

Kurt Wallander's Journey into Autumn

A Reading of Henning Mankell's *The Fifth Woman*

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ABSTRACT: The last decade has been a golden age of detective fiction in the four Scandinavian countries: Sweden; Denmark; Norway; and Iceland. If Henning Mankell stands in the first rank of Nordic mystery writers, it is because he takes the type of book known in Sweden as a "deckare" and gives it the complexity of a superior novel. Mankell not only endows his now famous detective, Kurt Wallander, with a brooding depth of character, but places him in a strikingly realistic setting, and a three-dimensional social context subject to the forces of change. Like the novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Thomas Hardy, the Wallander series has a memorable balance of plot, character, and atmosphere. In an article in *The New York Times Book Review*, Marilyn Stasio provides a concise summation of Mankell's strengths as a novelist: "Apart from his uncommon skill at devising dense, multilayered plots, Mankell's forte is matching mood to setting and subject."

RÉSUMÉ: Cette dernière décennie est considérée comme l'âge d'or du roman policier dans les quatre pays scandinaves : La Suède, le Danemark, la Norvège, et l'Islande. Si Henning Mankell est un auteur nordique de roman policiers de première importance, c'est parce qu'il prend le genre connu en Suède en tant que "deckare" et lui donne la complexité d'un roman supérieur. Mankell non seulement dote son célèbre détective, Kurt Wallander, d'un caractère profond et sombre, mais il place l'action du roman dans un contexte social tridimensionnel remarquablement réaliste et sujet aux forces du changement. Tout comme les romans de Fyodor Dostoevsky et de Thomas Hardy, la série mettant en vedette le détective Kurt Wallander démontre un équilibre harmonieux d'intrigue, de personnages, et d'atmosphère. Dans un article paru dans le *New York Times Book Review*, la critique littéraire Marilyn Stasio offre un sommaire concis des forces de Mankell en tant que romancier: « À part son aptitude remarquable à concevoir des intrigues complexes et multidimensionnelles, la spécialité de Mankell est d'assortir l'atmosphère à l'action et au sujet. »

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hen Thomas Hardy turned part of England's West Country into his fictional Wessex, he did not know that this "partly real, partly-dream country" (Hardy 1912 393) would become the most loved landscape in world literature. Wessex is, in Rosemarie Morgan's words, "a fully unified microcosmic construct" (18). Henning Mankell's Skåne is becoming a Nordic Wessex. Readers of the Wallander series can take guided tours of "Kriminalkommissarie Kurt Wallanders Ystad," or buy maps that enable them to walk "i Wallanders fotspår" [in Wallander's footsteps]. Wallander's Skåne, too, is a fully unified microcosmic construct. Both regions are of course fictional. However, Mankell's readers tend to feel that Wallander's Skåne is more "real" than Hardy's Wessex, mainly because the place names are identical to those found on a map of Sweden. In Anna Westerhåhl Stenport's words, Mankell's setting is "the recognizable environment of rural Skåne" (4). Both regions have a centre—vital to Wallander's investigation in *The Fifth Woman*—but while the centre of Wessex is Casterbridge, not Dorchester, that of Mankell's fictional Skåne is Ystad, the geographically coastal centre of the Swedish province.

Nu var det höst: Seasonal metaphor

John Wain says of Hardy that "His strength lies in particulars" (6), something that is also true of Mankell. Each writer knows his region in intimate detail, most strikingly in its changing seasons. In his poem "Afterwards," Hardy asks if he will be remembered as "a man who noticed such things" as seasonal change, twilight, the flight pattern of birds, or the nocturnal movement of a hedgehog as it "travels furtively over the lawn" (1976 553). In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Gabriel Oak sees three spiders dropping from the ceiling of a room in his thatched house, and interprets this as a sign of impending heavy rain (Hardy 2000 212). Mankell gives Wallander a similar ability to read the minutiae of nature: "En mus ilade förbi intill hans fötter och försvann bakom en gammal klädeskivista som stod vid väggen. Det är höst, tänkte Wallander. Nu är åkermössen på väg in i husens [sic] väggar. Vintern nalkas" [A mouse scurried past his feet and vanished behind an old clothes chest that stood close to the wall. It's autumn, thought Wallander. The fieldmouse is finding its way into the walls of the house. It will be winter soon] (172).¹ Both Hardy and Mankell have a strong, metaphoric sense of seasonal change, but Wallander seems most responsive to autumn: that time of year "Innan frosten" [Before the Frost] to use the title of his Linda Wallander mystery (2002).

