

INTRODUCTION

The Nordic Network for the History of Rhetoric (in Danish: Nordisk Netværk for Retorikkens Historie = NNRH) is an independent and non-commercial research forum for Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish scholars from many different fields of study, who focus their research on various aspects – theoretical, philosophical, literary, etc. – of the history of rhetoric. It is the purpose of the NNRH to contribute to the development of Nordic scholarship and collaborations dealing with the history of rhetoric, and to help make the results of this research available internationally.

As a part of this endeavor, since its foundation in 1999, the NNRH has arranged a series of conferences: at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark (2000); at the University of Helsinki, Finland (2002); and at University of Gothenburg, Sweden (2004). The NNRH's fourth conference takes place at the Kolding Campus of the University of Southern Denmark, in November 2008, and offers a program of 19 scholarly papers on the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition and its influence on the development of rhetoric in the five Nordic countries.

Further, in 2002, the NNRH launched a book series, "Nordic Studies in the History of Rhetoric", the purpose of which is to internationalize Nordic

This Introduction is published as pp. 1-8 in
Pernille Harsting & Jon Viklund (eds.):
Rhetoric and Literature in Finland and Sweden, 1600-1900
[= Nordic Studies in the History of Rhetoric 2]
Copenhagen: NNRH, 2008
<http://www.nnrh.dk/NSHR/nshr2/index.html>
ISBN: 978-87-988829-1-6

© 2008 by Nordisk Netværk for Retorikkens Historie
E-mail: nnrh@nnrh.dk – Homepage: <http://www.nnrh.dk>

scholarship in our field. The series does not include unrevised conference papers and reports: all contributions to the volumes must be thoroughly prepared and present innovative scholarship. Since it is not, as yet, self-evident for Nordic scholars in the humanities to write in English and address their work to an international audience, we insist on the importance of each contribution's meeting international standards, not only with regard to the content but also to academic English usage.

The first volume in the series, *Ten Nordic Studies in the History of Rhetoric*, contains research papers by a group of Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish scholars, and spans a wide range of topics in rhetoric's history, from the cultivation of anti-theoretical rhetoric in tenth-century Russia to the cult of body language in twentieth-century Denmark; from the enthusiastic rediscovery of ancient rhetorical treatises in the Italian Renaissance to the moralistic rejection of rhetorical effects in early Swedish novels; and from Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's rhetorical aesthetics to the rhetorical foundations of Henry David Thoreau's ethics of civil action.

For the present volume, which is the second in the NNRH series, we invited eight Finnish and Swedish scholars to submit research papers focusing on the relationship between rhetoric and literature in Finland and Sweden in the three centuries from 1600-1900. During a great part of this period, until 1809, when it was conquered by Russia, Finland belonged to the Swedish Kingdom and took part in its administrative, religious, and cultural development. Thus, the University of Uppsala (founded in 1477) was the main center of education for Swedish and Finnish students alike, until the foundation, in 1632, of the *Academia Gustaviana* in Tartu (in Swedish: Dorpat) in the Swedish province of Livonia (now Estonia) and, in 1640, of the first Finnish university, the Royal Academy of Turku (in Swedish: Åbo) – both new universities being

concrete results of the educational reforms that followed the establishment of the Lutheran Church in the Swedish Kingdom in the late sixteenth century.¹ Whereas Swedish was the official administrative language in both parts of the Kingdom, at the universities the international academic language, Latin, was used – indeed it thrived, at least as the written scholarly language, in Finland, until around the end of the eighteenth century, and, in Sweden, well into the nineteenth century.²

The Royal Academy of Turku soon became renowned for its cultivation of epideictic rhetoric and poetry, first and foremost in the Latin language, but also in Greek and in Swedish. As the contributions by TUA KORHONEN and HANNU K. RIIKONEN show, the flourishing of occasional writings was closely connected to the ambition of the young Finnish academy to prove itself a worthy contributor to the world of learning and to promote Finland as a cultivated and prosperous nation with as impressive a past and as promising a future as its powerful neighbors.

