



Into the Blue. The Visualization of Building Walls and Transgressing Borders in Scandorama by Hannele Mikaela Taivassalo and Catherine Anyango Grünewald

by Camilla Storskog

ABSTRACT: This essay examines *Scandorama*, a graphic novel from 2018 scripted by the Finland-Swedish writer Hannele Mikaela Taivassalo and drawn by the Kenyan-Swedish artist Catherine Anyango Grünewald. The work is read as a comment to unsettling trends in contemporary Scandinavia such as rising nationalisms, anti-immigrant sentiments, and the destruction of nature. Special attention is given to how the issues of building walls and transgressing borders are recorded not only on a verbal level but, first and foremost, to the ways in which these concerns are entrusted to the visual code of comics. It is argued that the chromatic structure employed in the book creates a visual subtext expressing the dystopian theme embedded in *Scandorama*. Through the use of a single colour, blue, in a monochrome storyworld, the idea of erecting walls and transgressing borders is backed up and expressed in at least three contexts investigated in the article: (1) 'othering'; (2) architecture; (3) body and mind. Here, the dramaturgical potential of colour combines with motives such as government surveillance, loss of individualism, genetic engineering, futuristic technology, environmental destruction, and urban settings to produce a dystopian 'blueprint'.

KEY WORDS: *Scandorama*; dystopia and the graphic novel; colour in comics; Taivassalo and Anyango Grünewald; border studies in graphic literature; othering in comic art



INTRODUCTION

If it holds true that contemporary scholarship on comics and graphic novels is “reasserting the primacy of the image” (Fraser 8), one might, in good conscience and as a sign of the times, set aside the mantra according to which a book should not be judged by its cover. The artwork on the front cover of *Scandorama*, a graphic novel from 2018 scripted by the Finland-Swedish writer Hannele Mikaela Taivassalo and drawn by the Kenyan-Swedish artist Catherine Anyango Grünewald, could then be considered as a window into the storyworld, cleverly suggesting the book’s complexity (fig. 1). As Anyango Grünewald has revealed in an interview (Remmets), the image on the front cover references the physicist Erwin Schrödinger’s notorious thought experiment from 1935. In this conceptual paradox, the scientist imagined a sealed steel box containing a cat, a Geiger counter (detecting and measuring radiation), a radioactive substance, a hammer, and a vial of poison. As the radioactive substance decayed, the Geiger would detect it and activate the hammer, which would smash the vial, thus releasing the poison inside the box and killing the cat. Schrödinger argued that since the process of radioactive decay is unpredictable there would be no way of knowing whether the cat inside the box was dead or alive at a given moment, hence the paradox: until the box is opened, Schrödinger assumed, the cat must be considered to be both dead and alive, his point being the farcical dismantling of the principle that subatomic particles can exist in multiple states simultaneously.¹

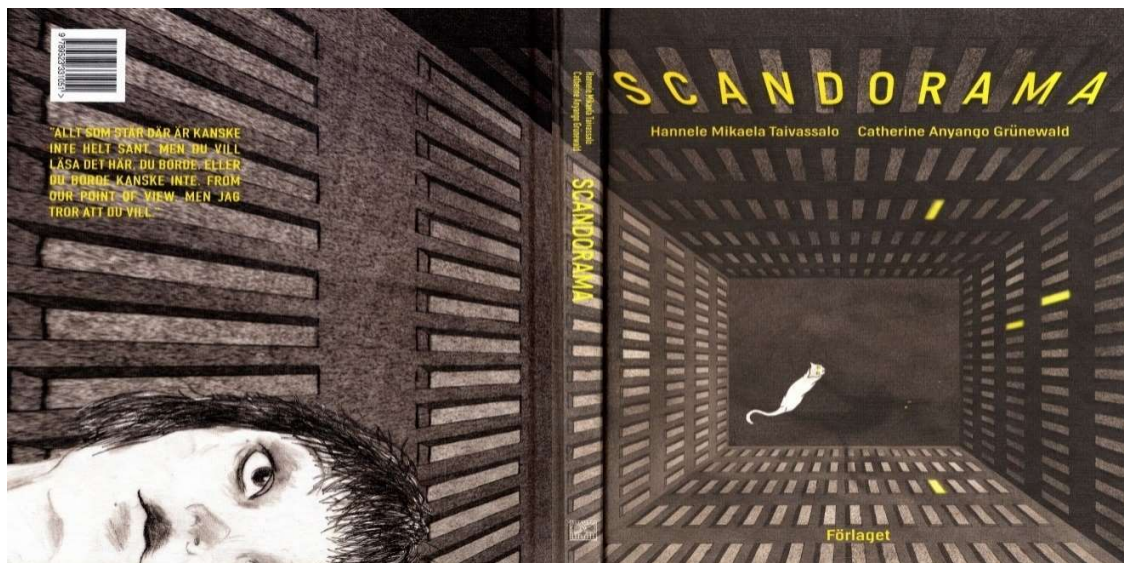


Fig. 1 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald. *Scandorama*, 2018, front and back cover. Panels from *Scandorama* are reproduced by kind permission from the artist Catherine Anyango Grünewald and Förlaget©.

¹ For more information on Schrödinger’s cat, see Kramer.