Wallander's Skåne is a microcosm of Wallander's contemporary Sweden, which is threatened by an increase in the hitherto "unSwedish" phenomenon of violent crime. We learn early in the novel that "brottsligheten i Sverige blev allt

grövre och våldsammare” [crime in Sweden was becoming all the more brutal and violent] (41). The belief that Sweden is an increasingly dangerous place to live is shared by liberals such as Wallander and the right wing Holger Erickson, a one-time mercenary, murderer, and first murder victim in the present time-frame of the novel. A witness tells Wallander how Erickson “tyckte samhället höll på att gå åt helvete” [thought that society was rapidly going to hell] (129). Even the young receptionist at Hotel Sekelgården can ask Wallander: “Hur kommer det sig att allting har blivit så mycket värre?” [How’s it happening that everything has become so much worse?] (197). Wallander broods on this question:

Han undrade över varför han själv var så ovillig att svara. Han visste ju mycket väl hur förklaringen såg ut. Det Sverige som var hans, det han hade växt upp i, det land som hade byggts efter kriget, hade inte stått så stadigt på urbergen som de trott. Under alltsammans hade funnits ett gungfly.
(197)

[He wondered why he himself was so unwilling to reply. After all, he knew the explanation very well. The Sweden which was his, in which he had grown up, the land which had been built up after the war, had not stood on such solid rock foundations as people thought. There had been a morass beneath it all.]

A fear of change permeates the novel. Stenport notes that in Mankell’s *Mördare utan ansikte* [Faceless Killers], Wallander himself perceives “a general dissolution of old rules” (17), and this feeling is perhaps even more widespread in *The Fifth Woman*. Linda Wallander asks her father “varför det var så svårt att leva i Sverige” [why it was so hard to live in Sweden] (250). His colleague Lisa Holgersson poses him much the same question: “Vad är det egentligen som händer i det här landet” [What is actually happening here in this country?] (289). Kalle Birch, Wallander’s police contact in Lund, remembers the prophecy of a long-dead inspector: “Han såg allt det här komma ... Våldet skulle öka och bli grövre. Han förklarade också varför. Han talade om Sveriges välstånd som ett väl kamouflerat gungfly. Rötan var inbyggd” [He saw all this coming ... The violence would grow and become more brutal. He also explained why. He spoke of Sweden’s welfare state as a well-camouflaged morass. The rot was in the foundations] (301).

Mankell mirrors this social decay first in Wallander’s vocational doubt and fear of ageing; he is envious of a colleague’s decision to change careers; his father dies during the novel; even his Peugeot “började bli gammal” [was starting to get old] (222). Mankell also employs a web of mutually reflexive metaphors, a matching of mood and setting, which give this deckare its novelistic texture. What I would call the control-metaphor is “höst” which translates as autumn or fall. In a representative moment, Wallander sees himself “som en patetisk figure, en polisman i alltför tunn tröja, stretande i blåsten i en ödslig svensk stad om

hösten” [as a pathetic figure, a policeman in much too thin clothing, struggling against the wind in a desolate Swedish town in autumn] (196). One reason for favouring translator Steven T. Murray’s “autumn” as an English rendering of “höst” is that “fall” exemplifies one of those rare occasions when a word or phrase in the target language is better than it is in the original. The play on words is accidental in English and not intended by the author. “Fall” is, however, useful as a coincidental key to the novel’s pattern of crime and disaster: Gösta Runfeldt’s wife fell to her death through thinned lake ice (226); Erickson falls through a weakened plank bridge to be impaled on bamboo stakes planted in a ditch where he buried Krista Haberman more than twenty-five years before (455); Yvonne Ander puts Eugen Blomberg into a sack and pushes him off a dock to drown slowly near the surface of lake water; she is about to throw Tore Grundén under a moving train when the Ystad police intervene. Mankell chose 1994 as the year of the novel’s action, both because it was nearly contemporary to its composition—he completed it in April 1996 (475)—and because the MV Estonia disaster, in which eight hundred and fifty-two passengers and crew drowned or died of hypothermia after a ferry capsized and sank off Tallinn, took place on September 28th of that year (Final report 1997). The felt shock of that tragedy in *The Fifth Woman* 46-47 seems an uncanny “proof” that things are indeed “becoming so much worse.” Wallander receives the news at first with an instinctive denial: “Sådan hände inte. I alla fall inte i närheten av Sverige” [That kind of thing didn’t happen. At any rate not near Sweden] (47). However, Sweden has no such immunity. The natural fall of leaves is accompanied by an unnatural human sinking into water, earth, and moral decay.

