

Abstract

In Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina* (1971), the female I, a fictitious famous author, ends up disappearing into a wall. Likewise, Tove Ditlevsen's novel *Vilhelms værelse* (1975) takes as its offset the death of the protagonist, Lise Mundus who is also a famous author. In this thesis, I set out to analyze the portrayal of female authorship in these two novels from a feminist perspective. Throughout the thesis, I also focus on reception history.

In the theoretical chapter of this thesis, I focus on three fields in feminist theory. I start out Cixous' writing practice, *écriture féminine*, an attempt to instate a non-patriarchal language. I also take into account Judith Butler's notion of *performativity* focusing primarily on the sub-genre *parody*. As a final part of my theoretical framework, I include the field of *queer temporality*.

In my analysis of *Malina*, I focus on the portrayal of the I as a being of the night whose existence is fleeting. I connect this quality of the text to the historicity of the novel which I put in relation to Bachmann's lectures in which she states that whereas the I used to be situated *in* history, history has recently situated itself *in* the I. I take this statement to be a darker version of Elizabeth Freeman's figuration *erotohistoriography*, a sensual historiography.

In my analysis of *Vilhelms værelse*, I focus on the portrayal of the main character Lise Mundus as a public and mediated figure. One of several ways in which she is mediated, is in her similarities with the actual author Tove Ditlevsen. For instance, their literary bodies of work overlap. There are several situations in which Lise's texts are being read and harshly judged by male readers that cannot grasp the traditional and feminine aesthetics of her work. I compare this feature with Freeman's figuration *temporal drag*, where cultural by-products of past times are re-actualized.

In a comparison of the two novels I conclude, that while they share a basic plot centering around the death of its writing female protagonist, they have some core differences. In Bachmann's vision, the existence of the female author is impossible because war is a permanent condition. This leaves its mark on her writing in that she is unable to write anything but her "Ways of Dying". With Ditlevsen, writing is portrayed as a lasting possibility, and even a powerful position from which it is possible to make fun of and toy with a readership looking for coherency.