

Lena Séraphin, 2017. Selected excerpts from the dissertation  
*The Don Quixote Complex and Investigations into Fictionality*

**p. 12-29, A Manual (NB not preface)**

**p. 13-14, Donna Haraway, points of departure/scope of the study**

As a basis for this work, I proceed from situated knowledges, a notion of knowledge developed by feminist and philosopher of science Donna Haraway. What I am attempting is to situate knowledge creation in the imaginary. Haraway elucidates partial knowledge and "a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges".<sup>1</sup> As I here emphasise Haraway, I also transpose the question on situated knowledges to artistic research. The fact that I return to Haraway has a background in my area of knowledge, and I wonder how situated knowledges can characterise artistic research. I also consider it of importance to point out that Donna Haraway developed situated knowledges in order to create and discuss objectivity in a scientific context. Through my artistic practice, I have discovered that I can situate myself in fiction.

**s. 14, Judith Butler, points of departure/scope of the study**

In *Giving an Account of Oneself*, gender theorist and philosopher Judith Butler discusses whether a subject that is not fully aware of itself can be accountable.<sup>2</sup> Butler poses the question: "There is that in me and of me for which I can give no account. But does this mean that I am not, in the moral sense, accountable for who I am and for what I do?"<sup>3</sup> Butler presents knowledge that emanates from a subject that is not completely familiar with itself. The contextual origin for knowledge is then, at least to some extent, hidden from the knowledge-creating subject. Butler writes about the consequences of this form of knowledge and describes how it can prompt generosity and humility.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Donna Haraway, "Situerte kunskaper: Vetenskapsfrågan inom feminismen och det partiska perspektivets privilegium," i *Apor, cyborger och kvinnor: Att återupptäcka naturen*, övers. Måns Winberg (Stockholm/Stehag: Symposium, 2008), 231.

—, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," i *Simians, Cyborgs, and Wome: The Reinvention of nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 188.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler, "Giving an Account of Oneself," *Diacritics*, nr 4, vol. 31 (2001): 22-40.

<sup>3</sup> Butler, "Giving an Account," 27.

<sup>4</sup> Butler, "Giving an Account," 28. "To know the limits of acknowledgment is a self-limiting act and, as a result, to experience the limits of knowing itself. This can, by the way, constitute a disposition of humility, and of generosity, since I will need to be forgiven for what I cannot fully know, what I could not have fully known, and I will be under a similar obligation to offer forgiveness to others who are also constituted in partial opacity to themselves."

I am interested in the subject that Butler presents: the generous and humble, that which does not offer an answer in itself, and I wonder if what I cannot account for can be referred to as the imaginary.

### **s. 20, defining definition/researcher's attitude**

When I write, I am reluctant to use restrictive defining, as I fear that definitions limit our fields of vision. At the same time, I cannot avoid describing in my artistic practice. I consider it problematic when defining becomes an ultimate goal. Instead, I wish to emphasise, describe, rewrite and clarify in order to extend my perspectives. I will consider fiction as a potent ability and, in this form, fiction can both perceive and instigate. In common usage, fiction is something of a twin to the lie, and in that case the opposite of fact. An etymological follow-up denotes the Latin *factum* as a plot, a completed work, an event or a result. Factum also refers to perpetration, misdeed and crime whilst *fictum*, in turn, refers to make-belief, betrayal, lie or fabrication.<sup>5</sup> When comparing the two concepts *factum* and *fictum*, they do not appear to be diametrical opposites of each other. Likewise, the pertinent is not found in the divergence, but rather in the fact that we can relate to something we call reality as well as something we call fiction. To refrain from defining can be interpreted as a lack of stringency, and within an academic context considered as a dip in knowledge. Even linguistically I avoid defining and most often use an indefinite form. Hence, I prefer to write about fiction rather than about the fiction My thought is that there is more than one reality, as well as several contemporary, parallel and intersecting fictions. I maintain that a restrictive definition of fiction does not achieve productive purposes within this thesis. Rather, I perform investigations: various attempts to create and explore with fiction.

