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tan ingenting. Men också allt, när människor talar utan fruktan, och andra människor lyssnar, utan rädsla för att höra.” (114) I *En civilisation utan båtar* framträder ytterligare en diktarposition som Anyuru identifierar sig med men som Stenbeck inte tar upp, den västafrikanska *jalin*, som förenar urgamla sånger med samtida händelser. ”En krigare var värdelös utan sin jali, sin besjungare, och vice versa. De var oskiljaktiga från varandra”, skriver Anyuru (93), och fortsätter: ”Jalin var rådgivare, medlare, historieberättare.” Här dyker alltså medlaren upp igen.

Samtidigt som Stenbecks analyser är rika och tankeväckande är det alltid vanskligt att inordna konstnärlig verksamhet inom ramen för ett visst perspektiv, särskilt när det gäller förhållandevis nya författarskap där det är svårt att dra långtgående slutsatser. Att i alltför hög grad kategorisera poetiska utsagor och aktiviteter som delar av en tydlig strategi eller som svar på förväntningar utifrån ger i värsta fall en ganska instrumentell bild av konstnärlig verksamhet. På samma sätt riskerar ett utvecklingstänkande där poeten framställs som tydligt på väg från ett förhållningssätt till ett annat att osynliggöra de delar som trots allt är tämligen konstanta. Jag skulle säga att just språkoptimismen är en sådan konstant i Anyurus författarskap.

Evelina Stenbeck har skrivit en både angelägen, gedigen och njutbar avhandling, som trots ett till synes begränsat primärmaterial uppvisar en avsevärd bredd av relevant forskning, begreppsanvändning och intressanta kontextualiseringar. Stenbecks analyser omfattar såväl sensibla textläsningar med ansenligt siktdjup som uppslagsrika undersökningar av aktiviteter och händelser utanför baksidan. Avhandlingen tillhandahåller också viktiga begreppsliga verktyg för undersökningar av den litterära händelsen som processuell och relationell. Stenbeck pekar på konsekvenserna av en förändrad konstsyn och erbjuder därmed också nya sätt att se på tidigare praktiker – i den meningen öppnar undersökningen även för historiska insikter.

Den föredömliga tydligheten ifråga om urval och perspektiv, som gör avhandlingen lätt att överblicka och argumentationen enkel att följa, medför en viss slutenhet inför alternativa analysmodeller med andra möjliga resultat. Även om undersökningen av Johannes Anyurus författarskap har en rad förtjänster, finns anledning att ifrågasätta både den polarisering som skrivs fram utifrån debutsamlingen och dramaturgin kring den språkkris i Aten

som enligt Stenbeck gör poeten till aktivist. Avhandlingen präglas också av en viss oklarhet kring vem eller vad som utgör det handlande subjektet i den aktivistiska, performativa poetiken. Även om självbetnografi och performativ biografism åberopas infinner sig frågan vilken roll poeternas biografi, och livsberättelse spelar och vilken dignitet deras eventuella intentioner ska tillmätas. Vem eller vad är det ytterst som styr över den konstnärliga praktiken – är det den enskilda poeten, omgivningens förväntningar, en övergripande estetik eller handlar det snarare om en funktion i texten?

Invändningarna förtar nu inte det faktum att Stenbecks avhandling utgör ett centralt bidrag till ett på svensk botten tämligen underutforskat fält. Stenbeck pekar ut en nödvändig nyorientering för lyrikforskningen, där de hermeneutiska och modernistiska läsarterna inte räcker till för att fånga spännvidden i en poesi som sätter såväl poetens som det diktande subjektets och det lyriska yttrandets legitimitet och representativitet i fråga. Genom att välja två aktuella författare vars poetiska och aktivistiska praktiker befinner sig någonstans mellan de formmedvetna och budskapsdrivna polerna lyckas Stenbeck också säga någonting väsentligt om en poesi som är nyskapande utan att vara avantgardistisk eller språkpeppistisk. Stenbecks perspektivrika genomlysning av Anyurus och Farrokhzads politiska poesi kommer därför att utgöra en central pusselbit i det fortsatta utforskandet av aktivistisk, performativ dikt med samhällsförändrande syfte och potential.

