

Bärbel Mielke, *Subtile Einladung zur Deliberation. Die Romane Emilie Flygare-Carléns* (Münchener Nordistische Studien 44), München: Herbert Utz Verlag 2021, ISBN 9783831648498, 330 pp. [Dissertation: Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, 2019.]

The nineteenth-century novelist Emilie Flygare-Carlén was not only one of Sweden's most popular writers nationally, but also enormously successful abroad, which has been illustrated in recent publications by Yvonne Leffler in the context of the joint research project "Swedish Women Writers on Export in the Nineteenth Century" at the University of Gothenburg (funded by the Swedish Research Council 2014–2016). Flygare-Carlén's production of novels is also the topic of Bärbel Mielke's doctoral dissertation *Subtile Einladung zur Deliberation. Die Romane Emilie Flygare-Carléns*. Consisting of nineteen novels, the corpus of Mielke's study is remarkably substantial in its extent and motivated by the author's wish to present the width of Flygare-Carlén's literary production, as well as to track down their common features (p. 17) while leaving the author's biography aside. Instead, Mielke is approaching these literary works from a rhetorical, philosophical and narratological angle, focusing on the concept and practice of "deliberation," both as a topic and an aesthetic technique of Flygare-Carlén's novels. In an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, as well as an appendix, Mielke investigates her hypothesis that the impression of "modernity" and up-to-dateness of the novels is a result of their constant preoccupation with the "Frage nach ethisch klugem Handeln" ['question of practices of ethically prudence'] in the sense of Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*. Mielke regards the practice of "deliberation" presented in the novels as a precondition of *phronesis* (p. 18).

In her introduction chapter, the author presents short definitions of the study's central concepts: "deliberation" as a precondition for Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*, the condition of "geistige Gestimmtheit" ['intellectual mood'], "self-deliberation" and "subtile Einladung" ['subtle invitation'], as well as thoughts on the essay as a relevant genre, which form the theoretical basis for the close readings presented in the following three main parts of the book. The introduction also offers a brief overview of previous scholarship on Flygare-Carlén—always referred to by both her first and last name by Mielke—, focusing on thematic aspects of her work, her role as a female novel writer, and biographical research. Unfortunately, this overview only covers research until 2007, leaving out several important studies such as the recent work on Flygare-Carlén's position on the international book market by Leffler and the publications on Flygare-Carlén in the context of female citizenship in Scandinavia by Anna Bohlin (2016; 2017; 2018) and Caroline Haux (2018). This might be a reason for some slightly unconventional statements in the context of "Verortung der Texte Emilie Flygare-Carléns" ['situating the works of Emilie Flygare-Carlén'] which is part of the introductory chapter. Here, the author refers to the works of extremely popular female contemporaries of Flygare-Carlén, such as the writers Fredrika Bremer and Sophie von Knorring, as "women's literature—by women for women," and as such being "eine Randerscheinung im literarischen Betrieb Schwedens" ['being on the fringes of Sweden's literary market'] (pp. 29–30).

The first chapter of the study's main part focuses on essayistic elements in Flygare-Carlén's debut novel *Waldemar Klein* (1838) by examining "[d]ie Frage nach einem ethisch klugen Handeln" (p. 35) presented in the novel. In the second part of this chapter, the author compares the essayistic-narratological traits of Flygare-Carlén's novel to the essay *Svenska fattigdomens betydelse* ['The Importance of Swedish Poverty'] by her Swedish contemporary Carl Jonas Love Almqvist, which was published the same year as *Waldemar Klein*. Their shared interest in social problems and their critique unite Flygare-Carlén with Almqvist, as Mielke convincingly shows in her study.

Another work by Almqvist, his scandalous novel *Det går an* [English title: *Sara Videbeck*] (1839) also constitutes the starting point for Mielke's second chapter, "Beobachtungsmöglichkeiten und Deliberation" ['Options of observation and deliberation']. In close readings of ten of Flygare-Carlén's less-known novels, Mielke investigates different thematic issues that expose the novel's characters to conflicts, such as the tension between friendship and love, freedom and restraint, and passion and reason. These thematic analyses are supplemented by a narratological examination of the ways Flygare-Carlén works with time and time perception.

The third part of the book is dedicated to "Beobachtung" ['observation'] as Flygare-Carlén's way of subtle social critique. By distinguishing between "kontrollierender" und "freisinniger Beobachtung" ['controlled' and 'broad-minded observation'], Mielke is "observing observation" as it is practiced by Flygare-Carlén and the characters of four of her most famous novels *Rosen på Tistelön* (1842), *Kamrer Lassman såsom gammal ungtkarl och äkta man tecknad* (1842), *Ett år* (1846) and *Ett köpmanshus i skärgården* (1860). An excursus on the portrayal of literature and its use in two novels concludes the third chapter of Mielke's study.