Although Mankell uses an omniscient third-person narrative, we experience the novel’s development and atmosphere primarily through Wallander’s often bleak point-of-view: “Wallander satt i bilen och betraktade huset. Regnet föll. Oktober var tröstlöshetens månad. Allt gick i grått. Höstfärgerna bleknade” [Wallander was sitting in the car watching the house. Rain fell. October was a desolate month. Everything became grey. The colours faded] (256). Such moments in *The Fifth Woman* have the effect of lateral thinking on the part of author and character. They do not advance the plot, but they are aesthetically right in the way they parallel Wallander’s unorthodox approach to the investigation of crime. In the following passages, for example, Mankell seems almost to forget he is writing a police procedural:

Han ställde sig vid fönstret. Blåst och höstmoln. Flyttfåglar på väg mot varmare länder. Han tänkte på Per Åkeson som till slut hade bestämt sig för ett uppbrott. Bestämt sig för att livet alltid kunde vara något mer. 284

[He placed himself by the window. Strong wind and autumn cloud. Migrating birds on their way to warmer lands. He thought of Per Åkeson who had finally decided to make a break. Decided that life could always be something more.]

Wallander stannade. Han hade fått en klump i halsen. När skulle han egentligen få tid att bearbeta sorgen efter sin far? Livet kastade honom fram och tillbaka. Snart skulle han fylla femtio. Nu var det höst. Natt. Och han gick omkring på baksidan av ett sjukhus och frös.
(322)

[Wallander stopped. He had a lump in his throat. When would he really have time to grieve for his father? Life tossed him backwards and forwards. He would soon be fifty. It was autumn now. Night. And he was walking around behind a hospital and freezing.]

Wallander drog undan en gardin för att släppa in mera ljus. Plötsligt upptäckte han ett ensamt rådjur som gick och betade bland träden i trädgården. Han stod alldeles stilla. Rådjuret lyfte på huvudet och såg på honom. Sedan fortsatte det lugnt att beta. Wallander stod kvar. Han fick en känsla av att han aldrig skulle komma att glömma det här rådjuret. Hur länge han stod och såg på det visste han inte.
(390)

[Wallander drew a curtain back to let in more light. Suddenly he noticed a lonely roe-deer that was browsing among the trees in the orchard. He stood completely still. The deer lifted its head and looked at him. Then it went on calmly browsing. He had a feeling he would never forget this deer. He didn't know how long he had been standing there watching it.]

Readers must approach these passages alert for subliminal connections with other moments and characters in the novel. The first two close the gap between Wallander and Erickson. The novel's present-day story begins with Erickson and what he calls "Hans egen höstliga högmässa, att stå där i mörkret och känna hur flyttfåglarna gav sig av" [His own autumnal high mass, to be standing there in the dark and sensing the departure of migrating birds] (22). "Höstluften var fylld av lukten från den våta leran" [The autumn air was full of the smell from the damp clay] (23), when Erickson goes out at night to listen to the flocks of migrating birds from a purpose-built tower. Wallander's self-pity in the hospital car park further links him with this murderer and victim. Erickson completes his last poem with a mixture of regret and pleasure:

Ålderns höst, tänkte han. Ett namn som passer väl. Allt jag skriver kan vara det sista. Och det är September. Det är höst. Både i kalendern och i mitt liv.
(21, author's italics)

[An old man's autumn, he thought. A fitting title. Each poem I write may be the last. And it's September. It's autumn. Both on the calendar and in my life.]

The similarity between Wallander's and Erickson's thoughts of autumn, age, and migrating birds, is not as uncanny as it may seem. It is more coincidental, more of a novelist's foreshadowing, that Yvonne Ander should begin her journey into darkness with autumnal thoughts a year before Erickson's murder: "Hösten fanns redan där ute. Osynligt väntande. Hon öppnade kuvertet och började läsa" [Autumn was already out there, waiting invisibly. She opened the envelope and began to read] (13). Mankell does not suggest conscious echoes of Erickson's thinking. However, the detective's ability to think like the murderers and victims in *The Fifth Woman* will bring him closer to solving the crimes.

