

## **Any New “A-e” Candidates? A Reply to Rickard Berghorn’s Posts of 18 November 2017<sup>1</sup>**

This article relates to Rickard Berghorn’s posts of 18 November to “Crypt of the Undead” (reproduced at the end of this article); as he has added no new argumentation, I might as well reply now.

I still think that Albert Anders Andersson-Edenberg was the Swedish translator/editor/author of *Mörkrets makter* hiding behind the pseudonym “A-e.” Andersson-Edenberg had used similar pseudonyms before in his translation of Norwegian stage plays by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and for his articles in *Svenska Familj-Journalen* (“A.-E.” and “A.E.” among others) he co-operated with Harald Sohlman, the Chief Editor of the Aftonbladet Group within the framework of Publicistenklubben<sup>2</sup> and during the preparation of the International Press Congress in Stockholm in summer 1897; in Spring 1899, he was the editor of the EKO FESTSKRIFT book in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Publicistenklubben – an edition to which Harald Sohlman also contributed. And I still think that Andersson-Edenberg’s role as Chief Editor of *Svenska Familj-Journalen* provided him with ideas and references that can be found back in *Mörkrets makter*. Some parallels are striking – what does not mean that they cannot be explained by other means. None of these cross-connections constitutes irrefutable proof, and I have been clear enough about this in my articles. Rickard Berghorn’s critique that I would have presented my arguments as “undeniable” thus runs empty; I quote from my article for the bulletin of Transilvania University of Braşov:

Although any well-educated Swedish author would have been able to find alternative sources for single metaphors used in *Mörkrets makter*, it is *the whole body* of these parallels – the near-dozen I already listed in the mentioned interviews included – that makes it seem probable that Andersson-Edenberg indeed was the person using the pseudonym “A-e”: Which *other* Swedish professional writer, we must ask ourselves, might have possessed the fluent pen, the romantic attitude, the mastery of foreign languages, the ready-at-hand knowledge about romantic operas, ruined castles, exotic tribes and antique goddesses alike, plus the necessary weight and authority in Stockholm’s press circles and the personal contact with Chief-Editor Harald Sohlman, all needed to qualify for the task at hand?<sup>3</sup>

The words “makes it seem probable” leave enough space for alternative proposals – but until now, Rickard Berghorn has not come up with any candidate he believes in himself. By lack of a competing thesis, I stick to mine.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1668311286764643/permalink/1967684793493956/>

<sup>2</sup> Swedish national association of journalists and photographers.

<sup>3</sup> “The origin of the first Dracula adaptation,” *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov*, Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies • Vol. 10 (59) No. 1 – 2017.

Now to the details of the articles published in for *Svenska Familj-Journalen* (SFJ) from 1867 till 1887. Let's check if I really managed to “misunderstand and misrepresent almost everything in a profound way,” as Berghorn claims.

1. **Siebenbürgen and Wallachia**: This first point goes to Berghorn; I botched this. The word “Siebenbürgen” is only used to define the location of Wallachia, and the origin of Voivode Radu Negru. I must have been tired.
2. **Tatra Mountains**: In *Mörkrets makter*, the driver of the caleche warns Harker for wolves, coming from the Tatra Mountains. In *Dracula*, such a reference is absent, and I found no apparent reason why it should have been added to the Swedish version. Contrary to what Berghorn writes, I never claimed that the article in SFJ would be “ethnographic” (as opposed to “geographical”) – although the title “Höga Tatra och befolkningen i dess grannskap”<sup>4</sup> and the detailed description of the local Slovak population (and their costumes!) would support such a characterization at least for the second part (pp.138ff). Berghorn's critique is confusing and distracts from the key point: An author or editor who already is familiar with the Tatra Mountains is much more likely to insert a seemingly random reference to this region than a writer who has never dealt with this topic. Bram Stoker, at least, never pointed to the Tatra Mountains.
3. **Portrait gallery**: Over 16 years at least, “Ett fosterländskt Bildergalleri”<sup>5</sup> was a constant element of SFJ. Of course, it did not describe the family of one Count Drakulitz in the Carpathians, but persons of interest in Swedish culture and history. Bram Stoker never saw a necessity to introduce the Count's relatives by means of painted portraits and background stories. The fact that Andersson-Edenberg was the Chief Editor of - and maybe contributor to - an illustrated series of personality portraits may have inspired him to add a portrait gallery to the Count's castle. At least, it makes him a more probable candidate than any other author who may have known portrait galleries only from museums or other public buildings, but never actively managed one.
4. **Flower Metaphor**: Berghorn left this example out, although I think it is significant:

A specific mentioning of the flower that blossoms in summer but dies in winter (a metaphor used by the Count while explaining the laws of life and love to Harker) can be found in Andersson-Edenberg's article “Sista resan” (The Last Trip), *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, 1872, pp. 360ff.

As far as I know, Bram Stoker never used flowers in a metaphorical sense; in SFJ, however, we not only find many botanical articles, but also several lyrical poems

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<sup>4</sup> The High Tatra and the Population in this Region

<sup>5</sup> A Portrait Gallery of our Fatherland

using the flower as a metaphor for Nature or for an enchanting maiden; I suspect that Andersson-Edenberg himself was the author of some of these poems. In *Mörkrets makter*, Harker compares the blonde girl's head to a "flower on a stem."<sup>6</sup>

5. **Gold rules the world:** I do not get the point of this critique. In Andersson-Edersson's article (or "short story," if you prefer) "Våra dagars guldmakeri," a group of young people and their professor picks "gold" as a discussion topic and come up with twenty short statements (I mistook them for Swedish proverbs) about this precious metal. Then the professor challenges the students to define gold and himself comes up with the phrases that gold rules the world and that it is the treasure of this world but the curse of mankind. In Bram Stoker's collected works, I never found this kind of critical observation; in *Dracula*, the "Crew of Light" takes the power of money for granted and is happy to have Arthur's and Quincey's ample funds at their disposal to bribe workmen and officials. For this reason, I suspect the Count's obsession with finding, possessing and producing gold – and talking about its dangerous power – is due to a Swedish input. That Andersson-Edenberg already worded the relevant phrases in his 1869 article makes him a suitable "A-e" candidate – at least more probable than similar Swedish authors who never critically reflected on the powers of gold in writing.
6. **Robinson:** Again, I do not deny that *Robin Crusoe* was and is a very famous novel and that most Swedish authors of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century must have known it -- just like I and my fellow-Dutchmen know it. But like in the case of the Tatra Mountains, the reference to Crusoe seems rather random in the context in which Harker uses it; Bram Stoker never employed it in any of his books, although he certainly was as familiar with the story as any of his Swedish colleagues. If the reference comes from the Swedish side, Andersson-Edenberg certainly is a more likely candidate than colleagues who never actively wrote about Defoe and his book.

My article for Transilvania University contains five more such examples. In my interview with *T'is Fris* (published on 1 April 2017), you can find six more; I also refer to the interviews in [www.vampirisme.com](http://www.vampirisme.com) of March 2017. The critique worded by Berghorn so far does not convince me; except for point Nr. 1, I see no flaws in my argumentation: an author who has actively written about a certain subject in the past is far more likely to use it as a stop-gap in his new writing than an author who has never dealt with this topic before. We are talking about probability here, not about hard proof, but if you look at all the odds combined (and the lack of other convincing candidates), I feel that my thesis deserves a less sloppy critique.

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<sup>6</sup> In Stoker's short story *Bengal Roses* (1898), the flowers play no metaphorical role.

