

Samlaren

Tidskrift för

svensk litteraturvetenskaplig forskning

Årgång 105 1984

Svenska Litteratursällskapet

Distribution: Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm

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Utgiven med understöd av

Humanistisk-Samhällsvetenskapliga Forskningsrådet

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ISBN 91-22-00757-1 (häftad)

ISBN 91-22-00759-8 (bunden)

ISSN 0348-6133

Printed in Sweden by

Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala 1985

des av ett medelklasskikt med viss geografisk spridning. Löfroth antar att situationen var ungefär densamma under de föregående tjugo åren och det har han väl rätt till; det får likväl räknas som en svaghet att mer exakta upplysningar saknas.

Löfroths avhandling lider alltså av en hel del brister. Författaren gör själv frågan om ett ideologiskt samförstånd mellan läsare och publik till en avgörande punkt. Vill man pröva denna tanke vetenskapligt jämför man lämpligen de värderingar som speglas i de litterära verken med de tänkesätt som kommer till uttryck i en för den dåtida amerikanska medelklassen representativ utomlitterär källa. Löfroth tycks helt främmande för denna uppläggning som hade givit hans framställning ökad tyngd. Nu nöjer han sig med hänvisningar till forskning kring andra texter från andra perioder och med spekulationer om att ett verks popularitet avslöjar något om tänkesätten hos vissa sociala skikt. Hans uppfattning att bästsäljarna lämpar sig som material för att utforska den amerikanska medelklassens värderingar torde sålunda kräva en källkritisk diskussion av helt annan omfattning än den som presteras.

Att en undersökning bygger på tveksamma premisser hindrar lyckligtvis inte att den rymmer åtskilligt av värde. Löfroths avhandling är ett utmärkt exempel på detta förhållande. I första kapitlet ger författaren sålunda en ytterst klagörande sammanfattning av huvudtendenserna i periodens bestsellers. Nyckelordet är optimism: utvecklingen går framåt vilket författarna genomgående sätter i samband med hjältnas viljestyrka, flit och förmåga till ledarskap. Pengar och socialt anseende är stående belöningar i bestsellerlitteraturens värld vilket inte hindrar att man brännmärker överdrivet intresse för dessa ting: även idealitet måste finnas med i bilden.

Löfroth visar sig också vara en utmärkt textanalytiker. Främst har jag fäst mig vid andra kapitlets diskussion av Frank Stocktons *The Adventures of Captain Horn* (1895) där författaren skickligt blottlägger romanens olika betydelseskikt; av en till synes ordinär äventyrshistoria blir i Löfroths engagerande läsning bl. a. ett diskussionsinlägg kring ledarskapets villkor. Även hans övriga textgenomgångar har stora förtjänster; inte minst lovvärd är ambitionen att fortlöpande aktualisera den samtida historiska verkligheten. Ibland blir dock innehållsreferaten väl vidlyftiga.

Löfroth kan heller inte frångämmas en viss tendens till övertolkning av sina texter. Särskilt påtagligt är detta i tredje kapitlet där författaren kanske mest energiskt driver vad som visar sig vara avhandlingens huvudtes, att periodens bestsellers speglar den amerikanska medelklassens vaktstående kring status quo. Att Booth Tarkingtons *The Turmoil* (1915) kan läsas som ett försvar för rådande samhällsförhållanden verkar sannolikt medan Winston Churchills *A Far Country* (1915) måste betecknas som ett mer tvivelaktigt fall: där är tanken att nuets kaos representerar en genomgångsfas på vägen mot ett bättre tillstånd i framtiden. Som försvar för status quo är väl detta något svagt; i varje fall ligger det på en annan nivå än hos Tarkington. Och Mary Roberts Rineharts, Eleanor Porters och Gene Stratton-Porters romaner utnyttjar väl bara gamla schabloner inom vissa typer av populärlitteratur när det gäller att undvika påträngande sociala realiteter. Därtill kommer som sagt att Löfroth inte säkert vet

om eller i vilken utsträckning bästsäljarnas läsare faktiskt motsatte sig sociala förändringar.

Löfroth är en begåvad forskare med viss böjelse för schematiska och spekulativa förklaringsmodeller. Denna svaghet tenderar att skymma de stora förtjänster som hans avhandling har. Nästa gång bör han tona ned de äventyrliga inslagen i sin forskningsstrategi och satsa på en omsorgsfullare empirisk förankring av sina teser.

