

# HVORDAN KAN SKJØNNLITTERATUR HJELPE OSS NÅR LIVET ER VANSKELIG?



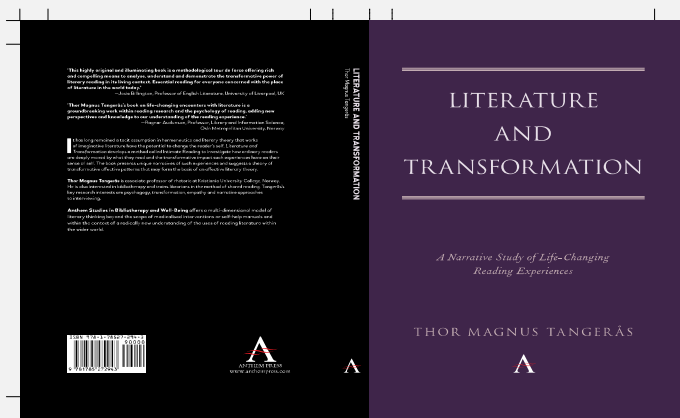
Om ulike typer transformative leseopplevelser

Thor Magnus Tangerås

Førsteamanuensis, Høgskolen Kristiania

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# HVORDAN KAN SKJØNNLITTERATUR FORANDRE LIVENE VÅRE?



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## FRA BLOGGEN TIL FORFATTAR NICOLA GRIFFITH:

«A woman in Australia, married with two children, read *Ammonite* and wrote me a letter to tell me that my novel had shown her what the empty space inside her meant: she was a lesbian. (...)

A woman in the Midwest approached me at a convention: No, she didn't want to chat, but she thought I ought to know that *Ammonite* had literally saved her life: she had been planning to kill herself but instead, for six months, read the book cover to cover, over and over, endlessly, immersing herself in a world of women until she knew it was okay to be a woman, to stay alive and become herself.»

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## CATHERINE ROSS (1999): STUDIE AV 200 LESERE

"Has there ever been a book that has helped you or made a difference to your life in one way or another?"

60 present svarte at en særskilt leseopplevelse hadde hjulpet dem eller endra livet i vesentlig grad. Det hadde vært som en «awakening».

Og flertalet av dem oppgav at det var et skjønnlitterært verk.

"Finding without seeking: The information encounter in the context of reading for pleasure", in: *Information Processing and Management*, 35, 783-799.

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## THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF LITERARY READING

Kuiken et al. «Expressive enactment» er en lese måte som forandrer selvforståelsen: «modifies feeling and reshapes the self.» (2011; 258).

De fant at 10 av 40 lesere hadde denne opplevelsen.

To forutsetninger:

Åpenhet

Livskrise

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## HERMENEUTIKKEN

Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, s 103:

“[T]he work of art is not an object that stands over against a subject for itself. Instead the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes *an experience that changes the person* who experiences it.”

“In the experience of art we see a genuine experience induced by the work, *which does not leave him who has it unchanged*”.

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## PROSJEKTET MITT

Kunstopplevelser er i følge Rita Felski (2011), "not just a matter of conveying information, but also of experiencing transformation."

"If you are listening to what people are saying," hevder Felski, "they will explain at length how and why they are **deeply attached, moved, affected** by the works of art which make them feel things."

Hun spør: "What **would** it mean to do justice to these responses rather than treating them as naïve, rudimentary or defective?"

Men hun spør bare seg selv. Hva får man høre dersom man virkelig lytter til folk?

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## Å BLI RØRT, Å BLI BEVEGET: ET SPESIELT FENOMEN

Menninghaus et al. (2015): "phenomenon is elicited by personally significant events, artworks and witnessing other people's suffering, and experienced as particularly meaningful."

Vessel et al. (2013): Nevropsykologiske prosessar i estetiske opplevingar som rører og pregar oss djupt:

«A fundamentally different brain activity accompanies only the most moving experiences. They are felt to be personally relevant.»

En prosess hvor aMPFC-området, Default Mode Network (selv-referensielle tanker og selvbiografisk mentalisering).

Å bli beveget blir etterfulgt av en realisering av personlig mening.

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## DEN EMOSJONELLE HJERNEN

forskning på mentale bilder og nevroner i hjernen har etablert at den emosjonelle hjernen ikke skiller mellom forestilte og faktisk oppfatta hendelser:

"The emotional brain responds in essentially the same ways to imaginal experiences as to externally perceived experiences, as was demonstrated by Kreiman, Koch and Fried (2000). Thus, for the emotional brain, the imaginal experiences during reenactment are real." The implication of this finding, propose Ecker et al., is that "new experiences that are imaginal can be effective for creating new neural circuits and new responses, because the emotional centers in the subcortex hardly distinguish between perceptions arising externally versus internally."