The finest of the three passages—Wallander's encounter with the deer—is also the one that is most difficult to link directly with the plot. What follows is, then, conjectural. For much of the novel, not just the identity but the gender of the present-day serial killer are unknown to the police. Because the crimes Yvonne Ander commits require considerable strength, the assumption is that the killer must be a man. However, Wallander's near certainty that Runfeldt's suitcase was re-packed by a woman (275) throws this assumption into doubt. Then Svedberg picks up Katerina Taxell's apparent Freudian slip: "Jag hoppas ni tar den som mördade Eugen" [I hope you catch the one who murdered Eugen] (334). As Svedberg realizes, Taxell chooses the word "den" deliberately to avoid (a) lying and (b) betraying the gender of the real killer, Yvonne Ander. Wallander has, unknowingly of course, already spoken to Ander and had eye-contact with her on the Malmö train (229). The second, more significant moment of eye-contact between Wallander and Ander occurs in the epilogue, when Ander describes the horrifying illegal abortion forced on her mother by her own stepfather: "Hon kunde minnas den natten som ett blodigt helvete. Och när hon berättade om just det för Wallander, lyfte hon blicken från bordet och såg honom rakt i ögonen" [She could remember that night as a blood-stained hell. And when she told Wallander about this particular moment, she lifted her gaze from the table and looked him directly in the eyes] (446).

The two encounters between Wallander and Ander, on the one hand, and the single encounter between Wallander and the deer, on the other, are, I think, mirror-images. The deer, "rådjuret," is not given a gender; it is "det" [it]. Nonetheless, we can assume that it is a doe, as it is autumn and Wallander does not, in his narrated thoughts at least, note any antlers on the animal. In the last analysis, Ander deserves Taxell's ambiguous pronoun since she becomes monstrous, genderless. It is surely not by chance that the name Ander is close to "andra," the Swedish for "others," nor that her antagonist, the detective who develops a brief empathy for her, should be called Wallander. Ander is at first redeemably, then irredeemably other. The deer is more an image of the woman

an undamaged Yvonne Ander might have been. Wallander feels that when she strangled Runfeldt, “Det var först då, i det ögonblicket som hon hade förvandlats till ett odjur” [It was first then, at that moment, that she had changed into a monster] (464). There is more than a suggestion of a vampire with superhuman strength in her attack on three men—Grundén, Martinsson, and Hansson—on the platform at Hässleholm. Her momentary bending over the injured Hansson, and her long “kappa” [coat, or in archaic usage, cloak], which first of all flaps in the wind (446), then, discarded, is carried off by a gust (447), are images familiar from contemporary vampire films. Mankell enhances the Gothic drive of Chapter 36 with a consistently “hård och byig” [strong and blustering] (442-43, 446, 451, 453) autumn gale.

Mördarens språk: Reading the crime scene

In her essay, “Detection and Literary Fiction,” Laura Marcus argues that “the literature of detection, with its complex double narrative in which an absent story, that of a crime, is gradually reconstructed in the second story (the investigation), its uses of suspense, and its power to give aesthetic shape to the most brute of matters, has been seen as paradigmatic of literary narrative itself” (245). She goes on to mention critics who “have drawn attention to the self-reflexivity of detective narratives, defined as metaliterary stories which, dedicated to their own constructive principles, and openly displaying the similarities between the detection and the reading processes, become representative of literature in general” (ibid.).

Of all the Kurt Wallander novels, *The Fifth Woman* comes closest to the self-reflexivity and metaliterary paradigm which Marcus defines. Within the control-metaphor of autumn, there is a pervasive secondary metaphor of reading. While Wallander tends to read autumn as a metaphor for his own melancholy and the perceived decline of Swedish society, he also reads what he calls “Mördarens språk” [the murderer’s language] (147). During the investigation of the first two murders—of Erickson and Runfeldt—Wallander tells his colleagues, “Om mördaren har ett språk så kan vi klart och tydligt läsa vad han skriver” [If the murderer has a language then we can read what he writes clearly and plainly] (281). He also remembers what Linda has told him about the actor’s need “Att läsa mellan raderna, at söka undertexten” [To read between] the lines, to look for the subtext] (ibid.).

