Eyvind Johnson: Tacktal vid nobelmiddagen 1974

Talare	Datum	Plats
Eyvind Johnson Vinnare av Nobelpriset i litteratur	10 december 1974	Stockholm

On behalf of Harry Martinson and myself I will speak as briefly as possible on the situation in which we now find ourselves.

A poet or prose narrator usually looks back on what he has achieved against a backdrop of the years that have passed, generally finding that some of these achievements are acceptable, while others are less so. Such a form of self-criticism is often valuable in that it lends perspective to our lives. It evokes or fortifies recollections of those teachers who have been important to us. These may be long departed thinkers and poets who nonetheless live on by virtue of their work, or contemporary writers, young and old, who have been a source of gratifying inspiration to us and led us along the paths of promise.

We can recall with profound gratitude the fine teachers of our earliest, important schooldays when as youngsters some of us on slates – we practiced the form and order of letters; in due course to acquire a clearer sense for the better or worse use of the alphabet.

A writer's work often reflects what he or she has been exposed to in life; experiences which are the groundwork of a poem or a story. Poet and storyteller both fabulate in order to produce true pictures of reality – reality as it is, or as it seems to them to be. From the throes of inspiration and the eddies of thought the poet may at last be able to arrive at, and convey the right admixture of words and meaning. And your poet or storyteller may sometimes experience a sense of profound egotistical joy in the function of musing, solving and composing.

And at the centre of all the good writing that has been, and is being created stands Man, in the midst of his own kind and surrounded by the technology, violence and compassion that he may encounter in the suffering and happiness which constitutes his individual or social destiny. In the world of the present, in our time, we feel that suffering, anguish, the torments of body and soul, are

greater than ever before in the history of mankind. Many men of science and poets have in their own manner, by various ways and means, and aided by others, sought unceasingly to create a more tolerable world for everyone. And this we should believe: that hope and volition can bring us closer to our ultimate goal: justice for all, injustice for no-one.

Harry Martinson and I would like to thank the Swedish Academy for the honour which it has done us in having the temerity, without consulting us or anyone else, to have placed us in the situation in which we now find ourselves.

At the same time we should like to thank the Foundation which, in the esteemed name of Alfred Nobel, has without protest accepted – indeed been kind enough to approve our presence here today, thereby bestowing upon us something which makes our personal situation – the one to which I have just referred – rather less disagreeable than I have perhaps pretended it to be.

Källa
Hämtat från nobelprize.org (2025-09-23)

Taggar
Nobelpriset, Nobelpriset, Svenska Akademien

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