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To Live or to Die for Art: Vicki Baum's Artist Novel *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* in the Light of Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark*

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To Live or to Die for Art: Vicki Baum's Artist Novel Die Karriere der Doris Hart in the Light of Willa Cather's The Song of the Lark

Kristina Fjelkestam

- 1 The novel *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* of 1936 by Austrian author Vicki Baum (1882-1960) depicts the dramatic success story of an opera singer.¹ Here the artist ideal of romanticism intersects and diverges with the objectivity of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and despite Baum's previous literary investments in the latter it is the romantic idea of the artist that victoriously comes out of the struggle. Since Baum is known as having an infallible sense of pitch in delineating the spirit of the interwar period in her best-selling novels, I would like to examine this break from a historicizing perspective.² This implies that I will contextualize the novel synchronically with the aesthetics of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and diachronically relate it to the artist novel as a genre – particularly in a comparative analysis of American writer Willa Cather's (1873-1947) *The Song of the Lark* of 1915, which I claim as its intertext.³
- 2 My essay opens with a discussion of the formal criteria of *Neue Sachlichkeit* aesthetics from the perspective of its historical context, also related to the literary breakthrough of Baum's, namely *stud. chem. Helene Willfüer* of 1928. Then I will analyse Baum's *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* in connection to the tradition of the female artist novel, especially in comparison to Cather's *The Song of the Lark*.

Neue Sachlichkeit

- 3 The term *Neue Sachlichkeit* was coined in 1925 as the heading of an art exhibition in Mannheim, Germany. It signified a kind of artistic functionalism, that is, an aesthetization of function. In a literary meaning the term has been associated with an

objectively registering style of report and it is usually translated into English as *New Objectivity*. It has also been called *New Sobriety* in a more narrow sense, and in a wider sense it is translated into *Critical Realism*.⁴ *Neue Sachlichkeit* is also considered a reaction against pre-war expressionism, both in style and idea. To depict actions and characters soberly and unsentimentally from the “outside”, instead of the expressionist “inside”, was simply more congenial to post-war cynicism and technologism.

- 4 These “outside”-devices were used in developing new literary genres and new narrative techniques. Montage-style was often used in order to catch the medial leaps of the time – commercial slogans, newspaper paragraphs and film lines were cut into the text. Irmgard Keun's *Das kunstseidene Mädchen* and Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* constitute good examples. The dissociated narrator is also typical, as for instance in Marieluise Fleisser's *Mehltreisende Frieda Geier. Roman vom Rauchen, Sporteln, Lieben und Verkaufen* (1931) and Irmgard Keun's *Gilgi – eine von uns* (1931).
- 5 In Sabina Becker's mapping of the literary aesthetics of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, she considers these fifteen criteria as unequivocal:
 1. Anti-Expressionism
 2. New Naturalism
 3. Sobriety
 4. Precision Aesthetics
 5. Reality/Actuality
 6. Report Style
 7. Observation
 8. Anti-Psychologism
 9. Neutrality/Objectivity
 10. Documentarism
 11. Poetics of Fact
 12. Account
 13. Utility Value
 14. Non-Sentimentality
 15. Non-Individualizing
- 6 Out of these fifteen criteria Becker considers the factual style of report, *poetics of fact* and *report style*, to be most fundamental. She also stresses the emphasis laid on the *utility value* of literature, which I also think is a central point. This so called utility value, or what I earlier called “aesthetization of function”, constitutes the democratic elements of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Its aesthetic was part and parcel of the international movement of the time that aimed at making art accessible to the vast majority through posters, design and best sellers. The best-seller concept was in its turn intimately tied to the ideology of *Neue Sachlichkeit* aesthetics present in the anti-war novel by Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts neues* of 1928.
- 7 The *Neue Sachlichkeit* literature represented an almost documentary kind of account based on current facts, and this produced contemporary and socially aware texts. In this sense the term *Neue Sachlichkeit* can also be described as a kind of slang, which more generally put words to “conceptions and attitudes towards the practicalities of everyday life characteristic of the period.”⁵ This depiction of everyday life and attitudes typical of the time was to be clothed in a clear and simple language without ornaments – just like an

austerely furnished apartment in functionalistic style. For instance all capital letters were replaced with lower-case ones.

- 8 Vicki Baum's most typical example of *Neue Sachlichkeit* is the novel *stud. chem. Helene Willfüer* of 1928, something which reviewers noticed and appreciated.⁶ At first, the publisher did not want to print something this "daring", which surprised Baum. It is true that Helene Willfüer gives birth to a child out of wedlock, but I assume that the style, and how the novel was written, was actually considered more offensive than the content of it, and what it was about.
- 9 Authenticity in the style of report is typical markers of *stud. chem. Helene Willfüer*. These marks were strengthened by an article Baum very consciously published in connection to the novel's first publication as a serial. Here she describes the chemistry research she did for the sake of the book.⁷ This preparatory work was also emphasized in the publishing house marketing, and caught on with the public. One of the reviewers even called the novel "journalism" rather than "art", which in this case is a positive judgement.⁸ Terms like "objective", "sober" and "authentic" were often used in contemporary descriptions of *Helene Willfüer*, and the narrative for instance uses montage devices in depicting parallel stories – as in movies.⁹ Helene personifies the modern woman with an unsentimental independence, but Baum obviously felt forced to continuously stress Helene's "femininity" that flourished with motherhood.
- 10 Baum's novel can also be described as a kind of *Die Karriere der Helene Willfüer*, but instead of the career of an opera singer it tells the career of a researcher. The success story of the poor Helene builds on hard work and sacrifices just like in the case of Doris Hart. Helene has, just like Doris, turned thirty when she can reap the harvest of all her hardships. However, Helene then marries and even though the novel is radical in many ways, this commercially romantic ending was much criticized in its time. The author does not draw any conclusions of her social portrayal, and thus no real change occurs. Walter Benjamin, for instance, criticized the social distance; he even considered it characteristic of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in general.¹⁰
- 11 I agree with the critique of *Helene Willfüer's* traditional ending, which probably depended on the commercial form requested by Ullstein publishing company. Another classic *Neue Sachlichkeit* novel, Hans Fallada's *Kleiner Mann, was nun?* of 1932 which ends with a praise of family values, is considered to be a concession to the literary market.¹¹ The question, though, is if the typical female artist novel-ending of Baum's *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* can be assigned to this kind of concession, or if it has other causes.

Die Karriere der Doris Hart

- 12 Women die like flies in the artist novels of the 19th century. To sum up: female characters either die in order to give inspiration to male artists or they die because, as artists themselves, they cannot combine their art with life and love.¹² The unsolvable equation, the impossible choice between Art and Love, continues to ravage the female artist novel far into the 20th century. Also in 1930s Vicki Baum's novel, the female artist dies in the end. The reason is the same old one, namely love. And even though Doris Hart, instead of a broken heart, dies more in the style of *Neue Sachlichkeit* from a shot-through lung, she still dies.

- 13 Rationality was the code word of the day, something expressed by Doris Hart. Unlike previous artist novels by and about women she has no problem with combining erotic flings with artistic calling. On the contrary, she works hard at becoming the celebrated opera diva she turns into by the end of the novel. Her real love is safely put behind bars after he shoots her, so she visits him only when she has time. He cannot stop her from having strategic love affairs in order to advance her career, and it is also due to his shooting that she received the money she needed for music lessons. This imprisoned man also becomes her muse, in a way, since her artistic drive is the dream of his release.
- 14 The most obvious break with the aesthetics of *Neue Sachlichkeit* is perhaps the fact that Doris Hart is an artist. During the inter-war period the literature of *Neue Sachlichkeit* usually depicted professions typical of the lower middle class, the white-collar workers. For instance the male protagonist is a shop assistant in the earlier mentioned *Kleiner Mann, was nun?* by Hans Fallada, and the female protagonist in Marieluise Fleisser's *Mehltreisende Frieda Geier* is a saleswoman on the road.
- 15 *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* opens with a description of a cubist clay sculpture of a woman's body, constructed with square blocks and hemispheres. This kind of metonymic representation immediately strikes the cord of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, since metonymy is a fundamental tool of realism.¹³ The allusion to cubism also lends contemporary colour, and places the characters on the current cultural field.
- 16 Doris Hart has been the nude model for the sculpture, and the reader is soon to see her naked body again through the eyes of Franklin O. Bryant, patron of the arts:
- The first thing he saw was an entirely naked woman who was standing on a box and holding her arms straight out in front of her. A glaring electric bulb was fixed over her head in a wire frame. Bryant had seen such lamps in theatre dressing-rooms – but not such women. Her breasts were youthful and magnificent, her thighs long and her knees neatly set above the long shins. Her face looked clothed in contrast with so much nakedness; but it was not a very pretty one. (11)
- 17 The rich Bryant has arrived to the studio of the Russian sculptor Basil Nemirov in order to buy a statue, but instead becomes obsessed with his model. This is the igniting spark that sets the story off.
- 18 Doris Hart is a German immigrant residing in 1920s New York's Manhattan, and she lives on the poor East Side where Nemirov also has his studio. She has fallen in love with him, works as a waitress, but dreams about becoming an opera singer. Doris' much longed-for but expensive opera class is eventually realized after some dramatic turns. Nemirov shoots her when he becomes jealous of Bryant, and in order to silence the scandal she receives money from Bryant's father. Her beloved Nemirov is indeed put into prison, but on the other hand it means that all obstacles in way of her opera career are then set aside.
- 19 The romantic idea of the artist is thus brought to a head, but it also brings in *Neue Sachlichkeit* aspects in an interesting way. Doris' Italian song teacher, who is an old-school opera singer, claims that one cannot become a true artist without a broken heart. Doris has a broken heart and also has a lung shot to pieces. She becomes an esteemed opera diva against all odds. But in the end he injured lung is the cause of her death. The fact that Doris does not die from a broken heart distinguishes her from her female precursors in artist novels. After modern science helps her survive for while, she finally dies of the aftereffects of an old-fashioned *crime passionnel*.
- 20 Despite this fact, the novel rather pleads against the aesthetics of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and it is clear in the case of Nemirov. His artistic "manifesto" is one of *Neue Sachlichkeit*

character, since he wants to renounce love and emotion for the sake of cold observation – but his art turns mediocre when it lacks authentic affection. Instead his work turns into art when he let express his love for Doris, and the clay sculpture of her is the only piece he manages to sell. Nemirov, however, persists in his distanced registering style, but the reader understands that it was an emotional expression that turned his slab of clay into art.

- 21 One of Doris' later lovers, just as "completely charming and completely crazy" as Nemirov, also honours an unemotional art in the modern sense. (205) The lover is called René and he composes music under the pseudonym Blancenoir:

"I once knew a sculptor who made figures like Monsieur Blancenoir's music." "(...) you belong to the same generation as I –" he said with compassion. "We believe in nothing," he went on; and this was the first serious word she had heard from him during the whole time they had been together. (214)

- 22 But René is wrong in accusing Doris for believing nothing. After all, she believes in love and art, even though she belongs to the same disillusioned post-war generation as he does, and René then never reaches the same artistic success as Doris does.

- 23 Doris succeeds due to her emotional investments. Her recurring motto is: "Be a singer or die." (162, 165, 169) To Doris art is about life or death. The experience of singing is a strong, physical feeling that is impossible to describe intellectually:

I can't tell you what it feels like when the notes are really there, when they're really solidly there and you know you have them – a note that's really solid, so that you feel it all through you (...). (181)

- 24 The base of Doris' artistry is her love for singing, and that feeling can reach sublime heights as in the above quotation.

- 25 Doris is forced, though, to learn the art of dissembling in life and on stage. Without the sounding board of emotion the gestures would sound false, but an artist is after all something you *become* and not something you plainly *are*. This fundamental insight separates *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* from the 19th-century tradition and makes it into a modern artist novel.

- 26 After the plunge of the stock market in 1929 Doris has to support herself by singing in an itinerant opera company and, together with her for the purpose strategically chosen lovers, she then creates her stage persona Dorina Rossi. With one of them, René, she goes into training and learns a complete opera repertoire; she also learns French and how to dance. A previous lover has taught her to be more calculating, and also how to dye her hair and to put on make-up. Doris soon understands that is it not enough to grant men access to her body: "They wanted to be loved. They wanted admiration, corroboration, adorations and prostrations. The act was merely the symbol of all this." (193) Even in her relationships to men it is all about disguise. Back in New York her next lover tells her how to act:

"I'll make an artist out of you, my precious," said Potter. Doris almost believed him. They got as far as a few embraces and a night or two, which were like a continuation of the worked-up scenes they rehearsed – ardent, impetuous and theatrical, and without the slightest relation to real life. (251)

- 27 After her relationship with Potter has ended, she only needs to trade her body one more time before she gets an eagerly awaited contract at the Metropolitan. She reaches her artistic goal in the twenty-second chapter, two-thirds into the novel:

At the age of thirty Dorina Rossi had achieved fame. The hot and dusty and meaningless fame of a great opera singer.

"Rossi is a personality [wrote the correspondent of the International Musical Press]. Her repertoire is not limited to a single language and therefore she is not very popular in the profession. She can sing the charming Italian operas like *Tosca* and *Aïda*. She can sing *Carmen* and *Thais* and she can sing the difficult scores of the modern German repertoire. Her beauty and her unusual dramatic talent predestine her for these parts. She herself smiles and modestly attributes most of her success to her teachers." (264; Baum's braces)

- 28 In other words, Doris is at the height of her career. She has attained professionalism by learning how to be both devoured by and distanced to her opera parts at the same time, in a perfectly adjusted mixture: "She was *Tosca*, heart and soul, and at the same time she was singing *Tosca* in the Metropolitan Opera House." (287) But hard work at the opera and persistent attempts to get Nemirov released from prison worn her out and she eventually collapses on stage.
- 29 What remains is the fulfilment of love. The novel ends with Nemirov released from prison. He sets out with Doris to the remote South Sea Island that they have dreamed about all these years. Here their urge for artistic creation is awakened again, but Doris dies after a couple of months. Her death follows the pattern of 19th century artist novel tradition and breaks with the new kind of ending establishing in women's artist novels at the beginning of the 20th century. This new ending involves the female artist living on, something depicted in Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark* for instance.

The Song of the Lark

- 30 I consider 1915 Willa Cather's artist novel as a main intertext of *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. There is no instance of confirmation that Vicki Baum had actually read it, but most likely she had been acquainted to the work of a contemporary Pulitzer Prize winner during her American exile. In *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* and in *The Song of the Lark*, protagonist becomes a celebrated opera diva at the Metropolitan in New York thanks to hard work – but also due to a man sacrificing his life (symbolically or literally). Both protagonists also have European roots; Doris Hart is a German immigrant and Thea Kronborg's parents are immigrants from Sweden. Thea's grandfather is supposed to even have known the singer Jenny Lind, the Swedish superstar.
- 31 However, *The Song of the Lark* is not only written twenty years before *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, but also set earlier. Thea Kronborg is probably about the same age as the author Willa Cather herself (1873-1947), so most of the story takes place at the *fin-de-siècle*. This fact implies, for instance, that *The Song of the Lark* contains more Wagner than *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, and its last chapter culminates in Thea's much acclaimed performance as Sieglinde in *The Valkyrie*. Doris reaches a similar perfection in *Tosca*, but it turns out to be her last performance. According to the epilogue, Thea, on the other hand, continues her successful career. Her hard work now bears fruit and Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* has found its form in her; when singing the part of one of the Rhine daughters, for instance, she becomes Rhein. It is not Truth, with a capital T, but rather an artistic "truthfulness":
- Artistic growth is, more than anything else, a refining of the sense of truthfulness. The stupid believe that to be truthful is easy; only the artist, the great artist, knows how difficult it is. That afternoon nothing new came to Thea Kronborg, no enlightenment, no inspiration. She merely came into full possession of things she

had been refining and perfecting for so long. Her inhibitions chanced to be fewer than usual, and, within herself, she entered into the inheritance that she herself had laid up, into the fullness of the faith she had kept before she knew its name or its meaning.

Often when she sang, the best she had was unavailable; she could not break through to it, and every sort of distraction and mischance came between it and her. But this afternoon the closed roads opened, the gates dropped. What she had so often tried to reach lay under her hand. She had only to touch an idea to make it live. (409f)

- 32 In modern aesthetics the break with the paradigm of classical mimesis occurred with J. J. Winckelmann's re-evaluation of antiquity. When Winckelmann discussed it in mid-18th century, he suggested that contemporary artists were to imitate the art of antiquity in *spirit*, instead of just plainly *copying* it as had hitherto been the case. Winckelmann named it *Nachahmung*, and Kant used the term when describing the innovative genius. The power of fiction and fantasy was upgraded through this new concept of the romantic genius, which now took over the part of source of beauty from nature. For Schiller, the thinking of Winckelmann and Kant also led to a polemic with Plato when he suggested that it is the representation of Plato's realm of ideas, *Schein*, that is the most "truthful", and not vice versa. This view of genius and art was hegemonic during the 19th century. Thea in *The Song of the Lark* embodies it, just like Doris in *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*.
- 33 But when *The Song of the Lark* enters the new century, *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* remains in the old one because Doris cannot bear the male sacrifice. Thea, however, moves on in spite of – and thanks to – male sacrifice. She takes it very seriously, and brings it up again by the end of the novel: "I began the world on six hundred dollars, and it was the price of a man's life." (393) When Thea's fiancé dies in an accident, she inherits his life insurance. It pays for her much awaited music class in the big city of Chicago.
- 34 Her music education started with an enthusiastic music teacher at home, the German Professor Wunsch. Thea does not only learn how to play the piano but also how to speak German – just like Doris was taught languages by her teachers. Thea also learns how to interpret the lyrics, and this knowledge is the road to success for her singing. Professor Wunsch initiates his language lesson with a poem by Heine that Thea is supposed to learn by heart. Wunsch then notices how her voice changes when she reads in verse. At that point her future artistry is anticipated. Wunsch claims that there are things you either understand or not, and that an artist must have an innate talent for interpretation: "*in der Brust, in der Brust* it is, *und ohne dieses gibt es keine Kunst, gibt es keine Kunst!*" (72; "In the chest, in the chest it is, and without it there is no art, is no art", my translation) Thea names it "sureness": "when it was there, everything was more interesting and beautiful, even people." (72) This "sureness" is also called "It", or "the voice within herself". (216, 52) It is to be essential in her later career in which her artistic strength lies in her ability to represent an idea:

It's the idea, the basic idea, pulsing behind every bar she sings. She simplifies a character down to the musical idea it's built on, and makes everything conform to that. The people who chatter about her being a great actress don't seem to get the notion of where she gets the notion. It all goes back to her original endowment, her tremendous musical talent. Instead of inventing a lot of business and expedients to suggest character, she knows the thing at the root, and lets the musical pattern take care of her. The score pours her into all those lovely postures, makes the light and shadow go over her face, lifts her and drops her. She lies on it, the way she used to lie on the Rhine music. (366f)

- 35 Thea's interpretation skills thus form the basis of her artistry, and she looks down on those who do not have it. But interpretation skill is innate and not of an analytic kind, therefore it is a hallmark of the romantic genius.
- 36 In Chicago the piano teacher discovers Thea's singing, and suddenly everything ties together. Thea was tense when she played the piano, but when she sings her shoulders and throat are relaxed. Piano studies had been strenuous, while singing gives her peace. She is simply natural born singer! Her first homework is the song "Die Lorelei" for which her knowledge in German comes handy. But something is missing in the performance, she claims, and the following work process is described step by step. Thea has to find her own idea, her own image of the song, in order to represent it. In contrast to Baum's metonymies, Cather's Thea does her thinking in comprehensive metaphors:
- [The singing-teacher] had often noticed that she could not think a thing out in passages. Until she saw it as a whole, she wandered like a blind man surrounded by torments. After she once had her "revelation", after she got the idea that to her – not always to him – explained everything, then she went forward rapidly. (174)
- 37 The metaphoric way of thinking is recurrent in the descriptions of Thea's artistic work, and it makes up for her interpretive "idea".
- 38 Thea decides to put all her artistic energy on singing, and she sacrifices family and friends along the way. Just like Doris in *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, Thea becomes harder during her way to the top. Just like Doris she starts climbing up the ladder with not only a will of her own but also with a contrived elegance. And just like Doris Thea reaches her goal when she has turned thirty. Then she receives last name status and becomes *die Kronborg* at the Metropolitan.
- 39 The main difference between *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* and *The Song of the Lark* is of course the mentioned fact that Doris dies while Thea lives on. Baum's novel demonstrates affinity to the romantic artist novels of the 19th century, while also repudiating unsentimental *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Nevertheless, *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* represents a modern artist ontology – one is not *born* an artist, but *becomes* one. In *The Song of the Lark*, on the other hand, genius is something innate. Artistry thus comes from the inside, something that Thea's lover emphasizes:
- There's the voice itself, so beautiful and individual, and then there's something else; the thing in it which responds to every shade of thought and feeling, spontaneously, almost unconsciously. That colour has to be born in a singer, it can't be acquired; lots of beautiful voices haven't a vestige of it. It's almost like another gift – the rarest of all. The voice simply is the mind and is the heart. It can't go wrong in interpretation, because it has in it the thing that makes all interpretation. (365)
- 40 Thea was born with an incredible voice which makes it all natural, in the affirmative sense. Doris, on the contrary, creates her own artistry, that makes it artificial in a pejorative sense. In other words, time was ripe for accepting female geniuses, as long as they were moulded in the traditional 19th century form. But the inter-war period was not yet ready for a constructivist idea of artistry, and therefore Doris has to die. Hence she also has to go back on her own motto, "Be a singer or die", and instead turning it into an older one: "Be a singer *and* die".

NOTES

1. Subsequent quotations will be taken from the English translation of Baum's novel, *Career*, London: G. Bles 1936. The American edition is betitled *Sing Sister Sing*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1936.
2. The research on Baum is rather limited; the only monograph in English concerning the authorship of Vicki Baum is Lynda J. King's *Best-Sellers by Design. Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1988. Of late, there has been a few theses published in German and a biography by Nicole Nottelmann: *Die Karrieren der Vicki Baum*, Köln: Kiepenheuer&Witsch 2007. The literary expressions of *Neue Sachlichkeit* have hitherto not received much attention either. Lately this has started to change, mainly through Sabina Becker's efforts. Ambitiously she tries to define it in *Neue Sachlichkeit: Die Ästhetik der neusachlichen Literatur 1920-1933*, published with a twin volume collecting the manifests, *Neue Sachlichkeit: Quellen und Dokumente*, Köln: Böhlau 2000. She also co-edited *Neue Sachlichkeit im Roman. Neue Interpretationen zum Roman der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Sabina Becker and Christoph Weiss, Stuttgart: Metzler 1995.
3. Willa Cather: *The Song of the Lark*, New York: Houghton Mifflin 1987 (1915).
4. Cf John Willett: *The New Sobriety: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period 1917-1933*, London: Thames&Hudson 1978, and David Midgley: *Writing Weimar. Critical Realism in German Literature 1918-1933*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000.
5. *Neue Sachlichkeit im Roman*, ed. Sabina Becker and Christoph Weiss, p. 274, my translation.
6. Lynne Frame: "Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne? Weimar Science and Popular Culture in Search of the Ideal New Woman", *Women in the Metropolis. Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum, Berkeley: California University Press 1997, p. 32 and footnote 97.
7. King: *Best-Sellers by Design*, p. 87f.
8. *Ibid*, p. 102.
9. Frame: "Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne?", p. 23.
10. Walter Benjamin: "Der Autor als Produzent", quoted from King, p. 204.
11. Midgley: *Writing Weimar*, s. 213.
12. Cf Kristina Fjelkestam: *Det sublimas politik. Emancipatorisk estetik i 1800-talets konstnärsromaner* (The Politics of the Sublime. Emancipatory Aesthetics in the Artist Novels of the Nineteenth Century), Stockholm: Makadam 2010. For an account in English, see for instance Evi Varsamopoulou: *The Poetics of the Künstlerinroman and the Aesthetics of the Sublime*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2002.
13. David Lodge: *The Modes of Modern Writing. Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1977. Antje Wischmann, however, claims the opposite, i.e. that the cubistic code is incompatible with the realistic code in *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*; see "A Strong Feeling of Her Own Self: The Modeling of the New Woman in Selected Swedish and German Novels, 1920-40", *The New Woman and the Aesthetic Opening. Unlocking Gender in Twentieth-Century Texts*, ed. Ebba Witt-Brattström, Huddinge: Södertörn Academic Studies 2004, p. 196.

RÉSUMÉS

Cette étude est centrée sur le roman allemand *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, publié en 1936. Son auteur, Vicki Baum, à l'époque grand écrivain de best-sellers, est aujourd'hui oublié. *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* raconte l'histoire du succès dramatique d'une chanteuse d'opéra. Le roman est écrit de telle sorte que l'objectivité critique du *Neue Sachlichkeit* se heurte à et rompt avec un idéal plus ancien de l'artiste. Cependant, à la fin du roman, l'idéal romantique persiste : cet essai tente d'expliquer ce phénomène. L'article s'ouvre sur une présentation des critères formels de la littérature du *Neue Sachlichkeit* qui contextualise synchroniquement *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Puis, un parallèle diachronique est établi entre ce roman et le genre du roman de l'artiste, et en particulier le texte qui est à considérer comme son intertexte, à savoir *The Song of the Lark* de Willa Cather, qui date de 1915. Enfin, l'essai se termine sur une analyse comparative avec *The Song of the Lark*.

The focus of this study is the German novel *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* published in 1936. Its author, Vicki Baum, is presently neglected, but was at the time a best-selling author. *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* tells the dramatic success story of an opera singer, and it is told in a fashion where critical objectivity of *Neue Sachlichkeit* clashes and breaks with an older romantic ideal of the artist. However, in the end the traditionally romantic ideal persists and this essay tries to answer how and why it is the case. The essay opens with a presentation of the formal criteria of the literary *Neue Sachlichkeit* which are synchronically contextualizing *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. The novel is then diachronically related to the genre of the artist novel, especially one that is here considered as its intertext, namely Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark* from 1915, and a comparative analysis of *The Song of the Lark* concludes the essay.

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