



HDK-VALAND – HÖGSKOLAN FÖR KONST OCH DESIGN

VEM VITTNAR FÖR VITTNET?

Det litterära verket som vittnesmål och översättning

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Akademisk avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i konstnärlig gestaltning vid HDK-Valand – Högskolan för konst och design, Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av Konstnärliga fakultetens dekan offentligt kommer att försvaras torsdagen den 26 november 2020 kl 13:00 i Aulan, HDK-Valand, Vasagatan 50, Göteborg.

Disputationen sker virtuellt via Zoom

På grund av restriktioner i samband med COVID-19 sker disputationsakten med hjälp av videolänk (verktyget Zoom), där deltagare behöver tillgång till en dator och ett nätverk. För att garantera offentlighet har HDK-Valand en lokal där disputationen visas på storbildsskärm. För att begränsa smittspridningen gäller erbjudandet att ta del av disputationen via skärm i Aulan, HDK-Valand, Vasagatan 50, Göteborg, endast de som inte har tillgång till egen dator. Begränsat antal platser. Alla deltagare kommer att ges möjlighet att ställa frågor vid slutet av disputationen, via Zoom.

Fakultetsopponent:
Professor Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, Södertörns högskola

Abstract

Title: Vem vittnar för vittnet? – Det litterära verket som vittnesmål och översättning
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Two brothers are riding the subway in Toronto. They have been spending some time in the city as guests of their family – aunts and cousins. Everyone is originally from Iran, but the brothers have lived most of their lives in Sweden. As the train rushes through the greater metropolitan area, the exasperation they feel, augmented by the sticky summer heat, starts consuming them, until they start speaking with each other. The one brother is annoyed by the way the other speaks Persian with their family. Little by little, the conversation evolves into an argument, and finally into a full-blown verbal conflict. Suddenly, they notice the other passengers are staring at them, and with a flash of shame they realize that the curiosity of the perplexed faces staring at them is because their animated argument has been conducted in Swedish – a language that sounds nothing like what would have been expected from two Middle Eastern men. The point of departure for this inquiry is the brothers' ability and inability to express intimacy and conflict in a language that can only exist as translation. The inquiry attempts to answer the question of how this event can be written, when the context that constitutes the receiving end of the account is shaped by the colonial history of the West – that is, when the potential reader is informed by a colonialist and racist epistemology. The study explores the possibility of decolonial practices embedded in literary and poetic writing. What is found at the heart of the inquiry is the literary construction of the event, not the event itself. By putting language into play, not only as a system of signs used for communication or critical thought but also as a poet and writer's concrete working material, the study explores what is characteristically literary in texts that are the result of artistic practices, and how such texts operate not only to report an event but to change their readers from spectators of the events to witnesses. In effect, this is an inquiry into the possibility of poetic and literary language to challenge and shift epistemic systems by way of non-symbolic language.