Lars Wendelius

Mari-Ann Berg: *Aspects of Time, Ageing and Old Age in the Novels of Patrick White 1939-1979*. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Gothenburg Studies in English 53. Göteborg 1984.

Beyla Burman: *The World in Patrick White's The Vivisector—An Interpretation*. Litteraturvetenskapliga Institutionen, Stockholms Universitet. Stockholm 1984.

Karin Hansson: *The Warped Universe. A Study of Image-ry and Structure in Seven Novels by Patrick White*. Lund Studies in English 69. CWK Gleerup. Lund 1984.

More than a decade after the award of the Nobel prize, the publication, within a single term, of three doctoral dissertations on Patrick White bears witness to a lively interest, among Swedish academics, in the work of this avowedly unacademic and anti-intellectual artist. Indeed, the volume and variety of his production provides a rich and stimulating subject for literary research. Two of the scholars, Mari-Ann Berg and Karin Hansson, have chosen to examine several novels in order to bring out a common theme or the recurrent use of certain images that unify the group. Beyla Burman has chosen instead to focus upon a single novel in depth and then draw attention to what it has in common with the rest of his work. All three provide a review of previous White criticism that establishes Alan Lawson's previous survey of the subject as authoritative.¹ Although the quantity of publications on Patrick White has greatly increased, studies of high quality are still in short supply.

In her discussion of the critical context of her thesis, Mari-Ann Berg states that a number of scholars have already noticed White's preoccupation with time and his use of timeshifts in several of his novels. She herself enlarges the scope of the topic by studying various aspects of the theme of time in as many as eleven novels. Moreover she suggests a development in White's interest in the question of ageing and old age over a period of forty years. His somewhat stereotyped treatment of old people in the early novels gives way to a more nuanced portrayal of them in his later ones. In fact, the protagonist in *The Eye of the Storm* (1973), is a dying woman of over eighty. In dealing with this aspect of White's work however, the author makes several observations on the need for the portrayal of old people in fiction and on related gerontological issues which alter the original purpose of her study

¹ Alan Lawson, "Meaning and Experience: A Review-Essay on Some Recurrent Problems in Patrick White Criticism", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. 21, 2, 1979; pp. 280-294.

which seemed to be concerned with more formal aspects of the theme of time. The change of direction is never convincingly justified and her failure to integrate the two different concerns creates a curiously disjointed impression.

Another unfortunate effect results from her decision to include as many as eleven novels within the limited framework of a single thesis. Inevitably, her analysis of the time-structure within each novel appears superficial. Much of the discussion remains at the level of description, or merely indicates which parts of a novel focus upon a particular character's fictive past, present, or his thoughts about the future. Although White's use of objects like rings and clocks to denote time, and of water imagery to suggest its flow is commented upon, the discussion is usually too brief to provide the reader with insights of any depth. Moreover an analysis of such a potentially promising subject as White's use of a fluctuating point of view in many of his novels is not provided.

Occasionally, the author asserts that a thorough analysis shows something, for example that it shows that "the mental lives of the characters are a key to the development of the time lines", but the reader who searches for such an analysis searches in vain.

Berg's method of grouping together characters who remember their past within a single category leads to the blurring of more essential distinctions between them which suggest that they should rather have been kept apart. Thus for example, the author speaks of Waldo in *The Solid Mandala* being "like" his brother Arthur, or "like" Elizabeth Hunter in *The Eye of the Storm*. However, the fact that the latter two belong among White's visionary characters, whereas Waldo certainly does not, is of much greater significance than the comparatively arbitrary fact that all three remember their past. In much the same way, Dorothy Hunter's view of her childhood is classified with Hurtle Duffield's whereas the differences between these two characters are surely more important than this similarity.

Finally, it is strange to find a study that concentrates upon the functioning of memory and a character's view of his past but pays so little heed to the work of Henri Bergson and Marcel Proust and quite ignores recent theorists like Gerard Genette. A. A. Mendilow's *Time and the Novel*, an excellent work but one that was first published some thirty years ago, seems to have served as the primary source of whatever theoretical framework the thesis possesses. All these limitations combine to leave an impression of it as a somewhat pedestrian piece of work.