Ecker, Bruce, Tivic, Robin and Hulley, Laurel (2012): *Unlocking the Emotional Brain. Eliminating Symptoms at Their Roots Using Memory Reconsolidation*. New York and London: Routledge, p. 86.

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## FORSKNING PÅ LIVSHISTORIER

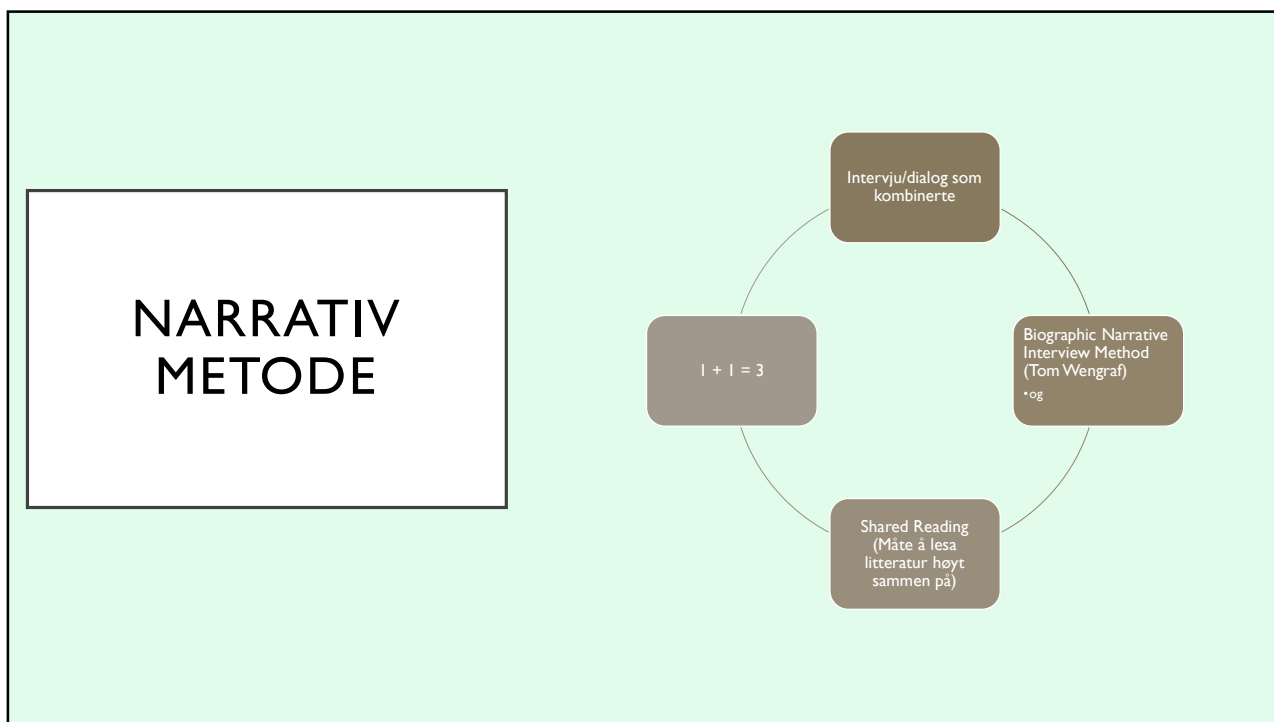
McAdams et al. (2001): *Turns in the Road*.

Undersøkte vanlige folk livsfortellinger for å finne ut hvordan de skaper mening i hendelser og endringer i livet.

«Redemption sequence»: Når en negativ livssituasjon blir snudd til et positivt utfall.

En forløsning.

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**INTERVJU MED 20 LESERE I ALDEREN 25-65**

Alle typer skjønnlitteratur kan være transformative:

Gammel og ny litteratur, realistisk og fantastisk, high-brow and middle-brow, poesi og prosa, barne- og voksenlitteratur

Eksempler på livsendrende litterære verk:

**Dikt:** Inger Hagerup, Matthew Arnold, Alexander Pope, John Keats

**Romaner:** Lady Chatterley's Lover, Unge Werthers Lidelser, Elskeren, Shikasta, Min Venn Flicka, Black Dahlia, Glass Bell Jar

**Noveller:** Mr Peeble's Heart, Ikke rart det kommer kråker (Karine Nyborg)

**Serielitteratur:** Enid Blyton, The Wishing Chair, og krim

(-)

