The Idea of a Text and the Nature of Textual Meaning
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In his account of text and textual meaning, Pettersson demonstrates that a text as commonly conceived is not only a verbal structure but also a physical entity, two kinds of phenomena which do not in fact add up to a unitary object. He describes this current notion of text as convenient enough for many practical purposes, but inadequate in discussions of a theoretically more demanding nature. Having clearly demonstrated its intellectual drawbacks, he develops an alternative, boldly revisionary way of thinking about text and textual meaning. His careful argument is in challenging dialogue with assumptions about language-in-use to be found in a wide range of present-day literary theory, linguistics, philosophical aesthetics, and philosophy of language.

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“I deeply admired and enjoyed this book. Pettersson is a very learned, lucid and careful thinker, often drily amusing. More important, Pettersson actually brings important news, powerfully stated, especially for those of us who have struggled to establish some model of intention in literary texts.”
Charles F. Altieri, University of California, Berkeley

“This book is a rigorously argued plea for conceptual clarity in our engagement with the meanings of texts of all kinds.”
Christopher M. Hutton, The University of Hong Kong

“This is a terrific new work that anyone interested in language, meaning, or interpretation should read.”
Robert Stecker, Central Michigan University