### **p. 29-57, from the essay Andrea as Andrea in Andrea Meinin Bück**

#### **p. 29, the horizon of the study and the expectations it presents, the style and tone of writing**

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<sup>5</sup> Axel W. Ahlberg, Nils Lundqvist och Gunnar Sörbom, *Latinsk-svensk ordbok*. (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget Bonniers, 1945). *Fictilis* anger formad av lera. Mer kontrast erbjuder *dictum* som anger (det) sagda, utsaga, yttrande, ord, ordlek, befallning, givet ord eller löfte. Verbet *tingo* anger forma, gestalta, skapa, smekande stryka över, bygga, med konst framställa, dikta, ordna, frisera, inrätta, bilda, skapa, forma, anpassa, omforma, förvandla, andl. föreställa eller inbilla sig, antaga, tänka sig eller döma andra efter sig, upptänka, dikta eller ljuga ihop. *Fictio* anger formning, gestaltning, *fictor* anger formare, gestaltare, bildhuggare, en som formar offerkakor eller offerdjur eller uppdiktare. *Fictrix* anger gestalterska eller skaparinna.

I am wild on paper. I am bestial. And then I must hide and, with the thick black crayon, I rub out every line. I blacken the page so they will never see what I have drawn, what I have done.

*The Blazing World*, Siri Hustvedt<sup>6</sup>

Le mot n'a pas peur de ce noircir.

*Le mot, le dialogue et le roman*, Julia Kristeva<sup>7</sup>

## **Andrea as Andrea in Andrea Meinin Bück**

### **Stepping in**

I have a tentative conception of art. Coming forth with these words, I am fully aware of how clumsy the sentence sounds, especially as it is the very first in an essay based on artistic practice and practice-led research. When I liberate tentativeness, I take a measured risk in favour of investigations and trials as knowledge building. In this essay, I reflect with and contextualize the artwork *Lena Séraphin, Andrea Meinin Bück & The Don Quixote Complex*, an installation which is the research result of my thesis. Some of the characters in the work are already known in the text, Lena, as the source of the study, and Andrea as the repetitive being of the work and title. I will present a course of events during which the artist transforms into a fictive character in her own work and a fictive character is embodied as a colleague. I will move within fictionality and suggest the reader as a co-creator as I think that you have already read the title and repeated Andrea three times, if not vocally then inaudibly, and in such you have established her as a fictive and real character.

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<sup>6</sup> Siri Hustvedt, *The Blazing World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 62.

<sup>7</sup> Julia Kristeva, "Le mot, le dialogue et le roman," i *Séméiotiké: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Editions du Seuil, 1969), 104.

"The word does not fear to blacken." and "The word does not fear its blackness."

p. 57-82, from the essay *The Wanderers*

s. 57, text as place, the word, and the hand

"Klein und großmannssüchtig zugleich."

*Hoppe*, Felicitas Hoppe<sup>8</sup>

"This, too, was myself."

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson<sup>9</sup>

## ***The Wanderers***

### **The intermediary**

From now on, I will write in the third person and rest in a movement of the hand that allows me to evolve into the essayist and that fades my self in the writing. She, the essayist, uses the text to elucidate herself with a long instinctive arm, at a distance, and palpates subjectivity as negotiations with herself being someone else in the text. A self writes itself out of the text and synchronises itself into another shape. The essayist announces legio lena séraphins and introduces the doppelgänger, as a sign of multiple egos.<sup>10</sup> Lena uses the text to present herself as another lena.

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<sup>8</sup> Felicitas Hoppe, *Hoppe* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2012), 31.

—, *Hoppe*, övers. Sara Eriksson (Malmö: Rámus, 2013), 32. "Hon var på samma gång liten och megaloman." "She was both little and a megalomaniac."

<sup>9</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (New York: Signet Classics, 2012), 114.

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll & mr Hyde*, övers. Charlotte Hjukström (Lund: Bakhåll, 2012), 70. "Den var också jag."