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## KRITERIENE BAK UTVELGELSEN:

- *Nærhet til boka:* hvor "tett på" verket kom vi i dialogen vår?
- *Tilskrivning:* virker det rimelig at livsendringa er knytta til selve lesinga?
- *Konsentrasjon:* Dialogen må dreie seg om den livsendrende leseopplevinga
- *Koherens:* Fortellingen må henge sammen og være forståelig
- *Integrert erfaring:* Leseren må ha erkjent det livsendrende med leseopplevinga før intervjuet fant sted.
- *Resolusjon:* Leseren må ha kommet gjennom krisa, slik at erfaringen er "helhetlig".
- *Kjærlighet til verket:* Leseren må fremdeles ha sterke positive kjensler/minner relatert til boka.
- *Deling av opplevelsen:* jeg måtte også ha lest boka før intervjuet.

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## 6 FORTELLINGER

Hele intervjuet blir presentert

Narrativ innledning og avslutning

Fortolkning av fortellingen

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## DORIS LESSING: SHIKASTA

### Jane:

Doris Lessing's introduction, which is called *Some Remarks*, at the very beginning, and when I read this for the first time I was absolutely... an atheist. I don't think I would even describe myself as an agnostic, I just think I didn't like the idea of religions or God. I loved Doris Lessing and had been reading her novels for many years, so when I came across this paragraph, I was really shocked by it, and also deeply affected.

I felt as if I was being asked to consider, at the deepest of levels, the very basis of everything I thought I was. And at the same time, while that was quite frightening, I also absolutely recognised something in it as true.

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## I. DH LAWRENCE: LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER

**Veronica:** It helped me see myself, something I may not have before, or not been able to recognise anyway. I certainly felt frustration and unhappiness and I guess anger, at certain points, but I couldn't see past that. That was what my emotion was, but feeling hopeful for Connie, and wanting better for her; that certainly made me want that for myself. It helped me understand it, almost like a mirror, like it reflected back into real life. Yeah, and it almost just seemed like such an obvious thing as well. You know, when you have that realisation, of course, come on, why can I feel it for her and not feel it for me? I think that was part of my depression and not being able to feel good about myself or feel that I was worthy. I felt that Connie deserved happiness, but maybe before reading it I didn't feel that I did. I felt like I just deserved to keep going with what I was doing. Hmm, so Connie's a great girl, hahaha. For me she is anyway.

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## MARY O'HARA: MIN VENN FLICKA

### Nina:

Jeg har kjempet en indre kamp hele veien. Jeg har alltid hatt et rikt indre liv, men jeg har trodd at jeg har måttet holde det skjult for omverden. At det ville bli tatt fra meg dersom jeg viste det til noen. Når jeg møter verden må jeg legge det bort og være en annen enn meg selv. Dette har vært et avgjørende tema for meg de siste 10-15 årene. Jeg har basert meg på antagelsen om at for å kunne være i verden må jeg følge spillereglene. Noe som gjorde at alle mine drømmer, alt det jeg forestilte meg ikke var gyldig. Så boka ga meg enorm støtte for min måte å se verden på, at det var en gyldig anskuelse. Samtidig har den også fått meg til å skjønne at det var mulig å komme ut med det jeg hadde på innsida.

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## MATTHEW ARNOLD: THE BURIED LIFE

### Sue:

... the poem has really helped me. I love it, because – I mean I love it for itself and I think it's a great poem – but it also has a special resonance for me in that it opened something up in me. Something that I will always carry with me. So I don't think of it so much as saving my life, I think of it more as, I don't know, reminding me of something important, getting back to sort of excavating something "from the soul's subterranean depth".

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## DURAS: ELSKEREN, GOETHE: UNGE WERTHER

**Camilla:** Det muliggjorde en avgjørende erkjennelse for meg: «ok, nå har de underliggende følelsene mine blitt anerkjent». Da kunne jeg begynne å godta følelsene mine.

**Thor:** Så boka holdt opp et speil for deg sånn at du...

**Camilla:** så jeg kunne se meg selv. De to bøkene spilte ulike roller i min prosess, men de har begge gjort den smertefulle ensomheten om til en god og nærende ensomhet. Det alenerommet du må gå inn i hvis du skal komme over noe, hvis du skal kunne bevege deg videre. Bøkene gjorde det rommet beboelig. Og de gjorde at jeg fant ut av følelsene mine. Dette er noe jeg har kjent veldig sterkt, og det er en form for redning.

