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Debatten om *Pippi Långstrump* på 1940-talet förde med sig att boken blev än mer känd bland både barn och vuxna, i olika sociala miljöer, skriver Margareta Strömstedt i sin biografi (s. 260). Hon citerar en notis från en skånsk dagstidning som förtjänar att återges: "Med 'Pippi Långstrump' bredvid sig hittades häromnatten en 26-årig transportarbetare redlöst berusad på en gata i Malmö. Han hade tydligen blivit trött och lagt sig ner att sova på trottoarkanten. Utom boken 'Pippi Långstrump' påträffades 23 kolor i hans fickor." Att den hittillsvarande historieskrivningen behöver revideras står klart efter läsningen av Wahlströms avhandling, även om utgångspunkterna kan vara olika. Men oavsett vad vi skriver kommer Pippi Långstrump alltid att dyka upp i nya tolkningar och föränderliga skepnader, vare sig det nu är i barnkammaren, på trottoarkanten eller på forskarbordet.

Boel Westin

Anna Victoria Hallberg, *Novel Writing and Moral Philosophy as Aspects of a Single Struggle. Iris Murdoch's Hybrid Novels* (Örebro Studies in Literary History and Criticism, 11). Akademin för humaniora, utbildning och samhällsvetenskap, Örebro universitet. Örebro 2011.

Anna Victoria Hallberg's doctoral dissertation is an ambitious piece of research into the literary works of an intriguing author. The dissertation is not always clear in its development of thoughts and in its conclusions, but it is all the time daring in its approach to interpretive, theoretical and philosophical issues. It is the result of thorough and wide-ranging research: Hallberg deals not only with a large number of Murdoch's novels, but also with her philosophical works, with some of her ventures into literary criticism, interviews with Murdoch, and other kinds of written material. Hallberg knows well and discusses intensively with a wide range of the reception of Murdoch's writings – so intensively that one gets the impression that other specialists on Murdoch might be her primary audience. However, the dissertation communicates well also with people who can make no claim to being part of the "family" of Murdoch scholars and fans.

In philosophy departments Iris Murdoch is regarded as a distinguished figure in post-war European philosophy. However, as Hallberg notes, she doesn't easily fit any of the ready-made categories

of modern thought. Through her five decades as an active philosopher, she articulated a rather singular vision of philosophy, in lively conversation with philosophers such as Plato and Wittgenstein, Sartre and Derrida. It is, however, a philosophical vision that so far has had relatively little impact on the study of literature in comparative literature departments, despite the fact that professors and students of literature over the last decades have been eager to place philosophical thoughts at the centre of their research discipline. Just on these grounds there is good reason to welcome Hallberg's dissertation.

What philosophy is, is itself a philosophical question. Murdoch thought that philosophy needed to widen its attention to thoughts and modes of writing that have their traditional home outside the walls of philosophy departments, and that philosophy had been badly damaged by modelling itself on the natural sciences, thus implicitly if not explicitly taking sides with the natural sciences in the battle between the sciences and the humanities – the battle between the two cultures, as C.P. Snow famously labelled it. Murdoch writes: "There is only one culture, of which science, so interesting and so dangerous, is now an important part. But the most essential and fundamental aspect of culture is the study of literature, since it is an education in how to picture and understand human situations. We are men and we are moral agents before we are scientists, and the place of science in human life must be discussed in words" (*The Sovereignty of Good*, 1991 [1970], p. 34).

As Hallberg notes, Murdoch has been a source of inspiration for philosophers (e.g. Martha Nussbaum and Cora Diamond) who have argued for and practiced a more inclusive philosophy, in dialogue with major figures in the literary tradition, such as Henry James, Charles Dickens and William Wordsworth. However, unlike these philosophers Murdoch also had a literary career, and was a distinguished novelist. In this she has very few colleagues, the most important being Jean-Paul Sartre, the subject of her first philosophical work (*Sartre. Romantic Rationalist* [1953]), and one that she very much defines her own thinking and writing in opposition to.

