

**INTERDISCIPLINARY WRITING IN *COSMODOPHINS: FEMINIST CULTURAL STUDIES OF TECHNOLOGY, ANIMALS AND THE SACRED* OF BRYLD METTE AND NINA LYKKE**

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## Abstract

In this thesis I focus on how the literary works in *Cosmodolphins: Feminist Cultural Studies of Technology, Animals and the Sacred* of Bryld Mette and Nina Lykke (2000). In order to do that I explore three concepts—literature, literary studies and the literary—and how they are positioned in the interdisciplinary network. Then I examine the debates around the dominant vs. ignored epistemological positions of literature among the disciplines, and I place it outside of academia. I map out three possible strategies to claim back literature as a mode of knowledge production and its implications for feminist studies. The first is an interdisciplinary method that focuses on how the application of literary studies’ analytical tools transforms the relationship between different disciplinary fields and leads to the formation of interdisciplines. The second finds its theoretical approach in the deconstruction of the hierarchical dichotomy between science and literature, and suggests that they are essential for each other. And finally, the third strategy’s foundational concept is post/academic writing that tries to relocate the dislocated literary in knowledge production by employing diverse writing styles in academic work. I explore how the authors place literature, literary studies and the literary in their work and in relation to interdisciplinarity, and I point out how revealing is the metaphorical level of their writing. I use the narrative turn as lens to bring into focus the book’s operational modes in claiming back literature. I analyze the three strategies as to how *Cosmodolphins* borders the realm of the literary. Finally I focus on the *Amazing Stories*, the writing strategies in *Cosmodolphins* and the rejection of the tradition of *écriture féminine*. My main claim is that, while *Cosmodolphins* is successful in interdisciplinary boundary-crossing especially in its methodologies and theoretical framework, its style is embedded in the academic writing tradition.

*I dedicate this thesis to Michael Rochfort for his inspirational life and work.*

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## Introduction

Fascinated by the variety of metaphors of interdisciplinarity in feminist studies I was looking for works that address precisely this question. I wanted to know more about the feminist monsters, cyborgs and goddesses (Haraway 1991; Lykke and Braidotti 1996) who populated the borderlands of diverse disciplinary fields (Anzaldúa 1999), who travelled across lands and sailed in zigzag against the hostile winds of academia in the interdisciplinary archipelago (Pryse 2000; Klein 1990). I have identified with the feminist nomads who have become polyglot during the journey (Braidotti 2011; Alvanoudi 2009; Pryse 2000), who learned how to translate, read, speak and work across methodologies and theories. who were not afraid to enter unknown territories and learn about them. Absorbed by the images I searched the catalogue and stumbled upon the book of Mette Bryld and Nina Lykke titled *Cosmodolphins: Feminist Cultural Studies of Technology, Animals and the Sacred* (Cosmodolphins) which was published in 2000 by an international publisher, Zed Books.

I had already read Lykke's work on the disciplinary questions around feminist studies (Livholts 2012c; Lykke 2004, 2010, 2011), and I was intrigued about how she, as an interdisciplinary researcher can put into practice her theoretical claims. The book promised the deconstruction of the master narratives on space travelling. This topic interconnected my interest in the metaphorical level of the feminist discourses on interdisciplinarity with my curiosity for an interdisciplinary study on real and imaginary travels. I ordered the book by interlibrary loan and during the long weeks of waiting I made an exciting discovery: *Cosmodolphins* wasn't just another interdisciplinary work it was written in an interdisciplinary way. Inserted in between the regular chapters some *Amazing Stories* were waiting for me to be read. I looked at reviews on *Cosmodolphins* and some of them mentioned them but without giving any importance to this interruptive writing style (Parks 2001; Salleh 2002; Moore 2001; Satter 2000). Feminist metaphors and feminist writing

methodologies of interdisciplinarity became my new interest, and when I reflected on it I realized that what connects the two issues is their literary nature. I decided to use *Cosmodolphins* as my case study to see how the literary is located in interdisciplinarity.

I am aware that *Cosmodolphins* was published more than a decade ago and many things have happened since then in the field of feminist studies, especially in feminist cultural studies of technoscience, to which this book belongs. However it is valid to go back to this work because the questions it raises about literature as mode of knowledge production and about the importance of writing styles in feminist studies are still vital. The fact that Lykke ten years later in *Feminist Studies: a Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* (2010) dedicated several pages to *Cosmodolphins* as an example of a feminist book that shifts the boundaries between creative and academic writing shows the importance of it in her work (Lykke 2010, 175–178).

I want to focus on how the literary works in *Cosmodolphins*. In order to do that I am going to explore three concepts in the first chapter—literature, literary studies and the literary—and how they are positioned in the interdisciplinary network. Then I will examine the debates around the dominant vs. ignored epistemological positions of literature among the disciplines, and finally I will place it outside of academia. I will end the chapter by mapping out three possible strategies to claim back literature as a mode of knowledge production and its implications for feminist studies. The first is an interdisciplinary method that focuses on how the application of literary studies’ analytical tools transforms the relationship between different disciplinary fields and leads to the formation of interdisciplines. The second finds its theoretical approach in the deconstruction of the hierarchical dichotomy between science and literature, and suggests that they are essential for each other. And finally, the third strategy’s foundational concept is post/academic writing that tries to relocate the dislocated

literary in knowledge production by employing diverse writing styles in academic works (Livholts 2012a).

After the theoretical framing of my work in the second chapter I will start to explore *Cosmodolphins* by looking at how Bryld and Lykke place literature, literary studies and the literary in their work and in relation to interdisciplinarity, and I will point out how revealing is the metaphorical level of their writing. The third chapter will use the narrative turn as lens to bring into focus the book's operational modes in claiming back literature. First I will explore how the narrative turn is related to my three concepts and identify the disciplinary implications of these relationships with special focus on cultural studies. In the second part of the chapter I will analyze the three strategies as to how *Cosmodolphins* borders the realm of the literary. My final chapter will focus on the *Amazing Stories*, the writing strategies in *Cosmodolphins* and the rejection of the tradition of *écriture féminine*.

My main claim is that, while *Cosmodolphins* is successful in interdisciplinary boundary-crossing especially in its methodologies and theoretical framework, its style is embedded in the academic writing tradition. Bryld and Lykke apply literary studies' analytical tools as interdisciplinary methods (first strategy to claim back literature as a mode of knowledge production), they deconstruct the binary opposition between science and literature by using the approach of cultural studies (second strategy), but they fail to include in their work diverse writing styles, especially creative writing (third strategy).

The driving force behind my study is the search for amazement: a key concept in Bryld and Lykke's work. I will attempt to achieve in my writing what—I claim—the authors of *Cosmodolphins* couldn't: to transmit my fascination for the topic. However constrained my work is by the limitations and rules of thesis writing I will follow Bryld and Lykke's model and insert texts in between the regular chapters in diverse writing style.