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## (INGER HAGERUP: EPISODE)

**Thor:** For å oppsummere, vil du si at litteraturen har forandret livet ditt?

**Esther:** Ja, det har den. Det vil jeg si. På en måte har den det. ... Og dette diktet, Episode, hjalp meg til å forstå foreldrene mine og meg selv, og hvor kompleks kjærligheten er.

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## Å BLI OVERRASKET

De ble *overrasket*.

De forventet/lette etter én ting, så kom noe annet inn.

Og de ble takknemlige.

Nåde: *grace*.

*Kharites. Skjønnlitteratur:*

å bli underholdt

å bli overrasket

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## 9 TYPISKE SITUASJONER I LIVET

### Hverdagslivet:

Stressreduksjon, regulering av følelser

Trang til å leve oss inn i andres liv, utvide forståelsen av verden

Trang til veiledning

### Livskriser:

Tap

Konflikt

Identitetskrise

Destruktive mønster

Eksistensiell krise

Depresjon

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## FORANDRINGER

- Forsoning gjennom å anerkjenne båndet til den andre
- Sørge over tap og vinne en følelse av helskap og mening
- Å komme seg ut av hemmende mønstre og finne evnen til å lytte til hjertet
- Å etablere en identitet, der indre selvforståelse får komme til uttrykk
- Å få et nytt livssyn/et større perspektiv
- Økt vitalitet: komme i kontakt med en glemt del av seg selv

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## Å LESE MED HJERTET

Metaforer knyttet til næring: sult, mat, fordøying

Metaforer knyttet til samklang: inntoning, resonans

«Readerese»: kroppslig og vokalt engasjement

Hellig rom

Materialitet

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## ERKJENNELSE

Epifani: plutselig åpenbaring  
 Affektiv mentalisering: å kjenne seg sett og holdt oppe  
 Krystallisering: sannheten stiger gradvis fram  
 Palilexia: internalisering gjennom gjenlesing  
 Ekpleksis: må forkaste det man har trodd på  
 Undring: uventa møte

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## NARRATIVE THREE: VERONICA'S BRUISE

*Veronica got in touch with me after someone had told her about my project. She said that reading Lady Chatterley's Lover had made her decide to break out of an unhappy relationship. With that information I sat down to read the novel. Imagining what her reading must have been like, whilst at the same time remembering my own previous reading of the novel, was an immensely rich and moving experience. Our dialogue took place in a quiet and pleasant meeting room in her office building, on a blustery morning in November. My first impression of Veronica was of a warm, outgoing and confident person.*

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(FORTS.)

**Thor:** I appreciate your being willing to share your experience with me.

**Veronica:** My pleasure. I've been quite excited about it, actually. When I heard about your project, I thought, oh yeah, brilliant. Actually I've never done it before. I first read the book a number of years ago and I wish I'd had the readerly understanding that I do now, to be able to process it a bit better. So, yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

**Thor:** Good! As you know, I want to find out how books can change readers' lives. So therefore, I'd just like to basically hear about your reading experience. It's up to you where you want to start. But one way we could start is, if there's a passage that you remember particularly well, if you could please read that for me.

**Veronica:** Initially let me just give you a bit of background, then. The reason that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* really resonated with me is that I read it for the first time about maybe nine or ten years' ago, something like that, when I was in my mid-twenties. I was in a long-term relationship in which I felt very trapped and at the same time had resigned myself to the fact that this was just what life was going to be. I was going to end up getting married, and I probably wouldn't be happy forever, but it was just... that was real life, and maybe romance was a bit of a fantasy. You know, this is what reality was going to be.

And then I read this book. I think it followed on from having read *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, which was another wonderful book for how I could sort of break free. Not necessarily by, you know, having an affair with the gamekeeper, but just wanting to be proactive and actually put myself on a different path. And it massively has. So the relationship broke up many years later, well, about a year after that.

And yeah, I just, I feel really free, now (*smiles*). And I can imagine that maybe if it wasn't for the book, if I'd continued on that path then I probably would be married now, have some children, just be unhappy and feel trapped, so I really feel quite lucky that this book found its way to me when it did, at the right time.

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(...)

*After the interview is over, I go for a long walk, mulling over in my mind the immediate impressions Veronica's story has made on me. I am left with many questions, yet I feel certain about one thing: any initial scepticism as to whether the novel had liberated her or just seduced her into seeing herself as trapped, has been dispelled. And I imagine that DH Lawrence, had he been able to listen in, would not only have shared my conviction that Veronica was truly empowered by what *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had awoken in her, but would also have felt understood by her.*

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