete action, composed in such a

way that the poem would immediately fall apart, should one element or another be removed or change place. It goes without saying that these criteria could be applied to the didactic poem only as a vague analogy, which of course had not prevented some theoreticians, like Charles Batteux, from trying.[8] In the non-epic long poem, the order of its parts could easily be changed. Instead of a unity based on representations of action, poets chose subjects that offered a frame to the material, but not properly speaking a structure. A popular instance is the "seasons" poems, which in the manner of *The Seasons* divided the poem into four books. If this accomplished a division into "books" or "cantos", it did not give much guidance to the disposition within the chapters. To some extent, the order between the different sections becomes reversible.

It is a symptom of the loose composition of these poems that while they generally were of a forbidding length, they could easily supply excerpts for anthologies, such as Per Adam Wallmark's *The Beauties of the Swedish Language* (*Swenska språkets skönheter*, 1820 – 28). The meticulous organization of this anthology allows excerpts from Oxenstierna's poems to be included under such headings and sub-headings as: "A) Natural description I. In general. 3. The times of day a) Morning."[9] The anthologist could without problem pick the poems apart to create a sampler of Swedish poetry, and thus give free rein to the "*love to Parts*" condemned by Alexander Pope in the *Essay on Criticism*.[10] But for the critic who had taken to heart the lessons of masters such as Pope, it was necessary to form a judgment on the unity of the poem as a whole. We can observe this mechanism at work in a review of the failed epic *Gustaf Wasa* (1785) by Olof Celsius. The critic at first gives the reader some excerpts and praises them, but then proceeds to add that

> A poem may contain beautiful parts of this kind, and still as a whole be pretty wretched; in the same way, one can always in a lousy portrait find a beautiful eye or some other part that has all theperfection one could ask for. It is therefore necessary to view this poem in its totality, to observe how the different parts connect with each other and with the poem as a whole, and to that purpose examine it according to the rules of art.[11]

This seemsto be the standard procedure of critics faced with an epic poem. It was to be challenged by the non-epic long poems. While their format made them activate a reading of the epic kind, their unity depended not on plot but on weaving together disparate parts as seamlessly as possible.

Lidner, Oxenstierna and the Art of Transitions

Let us now turn to two "Skaldestycken" or "Poëmes" that occupy interesting positions between "Enlightenment" and "Romanticism" in handbooks of Swedish literary history. While they differ from each other in many ways, they nevertheless show remarkable similarities in their uneasy relation to the classical idea of unity. I have chosen the poems "The year 1783" ("Året 1783", 1784) by Bengt Lidner, an almost journalistic poem surveying the world events of that year, and Oxenstierna's *The Harvest* (1796), a comprehensive depiction of the Swedish countryside and its agricultur-

al labour, treated in a didactic as well as descriptive fashion. The two might seem strange bedfellows. Oxenstierna, one of the first members of the Swedish Academy, is a fairly typical example of what has been called an "ämbetsförfattare", an "official author" who earned his living not from selling his books but by being tied to the representative public sphere of the court and offered posts in the chancellery. This type of writer was only beginning to be challenged by the modern market writer, of which Bengt Lidner is one of our very first representatives.[12] This difference in the writers' respective situation is reflected in other, no less conspicuous, differences. Lidner poses as a revolutionary sentimentalist who represents the voice of true, unmediated feeling; Oxenstierna preserves a polished, controlled diction and tends to avoid emotional immediacy. However, their poems also have something in common, as becomes apparent when studying the responses of the critics.

In his journal *The Swedish Parnassus* (*Svenska parnassen*) the critic and poet Gustaf Regnér dedicates a long review to "The year 1783". After giving a resume of the poem's content, he states: "The year 1783 contains that many great events, and our poet has tried to put as many subjects into his poem. Well, goodbye to old-fashioned unity…".[13] Regnér characterises the poem as a "concert, composed of various pieces, quite beautiful by themselves, while they do not accomplish much together."[14] As was the case with Lidner's poem, the absence of unity in Oxenstierna's *The Harvest* was commented on by critics. In a review for the *Stockholm Post*, Axel Gabriel Silfverstolpe points out that

> The nature of the subjects treated does not seem to allow for a well-ordered plan: the subjects are too many and too disparate, they do not truly have much in common. Only time and succession give them unity. In an epic or a dramatic poem, there is a thread to follow; in this poem, one must follow several, seemingly similar but not the same.[15]