Åsa Arping

Morten Feldtfos Thomsen, *Scenes of Writing, Scenes of Looking. Don DeLillo, Claus Beck-Nielsen, and the Politics of the Novel*. Institutionen för språk, litteratur och interkultur, Karlstad University Studies 2016:32. Karlstad 2016.

“Literature is dead and the image killed it” (5). With this provocation, Mr. Morten Thomsen opens his meticulously researched dissertation, *Scenes of Writing, Scenes of Looking: Don DeLillo, Claus Beck-Nielsen, and the Politics of the Novel*. This resourceful project is not, however, a whodunit that *recreates* a crime scene, so much as an interrogation of whether a crime (against literature, that is) has been committed at all. In Mr. Thomsen’s hands, the contemporary novel might re-

spend, along with Mark Twain: “News of my death is greatly exaggerated.” This dissertation takes up the contemporary novel in the context of narratology, Visual Culture Studies, and Media and Cultural Studies, asking how such novels employ intermedial forms (that combine text and image) in the digital age. It furthermore asks what political consequences flow from innovations that initially might be regarded purely in formal terms. *Scenes of Writing*, *Scenes of Looking* scrupulously engages the work of relevant theorists in these fields as well as the many literary critics of DeLillo, Beck-Nielsen, and the contemporary novel.

Scenes of Writing, *Scenes of Looking* demonstrates the novel’s ongoing vitality in the face of three significant developments: the emergence of contemporary media ecologies, and particularly digital media; the continued escalation of our ‘society of the spectacle’ and the growing dominance of the image; and the increasing reach of global capitalism and the ways it shapes cultural meanings, including those of the novel. Thomsen considers the ways the aesthetic politics of novelistic form have evolved to respond to these developments — particularly the novel’s intermedial text and image strategies that call attention to their diverse forms of materiality and address themselves to a spectrum of senses. The novels published between 1998 and 2012 with which Thomsen concerns himself — four by American writer Don DeLillo (born in the 1930s), and three by Danish writer and avant-garde artist Claus Beck-Nielsen (born in the 1960s) — demonstrate the ways they are collectively imbricated in dominant perspectival regimes and also labor to disrupt them. Thomsen characterizes DeLillo as a modernist writer preoccupied with America’s post-World War II history with an emphasis on the Cold War, while depicting Beck-Nielsen as an avant-garde writer clearly situated in his own time and place, with an emphasis on the post-9/11 U.S. *War on Terror*. Thomsen conceives of the politics of these novels, however, not in the sense of the two novelists’ direct involvement with political activities but in the narrow sense of how their texts ideologically disrupt the cultural logics through which forms of domination are perceived and naturalized. These contemporary novels are best regarded, then, as strategic interventions that foreground and question habitual forms of perception that normally remain implicit and invisible.

The intermedial relations among text and image thus permeate the scenes of writing and look-

ing referenced in the project’s title, while translating (and thus mediating) the embodied human acts of speech and vision they *constitute* (as opposed to transparently *reflecting* models of reality). Writing and looking are information technologies that presuppose relations of knowledge and power. In DeLillo and Beck-Nielsen’s work, texts, images, and their intermedial combinations establish hierarchies and patterns of interaction. They call attention to their own materiality on the page while reflexively commenting on the ways they make real the world they seek to represent. DeLillo and Beck-Nielsen’s novels are therefore quite distant from those realist novelistic predecessors that are intent on disguising their materiality, or promoting the pretense of omniscient narration. Instead, they each distinctively call into question the god’s-eye-view that is connected to the philosophical stances of Cartesian perspectivalism and its detached, rationalistic, objectifying gaze.

Thomsen prefers the term intermedial to inter-arts because the latter considers visual and verbal arts to be fundamentally distinguishable, whereas this project is devoted to showing their complex layerings. He takes a comparably dialectical approach to the relations between print culture and digital culture, rejecting a simple historical trajectory. Relying on W.J.T. Mitchell’s concept of the imagetext to theorize the unstable dialectic of text and image, Thomsen also expands on it with his own term “imagetext discourse”: a meta-category describing those imagetexts that comment on their own formal or thematic methods of representation. The project is deeply conversant with the discourse and practices of ocularcentrism, a perceptual stance that presumes the centrality of vision as an allegedly neutral tool for the acquisition of knowledge; ocularcentrism is also predicated on the belief that its forms of perception are uncontaminated by the bodies and cultures in which they are inevitably situated. When ocularcentrism combines with Cartesian assumptions concerning the world’s transparent availability to human knowledge it makes up the dominant scopic regime of modernity known as Cartesian perspectivalism: a model that weds detached seeing with rational knowing. Cartesian perspectivalism aims to erase its own conditions of production, along with its inevitable interests, biases, and limits.