The thesis that is argued for on almost every page of Hallberg's dissertation is that there is an intimate connection between Iris Murdoch the philosopher and Iris Murdoch the novelist. If I understand her correctly, Hallberg seeks to bring to light the importance of the philosopher for the novelist as well

as the importance of the novelist for the philosopher, in order to understand this internal dependence and communication between the two strands of her *oeuvre*.

Is this dissertation another contribution to the old and never-ending quarrel between philosophy and literature? As I read Hallberg, it should not be read in this way, at least not straightforwardly. Not because Hallberg does not reflect on, or make her reader reflect on, the relation between philosophy and literature. She does. But to see it as a contribution to this quarrel is, I think, to underrate the specificity of Hallberg's concern, which is not the relation between philosophy and literature at large, or the relevance of literature to moral philosophy at large. If it were, both the questions, the material and the methods in this dissertation would have to be different from what they are. It is a study of one set of literary works and its interaction with and in a certain sense dependence on one very specific contribution to moral philosophy. It deals with the issue of the relation between Murdoch's specific ideas and visions in moral philosophy and her specific aesthetic strategies and choices. This restriction in scope is important for a proper appreciation of this dissertation, in so far as it seldom establishes its discussion with a view to other philosophical or literary contributions. Sartre is presented as a contrast to Murdoch, and other philosophers are mentioned and referred to, especially Plato and Wittgenstein, but such discursive forays into non-Murdochian territory are strictly controlled by Hallberg's desire to understand what goes on in Murdoch's novels and in her philosophy. They are controlled in order to throw light on the idea that her philosophical and literary efforts are two aspects of the same struggle, and on the further claim that this struggle is best understood if we regard her novels as, in Hallberg's own words, a "hybridisation" of aesthetics and ethics" (p. 15).

This is important also because it helps establish the right kind of expectations to the philosophical discussion Hallberg engages us in through her dissertation. Her point of orientation is Murdoch, and even if the words of this dissertation are Hallberg's own, they are in long parts clearly marked by the fact that Murdoch has been her guide in philosophy. Being guided in this way is a wise move by Hallberg, and in my view she is at her best when she sticks to it.

At the centre of Murdoch's moral philosophy is the notion of attention and vision, and Hallberg

seeks to deepen our understanding of these two notions, so as to help us grasp both their philosophical significance and their role in turning the novels into important contributions to and articulations of moral philosophy. Seeing and attending are crucial for overcoming egotism – they are crucial to the process of *unselfing* that is at the heart of moral growth, and they are crucial to the way Murdoch's novels work, especially for the moral growth of the novels' central characters. Seeing and attending are also vital for how the reader is invited to relate to the characters: We see them seeing, attending; we see them being transformed, so to speak, by the process of attending that materialises or finds its expression in the novels.

The dissertation consists of an overture and five chapters, in addition to the usual paratexts. The Overture covers a lot of ground; in what seems almost like a short version of the whole dissertation, Hallberg gives what she calls four encounters with Murdoch and introduces some of the central ideas and concepts of Murdoch: the idea of the accidental or the contingent; her fierce opposition to the fact/value-distinction; the importance of giving a central place to the notion of inner or mental events; her criticism of her fellow contemporary philosophers' uncomfortable relation to consciousness-talk and consciousness-terms, and their opposition to marking a distinction between a private and a public sphere.

In the Overture Hallberg also makes a point of Murdoch's affinity for Plato, in particular his images of moral growth or moral progress, and underscores the criticism of philosophy that is implicit in her literary practice: "Novels are in dialogue with life and consciousness in a way that philosophy is not" (p. 20). She gives the first indication of what she means by *the hybrid novel*, one of the most central terms of the dissertation, by contrasting it with Murdoch's view of Sartre's existentialist novel. The existentialist novel, Hallberg claims, following Murdoch, "starts in the abstract and makes up something particular-like in order to illustrate the abstract idea. Murdoch's hybrid novels, on the other hand, have a direction of *asceticism* that suggests that the upward movement starts from the particular. The hybrid begins in the picture of the particular (a happy event, the behaviour of dogs, emotional reactions, chance encounters, falling in love), which is enlightened in a way that, concerning the characters, leads to insights of a moral nature. This strategy, to always start in the particular, organises

the plot and its characters and it is also meant to steer the novel's readers to insights of the true nature of moral intuitions" (p. 30).