If Lidner and Oxenstierna can be said to share this predicament in their deviation from the norms of unity, nothing couldbe more different than their respective attitudes to the problem. In his preface to "The Year 1783", Lidner had tried to pre-empt this kind of criticism. Due to the range of events contained in the subject (the American revolution, the secular reforms of Joseph II of Austria, Montgolfier's hot air balloon flight, the starvation in the Swedish countryside and so on) he confesses that he has been unable to observe "the laws of unity". He instead tries to shift attention to the poem's emotional qualities: "This is a *skaldestycke*, not an epic poem. […] What comforts is me that there are surely readers out there who will happily forget Horace and Despreaux [Boileau], when the heart gets to be tender and the eye turn wet."[16] He even twists a quote from Horace's *Ars poetica* to suit his purpose: "Denique sit quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum" ("In the end it could be what you want, as long as it is simple and one."). In a more orthodox interpretation, it was understood as an exhortation to simplicity of plot and unity of tone.[17]

This preface has been treated by Anna Cullhed in her recent monograph on Lidner, where she views it as a way of shifting focus from narrative unity to the unity

found in the associations and emotions of the subject.[18] It is a valid point, but it needs to be qualified in order not to underestimate the journalistic qualities of Lidner's poem and his wrestles with a recalcitrant material. Lidner did not only seek to dramatize subjectivity, he also strove to describe the world news in the year 1783 by skipping between different events and continents. This encyclopedic ambition is something that he has in common with Oxenstierna's poems, as Martin Lamm once remarked.[19]

Rather than focusing on emotions and subjectivity, Oxenstierna tries to point to the unity in the matter in hand and affirm the logical connection between the poem's various parts and its main subject: Swedish agriculture. In a way, he confronts the same problem as Lidner did, but in a much more cautious and conservative manner. He struggles to be correct, while Lidner proudly takes on the role of innovator. Oxenstierna's worries come to the fore in a letter to the poet and critic Leopold where he asks for help with the preface to the poem:

> I wanted to give excuses for the length of my poem, and I cannot but find it unforgiveable. I wanted to offer a reason for the abundance of episodes, and I cannot find one. I wanted to point to their connection to the main subject, and they seem far-fetched. I wanted to show the rules I thought had governed me, and I cannot see any rules, just my own whims. I find support by no Art Poétique, from Aristotle to Boileau.[20]

It is worth noting how closely Oxenstierna's private attitude resembles Lidner's official one, but where the former strives to conform, the latter chooses to present himself as an original genius. In either case, the price to be paid is to "find support by no Art Poétique".

But while the critics comment upon the lack of unity, their reviews are not altogether unfavorable; quite the contrary. It is apparent that for both Regnér and Silfverstolpe, the strange structure of these poems also makes possible a different kind of reading experience. This compensatory logic is quite clearly expressed by Silfverstolpe:

> Thus, it is in poems of this kind, that transitions, comparisons and episodes are possible. And one is forced to admit, that if the connection between the parts might not bear closer scrutiny [···] the transitions are managed so well, that one is rather inclined to praise the want of system that made them necessary in the first place.[21]

In a similar way Regnér focuses on the twists and turns of Lidner's poem: "In a skillful way the Poet now moves his readers, or perhaps one should say his spectators, to Freedom and America. The passage is both short and comfortable."[22] The lack of unity thus comes with an important corollary: the qualities of the poem are to be sought for on another level. The transition (the *transitio* of ancient rhetoric) and the episode or digression (*egressus*) become important to the poem's structure, and focus is shifted to the poet's virtuosity in handling these traditionally less important devices. On

this level the similarities between Lidner's and Oxenstierna's poems are apparent. Beneath surface features such as style and poetic persona, these long poems share the same predicament: that of having to create at least the semblance of unity and continuity out of disparate materials. From this perspective, Lidner's subjectivity also takes on a slightly different meaning. It is not exclusively the kind of subjectivity valued by the romantics; it is also a rhetorical technique with a specific function in the structure of the poem.