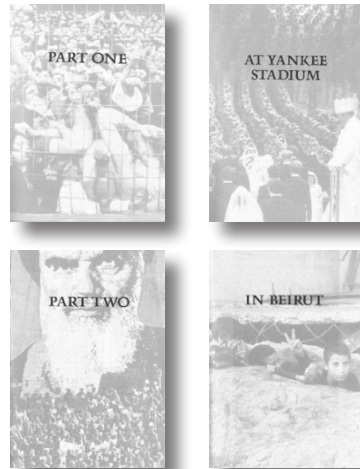
In addition to intermediality and Cartesian perspectivalism, a third essential framework for Thomsen’s project is Jacques Rancière’s aestheticico-politi-

cal concept, *the distributions of the sensible*. Unlike Cartesian perspectivalism, these distributions of the sensible know themselves to be emphatically situated in history and culture, and describe those forces that shape perceptual experience and regulate what can be seen, said, and valued in a particular collective or social context. Rancière's distributions of the sensible thus establish the boundaries and possibilities of sense perception in all its variability. For Rancière, artistic practice is necessarily a *political* practice because it operates through *dissensus*, or the ways that works of art can alter or expand the field of perceptual possibility. Another key theoretical framework for this project is Paul Virilio's *militarization of perception* that occurs through the tightly linked historical development of technologies of vision and technologies of war. Virilio's account of the militarization of perception shows how Cartesian perspectivalism has been historically co-extensive with the development of the tools, strategies, and rationales of warfare.

Thomsen begins his chapter on Don DeLillo with an examination of *Libra* (1988), a novel that recreates the story of John F. Kennedy's assassination by Lee Harvey Oswald; the novel toggles between three perspectives that include Oswald, a group of intelligence officers conspiring against Kennedy, and a CIA employee. Rather than consolidating around a truth that testifies to the knowable reality of Kennedy's assassination, the novel multiplies epistemological uncertainties that are conveyed in part through its own disjointed narration and its multiple, sometimes irreconcilable perspectives. It foregrounds the power of mistakes and accidents over will and intention. Thomsen reads the novel's concern with the visual media of television, film, and photography through Virilio's framework of militarized perception, which helps us comprehend not only the converging technologies of vision and war, but also the emergence of a possible space of resistance to their hegemony. DeLillo achieves that resistance, Thomsen contends, by opposing imagetext discourses to alphabetic writing and print culture, the latter of which jointly contribute to ocularcentrism and military perception. Thomsen shows how Oswald's estrangement from print — his "alienation from the linguistic order" (63), leads to his pursuit of visual permanence through such mass media as magazines, posters, military maps, and films. As Oswald models his life on film, ultimately witnessing himself being shot by Jack Ruby on live televi-

sion, *Libra*, Thomsen argues, shows the collapsing distinction between reality and its visual forms of mediation. Meanwhile, the novel recasts writing as another species of military intervention, such that it takes its place along with rifles and cameras as media that are collectively capable of violent inscription. *Libra* also draws attention to the materiality of the text through typographical innovations that obstruct the text's transparency, insisting that we look *at* as much as *through* the text to find its meaning.

Thomsen reads DeLillo's *Mao II* (1991) as similarly fusing technologies of vision and violence through its depictions of mass media spectacle, with the novel entertaining the proposition that terrorists are the new spectacular authors of contemporary society because of the mass audiences they reach. Thomsen discusses the novel's reproductions of five press photos that address crowds, violence or both: one, on the title page, of the Tiananmen Square protest of 1989; and the others marking the novel's main segments: a mass Moonie wedding; the Hillsborough stadium disaster; Ayatollah Khomeini before an Iranian crowd; and boys stranded in war-ravaged Beirut.