The issue at stake here is not, of course, so much Schrödinger's response to theories of quantum physics as the idea of a dual state, which supports the plot in *Scandorama*. As Anyango Grünewald points out in the aforementioned interview, the image on the front cover featuring a white cat and its black shadow might represent both the view from the top of a box and from its bottom, depending on how you look at it (Remmets). Flip the book around, turn it 90 degrees to the left and you get a worm's eye view of the protagonist Miskatt pitted against a high-rise building which is also the extension of one of the four sides of the cat's box.

This duality, the inside and the outside, and the play with points of view are reflected in the storyworld: in Neoscandia, a futuristic pan-Scandinavian state with closed borders, *Scandorama* is under development to become an elitist society for the "almost nearly perfect people".² The perfect society is, however, achieved through genetic engineering and deportation of misfits, aspects signalling the thin line that separates utopia from dystopia. This precarious balance is, moreover, also upheld by some rather unsettling trends of today such as rising nationalisms, anti-immigrant sentiments, and the destruction of nature, which draw *Scandorama* close to what Erika Gottlieb (27) has called the "dark mirror" of dystopian fiction, "a warning that we should not let the still curable illness of our present world to turn into the abhorrent pathologies of the world of the future". Indeed, the ways in which the utopian dream of a perfect society turns into dystopia and, as we will see, boundaries between future, past and present blur in the narration, make this graphic novel something of a cautionary tale.

In spite of its elliptical plot and a spare verbal narration, *Scandorama* tells of the past, the present and the future. The reader enters the northernmost part of Neuropa through the first-person perspective of Miskatt, a representative of the so-called *experimentfolket* (the experiment people) and the outcome of genetic research on human-feline hybrids conducted at the government-funded agency Scantek/Gentek in Helsingy City. Here, in a city of ruins, home to the debris that has slipped through the nets of the human engineers, Miskatt lives and is connected with Scunderground, an organized movement of resistance led by the defector Doc N, working for the victims of Doc S. On a mission orchestrated by Doc N, Miskatt is sent to the melting Arctic to liberate Marione and Maritwo, a couple of twins held at a research station. Along with her comes Gustaf, a lost blue-eyed boy from the golden upper class of Stohome City, the home of the beautiful, and a drug addict on the verge of giving himself up to science in exchange for money and pills.

Although the narration is episodic, at times even rhapsodically disjointed, it sends out tentacles spreading from past, present to future, sensors encouraging the reader to piece together an account of connected fragments that reference historical figures from the past, speak of the dark side of our contemporary world, and make use of *topoi* familiar to futuristic, dystopian narratives. As we will see, allusions to race biology and Nazi human experimentation resonate with the Swedish interwar years, while details such as cerebral doping and blister packs with blue *kristallin* pills draw

² The expression is borrowed from the title given to the British journalist Michael Booth's witty account of 'the Nordic miracle', see Booth.



the narration close to the genre of the drug dystopia.³ That said, the presence of phenomena such as global warming, nuclear waste, immigration, segregation, and deportation makes the text frighteningly current for both a historical and a futuristic scenario. These multiple chronological levels will guide us through the work.

AIMS AND METHODS

All these issues bring to the fore the question of walls and borders, concrete and metaphorical, including and excluding, so much so that one could argue for an examination of *Scandorama* from the perspective of the multidisciplinary field of border studies. Border studies, just like their object of investigation, “are shaped by history, politics, and power as well as by cultural and social issues” (Wastl-Walter 1). From this point of view, Taivassalo’s script comes across as a goldmine of political and material boundaries—concretely made visible through the border controls represented on the inside of the hardcover and manifested in the rendering of the cityscapes—but also of conceptual borders located within the elitist state, lines drawn on the basis of ethnicity and social groups. However, in the absence of an overtly didactic plot, we will turn the attention to the way in which Anyango Grünewald’s images talk. If, on a verbal level, *Scandorama* presents the idea of ‘othering’ and the issue of violating the borders of the mind and the body as thematic concerns, an examination of how these issues are expressed on the visual level characteristic of the graphic novel is our main concern. While attention will be paid to concepts such as ‘intericonicity’—whose importance for comics studies has been equalled to that of ‘intertextuality’ for literary studies (Meyer 166)—and ‘framing’ (Groensteen 39-57), the value and function of colour in an otherwise monochrome graphic universe will be at the core of the present investigation. The role of colour in comics still remains an under-researched scholarly topic (Baetens 111; Prytz and Palmer 25-27) in spite of its prominence and significance for the medium, recognized for example by Scott McCloud in *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art*, first published in 1993: “when used well, color in comics can—like comics itself—amount to far more than the sum of its parts”.

The assumption in the following lines is that the use of the colour blue is intimately linked to the representation of the dystopian storyworld. In a colour scheme employing a palette of black, white and grey hues, the blue details constitute an essential aspect of the visual rhetoric to the point of becoming its most efficient tool. I will argue that the “chromatic structure” (Baetens 126) comes to create a visual subtext expressing the dystopian theme embedded in *Scandorama*. In this sense, the upcoming examination of the use of colour as a narrative mode adheres to Jan Baetens’s proposal (118) that the reading of colour in comics should not focus on “color exclusively (its symbolic values, its historical references, its lexical equivalents, and so on”, but spotlight “the paradigmatic value of color in the light of a certain

³ In Hickman’s definition (141) “[...] near future societies where pharmacology produces or reinforces a dystopian social order”.



poetics". Through Anyango Grünewald's employment of a single colour, the idea of building walls and trespassing borders is backed up and expressed in at least three contexts: (1) 'othering'; (2) architecture; (3) body and mind. Let us see how.

