Svedjedal, Johan, johan.svedjedal@littvet.uu.se. Professor, Dept. of Literature, Uppsala University, Sweden: “Her living text: Victoria Benedictsson in the light of textual criticism”. Språk och stil 19, 2009, pp. 53–71.

The article discusses different theoretical approaches to literary intentions. Throughout her literary life, the Swedish novelist and playwright Victoria Benedictsson (1850–1888) closely cooperated with the author Axel Lundegård (1861–1930). Benedictsson also bequeathed her literary rights to Lundegård, including the right to revise her works. After Benedictsson’s death, Lundegård edited and finished various drafts of these into short stories, some of which subsequently became literary classics. In a new book, Hennes döda kropp [Her dead body] (2008), Swedish literary historian Lisbeth Larsson argues that Lundegård’s versions are so far removed from Benedictsson’s own intentions and style that they should no longer be published. In the present article, this approach is contrasted with perspectives from textual sociology, maintaining that a crucial part of Benedictsson’s intentions was to delegate them to Lundegård, accepting the fact that her unfinished works might survive only through his editing. Paradoxically, the restoration of Benedictsson’s original drafts means disregarding her intentions.

Keywords: textual criticism, literary theory, Swedish literature, Victoria Benedictsson, publishing history.