In her conclusion, Mielke considers the "invitation to deliberation" to be the "eigentliche Substanz" ['the actual matter'] of Flygare-Carlén's works (p. 295). Deliberation, in combination with the "Unvollkommenheit ihrer Figuren und deren subtilen Scheitern" ['the imperfection of her characters and their subtle failing'] (p. 298) in a setting of everyday life, is regarded as the distinguishing narratological technique by which Flygare-Carlén includes her readers in the process of ethical consideration without providing them with universal truths or solutions. This makes the loss of this "matter" during the editing and shortening process of her works after 1861 especially unfortunate, as Mielke demonstrates throughout her study.

With its combination of rhetorical and philosophical concepts (Aristotle, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca) and literary close readings, Mielke's study provides a methodologically innovative and interesting new take on Flygare-Carlén's literary production. The author affirms earlier scholars' appraisal of the "modern" aspects of Flygare-Carlén's novels and inspires her readers to (re-)discover the works of this Swedish nineteenth-century writer. Her choice to write the study in German might, however, limit its potential impact. As the study's main focus is the work of a Swedish writer and Swedish literature in general, I would welcome a summary of its conclusive chapter in English and/or Swedish. Also, in view of the author's wish to encourage further research on Flygare-Carlén as a female writer in the margins of traditional literary historiography, this would make the study's results more widely available to non-German speaking scholars working both within and outside of the field of Scandinavian literature.

REFERENCES

- Bohlin, A. (2016). "Den svenska 1840-talsromanen som nationell kartografi" ['The Swedish eighteenth-century novel as national cartography'], *Samlaren*, 137, pp. 58–86.
- Bohlin, A. (2017). "Kök till vildmark. Det kvinnliga medborgarskapets spatialitet i nordisk 1840-talslitteratur" ['Kitchen to wilderness. The spaciality of female citizenship in Nordic literature in the 1840s'], in *Konstellationer. Festskrift till Anna Williams*, eds. A. Borg, A. Hedberg, M. Karlsson, J. Määttä & Å. Warnqvist, Möklinta: Gidlunds förlag, pp. 79–93.
- Bohlin, A. (2018). "Female citizenship in Scandinavian literature in the 1840s," *Rethinking Scandinavia – CSS Publications Web Quarterly*, 2, pp. 1–15; <https://journals.lub.lu.se/rs/article/view/22274>; accessed on 23 Jan. 2024.
- Haux, C., (2018). "Nationell kroppsekonomi. Statlig kontroll och produktivt begär i Emilie Flygare-Carléns Rosen på Tistelön" ['National body economy. State control and productive desire in Emilie Flygare-Carlén's Rosen på Tistelön'], *Edda. Nordisk tidsskrift for litteraturforskning*, 105:3, pp. 203–217.
- Haux, C. (2019). "Medborgarsubjektets ekonomi. Subjektivitet, biomakt och konsumtionsmönster i två tidiga 1800-talsromaner" ['The citizen's economy. Subjectivity, bio-power, and consumer habits in two early-eighteenth-century novels'], *Samlaren*, 140, pp. 57–80.
- Leffler, Y. (2017). "Gender and bestsellers. The Swedish novelist Emilie Flygare-Carlén," in *Gender and Translation*, eds. I. Herrero López, C. Alvstad, J. Akujärvi & S. Skarsbø Lindtner, [Montreal?]: Éditions québécoises de l'oeuvre, pp. 107–126.
- Leffler, Y. (2019). "From bestselling novelist to forgotten woman writer. The transcultural circulation of Emilie Flygare-Carlén," in *Swedish Women's Writing on Export. Tracing Transnational Reception in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Y. Leffler, Å. Arping, J. Bergenmar, G. Hermansson & B. Johansson Lindh, Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, pp. 155–204.
- Leffler, Y. (2019). "Transcultural transmission. Emelie Flygare-Carlén and Marie Sophie Schwartz in Central and Eastern Europe," in *The Triumph of the Swedish Nineteenth-Century Novel in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Y. Leffler, Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, pp. 7–32.
- Leffler, Y. (2022). "The success of Swedish 19th-century women writers on the French-speaking book market. Fredrika Bremer and Emilie Flygare-Carlén versus C.J.L. Almqvist and Viktor Rydberg," *Nordic Journal of Francophone Studies/Revue nordique des études francophones*, 5:1, pp. 124–136.

Jules Kielmann

Dept. of Literature

Uppsala University

Sweden

jules.kielmann@littvet.uu.se

Einar Odd Mortensen Sr. with Gerd Kjustad Mortensen, eds.
Ingrid Urberg & Daniel Sims, *The Fur Trader. From Oslo to Oxford House*, Edmonton: University of Alberta Press 2022,
ISBN 9781772125986, 224 pp + maps & photos.

It seems implausible: in 1925 a twenty-three-year-old from the vicinity of Oslo, with no expertise with fur and whose image of "North American Indians" was drawn from the Romantic fiction of James Fenimore Cooper, lands a job as a fur trader in Canada, apparently based on the assumption that all Norwegians know about fur (p. 12). After three years, this man returns to Norway and writes account of his experiences for posterity. That unlikely scenario describes the narrative published here. The young man was Einar Odd Mortensen (1902–1968), who spent three winters as a trader in the regions around Oxford House and Pine Bluff in northern Manitoba. The docu-