BLUE LIVES MATTER: THE VISUALIZATION OF 'OTHERING'

The coinage 'Neoscandia', introduced on the back of the half title page, seems to renew the popular idea of a brand identity common to the Nordic countries employed with a view to separating the territory from a larger context, 'Neuropa', in the case of the graphic novel. Reproduced as a homogeneously white area on the periphery of Neuropa, the representation of Neoscandia can be retraced to the dark side of the concept known as 'Nordic exceptionalism', a long-standing positive image selling Scandinavia as home to "good" and "rational" citizens, promoters of social welfare, gender equality, freedom of expression.⁴ By introducing Neoscandia as a highly selective society where it is "as difficult to get in as it is easy to get kicked out",⁵ the authors of the book turn the presumed homogeneity into a question of anxiety over diversity and multiculturalism, which in the fictional universe has led to restricting immigration to those individuals who can be expected to be useful to the Neoscandian society and to systematically deporting those who presumably are not, like toxic waste in the global trade.

While projecting the reader into a future where the region has become a dream home to the Swedes at their purest, *Scandorama* also hurls the reader back in time to an era when the idea of Nordic exceptionalism translated as racial biology. In the aforementioned interview with Anna Remmets (Remmets), Anyango Grünewald mentions that her visualization of the villain, Doc S at Scantek/Gentek, is deliberately bearing a likeness to the white-haired Swedish race biologist Herman Lundborg (1868-1943). A representative of the downside of the history of Swedish science, Lundborg was the leader of the eugenics movement in Sweden from 1916 to 1930.⁶ As the director of Statens institut för rasbiologi (the State Institute for Race Biology) founded in Uppsala in 1922—the first of its kind on a universal scale—Lundborg warned against immigration and the mixing with 'alien races', a behaviour that would have as its consequence the physical and moral degeneration of "the Nordic type" (Hagerman, *A Racial Biologist* 143). Lundborg's research practice included fieldwork in the north of Sweden undertaken to document, map, and compare physiognomies of ethnic communities, granting special attention to the Sámi and the Finnish, or "East Baltic type" (Hagerman, *A Racial Biologist* 143), present in Lapland. In a book titled *Svenska folktyper* (Lundborg 1919; *Swedish racial types*), Lundborg came to the conclusion that the Nordic race, genetically superior to all races, was "more prominent in Sweden than

⁴ On the subject of Nordic exceptionalism, see Ahlbäck and Laitinen, and Loftsdóttir and Jensen.

⁵ "[D]u kommer knappast in, men det är lätt att visas ut" (Taivassalo and Anyango Grünewald). The pages in the graphic novel are not numbered.

⁶ *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenetics* (Bashford and Levine) contains a chapter on the Scandinavian eugenics movement, *The Scandinavian States: Reformed Eugenics Applied*. For information of Herman Lundborg, see Tydén 367.



in other countries” (Björkman and Widmalm 388), and supported his results with biometric data and photographic ‘evidence’. On Lundborg’s use of photography Maria Björkman and Sven Widmalm write:

Photographic images were in a sense the bread and butter of Lundborg’s research programme—he produced a large number of them, using them as a complement to the biometric data also collected. In the eugenic coffee-table books such photographs were used to illustrate various racial groups, or (presumed) hereditary afflictions such as criminality or alcoholism. But in addition Lundborg used images in a more subtle way. The images are a running visual commentary on the texts, broadening the message beyond what was actually said in words. [...] The difference in race corresponds to a difference in class, detectable not only in the verbal descriptions but in the subjects’ general appearance, in which the Nordic types are presented in typical middle-class portraits and the mixed types in ‘mug shots’ characteristic of the tradition of eugenic photography. This correlation between race and class was in line with Lundborg’s eugenic model that included the dogma that mixture between ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ races produces degenerate offspring. Hence the images show what the verbal descriptions and the genetic theory say. (388-389)

Scandorama’s intericonic references to Lundborg’s portraits of “the ‘lower’ races” establish further connections to Swedish interwar eugenics that add to Anyango Grünewald’s choice of lending the physical traits of the infamous scientist to the villain. In Lundborg’s ‘mug shots’ the objects of investigation were deprived of their names and classified solely according to race and social standing. Anyango Grünewald replicates a notorious photographic chart from one of Lundborg’s books aimed at an international readership and written in English, making the captions “Woman of manly type, socially of low standing” / “Workman, strongly race-mixed, of Finnish type” / “Gipsy with Finnish blood. Criminal” virtually unreadable (fig. 2a Lundborg and Runnström plate x] and 2b). Fading these captions can be interpreted as a visual strategy with the double aim of singling out the true criminal while changing the status of a bunch of labelled delinquents into that of a group of dismembered victims of biopolitics.