## *Partial Objectivity*

I am polyglot. I have been a literary translator for more than a decade. I have lived for several years as a nomad on the borderlands of the Mediterranean Sea and on the inner waterways of Holland, Belgium and France. I have crossed many waves and sailed in zigzag against hostile winds. I have feared to be a monster and told to be a goddess: none of them applies. I am a feminist polyglot, I am a feminist nomad: I am the living metaphor for interdisciplinary working mode.

I am a synesthete. I see every single word and number, I cannot not visualize. I live between colors, shapes and intertwined perceptions: my mode of thinking is metaphorical.

## Chapter 1: The Literary in the Academic Knowledge Production

The motors of academic work are accidental encounters that push the researcher to look for the unknown and her explorations are sometimes rewarded by amazing findings. Every so often the fortuity of these first encounters causes surprises, awakens passion and gives the necessary affection to carry on with the research. No matter how restricted, constrained and regulated the academic work is, the hope and longing for surprising encounters and findings is the driving force behind the many hours spent with reading, researching and writing. Amazement is only one of the many synonyms that can be used to describe the feelings and motivations involved in scholarly work. Passion and affection are also frequently used, alongside with excitement, intrigue, curiosity, and even obsession. I choose to explore *amazement* and its derivations as the main focus of my research subject, the book of Mette Bryld and Nina Lykke *Cosmodolphins: Feminist Cultural Studies of Technology, Animals and the Sacred* (2000). Amazement is a key word in their writing and gives the title—*Amazing Stories*—to the texts inserted in between chapters. They claim that not only these parts but the whole book works with diverse literary writing styles, combining academic and creative writing and genre-blending, since they aimed to give “room for amazement and for letting the unexpected work on us” (Livholts 2012c, 138). Finding and confronting with the unexpected was part of Bryld and Lykke’s methodology and they wanted the readers to have the feeling of it. The insertion of *Amazing Stories* between the regular chapters served this purpose: “We wanted them to ‘catch’ the readers’ attention in an alternative, more ‘literary’ way” (139).

Therefore, the ‘literary’ way of writing is the methodology used to transmit amazement in *Cosmodolphins* and this was the feature of their work that captured my attention and set me on the road of this research. As a reader I wanted to experience the unexpected, I wanted to be amazed, and as a researcher I was intrigued about how the authors

position the concept of the ‘literary’ in an interdisciplinary work and what are the consequences of making explicit such a position. In other words, how the ‘literary’ and the application of different writing styles problematize disciplinary boundaries, especially between science and literature. Before I start looking at how in the framework of feminist cultural studies of technoscience *Cosmodolphins* casts doubt on—reinforce and/or destabilize—boundaries between science and literature, in this chapter I am going to explore theoretical questions related to my main concern: the place of the literary in interdisciplinary work. First I am going to map out how literature, literary studies and criticism and the literary are related to the interdisciplinary network. Then I will look at the debates around the dominant vs. ignored epistemological positions of the literary in academia. And finally I am going to map out three possible strategies to claim back literature as a mode of knowledge production and its implications for feminist studies.

### **1.1 Literature and the Literary Studies in the Interdisciplinary Network**

Julie Thompson Klein dedicates a whole chapter in her book *Crossing Boundaries* to map out the interdisciplinary genealogy of literary studies until the 1990s, starting from the late seventeenth century when literature became an academic subject. She points out that the concept of literature as creative/imaginative writing only appeared a century later (Klein 1996, 136–172). The debate on the disciplinary boundaries of literary studies has been based precisely on this pre-disciplinary concept of literature, according to which it was considered a tool for education, “part of the cultural heritage of a people, a humanistic repository that did not merit separate study or require special method” (134). When literature emerged as an academic subject it lost its regulating role and close connection with “genteel models of liberal and general culture”. William Paulson argues that literary studies is a “residue” of a wider pre-disciplinary and prescientific form of knowledge production associated with

literature, which has important implications for its status in the disciplinary network (Paulson 1991, 47). He argues that literature and its study have never been a proper discipline with strict boundaries because of its defining feature that is “interdisciplinarity from within”. Literature is interdisciplinary in the sense that it is complex, cannot be described at a single level or reduced to a narrower disciplinary formation. The literary text since the romanticism had the cultural function to teach complexity. “In the modern academy the pertinence of this apprenticeship now manifests itself in the critical role of interdisciplinary studies” (47). Therefore the complex, intricate way in which knowledge is produced in an interdisciplinary network is similar to the ways literary text operates. Paulson sees a structural connection between literature and interdisciplinarity, and although the analogy might not be perfect—as analogies never are—following his thoughts has many implications for research writing. I will explore this later in this research.

In the 1980s, when Paulson’s ideas were first published, the editors of *Interrelations of Literature*, a volume of essays on the interdisciplinary approach, claimed that literature is the “logical locus” for integration of knowledge and that “comparative literature has restored literature to its ‘pristine position as a central cognitive resource in society’” (Klein 1996, 147). In their view, that which locates literature in a privileged epistemological position are the interdisciplinary connections of literary studies. However, Klein calls attention to the danger that the simple relational logic of “literature and...” might build bridges between disciplines without restructuring them, which would be the precondition of an interdisciplinary interaction: uncomplicated border-crossing is not enough (154, 169). Following Giles Gunn she warns against disciplinary reductionism, or “thinking that methods of one field are sufficient to interpret the materials of many,” and that the materials of one discipline can be treated “as mere epiphenomena of the subjects of another” (170). These concerns are particularly relevant regarding literary studies, which has lent many

methodologies and concepts to other disciplines and served as a base for cultural studies precisely due to the increasing interest in its potential to enter in interaction with other fields. The aim of my study is not to explore to what degree literary studies has transformed other disciplines and how its object has changed as a result of interdisciplinary connections. However, since *Cosmodolphins* has been a product of feminist cultural studies of technoscience I want to indicate that it is important to problematize how cultural studies relate to literary studies, to what extent it draws on its methodologies and analytical tools in order to relate to the literary.

It appears from Klein's genealogy that literature and literary studies have been and continue to be located in a powerful epistemological position. However, literature's place in academia, in research and in scholarly writing has generated many debates. The literary reigns, says Jonathan Culler, in his essay on the situation of theory writing (Culler 2007, 41). On the contrary, states Susan Miller Squier, literature is the invisible part of the cultural project (Squier 1999, 143). Literary writing is excluded from academia, many authors claim, which can produce systematic ignorance (Richardson 1990; Livholts 2012b). At the heart of these debates are several questions that Klein's exhaustive genealogy touches upon but doesn't articulate explicitly. What are the power relations between disciplines? How does the disciplinary hierarchy affect the relationship between literature and literary studies? And finally what is the place of the literary in this hierarchical network?

