Vanmaktens makt
Sekulariseringen i Sven Delblancs Samuelsvit och Änkan

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The central thematics in Sven Delblanc’s Samuel-suite – Samuels bok (Samuel’s Book) -81, Samuels dottrar (Samuel’s daughters) -82, Kanaans land (Kanaan’s land) -84, Maria ensam (Maria alone) -85 – and Änkan (The Widow) -88, concerns secularization. The Samuel-suite deals with the process of secularization, while The Widow treats secularized society and secularized man. Two vital questions which secularization seems to bring to the fore, are discussed: the question of ontology and the question of ethics. This thesis inquires into images of the secularization process and its consequenses which Delblanc’s texts want to convey. I perform my analyses in two steps as laid out by Paul Ricoeur: on my way towards an understanding I go via a distancing explanation. The explanatory moment is carried out with a structuralist-semiotical method where I first try to establish the genres of the texts and then discern the types of narrators and kinds of narration. The understanding is reached through a series of analyses of the mimetic, the symbolic and the thematic levels of the five novels. The study falls into two parts, where the former analyzes the Samuel-suite and the latter The Widow.

The Widow as well as the Samuel-suite tries to settle the accounts with an authoritarian, monistic almighty-god-ontology. This view has to be rejected because of the theodicy problem. Two alternatives are presented. First: to let go of all faith in God and every belief in some kind of order of existence, ontologically as well as ethically. Second: not to reject faith, but to revise it. We are presented here with the alternative of dualism, where the god is separated, by absolute division, from evil and destruction, and is described as opposed to them. He is purely good – but weak. Both texts articulate, however, also a power of powerlessness, symbolized by the resurrection and the blossoming cherry-tree. This dualistic ontology entails also a dualistical ethics which makes man responsible for choosing which innate tendency – original sin or original goodness – to accept and support. But to be able to make this choice man needs to accept life as a gift.

Keywords: secularization, ontology, ethics, semiotics, hermeneutics, theodicy problem, paradigm change, prefiguration, dualism, Delblanc, Ricoeur.