As with *Libra*, Thomsen argues that *Mao II* associates imagetext discourse with the articulation of a "political interventionist agenda" (91). In a Baudriallardian vein, photos threaten to precede and effectually replace their subjects, and to pursue unpredictable, semiotic journeys as images circulating through multiply redefining contexts. Subjectivity is thus drained or flattened, while images of the real create a pastiche in which truths and fan-

tasies appear to be interchangeable. Even books succumb to this consumer logic of the image, as they become methods of totalitarian inscription in ways that bear comparison with images (as we see in the description of Mao's *Little Red Book* as having been "written on the consciousness of the Chinese people" [101]). By these standards, the novel's American author Bill Gray must reassess himself as a failed authoritarian, even as he tries to defend the democratic power of dissent. Thomsen shows us the ways *Mao II* employs imagetexts as fragmentary, malleable modes of materiality, the digital nature of which allows them to entangle themselves with porous bodies and redefine them. While author Bill Gray attempts to sequester himself in a house that reads like a mausoleum of print culture and its protocols of archival control, he later succumbs to random events that strip him of both control and identity when a stranger's removal of the wallet from his corpse assures its future anonymity. Instead, a photographer's proof sheets take his place.

Thomsen reads DeLillo's monumentally scaled epic *Underworld* (1997) through the imagetext tradition of montage and collage associated with Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, whose imaginary film *Underworld* the novel painstakingly describes. *Underworld's* "multi-media-mimicry," as Thomsen puts it, draws upon photography, TV, advertising, graffiti, documentary and fiction film, painting, and sculpture in its 800 odd pages. Thomsen continues his argument about the ways the media ecology of this novel, too, demonstrates how "human consciousness [is] increasingly interpenetrated by militarized technology" (119) — here, in the context of the Cold War. The eye is under assault: it becomes "a naked receptor of visual stimuli" (121) as it is subjected to the violent intrusions of ocularcentrist control. The increasingly digitized world detaches itself from analog's indexical referentiality into the more abstract currency of ones and zeros — numbers and coordinates that translate the particularities of the real into a homogenizing code. Consumerism and surveillance technologies also coningle to impose new limits and values on the sense of sight. The numerous art and aesthetics projects depicted in *Underworld*, Thomsen contends, are marked by these forces as well as the militarization of perception, despite repeated attempts to resist and resignify them. Artist Klara Sax epitomizes this paradox through the lyrical paintings rendered by hand on retired B-52

bombers — paintings that aspire to alter and transcend the planes' military meanings through touch and imagery. But her work remains in tension with these more dominant perceptual frameworks. Another character's subway graffiti similarly forges a link between art and violence by aspiring to vandalize the eyeballs of its conscripted viewers. Perhaps more could be said about the underground location of this graffiti artist's pictorial writing, however. From the novel's ekphrastic account of the false Eisenstein film with which *Underworld* shares its name, to the novel's many other spatialized schemas that draw attention to characters' occupation of perceptual positions *from above* and *from below*, we might ask whether the text's spatial mapping holds wider perceptual significance. Still, Thomsen's analyses of the novel's alternative perceptual regimes that critique or subvert Cartesian perspectivalism's disembodied and abstracted modes of knowledge are convincing on their own terms.

The collaboration of violence and spectacle in the militarization of perception achieves a tragic apotheosis with the destruction of the Twin Towers on 9/11, and DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* (2007) is set in New York City's historical *before and after* of that event. Conspicuously, the novel declines directly to reproduce any images of that spectacle; however, it employs a fictional artist whose performances mimic the iconic falling man referenced in the novel's title. This proxy character enables DeLillo to engage "in a meta-aesthetical interrogation of the role of art and literature in the face of trauma and traumatic imagery" (152) that amounts to a transformation of perception, in which shock inaugurates an epistemological crisis of uncertainty. Those events furthermore reconfigure global politics on a par with the end of the Cold War, providing the U.S. with a new but more diffuse enemy in Al-Qaeda, whose acts of terrorism motivate a series of tactical and perceptual realignments the novel both chronicles and enacts through its multiple and partial narratives.