What has been viewed as the subjective features of Lidner's poem rest primarily on his way of intruding upon the action, where the poet invites us to partake of his emotional response to the events portrayed. This attitude is framed by an extended simile in the beginning of the poem, which explains the poet's relation to his subject-matter. His muse's global wanderings are likened to the visual shock of a man born blind that miraculously has his sight restored, and is overwhelmed by impressions. This fiction allows the poet to marvel at the variety of the world, in what sometimes comes close to metapoetic commentary. Transitions between different themes are accompanied by outburst such as these:

> You flew like a dove to rest upon cypresses:
> How dare you, Muse! Take off into the eagle's regions?[23] (v. 549 – 550)

These authorial intrusions often underline the contrast between the different sections of the poem at the same time as they ensure a connection between them (cf. v. 85 – 86, 176 – 77, 271 – 72, 565 – 66). This effect is often achieved through forms of aposiopesis, where the subject feigns being overwhelmed by what he sees. It is a rhetorical device that could be seen as typically lyrical, but it is after all not that foreign to the more formal and objective style of Oxenstierna. When in the final canto of *The Harvest* a wedding celebration is interrupted by soldiers returning from war, this is commented on in the following fashion:

> But in the joy of dancing, and the noise of games,
> Who interrupts my song with the tunes of war,
> Its banners and its shroud? Which unexpected guests
> Approach here, clad in armor, to take part of our feast?[24]

If we disregard the differing degrees of emotional charge, it is apparent that the function is very similar: to create a transition between two themes that in themselves lack a logical connection.

In both poems this patched-up kind of unity is intimately related to their preoccupation with the outside world in all its variety. We have seen how Lidner justified the lack of unity by pointing to the sheer amount of events that took place in 1783. A similar relation between the objects to be represented and the structure of the poem shines through in Oxenstierna's reflections. In the preface to the first, never published, version of *The Harvest* (1773), Oxenstierna tries to take the middle road between two demands: to achieve poetic unity, but also to steer clear of monotony. The

variations between different types of descriptions as well as shifts to a narrative mode are justified as ways of keeping the reader's attention from slackening. But he is forced immediately to add that

> I have sought to avoid all representation of things alien, and in the ones I have attempted, I have commanded them to unite in one object and agree with the main theme. [---] Thus (…) they become effects dependent on the main theme.[25]

When the poem in its second version of 1796 is expanded to a near epic format and in its encyclopedic scope points to the connections between agriculture, economy and trade, as well as their historical development, poetic unity becomes even harder to maintain and the transitions become more forced. This time, Oxenstierna is forced to justify even more deviations: "The stories as well as the moral teachings are always connected to the main design, either as derived there from or as leading us back there […] These episodes are no longer, in that sense, foreign matters."[26]

If these episodes do not, as in Lidner's poems, offer us a poetic subject overwhelmed, there is a similar bombardment of sense-impressions. The main theme, "The harvest", turns out to contain more subthemes than expected, and reaches out to zones that are a long way from the poem's locale—the Swedish countryside. For instance, in the fifth and sixth cantos the reader is moved abruptly from descriptions of harvesting activities to a mythological tale of the origins of navigation, and from there to a celebration of trade and a genre-piece depicting the life of a rich lord. This becomes possible through a series of transitions: the description of hemp leads to reflections on its use in the fabrication of ropes, which then gives way to the theme of navigation. When finally, in the genre-piece meant to illustrate the blessings of trade, the poem seems to stray a bit too far from the rustic simplicity elsewhere dominant, Oxenstierna is forced to create a transition back to the countryside. He manages this by likening his pastoral muse to a shepherdess that has lost her way into a palace and forsaken the true happiness of the countryside, and then admonishes her: "return to your meadow, your garden and your cottage."[27] The references to the native meadow and cottage set the scene for the next section, where useful imported products are distinguished from "unnatural" ones, i. e. luxury. This transition from the blessings of trade and the comforts of upper-class civilization, back to the rusticity of the countryside, was singled out for praise by Silfverstolpe in his review,[28] and we should perhaps ask why. It seems to be a matter of poetic skill as much as of the poem's grasp of reality. The transition joins together the themes "trade" and "the harvest of fruits and flowers", activities that are connected in reality but which require creativity to be brought together in a poetically convincing way. In both Lidner's and Oxenstierna's poems, the transition — whether managed by redirecting energy to the speaker of the poem, by metapoetic commentary or simply by association — allows a comprehensive view of the world while also standing in for what Regnér called "old-fashioned unity".