Marcus notes how the detective novel can “give aesthetic shape to the most brute of matters” (ibid.). Mankell’s skill as a novelist is clearly evident in the way he provides relief to the story’s grim events with an apparently incidental humour that is yet part of the metaphoric texture. Wallander, for example, invariably forgets his notebook and pencil, despite his determination to learn the murderer’s

language. He also needs reading glasses, but puts off his visit to the optometrist for several weeks. When he does go, he orders five pairs, fully aware of his propensity to lose things (235). However both these personal eccentricities reflect his need to read not only the murderer's language but what Wallander calls "scenografier" (149), scenographies or film sets which can be studied as palimpsests. The immediate crime scene is a coded version of another crime scene beneath or before the present one:

Vi har vid flera tillfällen talat om att mördaren har ett språk. Han eller hon försöker berätta nåt för oss. Vi har delvis lyckats avslöja koden. Holger Ericksson blev dödad med något som kan beskrivas som demonstrativ brutalitet. Hans kropp skulle garanterat återfinnas. Möjligheten finns att platsen också är vald av ett annat skäl. En uppmaning till oss att leta vidare. Just här. Och gör vi det ska vi också hitta Krista Haberman.
(387)

[We have on several occasions suggested that the murderer has a language. He or she is trying to tell us something. We have partially succeeded in breaking the code. Holger Erickson was killed with what can be described as ostentatious brutality. His body was meant to be found. There is a possibility that the site has been picked for another reason. A plea for us to go on searching. On this spot. And if we do that we shall also find Krista Haberman.]

Another such scenography is the death by starvation and strangling of Gösta Runfeldt, which mirrors the drowning of his wife, almost certainly by Runfeldt, under the ice of a lake in Småland ten years before.

Eugen Blomberg's drowning completes a triangle which makes it easier for Wallander to break the murderer's code and find "ett centrum" [a centre] (345). He has already used the surveyor's most important technique, triangulation, after the discovery of Runfeldt's suitcase. Wallander realizes that the case was found in one corner of a triangle made up by connecting Marsvinsholm, Krageholm, and Ystad (266). The final clues are provided by the chance discovery of a railway timetable hidden, like so many vital documents in Gothic novels, in the secret compartment of a desk (378), and of Yvonne Ander's notebook containing the list of her victims (439). Shortly before he finds the timetable, Wallander sees that the investigation must decode the murderer's movement in time as well as space: "vi vet för lite om hur den här kvinnan rör sig. Kanske bilden av ett geografiskt centrum kan klarna om vi ställer upp ett tidsschema?" [we know too little about this woman's movements. Perhaps the picture of a geographic centre may come into focus, if we draw up a timetable] (375).

This pattern of coded language, deceptive scenographies, triangulation points, list, and timetable, is strikingly close to the short story, "Death and the Compass" (147-56) by Jorge Luis Borges, which Marcus uses as an epitome of

metaliterary detective fiction (254-55). In this story, a detective with the coincidentally Swedish name of Erik Lönnrot investigates three murders which take place at three sites in a large city; these sites are located at what the murderer, in an anonymous note sent to the police, calls “the perfect points of a mystical, equilateral triangle” (152). At each murder, the police find a note to the effect that the first, second, and last letters of “*the Name*” (151, author’s italics) have been written. While his Commissioner assumes the serial killing is over, Lönnrot believes that the messages refer to the sacred name of God in Hebrew, which has four letters not three. Noting that the murderer employs symmetry in time as well as space, since the crimes occurred on the third day of three consecutive months (152), Lönnrot goes on March 3 to a villa located at the exact centre of the triangle, where he finds the murderer and his own death. In both Borges’s story and Wallander’s novel, there is a “list”—of respectively letters in Borges’s text and names in Mankell’s. In both works the detective anticipates a fourth murder by a combination of triangulation and timetable. The major difference is that Wallander prevents the fourth murder, whereas Lönnrot is himself the fourth victim.

This coincidental or deliberate intertextuality, and Wallander’s emphasis on reading and decoding, suggest that Mankell, like Borges, is offering us an example of detective metafiction. However, the effect on the reader of the two works is very different. Borges employs the detective genre as the framework of a metaphysical quest narrative. The villa in “Death and the Compass” is, after all, called “Triste-le-Roy” (153). Borges’s labyrinth is a metaphor for the idea of eternal recurrence, which enables Lönnrot to face his death with equanimity (156). Mankell, on the other hand, uses metaliterary techniques to enhance the realism of Wallander’s journey into the social, psychological, and ultimately moral abysses that lead to and are deepened by Ander’s crime. An analogy to Mankell’s technique would be the play-within-the-play in William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* which serves to enhance the tragic effect of the work as a whole.