Beck-Nielsen's *Beckwerk trilogy*, Thomsen contends, must be situated in the aftermath of those realignments. Despite the absence of direct engagements with the events of 9/11 in the three novels, it remains an implicit reference for the trilogy's consideration of the relations among spectacle, literature, and politics. While Beck-Nielsen's trilogy picks up historically from DeLillo's *Falling Man*, their respective aesthetic strategies and political resonances pointedly diverge: Beck-Nielsen takes

a more ambivalent stance towards images than DeLillo's extreme iconophobia. And unlike the adversarial struggle between words and images depicted in DeLillo's novels, the *Beckwerk trilogy* pursues their intermingling to denaturalize the colonialist assumptions buried in the Cartesian project — the characters' well-intended democratic efforts to the contrary. Thomsen describes the *Beckwerk trilogy* as "an avant-garde multimedia performance project" (164) that makes use of Internet webpages, video and photography installations, newspapers, essays, plays, and musical albums. It includes three novels — *The Suicide Mission* (2005), *Sovereign* (2008), and *The Fall of Great Satan* (2012) — that collectively follow the travels of Nielsen (as the author calls his character) and his partner Rasmussen as they attempt to establish a *democratic dialogue* with the people they meet on their journey. For this purpose, they carry an aluminum briefcase crudely labeled The Democracy, the better, presumably, to deliver that purportedly Western blessing to their hosts.



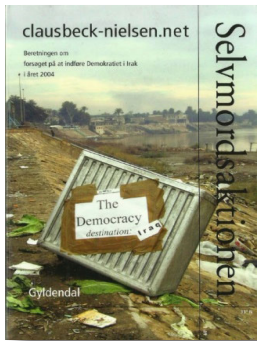
Nielsen and Rasmussen make one journey in each novel: from Kuwait to Bagdad (in 2004 during the second Gulf War); from New York City to Washington D.C. (in the days prior to the U.S. presidential election of 2004); and across Iran (in 2006).

The three novels employ distinctive narrative strategies: *The Suicide Mission* is told retrospectively from 2025 by a single narrator and includes a montage of *outside* texts authored by the character, Nielsen; *Sovereign* is narrated exclusively by Nielsen; and *The Fall of Great Satan* makes use of a multi-perspectival narration with only Nielsen and Rasmussen named among the large group of first-person narrators. The first two books include a panoply of photos, maps, and other graphic images, while the final book includes only one kind of im-

age. But together they nevertheless form a relatively cohesive narrative that mixes fact and fiction, social criticism and satire, using Denmark's participation in the American-led coalition that invaded and occupied Iraq in 2003 as their starting point. Thomsen focuses on these diverse images' collaboration in structuring "perceptions and conceptions of reality as well as governing the conditions of possibility for political and social engagement" (169). The context of war, he suggests, has made such images more contested than ever before — even, perhaps, an emergent method of warfare itself through their intention to shape the global imaginary.

Although the *Beckwerk trilogy* employs a hyperbolic discourse of utopian ocularcentrism, it proves to be ineffective as a mechanism for political change. Instead, Nielsen and Rasmussen haplessly reproduce the forms of oppression and violence they overtly oppose. Nielsen attributes the failure of vision to deliver knowledge and control to the disorienting state of exception that defines the Iraqi war zone. But the canny reader, Thomsen implies, will discover in Nielsen's confusion a more basic critique of the stability, accessibility, and neutrality of visual knowledge. Initially, Rasmussen is depicted as the more successful interpreter of the two, but more on the order of a visionary than a keen observer. Nor does his visionary status last long; as it abandons him he is left with nothing more than phenomenal experience that proves of limited communicative and collective value. Meanwhile, Nielsen's persistent belief in the objective power of photography and film takes on a totalitarian tinge — an aestheticization of politics, if I may use Walter Benjamin's terms, rather than its progressive alternative, the politicization of aesthetics. He places his faith, in Thomsen's words, in spectacle rather than truth, as he reveals himself to be a self-absorbed, self-promoting artist who reduces others to proverbial film extras on a stage set he orchestrates. Rasmussen's description of Nielson as someone who "stages his own myth" (190) recalls the propaganda strategies of fascism — a potential, Thomsen suggests, that is inherent in the ocularcentrist project. The third book in the trilogy, *The Fall of Great Satan*, features a disenchanted Nielsen cannibalizing Rasmussen's corpse as he (in a nod to Bataille) disarticulates and consumes Rasmussen's eye (while pocketing the other). Thomsen's reading of these embodied processes as subversions of existing modes of perception and hierarchies of knowledge is thoroughly persuasive.