The Solution of Romanticism

The critical procedure of Regnér and Silfverstolpe implies reading the poems in terms of composition: they are described from beginning to end, and the reader is given resumes of the content along with explanations of the transitions between parts of the poem. One could argue that this implies an "epic" rather than a "lyric" reading. It is a reading practice that also seems highly tentative and provisional. At its point of departure lies an ideal of unity that these poems fail to achieve. As a form of compensation, they are valued for weaving together disparate parts as seamlessly as possible. There is, to some extent, a lack of agreement between the poetic practice and the critical toolkit of the reviewers. It would be tempting to deal with this discrepancy in terms of a "question" posed by the innovative works themselves that eventually will find its "answer" in the aesthetic doctrines of the romantics, and their new idea of poetic unity. To use an analogy from Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, we could say that ad-hoc-adjustments tend to proliferate when a scientific paradigm approaches a state of crisis.[29] But paradigms are also discontinuous: rather than solving problems within the older worldview, the terms of the question itself are reformulated. When we now turn to the reception of these poems by the romantics, the problem of unity is displaced onto another plane, where some problems seem to be solved while new ones are generated. By then the lyrical poem, rather than epic or tragedy, had become the model genre, and the unity sought for in vain on the level of composition is now found in the subjective unity of the author's creative imagination.

The first major response to the poems of Oxenstierna comes from Esaias Tegnér, whose position in Swedish letters is largely that of a bridge-builder between romantic and neo-classic ideals. The discourse was occasioned by his election in 1819 to the Swedish academy, where he succeeded Oxenstierna. Tegnér concurs with former critics that *The Harvest* is "constituted by discrete and as it were loose paintings. They are not connected by any action in the strong sense of the word."[30] From an Aristotelian point of view, the poem lacks unity, but somehow, Tegnér argues, Oxenstierna has managed to seal its cracks. However, "this unity is less real than it is seeming. In fact it is located, as it must be in poems of this kind, in the poet's feelings, in his perception and treatment of the theme — to put it simply, this unity is of the lyrical kind."[31] Through the choice of words such as "lyrical unity" and "idyllic mood",[32] Tegnér manages to adjust *The Harvest* to a new critical vocabulary, and acquit the poem of the accusation of wanting unity.

These points would later be taken up and expanded by the leading romantic author and critic P. D. A. Atterbom in *Svenska siare och skalder* (*Swedish Seers and Bards*, 1841 – 1855), the first modern book of Swedish literary history. He expands on Tegnér's points of view while also stressing the poem's patriotism: "This poem has its objective unity in this mostly idyllic-didactic but sometimes also idyllic-epic illustration of the Swedish mother country; its subjective unity is to be found in the poet's warm, lyrical feeling for nature and patriotism."[33] This, in the end, is what keeps the poem together: "Should one disregard the unity just mentioned, then the poem

will dissolve into a heap of discrete paintings without much connection between them."[34]

In the same volume, Atterbom describes Lidner's poem in a similar way. "The year 1783" is likened to "a bead necklace, where every bead by itself is beautiful, but not connected to the next one by more than the wire on which they are threaded."[35] Atterbom is careful to point out that the poem's success was not a result of the "mere excellence of certain parts" but of "the spell-binding unity of the poet's soul, which replaced the unity of theme and description."[36] It is not self-evident that these poems should be granted that kind of unity. While the academician Tegnér and the aged Atterbom sought to reconcile the traditional writers with new aesthetic theories, an earlier romantic critic, Lorenzo Hammarsköld, had refused to call Oxenstierna's poetry lyrical, and criticized the failed fusion of reflection and description in his nature poetry.[37]

If unity is saved by recourse to subjectivity, it is appropriate to ask what gets lost in the new kind of reading. One answer would concern the relation between form and ideology of the eighteenth-century poems, the way these poems' lack of epic unity reflect their view of the world. Lidner's and Oxenstierna's poems skipped metonymically from object to object in an effort to take in as much of the world as possible. Of course, much of what they chose to portray had by the romantic age ceased to be considered matter for poetry. The attempts by eighteenth century poets to write about scientific innovations and agricultural economy were often ridiculed by the romantics as a sign of their vulgarity and failure of aesthetic vision. But it is not just a question of what can be depicted, but also of its relation to the internal hierarchy of the poem. The young Atterbom's criticism of the academic style of writing perhaps best illustrates the divide between the neo-classical and the romantic aesthetic:

> A poem was understood as a piece, a bit of verse, a combination of verses, instead of these verses being viewed as a gradual development of the poem's idea. It seems one really believed that a poetic whole would be achieved by simply adding verse to verse and line to line until the fabricator of verses had no more to say on the subject.[38]

The mimetic ambitions of the eighteenth century poems are probably easiest to get at by isolating that in them which resists theorization by both neo-classicist poetics and romantic aesthetics. For what concerns the eighteenth century criticism, it is easy to see how the quest for a fuller representation collides with expectations derived from more traditional genres. The subjects chosen — the year 1783 or the Swedish agricultural economy — are hard to adjust to an epic idea of unity. The ambition to represent reality thus collides with an idea of mimesis based on a narrative model.[39] From the perspective of neo-classicism, the result is a failure of unity. If, however, this idea of unity is replaced with one modeled on the subjective lyric, the mimetic ambition all but disappears. The unformed raw material of the world would then not be empirical things to be portrayed in all their variety, but would be transformed into symbolism. While there are subjective features to the eighteenth-century long poems,

it is still, as we have seen, in the service of a description of empirical reality.

The tensions between unity and fragmentarity in the poems of Lidner and Oxenstierna areinteresting points where form and ideology go together, and they could become a starting-point for a more detailed interpretation than I have attempted in this paper. They testify to the constraints of poetics as well as these poems' appetite for the world in all its variety.

Notes

1. *Svenska akademiens handlingar ifrån år* 1796, vol. 2 (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1802), 58.
2. Ibid., 59: "Sättet af föreställningen, ordningen, omklädningen, tillhör Poëten sjelf att välja, likasom Skaldeslaget och Versarten."
3. Lennart Breitholtz, "Till den litterära terminologiens historia. Sammansättningar med ordet skald-." in *Studier i frihetstidens litteratur* (Uppsala: Svenska litteratursällskapet, 1956), 81.
4. Dominique Combe, "Le récit poétique et la poésie narrative: la question de l'épique" in Sylviane Coyault (ed.) *L'histoire et la géographie dans le récit poétique* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses univ. Blaise Pascal, 1997), 37 – 43. See also his *Poésie et récit* (Paris: J. Corti, 1989), 63 – 70.
5. Bernhard Fabian, "Das Lehrgedicht als Problem der Poetik" in H-R Jauss (ed.) *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste* (München: Fink, 1968), 68 – 89; Baxter Hathaway "Were Empedocles and Lucretius poets?", chapter 4 in Idem. *The Age of Criticism: the late Renaissance in Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell university press, 1962).
6. Representative examples of this line of reasoning can be found in Charles Batteux, *Cours de belles-lettres, ou principes de la littérature*, vol. III (Frankfurt: J. F. Bassompierre, 1755), 96. Abbé Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, *Réflexions critique sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (Dresden: George Conrad Walther, 1760) (1719), vol. I, 60f. For a swedish example, see J. W. Liljeströhle "Företal" in *Fidei-commis till min son Ingemund*, 2nd ed. (Stockholm: Anders Zetterberg, 1797), 5.
7. Richard Terry "Longer eighteenth century poems" in Michael O'Neill (ed.) *The Cambridge History of English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2010), 379.
8. Batteux (1755), 89.
9. Pehr Adam Wallmark ed. *Swenska språkets skönheter i vers och prosa eller Swensk antologi innehållande valda stycken i alla slag af Witterhet, indelade och ordnade efter de särskilta slagen, och hämtade ur våra äldre och yngre författare*, vol. I (Stockholm: Ecksteinska boktryckeriet, 1820), xxxii. The close connection between the form of the anthology and the way these poems are written has been pointed out by Staffan Björck in *Swenska språkets skönheter. Om den lyriska antologin i Sverige – dess historia och former* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1984), 57.
10. John Butt ed. *The Poems of Alexander Pope. A one-volume Edition of the Twickenham Text with selected Annotations* (London: Methuen, 1963), 153 (v. 288).
11. "Gustaf Wasa. Hjeltedikt uti sju Sånger" (review) in *Vitterhets Journal* 1777 (Stockholm: Pet. Hesselberg, 1777), 314: "en Skaldedikt kan innehålla sådana vackra ställen, och ändå vara rätt eländig; likasom man på et uselt Portrait kan finna et öga eller någon annan del, som har al erforderlig fullkomlighet. Det blifver derföre nödigt, at anse detta Poem i hela sit sammanhang, huru alla delar passa med hvarannan och med det hela, samt at til den ändan undersöka det efter alla konstens reglor."
12. For the notion of "ämbetsförfattare", see Bo Bennich-Björkman, *Författaren i ämbetet. Studier i funktion och organisation av författarämbeten vid svenska hovet och kansliet* 1550 – 1850 (Uppsala: Svenska bokförlaget, 1970).
13. Oxenstierna and Lidner figure as antithetical types of authors in Gunnar Sahlins sociological study of the period, *Författarrollens förändring och det litterära systemet* 1770 – 1795 (Stockholm:

Stockholms universitet förlag, 1989) 225.
14. "Året MDCCLXXXIII" (review) in Gustaf Regnér (ed.), *Svenska parnassen för år* 1784 (Stockholm: Anders Jac. Nordström, 1784) 335: "så många stora händelser innefattar året 1783 och lika så många ämnen des skald uti et qväde. Bort med den gammalmodiga enheten…".
15. A. G. Silfverstolpe, review in *Stockholms Posten* 15/7/1796 (N. o 158): "En fullkomligen sammankädjad plan för detta arbete, torde ej ämnenas natur medgifwa: de äro för många och särskilta, de äga ej någon werklig gemenskap med hwarandra: det är blott tiden och successionen, som göra dem till ett helt. [---] I ett episkt eller dramatiskt poeme finnes en tråd att följa: här måste man följa flera och sammanknyta hwar och en med en till tycket lika, men ej densamma."
16. Bengt Lidner, *Samlade skrifter*, vol. II (Stockholm: Svenska vitterhetssamfundet, 1937), 374: "detta är ett skaldestycke, ej något Poëme épique. […] min tröst är, att läsare gifvas, hvilka gerna förlåta Horatius och Despréaux, när hjertat kan ömma och ögat kanske fälla en tår."
17. Hugh Blair's remarks on the horatian tag are probably representative of the mainstream: "This is the Simplicity of plan in a tragedy, as distinguished from double plots and crowded incidents; the simplicity of the Iliad, or Aeneid, in opposition to the digressions of Lucan, and the scattered tales of Ariosto; […]. In this sense, Simplicity is the same with unity." Hugh Blair, *Lectures on rhetoric and belles-lettres* vol. II (Paris: Levrault frères, 1801) (1783), 30.
18. Anna Cullhed, *Hör mänskligheten röst. Bengt Lidner och känslans språk* (Lund: ellerströms, 2011) 221.
19. Martin Lamm, "Lidnerstudier" in *Samlaren* 1909 (Stockholm: Svenska litteratursällskapet, 1910), 138.
20. Letter to Leopold 4/2 1795, in Gustaf Andersson (ed.), *Handlingar ur v. Brinkman'ska archivet*, vol. II (Örebro: Lindh, 1865), 452: "Jag ville ursäkta mitt arbetes längd ock finner den oförlåtelig. Jag ville ge skäl till mina Episoders myckenhet, ock finner inga skäl. Jag ville bevisa deras sammanhängande med hufvudämnet, ock finner dem hårdragna. Jag ville visa de reglor jag trodt mig följa, ock ser inga andra reglor än mina egna infall. Jag finner försvar af ingen Art Poétique, alt ifrån Aristoteles ända till Boileau."
21. Ibid.: "det är alltså i skaldestycken af detta slag, som egenteliga rummet är för transitioner, jemförelser och episoder: och man måste erkänna, at, wore ock sjelfva sammanhanget mellan ämnena här underkastadt någon anmärkning […] så äro likwäl transitionerne oftast så lycklige, att man skulle känna sig böjd att prisa den brist på system, som gjort dem nödwändiga."
22. Regnér (1784), 337: "Artigt flyttar nu Skalden sina läsare, eller rättare åskådare til Friheten och America. Öfverfarten är både kort och angenäm."
23. Lidner (1937), 374.: "En dufva nyss, du flög, att på cypresser hvila:/Hur djerfs du, skaldmö! Nu mot örnens rymder ila?". This reference to the line numbering, as well as the subsequent ones, follow this edition.
24. Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna *Arbeten*, vol. II (Stockholm: Carl Delén, 1806) 190:
25. "Men under dansens fröjd och lekens höga ljud,
Med krigets stämda spel, dess fanor och dess skrud,
Hvem bryter af min sång? Hvad oförtänkta gäster
I rustning nalkas hit att dela våra fester?"
26. Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna *Skördarne: skaldedikt i tre sånger* [1772 – 1773], Stockholm: Sällskapet bokvännerna, 1957) 35: "Jag har sökt undvika alla främmande föreställningar, och i dem jag vågat, budit till att förena dem i ett föremål och gjöra dem sammanstämmande i hufvudämnet. […] De blifva således (…) afhängige följder af hufvudämnet."
27. Oxenstierna (1806), preface (without pagination): "Så väl berättelserna som det moraliska förenas likväl alltid med hufvudämnet, antingen såsom härledde derifrån eller såsom förande dit tillbaka. Episoderna och dikten återkallas ständigt till våra bygder […] Dessa episoder upphöra i sådant afseende att vara främmande ämnen […]."

