

Summary

By another name

The use of pseudonyms by writers in Sweden from 1870 to 1920

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There are a number of reasons why writers use a pen-name or pseudonym when publishing a text. Pen-names and pseudonyms are closely related phenomena, and drawing the line between them is sometimes difficult. This article discusses several aspects of the use of pen-names and pseudonyms between 1870 and 1920. The main body of material studied consists of some 100 pseudonyms of Swedish writers, equally distributed between the sexes, which have been gleaned from various reference works. The writers are authors, journalists, critics and debaters who published some type of text during the period 1870–1920. The modern breakthrough at the end of the 19th century can be said to mark a transition from a period when writers could remain completely anonymous and not sign their texts at all in certain contexts, to one in which they used pen-names and pseudonyms and, finally, full names. Assumed names were used for a variety of reasons. Writers might for example wish to retain their anonymity, or to assume different roles as an author and write in different genres.