## **1.2 The Exclusion of Literature**

However strong the disciplinary location of literature and literary studies might appear like in the interdisciplinary network according to Klein, many authors claim that literature has been excluded from academia or at least relegated to a lower epistemological position (Squier 1999; Squier and Littlefield 2004; Paulson 1990, 1991; Schiebinger 1991;

Livholts 2012a; Lykke 1996; Richardson 1990; Serres and Lapidus 1989; Sheridan-Rabideau 2008). This lower position in the disciplinary hierarchy is due to the separation between science and literature that occurred in the late eighteenth century, when the term literature was reduced to creative/imaginative writing. Paulson sees the origin of this division in the emergence of a form of knowledge “whose legitimacy cannot be founded on the fascination of stories, the persuasion of eloquence, or the beauty of poetry” (Paulson 1990, 313). Feminist science studies explains literature’s exclusion from academia by the fact that the disciplinary hierarchy is gendered, therefore the division between literature and science reflects the “gendered nature of intellectual inquiry” (Squier 1999, 136). The factual, the objective, the grounded, the scientific is associated with the male, while the fictional, the subjective, the unstable is related to the feminine. The emergence of literary studies in this sense can be interpreted as a move to claim a place in academia under the mask of a science, as Squire states “critics emphasized the objectivity, precision, the *scientificity* of literary criticism because they aspired to science’s disciplinary prestige” (138). Hence in order to find the place of the literary in the interdisciplinary network the analysis should focus on two crucial moments of schism: the separation between literature and science and the emergence of literary studies separated from its object: literature. It causes confusion that much of the debates on the disciplinary boundaries of literature don’t distinguish between literature as imaginative writing and literature as disciplinary formation, and use literature and literary studies as interchangeable concepts (Klein 1996; Paulson 1991).

I claim that when literature was reduced to creative writing, to the literary text—and from now on I use the word literature in this sense—, not only that it has been separated from sciences, but entered in a status of non-discipline, therefore had no place in academia anymore. Literary studies tried to bring back literature as a disciplinary field but only achieved to reestablish it as an object not as a mode of inquiry and knowledge production.

However, literary studies' theorizing on the operating modes—on the literariness—of literature proved to be extremely useful in looking at the operating modes of the subject and objects of sciences. But in spite of the claims on the “pervasiveness of the literary” (Culler 2007) and “the voracious textualization” (Klein 1996) literary studies still belongs among the “soft” sciences of the humanities (Lykke 1996) with less disciplinary prestige than the “hard” ones, and as such it is under a constant threat of complete erasure from academia (Nussbaum 2010). Literature hasn't come back into academia in its own right. Composition studies, one of literature's possible entry points, is another “feminized” field (Sheridan-Rabideau 2008) regardless that its main concern is academic not creative writing. This paranoid fear of including creativity in knowledge production, from letting literature sneak into the academia as a subject with agency has a long tradition from Plato through to the Enlightenment (Richardson 1990). This is a gendered fear and is related to a larger one from the feminine Other. Feminist studies addresses precisely this fear and its consequent moves of oppression of the Other. Therefore I am going to look at how the non-discipline status of literature is reflected in feminist theory and what kind of gestures have been encouraged to claim it back as an organic part of knowledge production.

### **1.3 Claiming Back Literature**

Before I begin to explore how feminist theory locates literature in knowledge production, I want to make clear the way I use in this discussion three key concepts: literature, literary studies and the literary. I employ the word literature in the sense of creative/imaginative writing that produce literary text including here a wide range of genres and styles that also incorporates what I call personal or reflexive writing (memoires, diaries,

letters, etc.).<sup>1</sup> I use literary studies as a term for a form of theorizing whose main concern is to give a definition and analytical tools to explore the “literariness” of literature in the sense Culler tries to map it out in his essay “The Literary in Theory” (Culler 2007). And finally I refer to “the literary” as a complex operating mode associated with creative writing by way of which literature produces knowledge.

I distinguish between three strategies in claiming back literature as a form of knowledge production. The first is an interdisciplinary method that focuses on how the application of literary studies’ analytical tools transforms the relationship between different disciplinary fields and leads to the formation of interdisciplines. The second founds its theoretical approach in the deconstruction of the hierarchical dichotomy between science and literature, and suggests that they are essential for each other. And finally, the third strategy’s foundational concept is post/academic writing, which tries to restore the literary in knowledge production by employing diverse writing styles in academic works. I don’t claim that these moves only happen in the field of feminist studies, but I argue that the inclusion of the literary in knowledge production has an ethical edge in feminist thinking and it is not merely a disciplinary question.

I use Jonathan Culler’s writing on the literary in theory because it offers a rich contradiction that serves as an entry point to discuss the first strategy. Culler states that “literature may have lost its centrality as a specific object of study but its modes have conquered” meaning that literature has informed the disciplines “of both the fictionality and the performative efficacy of their constructions” (Culler 2007, 41). He goes further by claiming that when disciplinary discourses reflect on their location and on the constructed nature of their narratives they take part in the literary, therefore “what’s left of the theory is

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<sup>1</sup> I will not discuss it here although I am aware of the debates around what is considered literary or extraliterary text, and around the different definitions and categorizations of genres and styles.

the literary”. With this statement he takes part in the debate on old fears as to whether literature has been “ignored or relegated to the margins of the university”, if it can be saved as it was, and if the boundary-breaking new theories mean the end of the discipline (Klein 1996, 167–168). Although all through his article Culler distinguishes between literature, literary studies and the literary—a distinction I am also using in the same way in this study—when he arrives to his main argument suddenly “literature” stands for literary studies and “the literary” seems to be everything that has a reflective nature. Literary studies was the agent that in an interdisciplinary relation threw light on the constructedness of the disciplines, and not literature as such. The relationship between disciplines and literary texts at least has been mediated. Academia weren’t conquered by literature’s modes of operating, but literary studies’ reflective analytical tools were adopted widely. If the literary is the mode of working of literature that is associated with creative/imaginative writing then the exclusion of literature—as operating mode—from academia reverses Culler’s final statement: *what is left of the literary is theory*.

However, earlier in the same article Culler points out that theories on race, gender and sexuality in literary studies owe a lot to literature that “provides rich materials for complicating... such factors in the construction of identity” (Culler 2007, 34). His example—Judith Butler’s *Antigone’s Claim*—shows that, contrary to his claim, literature’s rich material contribution can’t be restricted only to the field of literary studies. The literary text functions in such a way that is capable of asking complex questions which lead to emerging theories in many disciplinary fields. Culler calls this complexity a “special structure of exemplarity”. Although he paraphrases Levi Strauss by saying that “literature is better to think with”, and mentions Freud’s claim that the poets had been there before him, he doesn’t follow up this line of thinking. He switches to discussing the literariness of philosophical writing that finally converges with his thoughts on the informed constructedness of theory and leads him to say

that the literary reigns. Culler's writing implies that there is no need to claim back literature as a mode of knowledge production in academia, because literature did its bit: informed other disciplines about the importance to reflect on location and constructedness.