Tracing the history of the figure of the apostrophe from classical (Greco-Roman) to Renaissance (Finnish) rhetorical textbooks, KORHONEN highlights both the traditional character and the innovative traits of Johan Paulinus Lillienstedt's patriotic eulogy, *Finlandia*, from 1678. In this Greek hexameter oration (here translated for the first time into English) the young Paulinus, who had first studied at Turku and thereafter matriculated at Uppsala, makes extensive use of apostrophes, successfully employing this rhetorical technique to leave his own mark on what was then a commonplace genre.

¹ The last Catholic king of Sweden and Finland, Sigismund, was deposed in 1599.

² For the use of Latin at the universities in Sweden and Finland, see Minna Skafte Jensen (ed.): *A History of Nordic Neo-Latin Literature* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1995), esp. pp. 129-158 ("Sweden", by Hans Aili) and pp. 159-200 ("Finland", by Iiro Kajanto).

RIIKONEN, in his contribution, examines the academic and literary background of another young Finnish student, Georg Haveman's Latin laudation of his native town, Vyborg. One of several texts dedicated to this town on the Finnish-Russian border, Haveman's late seventeenth-century oration is essentially a university exercise in rhetoric, history, and topography, recycling material from earlier writings – mainly from a poem by Olof Hermelin, Haveman's professor in rhetoric and poetry at the University of Tartu – and itself offering material for further orations and poems.

Outside of the university, the vernaculars were gaining a firm footing in the literature of seventeenth-century Finland and Sweden. Distancing himself from previous scholarship, which tended to focus on the linguistic style and the didactic contents of early Swedish texts, MATS MALM describes how 'the father of Swedish poetry', Georg Stiernhielm involved himself, through his writings in the vernacular, in the period's international debate on language and style. Thus, in his main work, the poem *Hercules* from 1658, Stiernhielm discusses good and bad rhetoric, and strongly warns, in the classical tradition of Quintilian and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, against 'voluptuous' language, contrasting this to a virtuous style, best illustrated in the masculine ideal of Hercules Gallicus – and best expressed in the Swedish language.

By emphasizing the rhetorical foundation of all pre-Romantic writing, STINA HANSSON, in her contribution, questions the distinction traditionally drawn by historians of literature between 'belles-lettres' and other kinds of pre-Romantic literature. As HANSSON points out, even such texts as a seventeenth-century preface (by Georg Stiernhielm) and an eighteenth-century dedicatory letter (by Carl von Linné/Carolus Linnaeus) should be read as 'artful literature': both texts were composed by authors paying scrupulous attention to rhetorical detail and carefully considering the wording and

arrangement that would best convey their message to the listener or the reader.

Whereas in the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century, within the academy and without, rhetorical theory was the undisputed foundation of writing and speaking, going hand in hand with rhetorical practice, in the late eighteenth century there were writers who began to contest the general value of classical rhetoric and rhetorical schooling. Nevertheless, modern reports of the demise of rhetoric in the eighteenth century seem greatly exaggerated, as the three contributions by ANN ÖHRBERG, STEFAN EKMAN, and OTTO FISCHER document.

Thus, a way of challenging classical rhetorical doctrine, while still employing conventional rhetorical techniques, was pursued by the songwriters belonging to the Moravian movement. Offering examples of the use of figurative language in late eighteenth-century Swedish collections of Moravian songs, ÖHRBERG illustrates the Moravians' efforts to create an alternative rhetorical ideal. In many ways conforming to classical rhetorical patterns and comparable to orthodox hymns, the Moravian songs are characterized by their extraordinarily vivid imagery, which the Swedish Lutheran church strongly condemned, but which the Moravians defended as a means to communicate sincere religious feelings to both believers and non-believers.