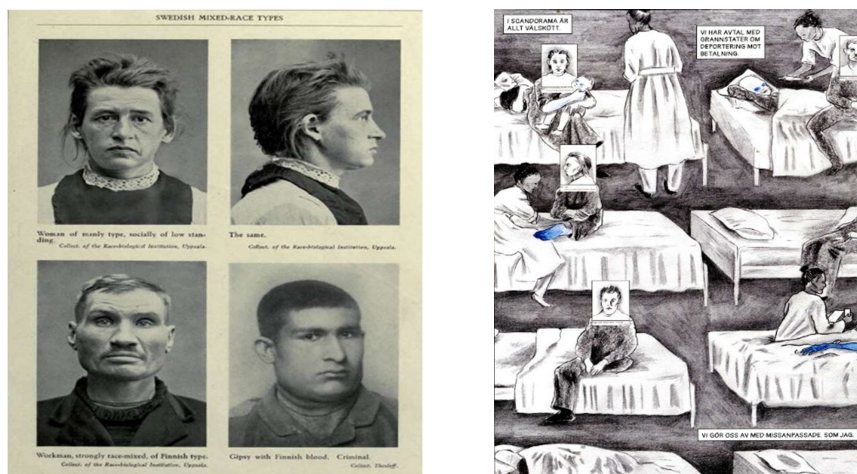


Fig. 2a Lundborg, Herman, and John Runnström, *The Swedish Nation in Word and Picture*, 1921, plate X.
Fig. 2b Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.



In this episode, blue works as a “supporting” colour (Baetens 115) that fills in on the context and helps dislocate the original setting for the shooting of these photographs. The faces on the portraits can be identified as representatives of *experimentfolket* and as patients through the use of blue marking the parts of their bodies (eyes, an amputated leg, a withered arm) on which the scientists at Gentek/Scantek have performed surgical interventions. Moreover, through the strategy of ‘framing’, here assuming what the comics scholar Thierry Groensteen defines as its ‘readerly function’ (56), Anyango Grünewald asks the reader to contemplate details in the narration that otherwise might pass unnoticed. By dedicating a frame to the reproduction of photographs picturing an anthropologist measuring the breadth of a nose and an ophthalmic injection into an eye with a blue iris (fig. 3), the artist brings attention to the close connections between *Scandorama’s* dystopian storyworld, Lundborg’s research activities, and the medical experiments performed in the death camps during World War II. Lundborg’s meticulous charting of body measures were in fact used to rank people as genetically superior or inferior racial characters and to identify racially foreign elements to the ‘Swedish/Nordic type’, dubious findings that were of some significance to the dehumanizing efforts of racial hygienists in Nazi Germany (Björkman and Widmalm 380).

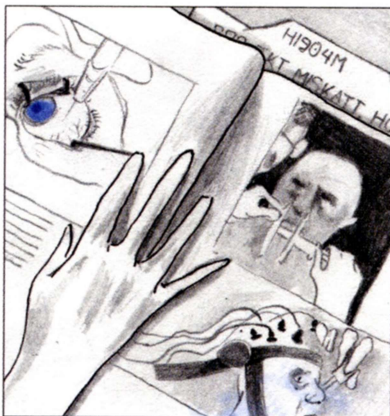


Fig. 3 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.

The scientific activity at Gentek/Scantek thus echoes Joseph Mengele’s insane efforts to alter the eye pigmentation in inmates through intraocular injections. In addition, his gruesome experiments on twins are referenced by the allusion to the fate of Marione and Maritwo in the graphic novel. Maja Hagerman, author of the biography *Käraste Herman. Rasbiologen Herman Lundborgs gåta* (*Dearest Herman. The Enigma of the Racial Biologist*) and of a documentary on the man,⁷ concludes her presentation of

⁷ The film, *Hur gör man för att rädda ett folk?*, is available also in an English version titled *What Measures to Save a People? On Herman Lundborg, Head of the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology* (Hagerman, *Hur gör man för att rädda ett folk?*). The ‘enigma’ referred to in the title of Hagerman’s book concerns Lundborg’s encounter with a woman of Finnish-Sámi descent who bore his child and whom he later married.



the eugenicist and his work on her website with the following words: “racial biology draws lines, and underlines differences, and creates aliens” (Hagerman, “Book”).

PAINTING THE TOWN BLUE: THE REPRESENTATION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND TERRITORIAL BORDERS

The work carried out by the scientists in *Scandorama* is part of a strategy of dystopian social engineering directed not only at the remodelling of citizens but also of the cityscapes. These cityscapes visually engage with the politics of segregation: Stohome City’s modern geometrical architecture exposes the values of the cold heart of Neoscandia, while the dingy ghetto of Helsingy City, untouched by urban planners, hosts the outcasts.

Again, the use of intericonic references to the real urban landscapes is extensive and helps to capture the timeliness of the message and its relevance to the world of today (fig. 4). In Stohome City, Stockholm’s municipal building with its characteristic profile has been de-crowned. The landmarks of entertainment, business, and sociality in the Swedish capital are also recognizable, for example the indoor arena known as The Globe, the Stockholm Waterfront congress centre, and the black-and-white tile pattern of Sergel’s square, a busy meeting point devoid of life in the graphic novel. Karolinska Institutet, where early experiments in phrenology and eugenics were carried out (Nordin 18) and from where Herman Lundborg had graduated in medicine in 1895, lurks on the left.

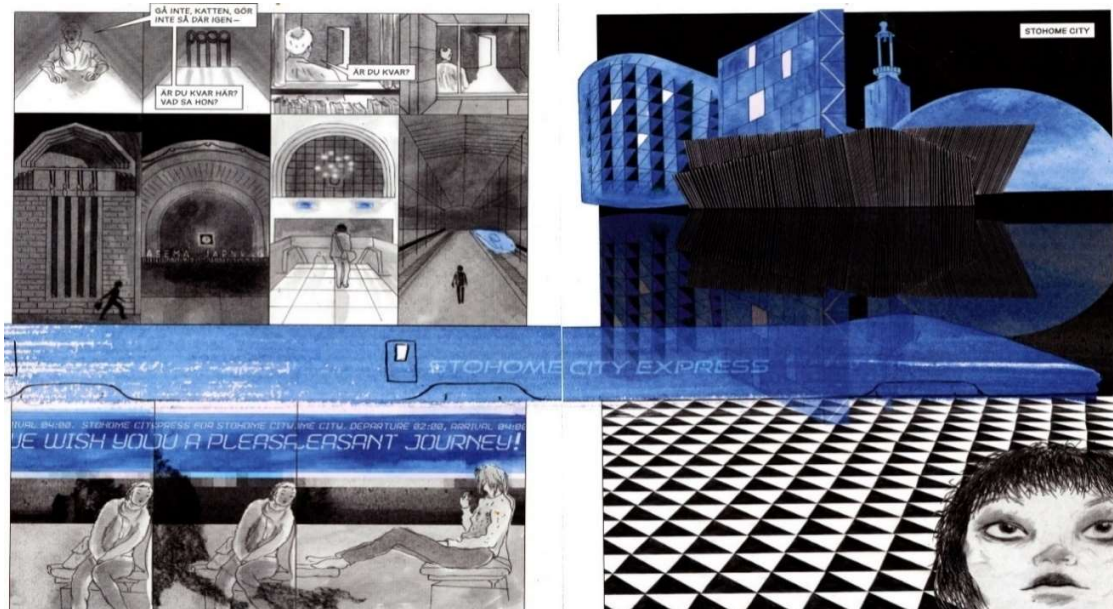


Fig. 4 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.



While the bleak rationality of the dream home is expressed through modern architectural structures, geometrical design, and impenetrable mirror facades, the dominating representation of Helsingy City, instead, draws on monuments from real-world Helsinki displaying classicist elements. Referenced within are the ruined pillars of the Parliament building, an Atlas crouching under the weight of the column he is supporting, Eliel Saarinen's railway station constructed in the style of national romanticism, and two of the most famous public statues in the Finnish capital, Ville Vallgren's *Topelius memorial*, eternalizing the memory of the writer Zacharias Topelius as a storyteller for children, as well as Felix Nylund's *Tre smeder* (1932; *Three Smiths*), a sculpture group symbolizing collaboration and hard work.

Like a blue serpent, Stohome City Express cuts across this double page (fig. 4) in a visualization of how technological means overcome borders and challenge boundaries in the graphic universe. Movement between the two cities is however limited to the ones who can exhibit the correct circulating medium to travel on the express train, thus underlining the theme of segregation that starts on the insides of the hard cover. This image (fig. 5), which functions as a dreadful introduction to Neoscandia, represents a seemingly endless queue of shadowy asylum seekers waiting to be stripped and scanned. Only one of them meets the required standards for entering the territory and makes it to the half title page, and as he steps onto the succeeding immaculately white page, he turns blue, as if to signal conformism and approval on behalf of the immigration services.



Fig. 5 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.

More interesting than the confirmation of an interdependence between space and identity—and of unsurprising stereotypes according to which the pure people are surrounded by a sterile, modern environment while a city of remnants is home to



violated lives—is an aspect of the visualization of Helsingy City that I would like to look at as a form of spatialized resistance. In the midst of bleak and looming houses, the misfits of Helsingy City resist the imposed dehumanization. Not only is humanity upheld by the abovementioned elements of classicism in the urban décor, it is also reconstructed as multiple forms of solidarity that cut across races and species and, in addition, it is visualized by giving the reader access to domesticity rather than to facades and laboratories. In a graphic novel where the urban environment is one of bricks, mortar, steel and glass, and where nature is jeopardized by nuclear waste and represented by the fast-melting Arctic, the wordless whole page dedicated to the happy domesticity of the denizens of an apartment building in Helsingy City stands out (fig. 6). Behind the curtains on the second floor a couple is sharing a moment of romantic intimacy; in the window below a man is tending to his flowers whose leaves become one with the texture of his sweater, and cats roam freely around Miskatt's humble garret. Through details like these, the spatial rendering can be seen as containing elements of a counter movement similar in spirit to the organized resistance of Scunderground.

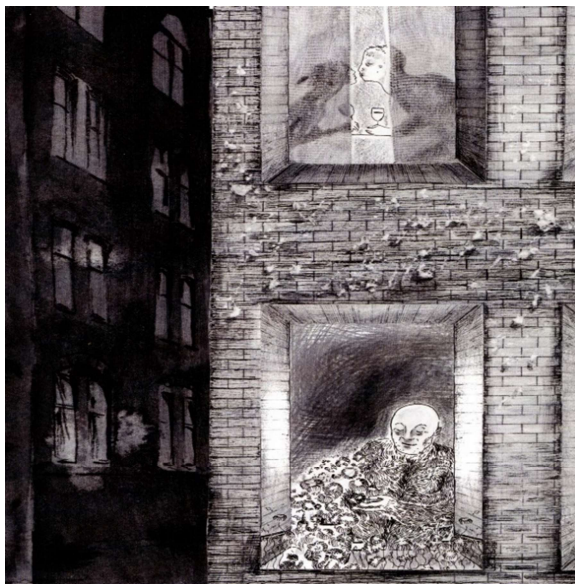


Fig. 6 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.

The colour blue which, as we have seen, stands for governmental control, is absent among the ruins of Helsingy City as if to signal an anarchic free zone. By contrast, it spills onto the glossy facades and fills up the waiting rooms of Stohome City, flooding the offices, laboratories and wards of Scantek/Gentek. In the vast Arctic landscape, the colour blue is instead present as scattered stains and blotches in what can be read as an attempt to make a mark on a territory described as one resisting colonization: the Arctic is *oförutsägbart* (unpredictable), *svårkontrollerat* (difficult to control), *sönderfallande* (disintegrating). The blue canisters with nuclear waste cramming the cubicle of the train that Miskatt and Gustav board on their way to the



Arctic bear the fingerprint of the pure people, seemingly unaware of the borderlessness of environmental disasters.

OUT OF THE BLUE: VIOLATING THE BORDERS OF THE BODY AND THE MIND

The visual rendering of the experiments conducted on Miskatt and on the twins is in line with the use and function of colouring in the abovementioned example of the hospital ward. Here too, the blue shade marks the scientists' intervention on bodies. In the panel sequence picturing crude moments from the maternity ward where Miskatt's mother's pregnant belly is being injected and ripped up and where her genetically manipulated child is taken away after birth, the hands holding the syringe and handing out the pills are blue. The kinetic 'moment-to-moment' (McCloud 70) visualization of the experiments on the twins, confined into a sequence of small frames where they are reduced to numbers and suffer from hallucinations due to chemical and electrical brain doping, is both drawn and coloured in blue pencil as if to illustrate the pervasive presence of the scientists in the life of the experiment people (fig. 7).

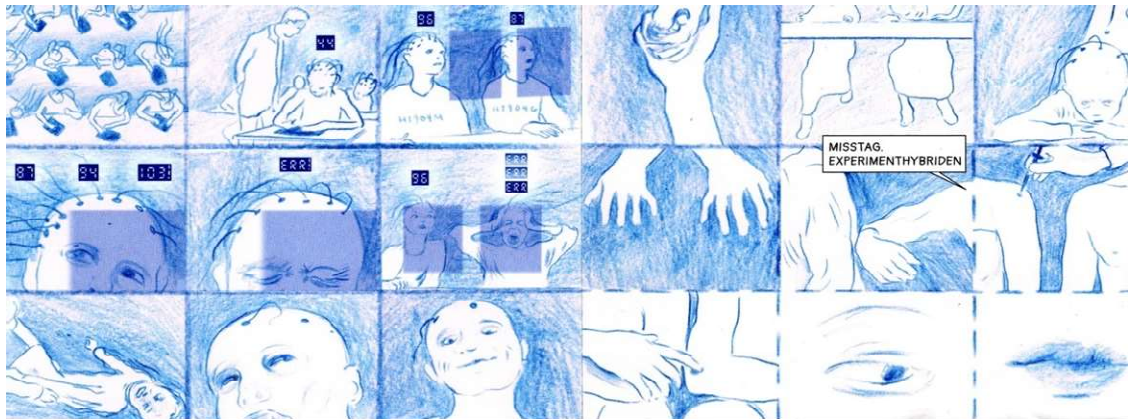


Fig. 7 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.

Technically convincing is the visual rendering of the *holo*, a revolutionary contraption used by the scientists to enter the consciousness of Miskatt and control her movements. The *holo* flickers as Doc N, suddenly and unexpectedly, enters Miskatt's mind, violating her intimacy and making her feel "busted, naked, dirty".⁸ The colour blue signals, this time on a psychological level, how barriers protecting a personal sphere are transgressed by scientists. Doc N's message, delivered in a governmentally blue speech bubble, reads "Miskatt, I need you" (fig. 8).⁹

⁸ "[E]rtappad, naken, smutsig" (Taivassalo and Anyango Grünewald).

⁹ "Miskatt, jag behöver dig" (Taivassalo and Anyango Grünewald).



Fig. 8 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.

The dictatorial control exercised over the life of Neoscandian citizens with the help of advanced technology can be connected with the 'Big Brother-motif' frequently found in dystopian art. As Doc N discovers an implant inserted under her skin and notices that the *holo* is controlling her movements too, she becomes the victim of her own experimentation and qualifies as a "helpless scientist", to use one of Roslynn D. Haynes's (252) stereotypes of scientists in Western literature, struggling for control over her own invention and against the authorities. While programming the *holo* in the laboratory, Doc N's own avatar emerges from the blue device and the words "I SEE YOU" are spelled out in capital letters (fig. 9).¹⁰



Fig. 9 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.

¹⁰ "JAG SER DIG" (Taivassalo and Anyango Grünewald).



Not only is the Big Brother-motif introduced through the device of the *holo* and through the presence of monitors supervising both civilians and scientists, it is also underscored by the visual rhetoric. Many panels maintain a controlling Big Brother-perspective from above, giving the reader insight into the work that is being carried out in the laboratories by adding an anonymous extradiegetic eye supervising the scientists at work.

CONCLUSIONS: A DYSTOPIAN BLUEPRINT

In *Scandorama* walls and borders are established and disrespected on various levels. Erected and drawn to distinguish one geopolitical space from the other, they solidify isolation and segregation, signal inclusion and exclusion, both internationally and regionally. With the help of technology and scientific research, the boundaries of the mind are violated and transgressed, those of the body blurred and invaded.

The medium of the graphic novel and the primacy awarded in the above to its visual level have allowed for an exploration of the use of borders not only thematically but, in the main, conceptually and aesthetically. We have seen how the dramaturgical potential of colour in combination with motives such as government surveillance, futuristic technology, environmental destruction, urban settings, social stratification, loss of individualism and a protagonist who battles against this society from within produce a dystopian 'blueprint'. I have argued for an understanding of the blue colouring as a narrative mode used to represent the key features of the dystopia. As seen in the examples given, it classifies the 'lower' people on whom the scientists have made their mark; it helps us to see how certain spaces correspond to a certain kind of citizen and how architecture forms walls also on a metaphorical level, creating a tale of two cities; it shows us how the Big Brother-motif creeps under the skin and into the mind.

When closing the book we return to Schrödinger's paradox referenced on the cover image simultaneously showing both top and bottom, inside and outside—to the idea, that is, of a dual perspective, which is also implied by 'the border'. If, from the inside, walls and borders may signify security, from the outside they most often equal exclusion. However, as Mireille Rosello and Stephen F. Wolfe claim in their introduction to the volume *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections*, borders and walls may also encourage contact. As "[a] form of classification or a way of marking distinctions, borders not only separate [...], they also imply interactions. The separation axiomatically generates a connection between the separated entities" (Rosello and Wolfe 2). In *Scandorama*, walls set up in the past have been reinforced and cast their shadow over the present and the future, but they also act as productive structures stimulating interchange and resistance across the border. The last double page with its unresolved, open ending returns to the idea of duality and, paradoxically, infuses some kind of hope in the blue subtext. The same scene is presented here from two different points of view: on the left, the reader assumes Doc S's perspective as he sees his victims, the twins, enter his office; on the right, we are instead looking at Doc S



from the twins' perspective, now seemingly in control. The activity in their manipulated blue brains shines through the skin of their shaved skulls as they issue their ambiguous forecast for the future: "bad things will happen" / "Perhaps good things, too?" (fig. 10).¹¹

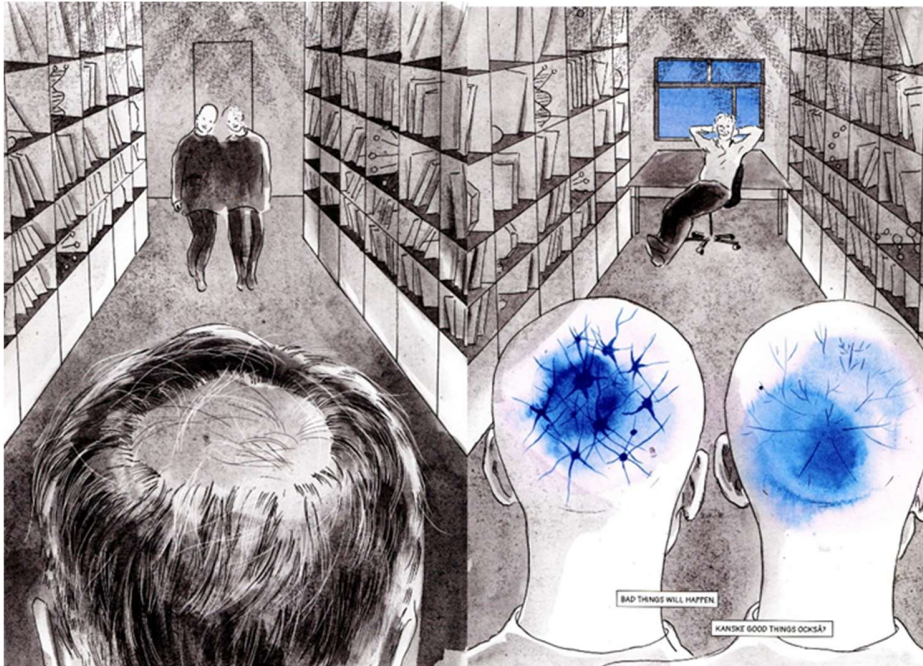


Fig. 10 Taivassalo, Hannele M., and Catherine Anyango Grünewald, *Scandorama*, 2018.

WORKS CITED

Ahlbäck, Pia Maria, and Tom Laitinen. "Introduction: Nordic Utopias and Dystopias." *Utopia Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2019, pp. 143-145.

Baetens, Jan. "From Black & White to Color and Back: What Does It Mean (not) to Use Color?" *College Literature*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2011, pp. 111-128.

Bashford, Alison, and Philippa Levine, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenetics*. Oxford UP, 2010.

Björkman, Maria, and Sven Widmalm. "Selling Eugenics. The Case of Sweden." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, vol. 64, 2010, pp. 379-400.

Booth, Michael. *The Almost Nearly Perfect People. The Truth about the Nordic Miracle*. Random House, 2014.

Fraser, Benjamin. *Visible Cities, Global Comics: Urban Images and Spatial Form*. UP of Mississippi, 2019.

Gottlieb, Erika. *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial*. McGill-Queen's Press, 2001.

¹¹ "[B]ad things will happen" / "Kanske good things också?" (Taivassalo and Anyango Grünewald).



Groensteen, Thierry. *The System of Comics*. Translated by Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. UP of Mississippi, 2007.

Hagerman, Maja. "A Racial Biologist in Lapponia." *Writing the North of the North / L'Écriture du Nord du Nord / Den Norden des Nordens (be-)schreiben. Reality and Location in the Literary Field / Construction d'imagesm confrontation au réel et positionnement dans le champs littéraire / Bildkonstruktion, Wirklichkeitsbezug und Positionierung im literarische Feld*, edited by Annie Boirguignon and Konrad Harrer. Frank & Timme, 2019, pp. 143-158.

---. "Book on Race Biologist Herman Lundborg." *Maya Hagerman* (author's website), <https://majahagerman.se/book-on-race-biologist-herman-lundborg/>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021

---. *Käraste Herman*. Rasbiologen Herman Lundborgs gåta. Norstedts, 2016.

Haynes, Roslynn D. "From Alchemy to Artificial Intelligence: Stereotypes of the Scientist in Western Literature." *Public Understanding of Science*, no. 12, 2003, pp. 243-253.

Hickman, John. "When Science Fiction Writers Used Fictional Drugs: Rise and Fall of the Twentieth-Century Drug Dystopia." *Utopian Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2009, pp. 141-170.

Hur gör man för att rädda ett folk?. Directed by Maja Hagerman and Claes Gabrielson. Film, 2015.

Kramer, Melody. "The Physics Behind Schrödinger's Cat Paradox." *National Geographic* 14 Aug. 2013, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/8/130812-physics-schrodinger-erwin-google-doodle-cat-paradox-science/>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

Loftsdóttir, Kristín, and Lars Jensen, editors. *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region. Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. Routledge, 2016.

Lundborg, Herman. *Svenska folktyper*. Tullberg, 1919.

--- and John Runnström, *The Swedish Nation in Word and Picture*. Tullberg, 1921.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics. The Invisible Art*. HarperCollins, 1994.

Meyer, Jean-Paul. "À propos des albums de BD adaptés de romans: de la transposition littéraire à la transposition didactique." *Bande dessinée et enseignement des humanités*, edited by Nicolas Rouvière, Ellug, 2012, pp. 157-170.

Nordin, Sven Dennis. *A Swedish Dilemma. A Liberal Nation's Struggle with Racism and Xenophobia, 1990-2000*. UP of America, 2005.

Prytz, Camilla, and Jasmine Palmer. "Comprehending Colour: An Approach to Reading and Understanding Colour in Comics." *Digressions. Amsterdam Journal of Critical Theory, Cultural Analysis, and Creative Writing*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2020, pp. 25-45.

Remmets, Anna. "Konsten att skapa något nytt: en intervju med konstnären Catherine Anyango Grünwald." *Horisont*, vol. 1, 2018, <https://horisont.fi/2018/04/konsten-att-skapa-nagot-nytt-en-intervju-med-konstnaren-catherine-anyango-grunewald/>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

Rosello, Mireille, and Stephen F. Wolfe. "Introduction." *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections*, edited by Johan Schimanski and Stephen F. Wolfe. Berghahn Books, 2017, pp. 1-24.



Taivassalo, Hannele Mikaela, and Catherine Anyango Grünewald. *Scandorama*. Förlaget, 2018.

Tydén, Mattias. "The Scandinavian States: Reformed Eugenics Applied." *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenetics*, edited by Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine. Oxford UP, 2010, pp. 363-376.

Wastl-Walter, Doris. "Introduction." *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, edited by Doris Wastl-Walter. Ashgate, 2011, pp. 1-9.

What Measures to Save a People? On Herman Lundborg, Head of the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology. Directed by Maja Hagerman and Claes Gabrielson. Film, 2015.

Camilla Storskog is Assistant Professor of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Milan. Her main research interests include intermediality, visual studies, and adaptation theory but she has also worked on issues such as travel writing, the historical novel, autobiographical poetry, science and technology in literature. Recent publications: the volume *Literary Impressionisms. Resonances of Impressionism in Swedish and Finland-Swedish Prose 1880-1900* (2018), and articles such as "Stripping H.C. Andersen. Peter Madsen's 'Historien om en mor' (or, what a graphic novel adaptation can do that its literary source cannot)" (2018), "Songs about Iron and of Iron. Henry Parland and the Poetic Potential of Technology" (2017). She is currently working on a monograph on the adaptation of Scandinavian classics into comics.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9201-4105>

camilla.storskog@unimi.it

Storskog, Camilla. "Into the Blue. The Visualization of Building Walls and Transgressing Borders in *Scandorama* by Hannele Mikaela Taivassalo and Catherine Anyango Grünewald", n. 25, *Muro/Muri. Forme e rappresentazioni del muro fra lingue, letterature e arti visive*, pp. 121-136, May 2021. ISSN 2035-7680. Disponibile all'indirizzo: <<https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/AMonline/article/view/15547>>
Ricevuto: 19/01/2020 Approvato: 01/03/2021
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13130/2035-7680/15547>

Saggi/Ensayos/Essais/Essays