Wallander does find his geographical centre, Ander’s house with its own architectural centre, the “offerplats” [place of sacrifice] (53) formed by a large baking oven made of bricks (54). The room containing the oven is her “kyrksal” [chapel] (*ibid.*), “sin private helgedom” [her private shrine]. Here, “hon befann sig i centrum av världen” [she found herself at the centre of the world]. However, this shrine is also Ander’s heart of darkness, the place where she begins her metamorphosis from woman to monster.

I mellanrummen uppstår klarheten: Towards clarity

As Wallander moves closer to solving the crimes, the autumn weather has moments that are clear and cold: “Natten var klar. Det hade blivit minusgrader” [The night was clear. The temperature had been below zero] (282). “När samtalet var över blev Wallander stående ute i höstkvällen. Det var en molnfri och klar himmel” [When the conversation was over, Wallander remained standing outside in the autumn evening. The sky was free of clouds and clear] (410). The clear sky mirrors Wallander’s presentiment of resolving the investigation: “Han märkte at han nu var alldeles klar i huvudet” [He noticed that his head now felt quite clear] (281). The clear weather is also a metaphor for a remark once made by his mentor Rydberg, which has become a sacred text for Wallander: “*I mellanrummen uppstår klarheten*” [*Clarity emerges in the intervals*] (354, author's italics). Rydberg’s somewhat runic adage means, I think, that the mixture of hard work and imagination, which detection involves, requires pauses, periods of apparent stasis or silence, during which the seeds of a breakthrough have time to grow. Wallander himself values silence as an investigative technique:

Wallander hade ofta tänkt att viktiga ögonblick i complicerade brottsutredningar antingen inträffade under samtal mellan människor eller i en absolut och koncentrerad tystnad ... Just nu var det tystnaden som gällde.
(176)

[Wallander had often thought that important moments in complex crime investigations either happened during conversations between people or in an absolute and concentrated silence ... Just now it was silence that mattered.]

Wallander’s questioning of Ander begins with a period of silence. She simply refuses to speak, perhaps for the reason that what she has suffered and done is all but unspeakable. She breaks the silence a week after her arrest, and Mankell marks the novel’s final turning point with seasonal precision:

Det var den 3 november 1994.
Just den morgonen låg det frost över landskapet kring Ystad.
(455)

[It was 3 November 1994.
That very morning frost covered the landscape round Ystad.]

Wallander experiences his journey into Ander's mental landscape as a descent into a series of "avgrunder" [abysses] (459). As we have seen, Ander appears in three different personae: deer, woman, and vampire. The innocent victim of her stepfather's brutality becomes the mature woman who sets out indirectly to avenge her mother's murder by tracking down men who have abused or murdered women and escaped from the law. Like a more recent female avenger in Nordic crime fiction—the murderer in Unni Lindell's *Rødhette* [Little Red Riding Hood] (2004)—Ander can claim a considerable degree of justification in her crusade against the brutality of men. However, both women become what they hate. Ander has operated with a rule that "Kvinnor begick bara misstag när de tänkte som män" [Women only made mistakes when they thought like men] (206). The terrible irony of her life is that she ends up thinking and acting like the brutal men she sets out to destroy.

Both detective and reader come close to Rydberg's clarity, but only close. Ander's scenographies were intentional coded messages. She does, however, make unintentional mistakes: she allows the police to find the train timetable and her list of past and future victims. Could these mistakes, especially the last, have been Freudian acts of self-betrayal?

Wallander funderade efteråt på om det betydde att hon egentligen hade velat att det skulle finnas ett spår. Att hon innerst inne had haft en önskan om att bli upptäckt och förhindrad att fortsätta.

Men han vacklade. Ibland trodde han det var så, ibland inte. Han nådde aldrig någon absolut klarhet om vare sig det ena eller det andra.
(465)

[Afterwards, Wallander wondered if it meant that she had actually wanted a clue to be found. That in her deepest self she had nurtured a wish to be discovered and prevented from committing further crimes.

But he wavered. Sometimes he thought it was so, sometimes not. He never reached absolute clarity about whether it was one or the other.]

It is true to the novel's exceptional illusion of reality that we should be left without absolute clarity. The reader is not cheated by an impossibly full understanding of Yvonne Ander; nor does Wallander fail to explore some at least of the abysses in her mind. Where there is resolution—beyond the solution of the crimes—comes in a sense of exhausted relief shared by detective and reader as the novel comes to its end:

Något var nu kanske äntligen över.
Den skånska hösten gick mot vinter.
(474)

[Something was now definitely over at last. Skåne's autumn moved towards winter.]

NOTES

1. Translations of passages from *Den femte kvinnan* are my own.

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