This is a charge that cannot possibly be levelled at Beyla Burman whose skillful analysis of the world of *The Vivisector* clearly demonstrates her intellectual independence and her perspicacity. Furthermore, even the critic who may hesitate to endorse Burman's view of *The Vivisector* as one of the indisputable "greats" in world literature, will nevertheless agree that it is a major work worthy of a full-length study.

Burman's thesis cannot be charged with superficiality either, since she carefully sifts the various strands of the novel and systematizes them meticulously. In doing this she discovers that the world of *The Vivisector* functions on a number of different levels. The text itself has an

historical and socio-cultural level whereas what the author terms the "infratext" has four: a pictorial, a visionary, a symbolic and a musical level. These different levels are then analysed as they occur in three chapters from *The Vivisector* which the author has selected as suitable to her purpose. The discussion of each of these levels is most illuminating. In particular her use of Hurtle Duffield's paintings as a point of entry into the text is one of those brilliant strokes that appear so self-evident once executed that you wonder why no one has thought of doing it before.

In view of all these merits, whatever objections the reviewer feels inclined to raise are likely to appear tediously academic. Nevertheless, if literary scholarship is to maintain the validity of some of its requirements then certain objections must be raised. First of all, trivial though the point may be, it is difficult to understand why the title of the thesis is in English although the text is in Swedish. My sympathy immediately goes out to all those diligent White scholars throughout the world who will undergo the laborious process of acquiring this thesis from Sweden only to discover that they are unable to read it.

Even those who know Swedish will find it difficult to read because of Burman's unconventional way of presenting her material. At first sight, the table of contents looks like an interminable list, and it takes considerable diligence to discover its structure. The thesis is divided into two parts, the first of which deals with the subjective experience of reading a text in the light of phenomenological theory. The second part is then devoted to an explication of that initial reading with the help of two established methods of literary research, namely the psycho-biographical and the comparative methods.

Having grasped this basic structure, the reader will find that Burman has made few concessions to his need of logically flowing argumentative prose. Not only does the discussion leap from one topic to another, often in note form, but there is also a continuous sub-text in the form of excessively long footnotes where Burman conducts her discussion of the critical debate and provides a fairly detailed examination of Patrick White's narrative technique. In addition, academic sensibilities are bound to be ruffled by her insistence on labelling her hypotheses as "guesses" about the text instead of adopting a more conventional term. Furthermore her elaborate justification of her own conceptual model for the hermeneutic process seems somewhat laboured since enough has been published on the subject to make one question the originality of her contribution in this respect.

A more serious objection is raised by her application of the methods of psychoanalysis to the character of Hurtle Duffield. From a literary point of view no matter how much like a real life person a character may seem, he is still a fictional creation and as such a structural element in a work of art. It therefore seems futile to speculate about aspects of his life and psychology that are not mentioned in the work itself. Yet Burman theorises about Hurtle's oral and anal phases and diagnoses his psychological hang-ups without any hesitation. As a result of her session with a "patient", who has the great disadvantage of not being able to talk to his analyst, she discovers yet another level in the world of *The Vivisector* namely the animus/

anima level where she sees Rhoda as the expression of Hurtle's conflict between the male and female aspects of his own nature. Rhoda is thus a symbol both of his alter ego and his anima, his own suppressed femininity. Burman's subsequent discussion of Rhoda's role is both perceptive and persuasive and, if indeed, she could not arrive at it by any other means than psychoanalysing Hurtle then her case-study may be justified. However, in her article on Hurtle's "Doppelgänger's Dilemma" (*Queens Quarterly*, 78, 1971) Patricia Morley is able to perceive two selves in Hurtle without subjecting him to psychoanalysis, thus showing that the text itself provides all the material needed for an understanding of the role of a fictional character. White has provided us with his own signals in *The Vivisector*. For example, he informs us that Kathy is Hurtle's "psychopomp" and thus alerts us to the relevance of Jungian concepts. He also explicitly says of Hurtle that Rhoda was "a growth he had learnt to live with". These clues enable an alert reader to arrive at an understanding of Rhoda's role without having to resort to the construction of a psychological case-history for Hurtle as Burman has done.