Let me give a short summary of the five chapters that follow. In Chapter One we are again introduced to some of the main ideas and concepts of Murdoch's philosophy, with special emphasis on her interpretation of Plato. This is followed by quite short readings of three of her novels: *The Bell* (1958), *The Unicorn* (1963), and *The Good Apprentice* (1985). In Chapter Two the emphasis is on the reception and research literature on Murdoch, especially with respect to the relation between her philosophy and her novels, but Hallberg also discusses various approaches to the relation between philosophy and literature. Chapter Three continues the line of discussion from Chapter Two in that it probes into extra-literary materials and discusses Murdoch's place in the larger literary setting of the 1950s. However, the main bulk of Chapter Three consists of a reading of *Under the Net*, Murdoch's debut novel from 1954, while Chapter Four is an in-depth analysis of *The Sea, The Sea* from 1978. In these chapters we are invited to look more closely at how these novels exemplify the hybridisation of aesthetic experience and philosophical reflection. The emphasis is on how textual features such as plot and plot structure, *viva voce*, visual epiphanies, the use of non-speech and other salient scenes contribute to establishing Murdoch's vision of, and the reader's experience of, the respective protagonists' moral struggle and development.

Chapter Five is to some extent a summing up, but is probably best regarded as – and Hallberg also announces it as such – an attempt to look beyond the dissertation to questions and problems that might be pursued in the aftermath and as a consequence of this dissertation.

After this summary, I will look more closely and critically at how Hallberg establishes her main research question(s). Hallberg does not spend much time on this issue, but what she does say about it is somewhat worrying: "I do not approach Murdoch's novels with a 'neutral' question of investigating whether or not her novels are indeed philosophical; I have already made up my mind, so to speak, that they are. I am not including the full process that has led up to that conviction for several reasons. First, such process is part and parcel of every academic study and each chain of thoughts cannot be incorporated into the final piece. The research questions in this thesis are more directly

linked to a later stage of reflections of Murdoch's 'philosophical material' in her novels. The overall perspective is thus cast in a different form than that which asks if the novels are philosophical or not. What I am arguing is that one prominent consequence of her desire for particular reversals in moral philosophy is that a propositional-attitude view would not capture the richness of its own object. This leads to a different perspective on the entire issue of Murdoch as a philosophical novelist, which will be addressed further on" (p. 34).

This paragraph deals with several issues the connection between which is not altogether clear. To ask for a research question is not to ask for a neutral research question. Perhaps there is no such thing as a neutral research question; any such question will presuppose judgements of various kinds. And exactly because of that the cultivation of questions, by which I mean the very process of specifying and sharpening one's questions, is very important: it might give an indication of what these judgements and presuppositions are. In my view, one mark of a well-formulated research question is that it has not got an inbuilt answer – that one can envisage several different answers, or different directions the answers might go in. For someone who holds that view, Hallberg's statement that "I have already made up my mind" looks like bad news.

Moreover, to ask for a research question is not to ask for the whole process that led to her answer to the research question, as Hallberg seems to think. In the paragraph following the one quoted she dismisses the idea that the dissertation should mimic the research process. I agree entirely: The dynamics and logic of investigation and discovery are in most cases, whatever kind of research one is carrying out, very different from the dynamics and logic of presentation. It is not at all clear to me that this is a good reason for not putting a lot of work into a well-formulated research question.

In the paragraph following the quotation above Hallberg also claims that the question whether Murdoch's novels are philosophical has already been answered by the research on Murdoch. However, her presentation of the research on Murdoch in Chapter Two indicates that this is a major issue still. Moreover, it is a question I cannot imagine that research on Murdoch will ever be able to leave behind. The two strands of her written *oeuvre*, the philosophical and the literary, the two different competences they require both on the part of the writer and of the reader, the fact that the discussion

of the relation between philosophy and literature has a long tradition that informs Murdoch's writings – all these factors contribute, I would think, to a need for scholarly readers of Murdoch to return to this issue again and again; it is a perennial question that will quite possibly never be put to rest. Moreover, one might hold that Hallberg's implicit research question is in fact the one she explicitly dismisses. She argues in favour of a yes to the question whether Murdoch is a philosophical novelist by showing *how* her novels are philosophical. The notion of the hybrid novel is Hallberg's answer.