28. Ibid., 119
29. Silfverstolpe (1796).
30. Thomas S. Kuhn, *De vetenskapliga revolutionernas struktur* (Stockholm: Thales, 1992) 74.
31. Esaias Tegnér, "Inträdestal i Svenska Akademien 22 juni 1819." *Samlade skrifter*, vol. III, (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1992) 74: "i det hela sammansatt af skilda och liksom lösa taflor. Det är ingen egentlig handling som förbinder dem"
32. Ibid. "[…] denna enhet är mera skenbar än verklig. Den ligger, som den i Dikter af denna art måste, egentligen i Skaldens egna känsla, i hans uppfattande och behandling af ämnet, den är, med ett ord, lyrisk."
33. Ibid., 209.
34. P. D. A. Atterbom, *Svenska siare och skalder*, vol. III, (Uppsala: Lundequist, 1844) 654: "I detta, väl mestadels idylliskt-didaktiska, men emellanåt äfven idylliskt-episka förhärligande af det Svenska Fäderneslandet, har förevarande skaldeverk sin objectiva enhet; sin subjektiva har det i skaldens lyriskt varma natur-uppfattning och fosterlandskänsla"
35. Ibid.: "Bortser man från den nyss angifna enheten: då upplöser sig detta verk i en myckenhet särskilda och föröfrigt blott löst sammanhängande taflor."
36. Ibid, vol. V (Uppsala: Lundequist, 1849) 435: "[…] ett perlband, der hvar perla för sig är skön, men sammanhänger med de öfriga genom ingen annan enhet, än det gemensamma snörets."
37. Ibid., 437f: "ej blotta förträffligheten i vissa enskilda delar" […] "den enhet af trollkraft, hvarmed skaldens själ ersatte ämnets och målningens enhet."
38. Lorenzo Hammarsköld *Svenska vitterheten: historiskt-critiska anteckningar* (Stockholm: Z. Haeggström, 1833)364.
39. P. D. A. Atterbom, "Den nya vitterhetsskolans betänkande om Svenska akademien och den goda smaken" in *Samlade skrifter i obunden stil* (Örebro: Lindh, 1866) 308: "Ett poem betraktades såsom ett stycke, en bit vers, en sammansättning af verser, i stället att dessa verser bort betraktas såsom en succesif utveckling af poemets idé: man tycktes verkligen tro, att ett poetiskt helt uppkommer derigenom att vers skrifves efter vers, rad under rad, till dess versmakaren ej har mer att säga om sitt ämne."
40. On the question of eighteenth-century transformations of mimesis, see among others Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf *Mimesis; Culture, Art, Society* (Berkeley: University of California press 1995) 155 – 163; John D. Boyd, *The Function of Mimesis and its Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1968) 98 – 129. The Swedish discussion is treated in Mats Malm's *Textens auktoritet. De första svenska romanernas villkor* (Stockholm/Stehag: Symposion, 2001).