The *Beckwerk trilogy* finally turns to perceptual synesthesia as a means of producing the dissensus requisite to reorganizing distributions of the sensible, with digital technologies creating text-image hybrids that destabilize ocularcentrism. Rather than try to summarize these many individual readings, let me foreground two exemplary segments, the first being the cover of the trilogy's book one, Beck-Nielsen's 2005 *Suicide Mission*.



Thomsen describes the suitcase or “democracy box” and its situation in this partly sunny, detritus-filled landscape. Together, they:

decisively dissociate “the Democracy” from the utopian connotations with which Nielson associates it. [...] the box is now “caught balancing on the edge of its own fall or slow slide into the abyss” among a “swarm of garbage” from which it is no longer substantially different. [...] The narrator turns his attention towards the sky such as represented in the photograph, which in turn leads him to reflect upon the characteristics of the digital images [...] as a producer of illusions rather than a recorder of objective reality. (252–253)

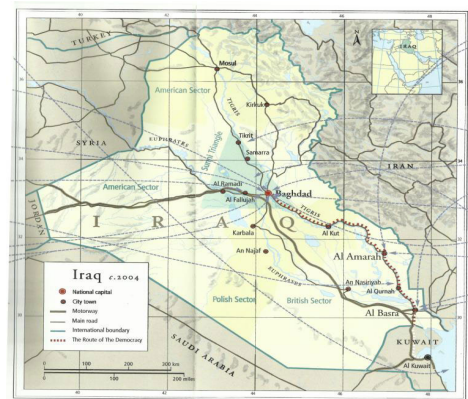
Thomsen notes the worn-down character of the box, the false blue of the sky, as well as the significance of Beck-Nielsen’s digital address in lieu of a conventional attribution of authorship; each are indicators of the ways digital technologies absorb and make credible visual and social contradictions. The word-image relationship is thus one of convergence rather than antagonism. Whereas analog photography is thought to be a *writing of nature*, digital representation is situated “explicitly in the context of spectacular capitalist consumerism” and the ways it buttresses militarized perception. He concludes:

[T]he narrator indicates that Nielsen and Rasmussen’s mission as well as the digital image is part

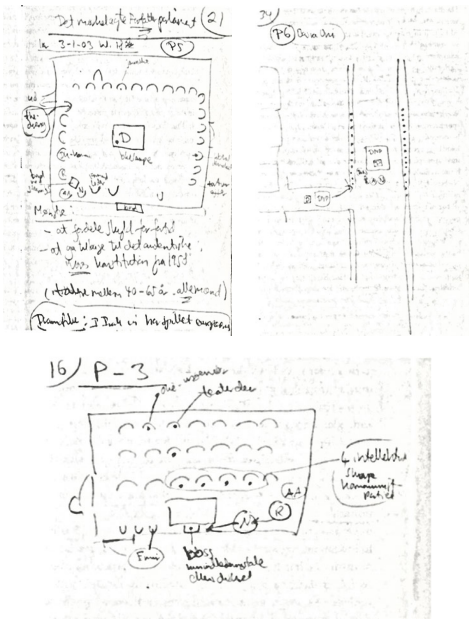
of a larger ideological system responsible for the war. [...] [T]he narrator here engages in a form of interventionist iconoclasm. (255)

For Thomsen, this iconoclasm should not be misconstrued as an attempt to denigrate the digital toward recuperating the authority of the narrative voice; rather, it serves to counter the more seamless interpenetration of words and images otherwise found throughout the trilogy. Beck-Nielsen’s efforts, in other words, are motivated by the desire to reveal the politics of iconoclasm and its ideological underpinnings.

Thomsen’s readings of the maps and other cartographic elements in the trilogy extend the project’s analysis of Cartesian perspectivalism by exposing the ways these text-image artifacts, too, are imbricated in a visual language of power and the militarization of perception. Because maps historically have contributed to a wider geographical imaginary linked to colonialism and the rise of the nation-state, they are best regarded as *graphic narratives* that tell the history of the ways a particular landscape has been ordered, at the same time that they abstract and efface human presence and other qualitative characteristics. Through the rationalization of space reified in such maps, he concludes, Iraq is reconfigured as a static, homogenous space.



