

**REVIEW:****Essays on Swedish Literature****From 1880 to the Present Day****Edited by Irene Scobbie****Available from the Department of Scandinavian Studies,  
University of Aberdeen, for £4.90 plus postage.**

Miss Irene Scobbie, the Head of the Department of Scandinavian Studies at Aberdeen University, has edited this volume of essays on Swedish literature, published by the University of Aberdeen in stencil form. The volume consists of almost 300 pages of essays by some ten contributors, all connected with Departments of Scandinavian Studies in some way, most of them University lecturers.

Though mainly intended as a textbook for students studying Swedish literature at University, this book is of value to anyone in Britain interested in modern European literature. It should also find some readers in Sweden, some of the essays giving a different perspective from the traditional Swedish one and also giving some international comparisons that open up new vistas.

For students of Swedish in British universities this book presents an opportunity of getting an overall background to their literary studies in a way which has not been available to them before, at least not in such a concentrated form. It will indeed be an invaluable aid to them, having earlier had to rely on lecture notes.

To other British readers interested in European literature it gives an insight into modern Swedish literature which is not only valuable because some of the chapters deal with individual authors of interest but because some of the chapters deal with periods and groupings of writers that are of special significance in Sweden and also set the European scene for these.

It does, however, seem a little strange that quotations are always in Swedish only. Would it not have been a good idea to have had some of them in translation as well? Especially where

poetry is concerned, it might be difficult, not only for the general reader with perhaps a smattering of Old Norse or a little knowledge of one or other of the Scandinavian languages, but also for the student, who has read Swedish for only a year or two, to appreciate a quotation of a few lines of poetry in the original language well enough to get the full flavour of it. Though perhaps a bad translation would be worse than none!

Some of the essays on individual authors appear to have been written in a rather conventional vein, completely adopting the accepted Swedish opinion. Other chapters, in particular Miss Scobbie's well written essay on *Attislet* and on *Pär Lagerkvist*, present an independent contribution to the interpretation of Swedish literature.

Also most valuable for the reader are the many notes, bibliographies and indexes.

Maja Jackson.