Works cited

Andersson, Gustaf (ed.). *Handlingar ur v. Brinkman'ska archivet*, vol. II. Örebro: Lindh, 1865.
Atterbom, P. D. A. "Den nya vitterhetsskolans betänkande om Svenska akademien och den goda smaken" *Samlade skrifter i obunden stil*. Örebro: Lindh, 1866.
---. *Svenska siare och skalder*. vol. III, Uppsala: Lundequist, 1844; vol. V. Uppsala: Lundequist, 1849.
Batteux, Charles. *Cours de belles-lettres, ou principes de la littérature*, vol. III. Frankfurt: J. F. Bassompierre, 1755.
Bennich-Björkman, Bo. *Författaren i ämbetet. Studier i funktion och organisation av författarämbeten vid svenska hovet och kansliet* 1550 – 1850. Uppsala: Svenska bokförlaget, 1970.
Björck, Staffan. *Swenska språkets skönheter. Om den lyriska antologin i Sverige – dess historia och former*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1984.
Blair, Hugh. *Lectures on rhetoric and belles-lettres* vol. II. Paris: Levrault Frères, 1801.

Boyd, John D. *The Function of Mimesis and its Decline*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Breitholtz, Lennart. "Till den litterära terminologiens historia. Sammansättningar med ordet skald-." *Studier i frihetstidens litteratur*. Uppsala: Svenska litteratursällskapet, 1956.

Combe, Dominique. "Le récit poétique et la poésie narrative: la question de l'épique." *L'histoire et la géographie dans le récit poétique*. Ed. Sylviane Coyault. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses univ. Blaise Pascal, 1997; *Poésie et récit*. Paris: J. Corti, 1989.

Cullhed, Anna. *Hör mänskligheten röst. Bengt Lidner och känslans språk*. Lund: ellerströms, 2011.

Du Bos, Jean-Baptiste. *Réflexions critique sur la poésie et sur la peinture*. Dresden: George Conrad Walther, 1760.

Fabian, Bernhard. "Das Lehrgedicht als Problem der Poetik." *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste*. Ed. H-R Jauss. München: Fink, 1968.

Gebauer, Gunter and Christoph Wulf. *Mimesis; Culture, Art, Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Hammarsköld, Lorenzo. *Svenska vitterheten: historiskt-critiska anteckningar*. Stockholm: Z. Haeggström, 1833.

Hathaway, Baxter. *The Age of Criticism: the late Renaissance in Italy*. Ithaca: Cornell university press, 1962.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *De vetenskapliga revolutionernas struktur*. Stockholm: Thales, 1992.

Lamm, Martin. *Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna. En gustaviansk natursvärmares lif och dikt*. Stockholm: Geber, 1911.

---. "Lidnerstudier" in *Samlaren* 1909. Stockholm: Svenska litteratursällskapet, 1910.

Lidner, Bengt. *Samlade skrifter*, vol. II. Stockholm: Svenska vitterhetssamfundet, 1937.

Liljeståhle, J. W. *Fidei-commis till min son Ingemund*, 2nd ed. Stockholm: Anders Zetterberg, 1797.

Malm, Mats. *Textens auktoritet. De första svenska romanernas villkor*. Stockholm/Stehag: Symposion, 2001.

Oxenstierna, Johan. Gabriel *Arbeten*, vol. II. Stockholm: Carl Delén, 1806.

---. *Skördarne: skaldedikt i tre sånger* [1772 – 1773], Stockholm: Sällskapet bokvännerna, 1957.

Pope, Alexander. "The Poems of Alexander Pope." *A one-volume Edition of the Twickenham Text with selected Annotations*. Ed. John Butt. London: Methuen, 1963.

Gustaf, Regnér. ed. *Svenska parnassen för år* 1784. Stockholm: Anders Jac. Nordström, 1784.

Sahlin, Gunnar. *Författarrollens förändring och det litterära systemet* 1770 – 1795. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet förlag, 1989.

Stockholms Posten 15/7/1796 (N. o 158).

Svenska akademiens handlingar ifrån år 1796, vol. 2. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1802.

Tegnér, Esaias. "Inträdestal i Svenska Akademien 22 juni 1819" *Samlade skrifter*, vol. III. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1992.

Terry, Richard. "Longer eighteenth century poems" in Michael O'Neill (ed.) *The Cambridge History of English Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2010.

Vitterhets Journal 1777. Stockholm: Pet. Hesselberg, 1777.

Wallmark, Per Adam. (ed.) *Swenska språkets skönheter i vers och prosa eller Swensk antologi innehållande valda stycken i alla slag af Witterhet, indelade och ordnade efter de särskilta slagen, och hämtade ur våra äldre och yngre författare*, vol. I. Stockholm: Ecksteinska boktryckeriet, 1820.

责任编辑:郭　雯