Susan Merrill Squier criticizes precisely this apparently interdisciplinary move. She claims that science studies has applied many literary and linguistic methodologies—roles of discourse, metaphors and the plot—, “yet, the two disciplines continue to have unequal weight” (Squier 1999, 142).<sup>2</sup> This statement is a warning against disciplinary reductionism and the instrumentalization of literature that in her view has a political agenda.

“Because our analysis of the gendered disciplinary hierarchy is still incomplete, feminist critics of science see little gain from an affiliation with the disciplinary position of literary studies. Instead there is a marked tendency for feminists... to protect their (relative) epistemological authority by retaining their disciplinary perspective and merely appropriating the discreet tools of literary study: metaphors, images, emplotment, and narrative” (Squier 2004, 43).

Therefore exploring the constructedness of disciplinary discourses might not be enough to destabilize disciplinary boundaries. Lykke also warns feminist critics against the “magic wand” of constructionism that enables literary scholars to move from the outsider position regarding science to a central one. She claims that “the reduction of science to mere textuality or power games... would restrict the conversation [between cultural and natural sciences] to the narrow outlook of one or the other pole of the great divide” (Lykke 1996, 81). Alternatively, both Lykke and Squier state that real interdisciplinary encounter happens when scholars look at the traffic between the realms of literature and science. This

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<sup>2</sup> Squier doesn't draw a clear line between the concept of literature and literary studies in her writing, calling both of them disciplines, which makes her argument sometimes confusing. I will follow my own terminology to make her claims more apparent.

interchange can be, but not necessarily has to be mediated by the analytical tools of literary studies.<sup>3</sup> Therefore the first strategy to include the literary in knowledge production by interdisciplinary methodologies must be aware of to avoid the error of mere appropriation of literary studies' analytical tools.

The second strategy I want to discuss also functions in the interdisciplinary framework but goes a step further in its primary aim, which is to deconstruct the opposition between literature and science. This approach conceptualizes literature as a discipline that has agency to “motivate or generate scientific representations” (Squier 1999, 142). It stresses the “mutual kinship” of science and literature (Klein 1996, 161) rather than the rhetoric of science, as the first strategy did. It sees them as an “ensemble of social relations, a thick and busy trading zone of boundary crossing and relationship” (Squier 1999, 153). Squier claims that literary texts must have a place in knowledge production because of their particular epistemological positioning. Researchers should embrace the fictional because it “is able to hold open a zone of exploration that other mediations (political, social, scientific, and economic) foreclose” (Squier 2004, 22). Squier’s suggestions and her methodological toolkit for literature and science are very promising although she restricts her claims to the exploration of science fiction novels as a way to gain a complex understanding of the cultural context: “that is literature’s contribution to feminist science studies” (Squier 1999, 153).

When discussing literature in relation to the disciplines hardly any text questions its disciplinary nature. Even Squier reinforces literature’s disciplinary status when she declares that there is no such thing as inherently literary or scientific, meaning that a “specific

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<sup>3</sup> These claims are closely related to William Paulson’s concern about attempts to reduce literary studies’ interdisciplinary nature to a narrower disciplinary formation “by privileging a particular level of the phenomena and establishing methodological principles for its investigation”. Since, “the structural nature of literary texts argues against any such exclusionary reductionism” (Paulson 1991, 47).

epistemology and methodology are not naturally inherent in either literature or science, but rather are the product of disciplinary organization and training” (146–147). I have claimed above that literature in the sense of creative/imaginative writing is a non-discipline that has been excluded from academia, but I agree with Squier when she talks about disciplinary organization regarding literature. She is more explicit about this question in a later article on the place of comics in medicine when she argues that genres have regulatory and constitutive functions (Squier 2008, 128). To escape the straightjacket of literary rules she turns to comics as a “flexible genre” to explore how science can be illuminated by literature. Since she agrees with Levine that literature and science are modes of discourse whose hierarchical position is due to “the conventions of culture they are embedded in”, and she is interested in examples of “hybrid identity” of literary and scientific publications (Squier 1999, 148).

A move further in this line of thought leads to the third strategy I want to discuss, the one that focuses on post/academic writing strategies as a way to include literature in knowledge production. The idea of post/academic writing is based on Lykke’s concept of postdisciplinarity: a new *mode of organizing* academic knowledge production. She distinguishes it from multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity, which are different *modes of working* across disciplines. She claims that boundary-crossing is a driving force of feminist studies and cautions against discipline-like knowledge production that would paralyze these forces. Therefore she argues for a postdisciplinary mode of organization of knowledge that would guarantee “*both* transversal openness and stable site for transdisciplinary reflections” (Lykke 2011, 143). Transdisciplinarity goes beyond the boundaries of existing disciplines and “research problems and thinking technologies are articulated in ways that are not ‘owned’ by any specific disciplines” (142). I claim that literature should be included in feminist knowledge production in order to preserve its *transdisciplinary mode of working* and its *postdisciplinary mode of organization*. Creative/reflexive writing methods are the perfect

place for transdisciplinary reflections and as a mode of articulation they go beyond disciplinary boundaries. Turning to the literary is also turning to a new mode of organization of knowledge that has been ignored or marginalized in academia. The conscious application of emergent writing methodologies under the umbrella term of post/academic writing has the force to challenge mainstream institutional academic practices, “promotes an ethics of change and a renewal of reflexivity in feminist studies” (Livholts 2012b).

In this chapter I mapped out literature’s place in the interdisciplinary network. I claimed that literature has no disciplinary position in academia, which has implications for knowledge production. Finally I discussed three strategies to claim back literature in feminist knowledge production in the inter-, trans- and postdisciplinary framework. In the following chapters I am going to examine how *Cosmodolphins* articulates these three epistemological moves and how it locates the literary in the scholarly work.

### *Choosing to Cruise*

“When presented with the idea of making a major lifestyle change that would involve moving from land to sea, only 3 of the 107 women interviewed rejected their partner’s proposed change outright and chose not to cruising. Some of the 104 women who took the risk of embracing the idea were eager participants from the outset: their primary question was ‘how soon can we leave?’ [...] 0 percent of the women let their fear of water or lack of sailing experience prevent them from making a change”(Cantrell 2000, 16–08).

## Chapter 2: A Journey across Disciplines Equipped with Literary Studies' Toolkit

In the previous chapter I tried to find the place of the literary in the interdisciplinarity network, I mapped out the connections of literary studies with other disciplines, I located literature outside of academia and I cherished boundary-crossing as the driving force in feminist studies. My language is full of metaphors and my writing articulates the key concepts of my research as spatial configurations. My style has been motivated by the prefix of my main concept *interdisciplinarity* that denotes a spatial relation 'between the entities stated in the root' meaning 'between', 'among' and the relation between abstract nominal bases, implying action and signifying 'mutually', 'reciprocally' and 'together' (Hamawand 2013, 739).<sup>4</sup> The *inter-* here implies fixed entities and the interaction between them, denoting fields that are in between disciplines and also the move across the borderlands in multiple directions. I find it difficult if not impossible to talk about interdisciplinarity without recurring to spatial metaphors, a tendency I have noticed in the works of many significant researchers (Alvanoudi 2009; Friedman 2001; Klein 2012; Repko, Newell, and Szostak 2008; Stacey 1995). This phenomenon has been partly explored by Klein in her analysis about the rhetoric and discourse of interdisciplinarity (Klein 1990, 1996). In this chapter I am going to look at how Bryld and Lykke place literature, literary studies and the literary in their work and in relation to interdisciplinarity, and I will point out how revealing is the metaphorical level of their writing. By recurring to this methodology, by applying literary studies' analytical tools to look at the constructedness of Bryld's and Lykke's discourse on *Cosmodophins*' disciplinary location I enter in interaction with my own research topic and I locate myself as a literary studies' scholar. I will repeat this double move in the next chapter when I will place their writing in the narrative turn, and will try to locate literature in that

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<sup>4</sup> In the later case 'discipline' is a verb.

framework. In order to map out the authors position regarding to the three key concepts of my research I will look at various writings of Nina Lykke—who has a larger theoretical work than Mette Bryld—published before and after *Cosmodolphins*. I argue that they are relevant in this research because they reflect on *Cosmodolphins*' origins and claims, they throw light on several questions and show continuity in her thinking about the place of the literary in interdisciplinary works.

## **2.1 Journey: the Metaphor of Interdisciplinarity**

Lykke and Bryld locate *Cosmodolphins* in the experimental interdisciplinary field of “feminist cultural studies of science and spirituality”. Inspired by Donna Haraway who identified science studies with cultural studies they claim that feminist science studies intersect with feminist cultural studies forming a “monstrous construct between humanities and the natural sciences in their classical sense” (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 28). The third element of their disciplinary field is spiritual ecofeminism whose aim—to subvert science’s image of nature as passive, inert other—is similar to the main goal of feminist science studies. This framework—feminist cultural studies of science and spirituality—apparently overcomes the binary oppositions of nature and culture, science and spirituality and places itself in the borderlands of humanities and natural sciences. However when the authors locate themselves as researchers, these oppositions become more clear-cut. “Educated in the humanities, we are, moreover, only tourists in the world of high-tech science [...] As women we are [...] peeping into the masculine subculture of space flight [...]. As individuals brought up in a rationalist tradition [...] a belief in astrology strikes us as extremely exotic as well” (27–28). These dichotomies reflect the gendered nature of intellectual inquiry. Humanities stand alongside with the feminine and with the spiritual, while science goes with the male and rational. The expressions of being “only tourists” and “peeping in” describes humanities’

inferior position faced with science's masculine nature and women's exclusion from it. The third binary—that states the exoticism of astrology and in which the researchers position themselves on the rational side—gains particular interest later when they dedicate a whole chapter to analyze the astrological language as a “cosmic *écriture féminine*” (137–158). I will return to this contradiction later as it implicitly reinforces the gendered binary of rationality and spirituality, what the book aims to deconstruct.

In the subchapter that focuses on their methodology the authors position themselves in the field of humanities as anthropologists and literary theorists whose common activity is described by the metaphor of traveling. The former travels in real life, the latter in fantasy, but they both cross real and imaginary borders (26). The journey is a foundational metaphor of interdisciplinarity in feminist discourse that clearly challenges the rigid boundaries of traditional disciplines. Moving across disciplinary borders and exploring borderlands constitute the feminist trajectory (Stacey 1995), although “the dangers of epistemological and cross-disciplinary travel are great” (Friedman 2001, 508–509). The feminist researcher is a good traveler who might have a home to return to where she can use what has been learned during the journey, which can be long expedition or just a “quick trip across disciplinary borders” (Friedman 2001). Leaving home can be interpreted as disloyalty, but it is necessary to engage in the journey to draw a—more fluid—map of knowledge. Traveling across borders relates to another basic metaphor that compares the disciplinary structure of knowledge production to a geopolitical one.

Kerstin W. Shands in her work on spatial metaphors in feminist discourse states that the transgressive metaphors of travel and boundary-crossing are highly appreciated and applied to compensate the “kinetophobia surrounding traditional constructions of femininity” (Shands 1999, 3). Shands argues that the feminist discourse has adopted opposing metaphors which indicate hypertransgressivity, a predominant trend in poststructuralism. She defines

“hypertransgressivity as an idealization of an extreme and incessant mobility across borderlines but without predetermined goals” (4). These metaphors imply that “we must keep running”, because settling down has negative connotations, and it is related to an essentialist and universalist way of thinking, “with absolutes and closures, with linear time and place, and with predictable and referential understandings of language” (9). This constant moving, shifting, displacement ad infinitum can lead into being solidified into an always defiant attitude or into an ascetic one that denies everything attached to the pleasures of home. The return to the home-discipline, the homelessness and the embracing of the disciplinary borderlands are neighboring metaphors of the interdisciplinary journey and reflect on the feminist researcher’s location.

## **2.2 A Postdisciplinary Home and the Academic Luggage of Literary Studies**

For Lykke boundary-crossing is not a mere obsession, not a sign of hypertransgressivity: it has a double goal. As I mentioned in the previous chapter she sees it as “one of the dynamics that has made feminist studies innovative” (Lykke 2011, 143). Petrified disciplinary borders would make impossible the “relentless” multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary work where the “strong potential” for innovation lies. However she expresses a need for the “stable sites for transdisciplinary reflections”. The desire for places of stability and mobility at the same time reflects feminist studies main concern about becoming an established discipline. Lykke suggests a postdisciplinary mode of knowledge production, a concept that offers a solution to deconstruct the dichotomy between stability and mobility. She suggests changing academia’s working mode in order to establish a place for reflection without losing its transversal openness. The implications of postdisciplinarity situate the concept in between the spatial metaphors of feminist discourse.

Shands distinguishes two major phases in the development of spatial metaphors: the first is the rejection of confinement; the second is the obsession with boundary-crossing. Feminist discourse favors resisting or ‘bracing spaces’ like of the constant travel. However Shands states that protective, restful ‘embracing spaces’ can be more empowering, not only politically but spiritually too. “Between the suffocation of confinement and the superoxygenation of unlimited openness there is a feminist imagery that visualizes an empowering spatiality whose embrace is both open and protective. For such visionary and empowering metaphors I propose the term ‘embracing’ or ‘parabolic’ space” (Shands 1999, 105). A postdisciplinarity discipline fulfills both aims: on one hand keeps on ‘bracing spaces’, crossing boundaries, fighting rigidity and on the other establishes a safe site for reflections. “You might say that I have tried to change academia in order to feel at home as a nondisciplined academic”, confesses Lykke in an interview (Livholts 2012c, 140).

Being “nondisciplined” here stands for a working mode not a lack of disciplinary affiliation. The postdisciplinary discipline of feminist studies might be a protective place, but not a home discipline. Lykke acknowledges her literary studies background not only in *Cosmodolphins* but in several texts where she discusses disciplinary questions (Lykke 1996, 2011). She claims that the postdisciplinary researcher must use methodologies of her home-discipline.

“I argue that it is my obligation, as a postdisciplinary feminist researcher, to take with me into the postdisciplinary field the methods to which I, via my educational and professional background, have a privileged access. I consider it to be my task to elaborate on the ways in which they can enrich the field and not just leave them behind” (Lykke 2010, 200).

This statement has a strong ethical claim—“my obligation”, “my task”—that urges the feminist researcher to use the knowledge acquired in the home discipline, not to forget her

specific background and be clear about what she is “particularly good at doing”. However the application of this knowledge is reduced to put in operation the methods of the home field. This move is very clear in *Cosmodolphins* where the authors describe their methodological pivots: discourse analyses, narratology, and semiotic and deconstructive readings (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 26). Therefore the interdisciplinary travelers carry an “academic luggage” (Lykke 2010, 200) which in their case contains the analytical tools of literary studies and the qualitative research method from anthropology. This luggage shouldn’t be left behind, the literary scholar’s obligation is to use the methodologies learned in her home discipline. Carrying across boundaries the analytical toolkit of literary studies accomplishes what I called in the previous chapter the first strategy to claim back the literary in the interdisciplinary work which transforms the relationship between different disciplinary fields and leads to the formation of interdisciplines.

Before I look at how Bryld and Lykke achieve this I will explore literary studies’ place in the field of feminist cultural studies of science and spirituality: the land the researcher-travelers go across.

### **2.3 Difficulties along the Journey: the Great Divide between Culture and Nature**

Although in *Cosmodolphins* the authors call the interdisciplinary field of the book ‘feminist cultural studies of science and spirituality’ in my analyses I will use the later denomination ‘feminist cultural studies of technoscience’ because this has become the more widespread name for this interdiscipline.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless I am aware of the importance of the deconstructive gesture to include the concept of ‘spirituality’ in the naming of the field, to which I will return later. In the volume *Bits of Life* (2008) Lykke maps out the origin and the

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<sup>5</sup> On the denomination of the field see Lykke and McNeil (Lykke 2008; Lykke 1996; Lykke 2004; McNeil 2008).

dynamic of three overlapping fields—feminist studies, cultural studies and science and technology studies—which intersect and constitute feminist cultural studies of technoscience (Lykke 2008). She argues that in the foundation of each there is an act of deconstruction. Feminist studies’ aim is to deconstruct gender, cultural studies dismantles the opposition between high and low culture and science and technology studies seek to question the positivist notion of rational progress in science. In her Venn diagram representing the overlapping fields appears “science and literature studies, SLS” as a constitutive part of science studies and cultural studies. As I pointed out above, Bryld and Lykke draw on Haraway’s work who defines science studies as cultural studies, a gesture that deconstructs the “nature-culture” dichotomy.

This division is more visible in an earlier writing “Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: Feminist Confrontation with Science” (1996) when Lykke locates herself in the “soft” humanities. “When I approach ‘hard’ sciences from this point of departure, it strikes me how great the divide that seems to separate natural and cultural sciences still is” (Lykke 1996, 75). Although she is committed to interdisciplinary work and transdisciplinary efforts and uses quotation marks to signalize how loaded are the adjectives “soft” and “hard” she is struck by the “excessively rigid” boundaries between disciplines. Her example is especially relevant for me to see how she places literature in the interdisciplinary network.

“Literary and physics departments, for example, seldom act as if they have anything in common other than the infrastructure of university buildings. ‘Nature’ in literature and ‘nature’ in physics seems to be two totally separate phenomena. One is inscribed in the world of art and language and supposed to be human, while the other is defined as a non-human and subject to natural laws” (75–76).

She claims that there is no interaction between the discipline of literary studies and science because of the erroneous inscription of literature in the world of art and language. She

criticizes the same move when she describes inter- and transdisciplinary communities of cultural approach to technoscience (Lykke 2008, 10–11). She argues that when the Society for Literature and Science included in its name “the arts”,<sup>6</sup> it emphasized its connection to high culture, instead of substituting “literature” for “culture”, since the word has been used in this “broader sense”. Literature together with “the visual arts, fiction, fantasy, and rhetoric” form the “cultural imaginary” whose links to the formation of technoscience undermine the positivist notion of science and technology. This statement contains two important assumptions on literature. The first is that literature in the interdisciplinary network can stand as a narrower concept for culture. The second is that there is a distinction between literature, fiction, fantasy and rhetoric, while they all form the realm of cultural imaginary. When this cultural imaginary enters in contact with science the great divide “set up by positivist epistemology between subject and object, and between the emotion and reason” will be crossed.

It is easy to see how from this list the concept of rhetoric relates to science. When mapping out the origins of feminist cultural studies of technoscience Maureen McNeil claims that “feminist literary scholars brought to science studies... a rich repertoire of practices culled from literary and linguistic disciplines” (McNeil 2008, 20). The academic luggage, the analytical toolkit of literary studies, proved to be useful for cultural studies. Klein claims that the integration of literary and linguistic methodologies caused the rhetorical turn in disciplinary studies, especially in the field of anthropology, ethnography, philosophy and the social sciences. A boundary work occurs here that is characteristic of all interdisciplinary activities: “from borrowing tools and methods to forming new hybrid disciplines” (Klein 1996, 57, 66–70). Boundaries seem permeable enough when the application of literary studies’ analytical tools remains in the field of the humanities. That is why feminist cultural

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<sup>6</sup> Society for Literature, Science and the Arts.

studies of technoscience' methodology has to be more transgressive and not only use the toolkit but find other ways to link science with the cultural imagery.

#### **2.4 Literature: the Missing Tool from the Academic Luggage?**

I have mapped out what literary studies' place is in Bryld and Lykke's interdisciplinary work: a set of analytical tools that makes it possible to deconstruct the binary oppositions between "soft" and "hard" disciplines, culture and nature, and undermines the gendered assumptions of a positivist epistemology. But where do they place literature and the literary in their work? To find it I will go back to Lykke's statement that "literature, fiction, fantasy and rhetoric" are part of the cultural imaginary, an essential concept to destabilize science's claims about its inherent objectivity and rationality. Literature in Lykke's text belongs to culture as a narrower concept but it is not identified with fiction, fantasy and rhetoric. Therefore literature in this sense doesn't stand on its own and it is not used with the meaning I attribute to it in my research that it is creative/imaginative writing that produces literary text. The meaning of literature in Lykke's context is located between the larger concept of culture and the narrower of fiction, fantasy and rhetoric and might denote what I call "the literary", a complex operating mode associated with creative writing by which literature produces knowledge. I base this claim on the fact that Lykke uses the concept "cultural imaginary" in the same sense as Graham Dawson and defines it as "those vast networks of interlinking discursive themes, images, motifs and narrative forms that are publicly available" (Lykke 2000). Therefore the analysis of the cultural imaginary in *Cosmodolphins*, that is the deconstruction of master narratives based on textual and non-textual materials, demonstrates that Bryld and Lykke understand the literary as a form of knowledge production. The acknowledgment of literature's particular epistemological

positioning that contributes to the exploration of the cultural context is made explicit by the way they include science fiction novels in the analysis.

