

as an embodied subject. According to Thomsen, von Trier's body of work is marked by an increasing concern for spectatorial affect. Inspired by Deleuze's notion of the diagram (itself adapted from the semiotic theory of C. S. Peirce), which Deleuze describes as a kind of sign that provides an abstract representation of information in a meaningful (though not indexical or figurative) way, Thomsen coins the term "affektdiagrammer" (affect diagrams) to describe von Trier's affective strategies. Von Trier's "affect diagrams" often take the form of close-ups of parts of the body that can verge on abstraction, but which also address the viewer as an embodied being on an affective level. In von Trier's recent films, "affect diagrams" have also taken the form of super-slow motion sequences only made possible by the latest high-speed digital cinematography. These sequences often invoke painterly composition strategies, while at the same time forming abstract "diagrams" in the sense that they have an uncertain relationship to the diegetic unfolding of the plot.

Thomsen's book is admirable in its thorough and meticulous analysis of von Trier's strategies for addressing an embodied viewer and foregrounding the paradoxical combination of hypermediation with a compelling kind of affective realism. It is an essential book for anyone interested in von Trier's films and is particularly strong in its analysis of the many different ways von Trier has addressed (and confronted) the spectator throughout his career. My main critique of the book is a rhetorical one, namely, that Thomsen assumes a level of familiarity with Deleuzian concepts that not all readers will have, which leads her to define central terms such as "haptic vision" and "diagram" in ways that can be vague or elliptical. This kind of rhetorical signaling and meta-commentary may be justified in a study that draws so densely on a range of theorists and philosophers. Yet a more explicit and direct definition of terms, along with more frequent evocation of these definitions throughout the book, would lead the reader more smoothly through Bodil Marie Stavning Thomsen's wide-ranging and thought-provoking analyses of von Trier's films.

Benjamin Bigelow
University of California at Berkeley

■ Jennifer Eastman Attebery. *Pole Raising and Speech Making: Modalities of Swedish American Summer Celebration*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2015. Pp. 184.

In recent years Scandinavian American historiography has been characterized by a number of studies dealing with different kinds of identity-formation processes among immigrants and their descendants. This line of research has been an important complement to the demographic and social dimen-

sions that characterized the field for many years, especially in Scandinavia. Jennifer Eastman Attebery has been an important voice in this “cultural turn” among scholars of the Swedish American community. Her 2007 book *Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience* (University of Minnesota Press) broke new and important ground by using immigrant letters to analyze the creation of a Swedish American identity. In addition she focused her (and our) attention on the specific conditions of the Swedish Americans of the Intermountain West, an area that had received relatively little attention up until that time.

In her new book, Attebery continues her explorations of identity processes among Swedish Americans in the northern Rocky Mountains—Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado. She uses a variety of celebrations as a way of understanding how Swedish Americans related to traditions of both their ancestral and adopted lands, and how these traditions became a central part in the creation of new identities specific to the experiences of the migrants and their descendants in America. The celebrations that form the core of her analysis are what she calls “spring-to-summer celebrations,” occurring from May to July. They include American holidays, such as Decoration Day (today, Memorial Day), and the Fourth of July, as well as Swedish celebrations connected to Midsummer, and specific Mormon celebrations, such as Pioneer Day (commemorating the entry of the first Mormons into the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847).

This is a rich book that makes use of a number of sources in archives and libraries in both the United States and Sweden. Attebery’s use of the Swedish-language press in the Rocky Mountain states is particularly effective, and she shows how much can be done with this often elusive and unwieldy source material. She also continues to be informed by letters and by a number of speeches and orations given at the various events.

Midsummer is a central celebration in Swedish America—or as Attebery puts it, “what could be more Swedish American than Midsummer?” (p. 6). She gives us a careful and interesting discussion of a variety of Midsummer celebrations in Swedish America in general, and in the Rockies in particular. She shows how Midsummer celebrations were uncommon during the early phase of the migration and were introduced into Swedish America around the turn of the nineteenth century, a time during which such celebration underwent a revival in Sweden. It was often Swedish Americans returning from a summer visit to Sweden who brought an awareness of the tradition to Swedish America, and a willingness to celebrate it. Although Midsummer celebrations were occasions to meet with family or friends, they increasingly took on organized and public dimensions. In the major urban settlements of Denver and Salt Lake City, Midsummer excursions, or *utflykter*, often by train, were arranged for travel to parks

or recreational areas where picnics were held, food was eaten, and full programs presented.

In 1894 in Eden Park in Bountiful, Utah, for example, a midsummer pole was raised together with dancing, singing, and games. A formal program followed, with more music and speeches. Attebery has an interesting discussion of the oratorical components of the celebrations, where leaders of different factions of the Swedish American community, such as Dr. Charles A. Bundsen of Colorado, were given an opportunity both to speak to and speak for their fellow immigrants. The contents of these addresses were not always explicitly ethnic, and often resembled non-ethnic US rhetorical styles of the times; yet as Attebery shows, they also functioned as a way of creating and maintaining local Swedish American communities.

Midsummer was not the only spring-to-summer celebration marked by the Swedish Americans in the Rockies. It was a “crowded calendar,” and Attebery shows how Swedish Americans participated in both Decoration Day and Independence Day celebrations. These American holidays became ways for the ethnic community to assert its loyalty to the new country. Although different in origins, interesting combinations of Swedish and American practice emerged in these celebrations, which Attebery frames in terms of secular and religious, but also in light of the long discussion of civil religion in America.

The Latter-Day Saint (LDS; Mormon) component makes this book particularly interesting. Significant numbers of Scandinavians converted to the LDS Church and emigrated to Utah and other Mormon areas in the Rockies during the nineteenth century. Attebery’s discussion of how they related not only to Sweden and the United States, but also to the LDS Church, adds significantly to our understanding of a previously understudied dimension of Swedish immigration history. It is striking how Pioneer Day and Independence Day celebrations resonated with each other, and how Swedish immigrants managed to include both of them in their own constructions of who they were.

Jennifer Eastman Attebery has written an important book about celebrations and traditions among Swedish Americans in the Rockies. The “spring-to-summer celebrations” provide us with a meaningful and new way of observing and understanding how Swedish Americans found a place in their adopted homeland. The book also reminds us of the varieties of the Swedish American experience. The midwestern experience has long dominated our view of Swedish America, and the perspective from the Rockies serves as an important addition to this picture.

Dag Blanck

Uppsala University & Augustana College