Before turning to the notion of the hybrid novel, I will try to throw some critical light on the *dispositio* or organisation of Hallberg's dissertation. Broadly speaking, she moves from Murdoch's philosophy to her novels, so as to show how her novels embody or encapsulate or "ensnare" her philosophy, or so as to show us "the two sides of Murdoch's hybrid" (p. 130). As my summary of the successive chapters hopefully revealed, Hallberg tends to present a series of versions of the same message. There is nevertheless a progression in the structure; she seems to wish through the progression of her text to give successively deeper and more specified versions of the point she makes in her title: *Novel Writing and Moral Philosophy as Aspects of a Single Struggle*. This gradual deepening of her overall conclusion gives a tight and compact text. More or less every part of her dissertation pulls in the same direction. The downside of this structure is that it does make the text rather repetitive. The same points are put forward again and again. To some extent Hallberg is capable of varying the terms in which she presents her points, and clearly our understanding of the central tenets of the dissertation is deepened. But this does not entirely prevent the reader from feeling that her intelligence is being slightly underestimated from time to time, or her patience overestimated.

Another problem with this procedure has to do with the relation between premise and conclusion. And this in turn is connected with the lack of a well-formulated research question. Instead of cultivating and sharpening her research questions, Hallberg seems to present her answer to her main question as the premise for the thesis, and then proceeds from that conclusion onwards. The result is what I would call a conclusion-driven rather than question-driven dissertation.

This problem is also reflected in the reading strategies employed by Hallberg, the strategies

whereby she singles out what aspects of the text she will pay attention to. The overall picture is that it is Murdoch's philosophy that has provided Hallberg with her reading strategy for the novels. She has taken as her starting point central features of Murdoch's philosophy and looked for features of the text on all levels that contribute to enabling the novels to embody these features of her philosophy. Most of the time this leads to observations that need no technical vocabulary, especially when she moves in the area of character analysis and ethos development. Here she is well served by Murdoch's philosophical language, which, by the way, is quite close to ordinary language, except when it is overtly Platonic.

However, it seems to me that the interaction of philosophy and novels also works the other way, and that Hallberg's reading of Murdoch's philosophy is at least to some extent adjusted to fit her needs as an analyst or interpreter of the novels. This approach, of looking at the literary texts through Murdoch's philosophical texts, while these philosophical texts are in turn read selectively with a view to using them for this particular purpose, has its problems. The investigation of the text is carried out in such a way that there is little chance that the investigation may lead to observations that can speak up against and make her doubt her conclusions. In fact, it is a methodical procedure that leads one to look for only those features of the text that may confirm one's conclusions. The result is a piece of research that is not only conclusion-driven, but also confirmation-seeking. Hallberg comes close to underwriting this characterisation of her dissertation in the paratextual (and not paginated) Abstract, in which she states that "[m]otif, epiphany, plot, non-speech, and other functional devices that are meaningful for the detection and 'confirmation' of the hybrid novel are given attention."

Methodologically such an approach is lacking in what might be called pitfall-awareness – awareness of what may go wrong in one's research. One of the ways in which things may go wrong in literary studies is that premises and conclusions have entered into a profound and almost unbreakable alliance. Methodological awareness in the form of pitfall-awareness is in literary studies among other things a matter of how well we listen to the text, or how we organise our attention to the text so as to be able to listen as carefully as possible. If I find this dissertation somewhat lacking in such methodological awareness, I must emphasise that Hallberg

is not alone in this. Many studies of literary texts, written by highly merited literary scholars, are lacking in this respect. If our starting point is Murdoch, however, this problem seems all the more serious. We might take the demands on our attention to be an ethical challenge. It is a way of overcoming our egotism, a process of unselfing.

I now move on to the notion of the hybrid, as it is clearly the most dominant single concept in this dissertation. It appears in its title, and on altogether 77 pages (of 186), the paratexts included, in one of its many forms: *hybridity*, *hybridisation*, *hybrid-arguments*, *hybrid-salient*, etc. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find a definition of the term, and after several readings of the whole book its meaning remains slightly unclear. I *think* it is meant to capture the interaction and interdependence of Murdoch's philosophical works and her novels, the interaction and interdependence going both ways. On the one hand Hallberg claims that philosophers who appreciate Murdoch's moral philosophy, but fail to take an interest in her novels, don't really grasp the full implications of her moral philosophy. It needs the novel's mode of showing. On the other hand a reading of the novels that is to capture their philosophical significance will need to relate to Murdoch's philosophical texts. It is really only by way of these references (or *signposts*) to Murdoch's philosophical work that the novels communicate their vision of the nature of morality or moral life. I believe it is this double interdependence of Murdoch's literary and philosophical works the term is meant to capture.

If this is what Hallberg means by the notion, I still find it problematic. One problem is its status: is it a generic term, or is it meant to capture something that is peculiar and unique to Murdoch's novels? It seems to me that Hallberg wants it both ways. On the one hand she uses terms such as *the hybrid novel*, *the hybrid novel's form* etc., and all this sounds generic. On the other hand she claims that she does not want to launch it as "a theoretic concept that has general applicability" (p. 27). However, if it is a generic term, it inescapably has general applicability, to texts that fit the bill, so to speak. And I find it hard to accept that what Hallberg has spotted in Murdoch's novels is so unique that it could not appear in novels by other authors.

To press this issue a bit further, I will look at the term 'hybrid' itself. It suggests a fusion of two things that are normally not fused. In the hybrid utterances that Bakhtin talks about two or more voices

are fused. In hybrid identities two or more identities are fused. In hybrid cars two types of engines – an electric motor and a conventional gasoline engine – are fused. Does the bringing together of aesthetic experience and reflection, which are said to represent "the two sides of Murdoch's hybrid" (p. 130), really represent the bringing together of two things that are not normally fused in the novel?

We might also formulate the problem in generic terms: Is Hallberg's talk of the hybrid meant to capture that Murdoch brings to the novel something that is foreign to the novel as genre, so that it is not business as usual for the novel? On the other hand, would it not be more natural to see the signposts in Murdoch's novels referring to her philosophy as examples of intertextuality? Intertextuality is business as usual for the novel.

One may also wonder whether there is a tension between the thought that the philosophical vision is internal to the Murdoch novel and a function of its capacity for showing, and the idea that Murdoch's novels depend for their form and communicative import on their reference to her philosophy. Is this an indication that the hybrid novel is an expression of Murdoch's lack of trust in the novel? Should not the Murdoch novel's form, its mode of showing, its invitation to the reader to attend to the characters' seeing and attending, be able to enlighten its reader without help from the philosophical prose that explains the importance of these concepts? Is there a danger that the more Hallberg stresses the novel's capacity to show something about the nature of moral life, the more vulnerable Murdoch's novels become to the accusation that she is just illustrating her moral philosophy? I do not claim to hold the answer to these questions, but I definitely think Hallberg's dissertation would have profited from addressing them.

Let me conclude with a note on the relation between literary studies and philosophy. Hallberg's dissertation makes use of the term 'the hybrid novel,' but it might itself be regarded as a hybrid text: It combines philosophy and the study of literature. This is not unusual within literary research nowadays, quite the contrary; it has become more of a standard. Literary research is brimful of philosophical terms and references. As mentioned earlier I find Hallberg's endeavour to bring Murdoch into the discussion among literary scholars very valuable. And I want to emphasise that I regard this dissertation as well informed on the philosophy of Murdoch.