Likewise, when Swedish adherents of the late eighteenth-century 'school' of Sentimentalism defended their funeral poems against the growing critique of occasional poetry, they explicitly discarded the rules of classical rhetoric, while at the same time employing many of these rules in their texts. As EKMAN shows, this seeming paradox is chiefly a question of degree and definition: although uninterested in the minutiae of the rhetorical prescriptions for funeral poetry, the Sentimentalists certainly did adopt the rhetorical tech-

niques that could bring about the level of pathos suitable for their poems. And although rejecting the persuasive aim of classical rhetoric, they nevertheless introduced a ‘poetic I’ into their texts to express their personal feelings of grief and mediate these to the sympathetic reader.

The definition – in apparent contrast to classical rhetorical teachings – of communication as the creation of emotional understanding between like-minded authors and readers, is also at the core of Thomas Thorild’s late eighteenth-century writings. Stressing the importance of ‘innate sensibility’ as the guiding principle in Thorild’s ‘natural’ mode of expression, FISCHER shows how, in his Swedish- and English-language reflections on such fundamental rhetorical concepts as style and delivery, Thorild remolded the classical theory to fit his own, elitist, view on literary communication: to him, true eloquence was the ability of the speaker and writer to understand and formulate that which is “*truly grand or dreadful* in any subject”.

The demand for emotional authenticity and the quest for a congenial audience characterize the endeavors of the nineteenth-century Swedish writer Carl Jonas Love Almqvist as well. As JON VIKLUND explains in his contribution, to Almqvist, good communication depended, not on rhetorical persuasion but on the creation of intimate settings, in which reader and writer were united by a common sentiment or belief. Yet, the swift development of the printing press had gradually increased the distance between the writer and her/his – now largely unknown – readership. In an attempt to overcome this obstacle, both in his journalism and in his literary works, Almqvist depicted rhetorical situations – often involving discourse in the deliberative genre – that exemplified his ideal of communication as the flow of true understanding from one open heart to another.

The eight studies presented here illustrate some of the ebbs and flows – or what Brian Vickers saw as periods of ‘fragmentation’ vs. periods of ‘re-integration’ – in the reception of classical rhetorical theory.³ Seeing rhetoric as a storehouse of traditional knowledge, Finnish and Swedish authors of the period 1600-1900 focused on those rhetorical teachings that fitted their specific contexts and served their specific purposes, as a positive or as a negative frame of reference for their literary writings and ideas of communication. As exemplified here, the history of rhetoric is not a history of revolution, but rather one of adjustment: the more it changes, the more it stays the same.

* * *

This second volume of the NNRH series is published both as a free-access web book and in a strictly limited number of printed ‘preservation copies’, donated to research libraries in Europe and in North America that include in their fields of specialization the history of rhetoric and Nordic literature. It is our hope that, in this way, the studies will be available to as many readers as possible and for many years to come.

We warmly thank Maria Bylin and Russ Friedman for their help, advice, and encouragement in the process of planning the book and preparing the texts for publication. This result of many months’ work is dedicated to them, as well as to Jesper and Sara, whom we hope will enjoy reading this book (in a decade or two). Thanks also go to Claes Wiklund, for his kindness and understanding in what was quite a difficult period; and to Sari Kivistö, who, at the very beginning of the editorial project, assisted us in contacting the Finnish contributors.

³ Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

The present book project could not have been realized without the support of generous patrons of the humanities. We are deeply grateful to the following Swedish foundations: *Letterstedtska Föreningen*, *Stiftelsen Konung Gustav VI Adolfs fond för svensk kultur*, *Stiftelsen Lars Hiertas Minne*, and *Wenner-Gren Stiftelserna*, for their financial support of the indispensable linguistic correction of the various contributions (*Konung Gustav VI Adolfs fond*, *Stiftelsen Lars Hiertas Minne*, *Wenner-Gren Stiftelserna*) as well as of the internet publication (*Letterstedtska Föreningen*, *Wenner-Gren Stiftelserna*) and of the printing and distribution of the preservation copies of the book (*Stiftelsen Lars Hiertas Minne*): Thank you very much!

Pernille Harsting and Jon Viklund

Denmark and Sweden,

in August 2008