Yet even Nielson’s hand-drawn sketches betray similar (and paradoxically more overt) tendencies toward rationalizing *the Other*, despite their manifestly more tactile and embodied production:



Thomsen argues that these sketches:

[a]re meant to represent a kind of open, democratic space. Instead they quite clearly attempt to impose a hierarchy of difference between Nielsen & Rasmussen and the people they encounter. “[T]he Iraqi people are each represented on the drawing by a little dot, while Nielsen & Rasmussen [...] sit as initials in their own spacious circle.” (Neilson 271).

The sketches thus promote Nielsen & Rasmussen to the status of autonomous subjects compared with the nearly identical and anonymous Iraqis.

In the concluding brief chapter, “Towards a Politics of the Novel,” Thomsen returns to Rancière’s arguments in order to ask: “Is the print novel a viable tool of political intervention in the so-called *age of the image*? And if so, how might such a politics manifest itself?” (296). Because DeLillo and Beck-Nielsen’s aesthetic strategies disrupt reigning regimes of perception, he concludes, they complexly contribute to the new modes of perception described in Rancière’s *redistributions of the sensible*. Such an understanding of a politics that proceeds from the formal, the aesthetic, and the perceptual may not satisfy all comers, given that the trajectory from aesthetic strategies to political change often involves barely legible, subtlety-unconscious challenges to naturalized epistemological stances; their paths are anything but straightforward. In this conviction, however, Thomsen joins a larger

group of Marxist, post-Marxist, and Foucaultian theorists of ideology and discourse in stressing the ways that a dissensus anchored in the body, materiality and the particularities of spacetime has the capacity to reorganize perception, and therefore directly to challenge the idealization of disembodied abstraction and control that govern Cartesian perspectivalism’s perceptual regimes — even those most well-defended (as it were) in the form of militarized perception.

In the book version of this project I look forward to a more systematic situation of these arguments within a broader critical conversation about the politics of form (from Lukàcs on realism, Benjamin on modernism and film, Peter Burger on the avant-garde, Jameson on the novel in late capitalism, to Terry Eagleton’s *the ideology of the aesthetic*). Identifying Beck-Nielsen’s work in the tradition of the avant-garde, furthermore, raises larger periodizing questions about DeLillo’s and Beck-Nielsen’s distinctive attitudes toward intermediality, ocularcentrism, and the seeming iconophobia manifested in their respective later works — attitudes that may gain legibility through more direct explorations of modernist and postmodernist aesthetic paradigms. Such explorations could profitably also engage with the discourses of post- and transhumanism — discourses that dismantle the unified body of the Cartesian observer toward its reconfiguration into assemblages and other prosthetic forms that more widely distribute agency. These sorts of conceptual encounters could sharpen the project’s assessment of the political strategies employed by its central texts in the larger context of the novel’s co-evolution with image cultures, while historicizing the contributions of Jacques Rancière. In a final iteration of this project, too, I would like to see a wider engagement with text-centered models of intermediality such as ekphrastic images that figure so prominently in DeLillo, given that they internally stage some of the intermedial contradictions Thomsen finds central to a critique of ocularcentrism.

However, this extremely lucid, well-argued dissertation on the political possibilities that inhere in text-image intermediality is impressively conversant with a wide spectrum of criticism and theory and anchored in precise close readings of its primary texts. Thomsen achieves these things, moreover, while negotiating two quite different national traditions and languages. While any successful project raises as many questions as it answers, one

measure of the accomplishments of *Scenes of Writing*, *Scenes of Looking* is the very difficulty of the questions it inspires.

Karen Jacobs

Katrin Lilja Waltå, *”Äger du en skruvmejsel?” Litteraturstudiets roll i läromedel för gymnasiets yrkesinriktade program under Lpf 94 och Gy 2011*. Humaniora med inriktning mot utbildningsvetenskap, institutionen för litteratur, idéhistoria och religion, Göteborgs universitet. Göteborg 2016

Via min egen forskning har jag blivit varse att en boks paratexter säger mer om innehållet än man vanligtvis tänker sig. Inte mycket finns där av en slump. Omslaget till Katrin Lilja Waltås avhandling pryds av ungt yrkesfolk i något som synes vara fritt fall mot ett okänt underlag utanför bild. Hur denna bild korrelerar med avhandlingens innehåll kommer förhoppningsvis att framgå nedan.