The other single most important philosopher in this dissertation is Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein is a difficult philosopher to get a grasp on, and the difficulty may itself be difficult to grasp. Unlike French philosophers who have provided literary scholars with many sets of intriguing concepts, his texts may seem easily accessible, with hardly any difficult or foreign terminology. However, this may be a deceptive simplicity. It may still be hard to connect with Wittgenstein's utterances; it may be difficult to understand the point of a remark, what he is trying to bring us to see, or what the issue is. And I do think that Hallberg is at times being deceived by Wittgenstein's apparent simplicity. Most passages in this dissertation that contain references to Wittgenstein or make use of his terms I must admit I find it difficult to connect with; in short I find it hard to recognise Wittgenstein's concerns (as I understand them) in her use of his terms. Especially her use of his notions *form of life* and *grammar* I find at times incomprehensible. In addition, my impression is that these terms and references are rather superfluous to what Hallberg wants to say about Murdoch's novels. My standard advice to myself and others in literary studies is to travel light philosophically: to bring to one's research on literary texts only the philosophy one really cannot do without – the bare philosophical necessities, so to speak, and nothing more. Murdoch's philosophy is clearly a necessity in Anna Victoria Hallberg's dissertation. Wittgenstein's is probably not.

Anniken Greve

Immi Lundin, *Att föra det egna till torgs. Berättande, stoff och samtid i Kerstin Strandbergs, Enel Melbergs och Eva Adolfssons debutromaner* (Critica Litterarum Lundensis: Skrifter utgivna av Avdelningen för litteraturvetenskap, Språk- och litteraturcentrum, Lunds universitet, 10). Lunds universitet. Lund 2012.

Immi Lundins avhandling rymmer analyser av ett både intressant och viktigt material. Den behandlar centrala feministiska författarskap och avancerade romanbyggen som inte tidigare studerats akademiskt. (Strandbergs självbiografiska *Skriv Kerstin skriv!* från 1978 har dock diskuterats i Cristine Sarrimos avhandling *När det personliga blev politiskt. 1970-talets kvinnliga bekännelse och självbiografi* från 2000.) Den vill också försöka säga nå-

got om offentlighetens konsekvenser, om tidens och rummets betydelse för begynnande författarskap.

Det första begrepp Lundin definierar i inledningen är det "torg" som avhandlingstiteln rymmer. Redan på första sidan beskrivs det som något som handlar om "föreställningen om en för alla öppen plats i samhället, där samtal om gemensamma viktiga frågor kan föras." Ett slags offentlighet, alltså, eller som Lundin själv benämner det, "det offentliga samtalet" (10). Uttrycket har hon lånat från Lars Gustafssons *The Public Dialogue in Sweden* (1964), som blir ett slags utgångspunkt för studien, men hans bok fungerar även som ett exempel på att det idag blivit hopplöst att ens försöka sig på att skriva den typ av sammanfattning av läget som Gustafsson eftersträvar, eftersom det nu inte finns *ett* enda torg, utan flera. Men mycket uppmärksammades aldrig ens på Gustafssons enda torg. Till exempel har kvinnofrågor haft svårt att ta sig in och att sedan också bli kvar. Periodvis har kvinnors litterära verk visserligen utövat inflytande på det offentliga samtalet, men bara för att sedan försvinna igen. Denna fluktuering vill Lundin studera närmare, för att se vad den kan bero på.

Avhandlingssyftet beskrivs som en strävan efter att sätta resultaten av de kommande romananalyserna i relation till samtidskontexten (s. 15). Men en nödvändig specificering av detta synnerligen allmänna syfte följer direkt: "Jag ville undersöka om man i [romanerna] kan finna några egenskaper eller kombinationer av egenskaper som i någon mening kan sägas passa i tiden och som kan tänkas ha bidragit till att deras författare, med avhandlingsrubrikens metafor, kunde föra det egna till torgs, alltså blev utgivna och recenserade vid just dessa specifika tidpunkter." I specificeringen av syftet kommer alltså poängen med kontextualiseringen fram, det vill säga att studera mekanismerna kring hur romanmaterialet konstruerar och konstrueras av den offentliga debatten. Detta är mina ord, inte Lundins, men hon uttrycker det själv på följande sätt: "Det jag är intresserad av är de avtryck samtiden gör när kvinnliga erfarenheter ska gestaltas så att de kan kommuniceras på den gemensamma plats jag kallar torget" (s. 25f.).

De tre utvalda verk som ska relateras till respektive samtidskontext är Kerstin Strandbergs *Som en ballong på skoj* (1967), Enel Melbergs *Modershjärtat* (1977) och Eva Adolfssons *I hennes frånvaro* (1989), alltså debutverk från tre olika decennier. Decennievalet motiveras med att Lundin egent-