

HELENA FORSÅS-SCOTT, LISBETH STENBERG, BJARNE THORUP THOMSEN (eds.):

Re-Mapping Lagerlöf: Performance, Intermediality and European Transmissions.

Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2014. Pp. 351.

ISBN: 978-91-87351-21-1.

Re-Mapping Lagerlöf is the offspring of the Lagerlöf conference held at University College London in 2011. As a major figure of world literature, Lagerlöf certainly deserves the attention. That she has earned the subtitle of the volume, "Performance, Intermediality, and European Transmission," is indicated by the fate of such texts as *Herr Arnes penningar* (1903, *Lord Arne's Silver*), which was adapted for the stage by Gerhart Hauptmann, as *Winterballade* (1917, 'Winter Ballad'), which in turn influenced the silent film, *Sir Arne's Treasure* (1919) by Mauritz Stiller, which was sold to 46 countries (p. 108). The volume is indeed interdisciplinary, by necessity it would seem. There is quite a range of scholars with various interests making contributions to Lagerlöf research and it is only natural that the individual reader will find some approaches more interesting than others.

From my perspective, I would never have guessed that one of the more fascinating articles would prove to be the story of Lagerlöf's reception in Czech. Dagmar Hartlová takes a look at the popularity of Lagerlöf in Czech translation throughout the twentieth century. The stunning tidbit is that 'in the 1950s, when censorship was at its most effective, Lagerlöf was the only Swedish author deemed acceptable by the powers-that-be' (p. 245). Lagerlöf's considerable fan base in that country was able to keep her in print by emphasizing the socialist aspects of her texts, 'although her concept of socialism was Christian but not religious', as one reviewer qualified (p. 254). Hartlová notes the perceived synergies between Lagerlöf's writing and communism: 'an interest in and a solidarity with hard-working people, a responsibility for higher common goals including a preparedness for self-sacrifice, a sense of social justice, and an engagement for peace' (p. 253). With regard to the popularity of Lagerlöf in particular and Swedish literature in general, Hartlová argues that as a Czech-

language literature developed during the twentieth century it was less threatening for Czechs to be influenced by a small nation 'with advanced, respected, and progressive literature', and above all there was a desire to emancipate Czech literature from the German language (p. 258).

With this in mind, Jennifer Watson's piece about Lagerlöf and Nazi Germany becomes even more interesting. Whereas Lagerlöf was almost treated as an honorary proletarian writer in communist Czechoslovakia, she managed to remain popular in Nazi Germany as well, never being consigned to the 'Liste des schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums' (list of detrimental and undesirable books, p. 303). There she was seen as a 'Nordic roots' writer. *Lord Arne's Silver* was published as a Frontbuch 'that demonstrated the Germanic mindset of the Scandinavians, proving why Germans should be in Norway' (p. 313). Taken together, Watson's and Hartlová's essays demonstrate with resounding force that translation is about more than merely casting a text into another language (Hear that, Google Translate!?). It is also about preparing it for consumption by another culture and context for perhaps widely different purposes. Now let us add to this already fascinating mix the fact that most Czech translations of Lagerlöf were made from German translations, not the original Swedish. Now *that* is transnationalism!

Several essays in the volume make the point that Lagerlöf was an early celebrity, whose international fame was enhanced by her Nobel Prize, her involvement in the women's movement, and the adaptations of her work to film. Film scholars will certainly find the section on 'Intermediality and Film' worthwhile. This section includes Astrid Surmatz's intriguing essay on *Nils Holgersson*, in which she first makes a post-colonial reading of the Sámi in Lagerlöf's text, yet moves on to show that in the Japanese animated film based on the same text, the Sámi are oddly conflated with Vikings, making them somehow symbolically Nordic to the Japanese artist's eye. Christopher Oscarson considers spectatorship and the role of landscape in early Swedish cinema, in particular *Ingemarssönerna* (1919, Sons of Ingmar, aka Dawn of Love) directed by Victor Sjöström and adapted from Lagerlöf's novel *Jerusalem* (1901-2). Ebba Witt-Brattström has stumbled upon a

likely intertext for *Gösta Berlings saga* (1891, *Gösta Berling's Saga*): *Hundraå minnen från Österbotten* (1844-6, *One Hundred Memories from Österbotten*) by the Finland-Swedish writer, Sara Wacklin. Such things are always interesting, especially when this all-but-forgotten woman writer can be brought back into the light through her connection with this famous piece of canonical Swedish literature. Under the section 'Readers, Performance, Construction', Jenny Bergenmar and Maria Karlsson continue to make a valiant effort to interpret parts of the enormous letter archive (over 42,000 letters) relating to Lagerlöf that became available in 1990. That archive, indeed, provides more than enough fuel to justify calling Lagerlöf a celebrity.

Overall, this is a valuable book that will hopefully stimulate even more interest in Lagerlöf. There is something here for everyone.

SUSAN BRANTLY

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN