Dear Ezra,
Could you lend me a little money? ...
It worries me as much to write this as it will you to read it.

Dear Ford
Here's the hors d'oeuvres. I will try to make up the rest of the hundred bucks within a fortnight. I am bloody damn sorry the strain has arruv at such point. My own earnings are merely derisoire. (p. 93).

A couple of years later Ford wrote to Pound: "I *ought* to have plenty of money for there is plenty of demand for my writing in your country — but it does not work out that way" (p. 119). And Pound answered "We all OUGHT to have plenty of money. I have thought so for twenty years" (p. 120). All their understandable preoccupations with money in the letters thus provide us with what Peter L. Berger has called the "experiential background" to, at least, Pound's economic theories.

In her last chapter Brita Lindberg-Seyersted quotes Pound on T.S. Eliot: "The fun of an intellectual friendship is that you diverge in something or other and agree on a few points" (p. 181). The dictum also applies to the relationship between Ford and Pound. Brita Lindberg-Seyersted has told the story of that intellectual friendship most admirably.

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Erik Löfroth, *A World Made Safe: Values in American Best Sellers, 1895-1920,* Uppsala 1983. Acta Univ. Ups., Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia 45. 197 pp. plus Abstract.

Erik Löfroth has chosen to investigate an era of American publishing history which attracts attention for two reasons: best seller lists first appeared in America in 1895, and although these lists are only approximately systematic, they are still sufficiently reliable as the earliest sources of information on popular fiction in the States. Secondly, Löfroth contends that the study of values in best-selling fiction from that time contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the concerns and attitudes of the American reading public in a period of mass unrest and changing economic structures. The very concord between the value systems of writer and reader secures success: "... that the best-selling writer is sincere and in tune with his readers, that he shares their outlook and values — his conventionality, in other words — would seem to be a prerequisite for his popularity."

The introduction to Löfroth's study deals with the technical and methodical pitfalls of research in this particular field of mass culture. The reliability of best seller lists, especially of the period in question, is discussed in detail, and the factors leading to a place on the list are balanced to allow the author to conclude that the books sell predominantly because of "intrinsic qualities," and that advertising and other marketing devices are less important in determining a book's status as best seller. The conclusion appears to be

important for Löfroth's purpose, but falsely so, since the inexactitude of these "qualities" leads the author to equate them with values. Moreover, the combination of values with the concept of sincerity in best sellers adds a vague, moralizing dimension to this kind of fiction, which is then offered as an explanation of its popularity. Writers "advocate" and "praise" various values and virtues, readers seek "reassurance." The contemporary view of the "why" of the best seller was recorded, among others, by A. Wyatt Tilby, in an article on English best sellers, "The Best Seller Problem," in "The Edinburgh Review" (236) in 1922. The article is apparently unknown to Löfroth, and the argument it represents also seems unfamilier to the author: "The one thing that matters in popular fiction is the ability to tell a striking story." Obvious as the remark is, it nevertheless serves to establish a crucial distinction in popular literature between delight and Löfroth's idea of "reassurance." Values, of course, are not the main attraction, but only part of the expected universe, and though values in fiction may manipulate the values of the reader, their main function in popular literature is to provide a necessary element for recognition, making the fictional world acceptable. Thus the popular writer's explicit concern with virtues and vices will more often than not suffer from the reader's reductionist tendency: "Reflection may be trite and obvious — it is of no consequence so long as the action is continuous," Tilby notes, and since this is clearly the consumer's view, it remains an equally valid statement on the nature of best sellers. Löfroth must of necessity concentrate on the reflective passages in the analyzed novels, but in the process his concern with "intrinsic qualities" is separated from that of the ordinary reader. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in his somewhat dogmatic use of the word "escape" to signify his view of the entertainment incentive in popular fiction. Löfroth's attitude is perhaps understandable when it is considered that his acute analyses of the texts themselves establish a substantial causal connection between social turbulence, and *writers'* insistence on "a world made safe." But in the last analysis it does not excuse a confusion of the consumer's emphasis on "intrinsic qualities" with the critical interest in values.

The main force of Löfroth's study lies in his detailed account of these values in an impressive number of novels in the first 25 years of the existence of the best seller lists. Chapter one, entitled "A Splendid World," proves a fine index to the concerns and hopes of popular writers at the turn of the century. At the core of the various novels is a "belief in a planned, moral world," and accompanying ideals like "moral growth rather than material development" and "love" are successfully measured against concepts of "will power" and "status." Despite diversity, Löfroth manages to chronicle "a certain uniformity" in the world views of the novels. The chapter challenges traditional and accepted responses to the political and ethical norms in novels of this sort. Löfroth's account of the peculiar contradictions of "aristocracy" versus "democracy" makes interesting reading. And through a discussion of the importance of "character" over "achievement," i.e. an appraisal of moral and spiritual strength on behalf of material success, we have to conclude with the author: "In no sense, then, can the majority of these novels be considered rags-to-riches stories, although they clearly share the ideology of that type." I find the chapter a useful profile of the age, with a significance

extending beyond the mere best seller list, and thus beyond Löfroth's material, to the works of, say, Hamlin Garland, Kate Chopin, Willa Cather. Even the transformation of Jack London's Northland beast in *White Fang* (1906) to a loving, domestic animal is given context by applying Löfroth's system of ideals. In this respect, Löfroth's book is not only of interest to scholars of popular literature, but also to students of American literature.

The bulk of the study is a critical examination of "the splendid world." Chapters two and three are devoted to a sub-period each, 1895 to 1905, and 1905 to 1915, respectively, and chapter four to the best sellers of 1920. The periods were all determined by the given material, according to the author, not by any historical considerations. He has chosen exemplary novels to demonstrate his findings in each period, but abundance of references to the rest of his sample justifies all claims, and Löfroth remains at all times safely within verifiable judgements. The stylistic effect is a slightly repetitive one, but on the whole the chapters present more surprises than dead passages. Chapter two registers an intriguing similarity in the books of the first decade, which separates them from those of the second period. They are all set in the past, the world "that is demonstrably so splendid is the world of yesterday." Löfroth's exemplary text is here a best seller by Frank R. Stockton, *The Adventures of Captain Horn* (1895), in which the hero of the title is taken to typify the strong leader with the attendant characteristics of such a position: "Over and above the aspects mentioned — character, work, investment — Horn also qualifies as a potential owner of great wealth through his sense of responsibility." Underneath the explicit moral reflections of these first novels, Löfroth finds a convincing connection between leadership and strong character, and the rewarding of responsibility with wealth. This connection he attributes to the novelists' deliberate and conservative affirmation of a social stability, threatened, among other things, by strikes and the rise of the Populist party in the 1890's. Esteem of the elite is the implicit message. Problems of contemporary society were projected unto a romance formula, set in the past, and given emphasis through repetition.

In "the Sugary years," the decade of *Pollyana* (1913), Löfroth finds a surprising concentration of stories concerned with "love, home, and family" — surprising in view of the preceding best sellers — and again the author seeks an explanation in the changing social conditions. In this case, he finds an insistence on values that are undermined mainly by the advent of women on the labor market, with all the political and social consequences of this, and his examples demonstrate a reaffirmation in the best sellers of the qualities of urban family life. Mary Roberts Rinehart's novel, *The Window at the White Cat* (1910), serves to sum up the tension between the sordid affairs of public life and domestic safety. Löfroth describes in detail the sensitive "awareness of great wrongs" in Rinehart's novel, as well as in Eleanor H. Porter's *Pollyana Grows up* (1915), and Gene Stratton-Porter's *Michael O'Halloran* (1915), and discusses the transformation of the concept of "responsibility" in the first decade of that of "uninvolvement" in the second. Misfortune is considered a "personal question," in Stratton-Porter's phrase, though only those committed socially are prone to an unhappy fate, leaving the choice, especially for the female characters, to be one of social tragedy versus the pleasures of family life.

The best sellers of 1920 express a return to nature in two senses: the settings of these books are similar, to some extent, to those of the first decade, the "rural" or "Western" scene of the past. But now the consoling effects of nature are in the foreground, and Löfroth characterizes this consolation as the sentimental version of the romantic idea of harmony between man and nature. Löfroth naturally considers the fear of environmental alienation in a broad, industrial perspective, but finds here also a portrait of the post-war generation. All in all, the amazing systemization these books lend themselves to strengthens Löfroth's mimetic theory of popular literature, and it draws our attention to the benefits of his analytical procedure.

According to the Introduction, Löfroth's pragmatic method was adopted to avoid "testing a particular theory or confirming the presence in the works of specific ideas." The advantage is obvious, as Löfroth's unprejudiced approach exposes faults in the stylized receptions of these novels — Löfroth argues continually with reviewers and other critics — and thus his book contains valuable corrigenda to the study of best sellers in these 25 years. But the approach also tends to create the effect of a vicious circle, blurring any truly consistent hierarchy of values the author might have hoped for. This tendency emerges now and then in the account of the predominance of one ideal over another; "morality," for instance is once called "an aspect of character" together with "will power," though later "morality" is *juxtaposed* with "character" and "idealism." But worse, this closed circuit of self-references at times obscures Löfroth's initial definition of "values:" "... in very broad terms as ideals that motivate behaviour." In compliance with this kinetic use of the word, love is placed as the basic moving power in the books, "love is what provides the motivation for the main action," and "love is what makes this fictional universe go round." But then, confusingly, love is replaced by idealism, which is called "the mainspring of positive action in this period." Surely Löfroth wants us to distinguish between values and idealism when Zane Grey's protagonist in *Man of the Forest* (1920) "brings an association of idealism to the values he comes to uphold." Idealism "in one form or another" can make values "inifinitely attractive," and there is also a strong tie between "ideals" and "idealism," as certain ideals "are intimately connected with the prevailing world view," which is one of "general idealism." With Löfroth's definition of values in mind we get disturbingly close to the meaningless: without a stable frame of reference, values are vaguely distinct from ideals, and yet related.

Since Löfroth himself invokes the concept of ideology he might simply have defined value as the normative element of ideology (e.g. marriage), and ideal as the normative element of idealism (e.g. love). Ideology is regarded as "a function of the writer's historical position" and is clearly a more inclusive term than idealism, which in this book is synonymous with the explicit world view. The degree of awareness in the distinction between ideology and idealism is important, as it implies two separate analytical activities, the *description* of given ideals (as in chapter 1), and then a *critical examination* of these ideals (as in chapters 2, 3, 4). If Löfroth himself did not intuitively distinguish between ideal and value along this line, even his conclusion would be meaningless: "... upon closer inspection it is clear that certain value clusters are insisted on in particular years in such a way as

to belie this innocently optimistic picture." Löfroth's pattern of values would have avoided an undermining of its own coherence if the distinction between ideal as an explicit moral norm and value as an implicit material norm had been consistent.

Löfroth's method would not have suffered any harm, either, if his insight had been contextualized prior to his presentation of his analyses. I am surprised, for instance, that William Dean Howells is only referred to twice in this book, and then only as another novelist among the many. Especially because Löfroth deals with norms in fiction, the essays and letters of William Dean Howells would appear appropriate as a new approach to the best sellers. Howells was an influential spokesman for realism, and an ardent opponent of sentimental romance stories. And Löfroth has found a discrepancy between "sincerity" and "awareness of great wrongs" on the one hand, and romance and adventure stories as successful literature on the other. To gain perspective for his analyses, he might have consulted the contemporary cultural scene as an intermediate step between social change and norms in best sellers.

Nonetheless, Löfroth's method has also produced a quite readable book in a potentially tedious field. The book is, finally, a useful companion to 25 important years in the history of American literature, and it is a book to be recommended for its loyalty to the material involved, and for making this material significant and accessible.

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Magnus Jerneck, *Kritik som utrikespolitiskt medel. En studie av de amerikanska reaktionerna på den svenska Vietnamkritiken* (Criticism as a foreign policy instrument. A study of American reactions to the Swedish Vietnam critism). Lund, Sweden, 1983. 246 pp.

What are the effects of criticism from abroad on the foreign policy behavior of a great power? This broad, but interesting question has received a lot of attention in a Swedish research project headed by political science professor Lars-Gøran Stenelo. Magnus Jerneck's study of American reactions to Sweden's Vietnam criticism forms an important part of this project.

Swedish criticism of the US policy in Vietnam became pronounced from 1965 on. The Social Democratic government objected not only to the means Washington used, but also to the American goals, particularly the extent to which the Johnson, and later the Nixon Administration allegedly pursued goals which were different from the formally announced objectives. The United States came to be seen as an obstacle to Vietnam's right of self-determination. By international standards the means used by the Swedes in their criticism were dramatic; Olof Palme joined the North Vietnamese ambassador to the Soviet Union in a demonstration against the war in February 1968, and as Prime Minister compared the American Christmas bombings of 1972 to the Nazi acts of terror during the Second World War. Sweden's recognition of North Vietnam in 1969 and its substantial economic