## The Strindberg Connection

In this point, Berghorn is causing confusion, not I. Let me quote my sub-chapter in full:

### 11. August Strindberg as a “mad scientist”

À propos psychiatry, alchemy & mystics: Both at *Svenska Medborgarans* and at *Dagens Nyheter* (Sweden’s largest newspaper during the 1860s and 70s, equally supporting the cause of *Lantmannapartiet*), Andersson-Edenberg was a senior colleague to the young journalist August Strindberg (1849-1912), who over the following decades developed into Sweden’s most successful, though controversial author. In the 1880s and 1890s, Strindberg was fascinated by psychiatry, sociology, evolution theory, mysticism and alchemy; he personally performed chemical experiments, trying to prove that certain elements could be “transmuted” to each other. He even attempted to create gold from iron and sulphur, one day resulting in the formation of iron pyrite, generally known as “fool’s gold.” Strindberg, however, believed to have created real gold and thus have found the answer to the classical quest of alchemy. From Autumn 1894 till the end of 1896, he experienced a severe mental crisis, leading to paranoid hallucinations, as described in his autobiographical work *Inferno*, published in 1897.

Future research on the backgrounds of *Mörkrets makter* should certainly look into a possible link between Strindberg’s life, work, ideas and spleens on the one hand, the characters of Harker, Count Dracula and Van Helsing as portrayed in *Mörkrets makter* on the other hand – not to speak of the blonde vampire girl as a *femme fatale*.

Nowhere do I suggest that Strindberg might have been a **co-editor** of *Mörkrets makter*. Instead, I address the possibility that Strindberg may appear as a **character**, or even may be **reflected in several characters**: in the Count, who appears as a “mad scientist” and alchemist, in Harker, with his constant fears of going mad; in Van Helsing, who is also presented as a “mad scientist” and mysticist. The Renfield character, that appears in the extended version only, may equally have some traits in common with Strindberg. The vampire girl as *femme fatale* might match the way Strindberg experienced women. I do not claim that Strindberg “undeniably” was a role model for these characters: I merely note that the parallels might be worthwhile looking into. Just because Strindberg was so famous, the question should at least be raised.

Although I have no definitive evidence for my theories, so far, I see no reason to revise them.

Bantayan Island, 19 December 2017  
Hans Corneel de Roos

## **Rickard Berghorn's post to Facebook (Crypt of the Undead) of 18 November 2017**

Finally, Hans de Roos provided us with his (as he claim) undeniable evidences, from the Swedish magazine Svenska Familj-Journalen (1864-87), why A--e need to be Albert Andersson-Edenberg. Unfortunately he misunderstand and misrepresent almost everything in a profound way. A--e was the signature who made the Swedish adaptation of "Mörkrets makter" 1899-1900, the original (and unabridged) novel that was later translated into Icelandic as "Makt myrkranna".

Evidence 1: "Andersson-Edenberg may have derived detailed knowledge about Transylvania from an extensive article titled 'Siebenbürgen,' containing, among others, a description of local costumes: Svenska Familj-Journalen 1871, pp. 247ff." -- PROBLEMS: This article is not about Siebenbürgen but Wallachia, and the title of the article isn't "Siebenbürgen". The real title is "Bilder från Walakiet" ("Pictures from Walachia"). Link to the article:

<http://runeberg.org/famijour/1871/0251.html>

Evidence 2: "Mörkrets makter mentioning of wolves, coming from the Tatra Mountains, may have had its basis in an article on the High Tatra with a further description of Slovak costumes: 'Höga Tatra och befolkningen i dess grannskap,' in Svenska Familj-Journalen, 1868, pp. 74ff" -- PROBLEMS: There are no mentions of wolves in the article, only groundhogs, mountain goats and bears when it talks about the fauna. And, no mentions of Slavic costumes, either. There are a few paragraphs about the lokal people, but this is not an ethnographic article, it is a geographical article. Link to the article: <http://runeberg.org/famijour/1868/0078.html>

Evidence 3: "The concept of adding a portrait gallery to Castle Dracula, allowing the Count to introduce his family members to Harker, may have been inspired by the article series 'Ett fosterländskt Bildergalleri,' appearing in Svenska Familj-Journalen from 1869 on, continuing till 1885 at least." -- PROBLEMS: Gosh... This has nothing to do with the portrait gallery in Dracula's castle. The article series published short biographies about famous Swedes, one such in each number. Of course it is nothing strange with a picture gallery in an old castle, and nobody needs to be "inspired" to add one in Dracula's castle, and absolutely not from such a far-fetched source as "Ett fosterländskt bildgalleri". Links to two examples from this series:

<http://runeberg.org/famijour/1869/0073.html>

<http://runeberg.org/famijour/1885/0297.html>

Evidence 4: "Gold rules the world. This specific statement, used by the Count, was perhaps derived from Andersson-Edersson's article 'Våra dagars guldmakeri,' in Svenska Familj-Journalen 1869, pp. 170 ff, listing numerous proverbs about the uncanny power of this precious metal." -- PROBLEMS: This is not an article, it is a short story. The "proverbs" are some lines of poetry at the beginning of the story. In the beginning there are some lines that \_looks like\_ proverbs, but in reality it is a company of friends who, one after another, express their opinion about "gold", which they use as a synonym for money. And there is, of course, nothing original in the notion "gold rules the world". Link to the story:

<http://runeberg.org/famijour/1869/0174.html>

Evidence 5: "After Harker's reference to the story of Robinson Crusoe in Part I of Mörkrets makter, the extended version in Part II uses the name "Robinson" in the conversations with Mr. Swales and assigns the name "Elise Bobinson" (perhaps a typographical error, or a rhyme) to Lucy's housemaid. In Svenska Familj-Journalen Andersson-Edenberg published both on Defoe's famous book (1873, pp. 39f) and on the life of Defoe himself (1880, pp. 168 ff.). -- PROBLEMS: Perhaps Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" is rather unknown in the Netherlands, but it is one of the most famous literary classics ever in Sweden and the rest of the world. Of course any editor behind "Mörkrets makter" knew Robinson Crusoe very well.

Hans de Roos provide six more "evidences", and I give my response to them soon, in another commentary. Right now I am very tired in my head.

De Roos' paper about A--e and Andersson-Edenberg is here:

[http://webbut.unitbv.ro/.../13\\_DeRoos\\_Cultural%20studies\\_FINAL...](http://webbut.unitbv.ro/.../13_DeRoos_Cultural%20studies_FINAL...)

### **Further Comments of 18 November 2017 by Rickard Berghorn, about Strindberg**

At the end of his paper, [Hans de Roos](#) is talking about the author August Strindberg as a possible co-editor under the signature A--e. Surely, Strindberg is a fascinating personality with his ockultism, alchemy and political views, but he is also the most thoroughly scrutinized and documented author in Sweden's literary history; even his diaries and more than 10 000 of his letters between 1858 and 1912 are published. There is no possibility that thousands of Swedish literary scholars would have missed his work on a serial like \_Mörkrets makter\_.

[...]

It is convoluted, what you write about Strindberg, but first you write this rhetorical question: "Which other Swedish professional writer, we must ask ourselves, might have possessed the fluent pen, the romantic attitude, the mastery of foreign languages, the ready-at-hand knowledge about romantic operas, ruined castles, exotic tribes and antique goddesses alike, plus the necessary weight and authority in Stockholm's press circles and the personal contact with Chief-Editor Harald Sohlman, all needed to qualify for the task at hand?"

All this can be said about Strindberg, although stretched in some details. After that you present Strindberg, and state this: "Future research on the backgrounds of *Mörkrets makter* should certainly look into a possible link between Strindberg's life, work, ideas and spleens on the one hand, the characters of Harker, Count Dracula and Van Helsing as portrayed in *Mörkrets makter* on the other hand -- not to speak of the blonde vampire girl."

The connection between Strindberg and the blonde vampire woman in Dracula's castle is probably meant to be one of Strindberg's wives, especially Siri von Essen; Strindberg was a misogynist and his marriages usually ended in misery and hatred. But as I clearly point out in my article about *Mörkrets makter*, the blonde vampire woman is already present in *Dracula* 1897 (she is the one who try to kiss Harker), and you can see in Stoker's notes(Eighteen-Bisang & Miller p. 12) that he, during a period, really planned to use only one vampire woman and not three; "a detail that was strangely overlooked in the English translation of *Makt mykranna*," as I write.