

mat och tillverka kläder – sysslor som brukar hänföras till ”domestic” för att använda Whittles analys – nämns helt kort som att de ”kvarstod under hela perioden” (s. 42) och beskrivs inte som definierande för näringsstrukturen.

*Fantastiska verb* är en generös och pedagogisk presentation och diskussion av *Gender and Work*-projektets källor – en rundvandring i projektets verkstad. Den som vill veta mer om resultaten i form av genusarbetsdelning i 1800-talets Västmanland får emellertid invänta en ny publikation som *Making a living, making a difference*. Men forskning om genus och arbete är tidskrävande, av skäl som en läsare av *Fantastiska verb* får synnerligen god inblick i.

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Roddy Nilsson & Marie Eriksson, *Ilska, desperation och lömska försåt: Våldsamma kvinnor i 1800-talets Sverige* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press 2020). 261 pp.

The volume by Roddy Nilsson and Marie Eriksson investigates women's use of physical violence in nineteenth century Sweden. It seeks to understand women's violence in a historical context by engaging with four themes: homicide (chapter 2), neonaticide (chapter 3), non-deadly violence towards others (chapter 4) and finally, violence by women towards their own bodies (chapter 5), that is, suicide and death resulting from failed attempts at abortion. The book is a result of a project funded by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) "Evil women or desperate housewives?", conducted by the authors 2013–2018. The authors, Nilsson and Eriksson, are historians working on historical criminology and social work respectively, both with an established academic record.

The title of the project also reflects the framework of the volume at hand. The authors question, and set aside, what they claim to be the usual feminist perspective on women as victims, either of violence conducted by men or of patriarchal society, which forced women to resort to violence. Violence has usually been considered as an action predominantly committed by men. Subsequently, with the exception of infanticide, women's violence has not been deemed important. To counter this trend, the book treats historical women as active agents responsible for at least parts of their actions, and as such subjects in their own lives.

As the authors state, using records from lower courts and the court of appeal, they have found more court cases that investigated women committing

violent acts, both deadly and non-lethal, than has been previously estimated. These numbers do, however, seem to include also cases where the accused were freed of charges. The authors argue that this did not necessarily mean that they were innocent but rather that it was impossible to find sufficient evidence to pronounce them guilty. As the authors move from violence against other people to study violence against women's own bodies – that is, suicide and deaths resulting from successful attempts at abortion – they move on to medical and mental health authority archives (Sundhetskollegium, Medicinalstyrelsen). In these, they found once again a considerable number of cases although, as they state, the number of cases that never came to be investigated can only be guessed at.

A reader may get the feeling that the authors want to emphasise that women were not victims and did in fact commit violence and that it was important. Whether there is a danger of overemphasis cannot be established based on the book itself but needs a comparison with the existing research. It is evident, however, that the authors feel a need to state this despite the fact that most nineteenth-century violence was committed by men. I am not sure whether this type of emphasis is necessary, or if another, a more qualitative point of view might be more effective than the numbers themselves in proving the significance of women's violence.

Such qualitative analyses are indeed present in the book. These include an analysis of different types of subjectivity emerging from the cases of violence and a discussion of cultures of honour around which women's subjectivity and violence revolved. The authors use a 5-tiered typology of violence related to subjectivation and de-subjectivation developed by a French sociologist Michel Wieviorka. It allows the authors to consider different modes of subjectivity from creating, changing and defending to losing and destructing subject positions. This discussion in the book is potentially very fruitful and can bring new insights into – and possibly show an avenue out of the trenches of – the old debate on women's agency vs oppression in a patriarchal society.

The book is clearly and simply written, although obviously meant for an audience of scholarly historians. As a Finnish reviewer, I might also point out that it is equally clearly meant for a Swedish audience, for the "international" literature used in the book does not include even the Finns who have written in English on honour (e.g. Satu Lidman) or gendered suicide (e.g. Riikka Miettinen) or infanticide (e.g. Anu Koskivirta) in Sweden's and Finland's joint past. Nevertheless, the book offers useful statistics and interesting analyses in a clearly structured and accessible package.