<sup>10</sup> Essäisten är inte ensam om ett samtida intresse för dubblering. Bildkonstnär Kari Vehosalos utställning *We Hope You Are OK* på Galleri Anhava i Helsingfors år 2014 framförde ett dubbel-tema. Målningarna *Doppelgänger 1* (olja på duk, 160x196cm) och *Doppelgänger 2* (olja på duk, 190x148cm) tolkar dubbelgångare ur en djuppsykologisk vinkel. Dubbelgångaren blir en slags förvrängning, en blick in i självet, som en mörk avgrund. Sigmund Freuds begrepp "Unheimlich", det o-hemlika, tolkas av Vehosalo som ett främlingskap inför jaget menar essäisten. Dubbelgångaren har även synt till i filmatiseringar. Spelfilmen *The Double*, en filmatisering av Fjodor Dostojevskijs roman *Dubbelgångaren* hade premiär 2013. Regissör Richard Ayode föredrar att lotsa filmen mot ett lyckosamt slut till skillnad från förlagan, som avslutas i en färd till mentalsjukhuset. Spelfilmen *Enemy*, med regi av Denis Villeneuve, är en filmatisering av José Saramagos roman *O homem duplicado* ("Dubbelgångaren"). Filmen hade även premiär 2013. Dubbelgångaren har blivit ett gängse begrepp; på en potatischipspåse läste Séraphin "ORIGINALITETSGARANTI Vartenda ett av våra ekologiska chips är ett original. Vi vågar garantera att du inte hittar två likadana. Men om du mot förmodan skulle göra det, så vill vi absolut se det lilla miraklet! Var alltså redo att bevisa att du har hittat en dubbelgångare. Om du kan hålla dig från att äta upp dem förstås." Chipsters, Ekologiska chips med rosmarin, Tillverkad för Ab Chipsters Food Oy, Mariehamn. 150 g. Bäst före 08.03.2014. Lotnr:13783S1

**p. 82-107, from the essay Fiction as Threat and Possibility, Don Quixotes and Bovarysm**

**p. 86-88, the chapter: A rereading of the function of the writer writing/reading as an action?**

(cfr Rosi Braidotti: "Texts are not here to be interpreted, but rather to be assimilated, consummated, used – or not." Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: towards a materialist theory of becoming* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 96)

Foucault writes about the distance between the self and the author, and in his account, space is short between the author function and the subject. The subject appears as if cast out of the author function of the lecture. Lena observes how the essay transforms her and how she slips away without a present self. She deliberates abandoning the investigation with the essayist and reinserting her self. Foucault suggests the reinstatement of biographical and psychological references.<sup>11</sup> Situating herself into the text, she reads aloud: "Foucault emphasises biographical and psychological references to find his way to the insertion points, functionalities, and contingencies of the subject." In the article, Foucault proceeds from rejecting the one who speaks to recommending rehabilitation to the one speaking. Lena does not interpret this as a conflict, and how could she when she is attempting to do what Foucault intends; that writing provides an opportunity for subjectivity. Foucault places similar requirements on the subject as he does on the author function and describes it as a function of discourse:

[u]nder what conditions and through what forms can an entity as the subject appear in the order of discourse; what position does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse? In short, the subject

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<sup>11</sup> Foucault, "Vad är en författare?," 98 "Jag vet mycket väl att man redan har ifrågasatt subjektets absoluta karaktär och dess grundarroll genom att göra inre, arkitektoniska analyser av ett verk (det må vara en litterär text, ett filosofiskt system eller ett vetenskapligt verk) och genom att sätta de biografiska och psykologiska referenserna inom parentes. Men kanske kan man ta tillbaka detta upphävande, inte för att återupprätta temat om subjektet som alltings ursprung utan för att fånga subjektets infogningspunkter, funktionssätt och avhängigheter. [...] Att inte längre ställa frågan: hur kan ett subjekts frihet tränga in i djupet av tingen och ge dem mening, hur kan de inifrån skänka liv åt ett språks regler och därmed ådagalägga dess tankar som dess egna?"

Foucault, "What is an Author?"

(and its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analysed as a complex and variable function of discourse.<sup>12</sup>

Séraphin read Foucault's presentation of the subject as transitory, complex and multi-articular yet not expressly rooted in corporeality but rather as "a function of discourse". Lena misses her self as she moves forward in discursivity and greets her self: What knowledge have I gained whilst investigating with the essayist? As I now look upon writing as the essayist, I notice that this character clarifies my role as a transforming subject within this writing practice. The essayist came about in the essay *The Wanderers*, a text that brings to surface literary and theoretical understandings of polarisation and, in the essay, I have examined the essayist as a parallel to the characters of the novels that I am exploring. In short; my intention has been to situate myself in fiction in order to write about fictive characters. The essayist demonstrates how I can write my world as the essayist, just as I can write my world as other characters. I consider all these imaginable and achievable characters as expressions of subjectivity in transformation. The investigations with distancing my self have not been obvious, occasionally they led to experiencing a sense of evanescence.<sup>13</sup> When a specific investigation comes to a halt it installs a sense of melancholia, and, when I return to myself I do it with a sense of loss. Now I wonder how I, without the essayist, can write to encompass my whole register (and maintain the unintentional spelling). As the essayist, I did a rereading of texts that have challenged and

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<sup>12</sup> Foucault, "Vad är en författare?," 98.

Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?," 95."[c]omment, selon quelles conditions et sous quelles formes quelque chose comme un sujet peut-il apparaître dans l'ordre des discours? Quelle place peut-il occuper dans chaque type de discours, quelles fonctions exercer, et en obéissant à quelles règles? Bref, il s'agit ôter au sujet (ou à son substitut) son rôle de fondement originaire, et d'analyser comme une fonction variable et complexe de discours."

<sup>13</sup> Hoppe, *Hoppe*, 186 och 187. Hoppe skriver "Än idag drömmer jag ibland att vi sitter tillsammans på en altan, i två kvarlämnade gungstolar, och håller upp frimärken i kvällsljuset. Det är förstås bara en löjlig dröm som egentligen inte har någonting med Felicitas att göra, eftersom hon alltid har så bråttom, alltid är på väg någonstans, aldrig går att greppa ('flyktigare än en påse helium', som en tysk kritiker senare skulle beskriva henne i ett helt annat sammanhang/F.H.), eftersom hon är så upptagen med att enbart existera att hon själv försvinner på kuppen, ständigt på flykt men aldrig bort från något, alltid på väg, mot ett mål som jag inte känner till."

"Kanske är det hennes hemliga önskan: att försvinna så att man måste leta efter henne, närvaro genom frånvaro."

Hoppe, *Hoppe*, 184. "Noch heute träume ich manchmal davon, wir säßen zusammen auf einer Terrasse, in zwei übriggebliebenen Schaukelstühlen, und hielten Briefmarken gegen das Abendlicht, nichts als ein alberner Traum natürlich, mit dem Felicitas nichts zu tun haben kann, weil sie immer in Eile ist, immer irgendwohin unterwegs, nie zu fassen (›Flüchtiger als ein Säckchen Helium‹, wie später ein deutscher Kritiker in einem ganz anderen Zusammenhang schreiben sollte./fh), weil sie so sehr mit dem reinen Dasein beschäftigt ist, dass sie sich dabei selbst zum Verschwinden bringt, ständig auf der Flucht, aber nicht vor etwas davon, sondern auf etwas hin, ein Ziel, das mir unbekannt ist."

"Womöglich ist das ihr geheimer Wunsch: zu verschwinden, damit man sie suchen muss, Präsenz durch Abwesenheit."

reformulated origin and authorship. My intentions are to keep reflecting on artistic practices and subjectivity and then reformulate the question “What is an author?” to “How is an artist?”

## **p. 107-112 Afterimages (NB not conclusion)**

### **p. 107**

The page I wrote upon became hazy; resting awhile, I looked up at my bit of ceiling. The moulding, like a monorail into the unknown, streaked through a false wall into the visibility of other lodgings.

*The agony of the Partition, Mina Loy*<sup>14</sup>

## **Afterimages**

### **In Retrospect**

When I initiated my thesis work, I assumed that a form of balance would appear between the existing and the assumed; hence not a state where one prevails over the other, but that they exist in a porous and necessary contact with each another. As the investigations into fictionality progressed, the fictive photographer Andrea Meinin Bück was established. Another being was synchronised with the character: The more real Andrea became, the more fictive I became in the work. The work process, that led to the exhibition *Lena Séraphin, Andrea Meinin Buck & The Don Quixote Complex*, cannot fully explain how I discovered a new register within myself, which is that I could communicate with Andrea without having to remind myself that she is fabricated. I believe this shift confirms the self as a transient form. My investigations rendered that the self is not necessarily a set point of departure, the self changes in fictionality and the self is perhaps nothing more than a footbridge between fictions. I have discovered that fictionality is manipulative, that it influenced me, transformed me, even though, and this is the most remarkable: I was its source.

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<sup>14</sup> Mina Loy, "The Agony of the Partition," i *Stories and Essays of Mina Loy*, red. Sara Crangle (Champaign, Dublin, London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2011), 5.

"Sidan jag skrev på blev suddig, medan jag vilade en stund såg jag upp mot min del av taket. Kranlisten, som en enspårig bana till det okända, sträckte sig genom en falsk vägg in till andra boendens synlighet."

My aim has been to form an environment of knowledge creation that embraces the imaginary, and in such extends and enlarges the coherent or rational with the capacity of imagination.