A similar objection can be raised in regard to Burman's equation of the structure of *The Vivisector* with a specific piano concert by Mozart. Although there is no denying that music is an important element in this novel by virtue of Kathy's being a musician and, as such, an artist in a way that qualifies her to be Hurtle's "spiritual child", yet it is difficult to see how the imposition of a form that belongs to a different medium can have other than a reductive effect. Instead, Burman could have more profitably chosen to extend her examination of the text by analysing more than chapters 4, 5 and 6 only. As it is, her discussion sometimes suffers from a lack of continuity because of her concentration upon these chapters alone. For example, when she discusses Hurtle's dreams she leaves the dreams he has in other chapters out of her account, and when she discusses the theme of vivisection, chapter 7, in which it is of obvious significance, is excluded. Yet these are minor omissions and compensated for by the fact that when she is at her best she does more than most literary critics are able to do. Having entered the world of *The Vivisector* with Beyla Burman as his guide, the reader finds himself constantly challenged and often provoked, but he emerges with his understanding of White's complex creation greatly enhanced.

Karin Hansson takes upon herself the Odyssean task of steering between "the Scylla of the imposition of extrinsic systems and the Charybdis of concentration on intrinsic artistic achievement", but like Homer's hero, she succeeds in sailing through to clear water. Convincingly justifying her assertion that the seven novels between *The Aunt's Story* and *The Eye of the Storm* form an artistic entity, she deftly employs a structuralist approach to show how certain recurrent images in White's fiction acquire meaning by a process of accretion. By providing a detailed analysis of the system of structures and symbols on which the seven novels she groups together appear to be based, she proceeds to create a "holographical picture" of what she describes as Patrick White's "warped universe". This universe proves to have several features in common with the world that Beyla Burman explores in

The Vivisector, thus confirming the validity of the findings of each.

However, Hansson's thesis has the advantage of being well-written and clearly organized. It is divided into three parts. In the first, she identifies certain recurrent image clusters such as the garden, the house, the tree, the desert, and shows how these become associated with ideas of illumination: White's true visionaries are able to respond to the fusion of certain images, for example of tree and storm, in a way that his other characters are not. In the second section, Hansson traces the metaphysical and psychological background to White's work. Here, she touches on similar influences as Burman in her discussion of Jung and some Judeo-Christian mystics as part of the "architext" of *The Vivisector*. However, because of her wider perspective, Hansson is able to go further and uncovers some interesting affinities between White and Blake, Buber, Eckhart and Schopenhauer in addition to the more obvious one of Jung. In this way she makes an important contribution to an understanding of Patrick White's ideological and cultural context.

Finally, after having persuaded the reader that these seven novels can be seen as a series in which White explores the various ways in which human beings are blessed with a glimpse of divine harmony, Hansson proceeds to differentiate between them as representative of three phases. The first phase, comprising *The Aunt's Story* and *The Tree of Man*, focuses upon a single protagonist and explores the possibility of spiritual illumination for apparently ordinary people. The second phase, comprising *Voss*, *Riders in the Chariot* and *The Solid Mandala*, includes more than one extraordinary person and represents the culmination of the religious associations of the quest theme. The third phase comprises *The Vivisector* and *The Eye of the Storm* which represent a kind of synthesis with a single extraordinary figure at their centre and seem to "round off" White's exploration of the theme of a spiritual quest.

In a final note on *A Fringe of Leaves* Hansson indicates a shift of emphasis in White's fiction and an ebbing away of specifically religious associations with fewer of the image clusters and foregrounding effects that are characteristic of the middle group. Her interpretation of Ellen Roxburgh's experiences in this novel, differs markedly from that of Mari-Ann Berg and indeed of most other critics, all of whom regard Ellen's return to civilisation as a triumph. By carefully adducing evidence from the text in favour of her argument, Hansson succeeds in establishing that Ellen's return should rather be regarded as a defeat. Hansson's method here is characteristic of the thesis as a whole. She does not hesitate to take an independent position and having done so she takes care to support it so well that it becomes difficult to fault her. Indeed, this is the kind of book that must be the envy of every thesis writer: an admirable blend of sagacity and scholarship, full of original insights and imaginative readings, written in a highly accomplished prose style and well on the way to becoming one of the more valuable studies of Patrick White's fiction that has hitherto been produced.

Ishrat Lindblad