The acknowledgement of the literary as a form of knowledge production can be traced in their methodology (literary studies' analytical tools), in the inclusion of the "cultural imaginary" in their project (with special focus on the role science fiction novels play in it) and in the explicit aim to apply creative writing practices. These three gestures correspond to the three strategies to claim back literature in the inter-, trans- and postdisciplinary work.

After mapping out Bryld's and Lykke's interdisciplinary journey through the disciplines, with special attention on how they locate literary studies, literature and the literary and how they position themselves in relation to them, I will look at how the three strategies are related to the narrative turn as a main inspiration and focus in *Cosmodolphins*.

## *Polyglot Etymologies*

*Metapherein* to see and carry over,

*Transferre* to translate

*Gnarus* to know the knowable

and, finally, to narrate.

### Chapter 3: The Narrative Turn and the Literary in *Cosmodolphins*

In order to map out how *Cosmodolphins* claims back literature in knowledge production I will use the narrative turn as the lens to bring into focus the book's operational modes. This has a special importance here because as Lykke states in a later writing, *Cosmodolphins* is a perfect example to illustrate the influence of the narrative turn on the methodology, structure and writing style of interdisciplinary works (Lykke 2010, 175). In this chapter I am first going to explore how the narrative turn is related to my three concepts—literary studies, literature and the literary—and what are the disciplinary implications of these relationships with special focus on cultural studies. I will look at some of the satellite concepts and revisit some dichotomies—fiction/fact, literature/science and culture/nature. In doing that my main resource will be the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (2005) because the entries have been written by the most important theorists in the field. According to this decision I will use the word *narrative* as the authors of the encyclopedia's entries do, that is in a broader sense sometimes including it in narratology and narrative theory. Reading their thoughts in a highly summarized style gives me the opportunity to reflect on the metaphorical level of their language that sneaks in despite the limits in extension, and discusses the struggle between binary oppositions and disciplinary fields. In the second part of the chapter I will analyze the three strategies of how *Cosmodolphins* borders the realm of the literary, what are the authors' claims about including the narrative turn's achievements in their work and to what degree they accomplish it.

The narrative theory has a long history from Russian formalism through French structuralism and semiotics. Thanks to the French theorists, it started to migrate from literary studies to other disciplines in the humanities in the 1970s. In the 1990s narrative and narrative theory reached faraway territories, including natural sciences. The history of its

journey reflects the governing disciplinary hierarchy and the varying permeability of boundaries. Since then the concept of narrative and narrativity, and the methodologies, modes of inquiry and research paradigms associated with narrative theory or narratology, have been shaping not only the disciplinary borderlands, but the disciplines themselves. The increasing interest in the narrative and in its neighboring concepts—the story, the plot, the discourse—as a form of knowledge production lies at the heart of the narrative turn.

The founding act has been described as the narrative's *emancipation* from literature and from fiction, its *coming of age*, its *liberation* from literary forms (Ryan 2005, 340); that the “the study of the story has been effectively *dislodged* from its original academic home” (Kreiswirth 2005, 378).<sup>7</sup> Once freed, the narrative began to *invade* fields (Ryan 2005, 344), to *flood the market*, to perform an *ever-widening* migration, to *travel far*, to *populate* and *colonize* new terrains (Kreiswirth 2005). The narrative is *epidemic*, the narrative is *promiscuous*, the narrative is everywhere: ubiquity is its most essential feature. Talking as a victim of the narrative plague I claim that this narrative of liberation and colonization throws a light upon the concept's disciplinary status. Some scholars attribute narrative's ubiquity to its interdisciplinary nature (Bal 2005, 250), others claim that it is inherently multi- or transdisciplinary (Kreiswirth 2000). I reckon that this variation is partly due to different definitions of multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity. Nevertheless the narrative connects many disciplinary fields by the borrowing of theoretical and methodological tools—in this sense it is interdisciplinary—, and reaches beyond established academic fields, that is a condition of transdisciplinarity. I am not going to look at what narrative is, and how its diverse definitions

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<sup>7</sup> Italics added.

have promoted and shaped disciplinary interconnections,<sup>8</sup> because what I am particularly interested in is its connection to my three key concepts—literary studies, literature and the literary—, therefore when I explore its disciplinary status I focus on its origins. It is easy to see the foundational role of literary studies in the narrative turn but, when it comes to literature and the literary, the picture gets extremely fuzzy. The narrative turn’s inter- and transdisciplinary moves and its aim to reassess the relationship between “the human” and “the scientific” cannot be understood without the differentiation of narrative from fiction and from literature.

### **3.1 The Narrative, the Fictive and the Literary**

Martin Kreiswirth, in his reviews of the history of the narrative turn in the human sciences, states that the narrative until up to the 1970s was an object of study of narratology whose home discipline was the humanities, especially literary and linguistic (semantics and semiotics) and, to a lesser extent, philosophical studies (Kreiswirth 1992, 2000, 2005). Narratology in the beginning privileged fictional narratives and thank to that focusing they became an implicit model for narrative in general. Therefore originally no questions have been raised about the referentiality and truth values of the text. When the narrative traveled far from the humanities and entered the field of the natural sciences grounded on traditional positivist epistemology and the holy trinity of facts, truth and objectivity, suddenly a troubling suspicion arouse “that when all said and done, story may actually turn out to be its wily twin, fable” (Kreiswirth 2005, 381). This nagging distrust is due to that the concepts of narrative and fiction has the same root and they are entangled with the idea of literature.

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<sup>8</sup> I am not exploring here the debate about narrative’s disciplinary nature, what its disciplinization would mean or if it has a human science’s status on its own (Kreiswirth 2000), because it would entail tackling questions around narrativization and narrativity, a set of problems that are far from the main argument of my research.

Many scholars have warned of the dangerous confusion of the narrative with the false, the fictive and the literary. That fear led to a division of labor in the narrative field among disciplines—humanities focused on the distinctions, while sciences on the truth values—and the boundaries impeded the development of narrative theory along these lines. “Research on the distinctions between story, fiction and literature has been primarily carried out by those not directly concerned with making or assessing narrative truth claims” (Kreiwirth 2000, 313).