Lilja Waltå tar utgångspunkt i sin egen beprövade erfarenhet som svensklärare vid gymnasieskolans yrkesinriktade program och problematiserar förhållandet att det produceras olika läromedel för olika elevgrupper när det gäller gymnasiegemensamma kurser, det vill säga kurser som har en gemensam kursplan, som gäller samtliga studieinriktningar och där alla elever ska bedömas utifrån samma betygsriterier. Vidare uppmärksammas vi på det faktum att ”[t]rots att mycket tyder på att läroboken spelar en viktig roll när det gäller förmedling av kunskaper, normer och värderingar” så råder det ”i det närmaste en total tystnad om den i debatten om skolan”, en debatt som vi alla annars känner som tämligen överhettad i spåren av de senaste tjugofem årens sjunkande resultat för svenska skolelever i internationella jämförelser.

Efter att Statens Institut för Läromedelsgranskning skrotades under tidigt 1990-tal har läromedelsmarknaden kommersialiserats och den enskilde läraren får själv avsätta tid för granskning av hur olika läromedel förhåller sig till skolans styrdokument – tid som Lilja Waltå påtalar är en bristvara för lärare idag. Kan kommersialiseringen av läromedelsbranschen och bristande granskning av vilken kunskaps- och människosyn olika läromedel förmedlar på något vis ha påverkat de sjunkande skolresultaten för svenska elever? Ja, det kommer vi inte att kunna föra i bevis här även om man kan nära en misstanke om samband. Sådan tur då att

landet Sverige ändå har en och annan didaktiskt bevandrad doktorand, som viger sitt studium åt just läromedelsanalys.

Efter en föredömligt kort och kärnfull inledning presenteras avhandlingens syfte och forskningsfrågor. Forskningsmaterialet utgörs av ett läromedel i ämnet svenska som förlaget Gleerups marknadsfört och riktat mot gymnasiets yrkesinriktade program: *Bra Svenska* och *Blickpunkt*. De är producerade under 2000-talet då *Läroplan för de frivilliga skolformerna (Lpf) 94* fortfarande var den gällande läroplanen, men har delvis reviderats utifrån 2011 års gymnasiereform. Syftet är att ”undersöka vilka förväntningar på att läsa och bearbeta litteratur som förmedlas” i detta läromedel i svenska för gymnasiets yrkesinriktade program och vilka förutsättningar för meningsskapande de erbjuder. Frågorna till materialet är två: vilka kunskaps-, ämnes- och litteratursyner förmedlas i läromedlets läroböcker och vad det säger om läroböckernas modellläsare, samt på vilket sätt läromedlet förändras i samband med att det revideras inför en ny läroplan?

Här stöter vi för första gången på begreppet modellläsare som Lilja Waltå hämtat från Umberto Eco:s teoribildning om hur vi kan förstå läsarens roll i kommunikationsprocessen mellan författare, text och läsare. Redan här kan det vara på sin plats att slå fast att denne modellläsare inte på något vis ska sammanblandas med den empiriske läsaren som oftast faktiskt står fri att bruka texten helt efter egna intressen och behov.

Innan vi går vidare har vi dock ytterligare några preciseringar angående avhandlingens mål som behöver belysas. Svenskämnet brukar beskrivas i termer av ett språk- och litteraturämne och här redogörs för hur man över tid har förhållit sig till dessa entiteter och hur olika bildningsideal manifesterats i svenskundervisning vid olika tider och i olika utbildningar. Som avhandlingens undertitel lovar är det litteraturstudiets roll i läromedel för yrkesinriktade program som fokuseras här. Det material som analyseras i *Bra Svenska* och *Blickpunktsböckerna* är de skönlitterära texterna med tillhörande uppgiftsmaterial.

Avhandlingen placeras vidare in i de klassiska didaktiska grundfrågorna vad, hur, varför och vem? Vad-frågan kopplas till läroböckernas texturval, alltså innehållets beskaffenhet. Hur-frågan handlar här om uppgiftskulturer i läromedlen och hur den lästa litteraturen bearbetas. Vem-frågan handlar om vilka modellläsare böckerna konstruerar och förutsätter. Slutligen kopplas varför-frågan