This point is particularly important for my research on placing the literary in the interdisciplinary network. The concept of the narrative left the disciplinary confinement of the humanities, its ubiquity promoted inter- and transdisciplinarity approaches. It made permeable even the rigid boundaries between human and natural sciences. But when it entered the realm of the scientific, truth claims and referentiality suddenly became very important because the concept of the narrative undermined science’s traditional epistemology. Instead of dealing with the possible literary nature of the narrative, science preferred to focus on the distinction of the narrative from the literary. In the beginnings thanks to narrative’s capacity of migration, the concept apparently brought closer diverse disciplinary fields, but science’s fear of the literary kept the gap wide between humanities and the “hard” sciences. Kreiwirth’s claim that in narrative’s intrinsic form there is nothing inherently fictive or non fictive, and that this assumption is a product of the disciplinization of narrative, goes parallel with Squier’s statement that “there is nothing inherently literary or scientific, only what disciplinarity makes so” (Kreiwirth 2000, 314; Squier 1999, 145). In the moment the literary sneaks into academia claiming a place in knowledge production it is pulled out of its realm by the forces of disciplinarity or back to the fields of humanities, sometimes to the even narrower field of literary studies. However the literary resists disciplinization, and tries to invade academia in sophisticated ways. I don’t subscribe to the

rhetoric that fears or admires the pervasiveness of the literary, the colonization of the narrative or the voracious textualization. I consider that both discourses are divisive. The Enlightenment's binary oppositions—rationality and emotions, subject and object—and especially its high regard for the ratio are more embedded in the interdisciplinary thinking than what many theorists seem to acknowledge. However I see the literary mode of knowledge production as an unstoppable force that constantly challenges academia, disciplinary boundaries and interdisciplinary working.<sup>9</sup>

Cultural studies is an important interdisciplinary field that draws on the literary mode of knowledge production and uses the narrative as analytical tool. On the one hand it analyzes the narrative structures in symbolic forms and cultural practices and borrows narratological methods and concepts, on the other it explores how literary texts are part of the cultural context. In this approach “the literary text is not to be conceived as outside, above or below, but rather as an integral part of its cultural context” (Erl1 2005, 91). Squire in the same line claims that literature's contribution to feminist science studies is offering a complex understanding of the cultural context (Squier 1999, 153). Cultural studies accepts the literary mode of knowledge production as an organic part of the cultural imaginary, which in some cases simply reduces the literary text to mere data, a cultural phenomenon without taking into account its special operational mode. Although it produces knowledge in an interdisciplinary way it is not committed to turn to the literary regarding its methodologies. Lykke moves beyond the primary aims of cultural studies when she states that the narrative turn had such an influence on her work that she and her co-author consciously composed *Cosmodolphins*

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<sup>9</sup> I am aware of that my argument raises several questions especially about the similarities and distinctions of the narrative and the literary as operational modes. Kreiswirth urges to look at what is narrative about narrative rather than what is literary (Kreiswirth 2000, 314), but I think this is a divisive gesture that would produce what Squier calls “systematic ignorance” (Squier 1999, 137).

“in a literarily narrativized way, that is, built on a narrative plot structure that can be compared to that of a novel” (Lykke 2010, 175). This claim implies that, for them, the narrative hasn’t lost its literary features.

### 3.2 The Narrative in *Cosmodolphins*

Lykke points out that the narrative turn had a special importance for feminist studies (Lykke 2010, 149). Feminist researchers have explored the potentials of narrativity as an analytical tool to criticize master narratives of hegemonic power and to look at alternative, non-essentializing narratives of resistance and subjective agency. The aim of Bryld and Lykke in *Cosmodolphins* is to deconstruct the master narrative of space travelling through three icons: the spaceship, the horoscope and the dolphin. The demonstration of the constructedness of sciences’ narrativity is the main aspiration of feminist cultural studies of technoscience although the definition of this interdisciplinary field varies greatly: from the simple application of literary analytical tools to science to an epistemological revolution that brings in a new paradigm of knowledge (McNeil 2008, 16–17). *Cosmodolphins*’ main aim is to expose “the ways in which modern science contributed to the othering of Woman, Native and Nature” (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 28) and to analyse “the post- and neo-colonial re/de/constructions of a classical colonial discursive figure: Universal White Man” (Lykke 2010, 175). They focus not only on the deconstruction of master narratives but also on the reconstruction of alternative ones informed by feminist critiques and epistemologies (Lykke 2008, 14). The reconstruction is carried out in the book by the inclusion of the analysis of science fiction novels, to which I am going to come back later.

As I described in the first chapter, the first—and most wide-spread—strategy to claim back literature as a form of knowledge production is an interdisciplinary method that focuses on how the application of literary studies’ analytical tools transforms the relationship between

different disciplinary fields and, thereby leads to the formation of interdisciplines. When Bryld and Lykke decide to apply the methods of discourse analysis, narratology and semiotic and deconstructive readings of textual and non-textual materials, they perform this first move. They are inspired by the work of Irigaray and Haraway who—they claim—made “the boundaries between theory and literature permeable” (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 39). They achieve this permeability with their writing style and reading strategies. The authors of *Cosmodolphins* focus on the latter one, on the creation of critically disruptive and deconstructive reading positions. This means that they read “out of context”, they transliterate discourses on the space flight, astrology and dolphins into narrative genres and fables. After connecting the four master narratives (on the spaceship, the horoscope, the cyborg dolphin and the noble savage dolphin) to genres (adventure story, spiritual journey, science fiction and pastoral) they claim that these must be read as configuration to create critical estrangement and de-naturalization.<sup>10</sup>

They argue that this reading strategy has the “oblique angles of literary reading”, which means: “Addressing the non-fictional discourses of our material as though they were narrative, we can read these alongside the truly fictional ones from the perspective of literary theory and borrow analytical tools” (50). Fictional in this context refers to the literary as the authors have already and explicitly embraced Haraway’s position, who rejects the binary opposition of fiction and fact arguing that both “are rooted in an epistemology that appeals to experience” (Haraway 1989, 4). The concept of fictional in Bryld and Lykke’s theoretical framework could not refer to the truth claims of differently constructed narratives as their main point is that constructedness destabilizes the truth claims of scientific objectivity. Therefore I claim that fictional stands here for the literary. Reading the statement in this way means that a main assumption can be outlined, which implies that the application of literary

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<sup>10</sup> Lykke later calls this strategy ‘queer’ readings (Livholts 2012c).

studies' toolkit legitimizes the inclusion of the literary in research. And it suggests that in *Cosmodolphins* the concept of narrative is associated with the literary.

The authors' statement refers to the inclusion of the analysis of three science fiction novels which from an alternative position rewrite the master narratives of cosmic and oceanic otherness (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 216). This gesture deconstructs the hierarchical dichotomy between science and literature, and suggests that both discourses are essential for each other. I named this the second strategy to claim back literature in knowledge production. I find it especially important that the authors talk about the three novels in the conclusion of the book, titled "Inappropriate Contiguities Revisited", because it reflects on how they see literature's position in their work. I argue that locating the novels in the conclusion is a double move that places literature outside of the interdisciplinary network by not forming organic part of the main chapters<sup>11</sup>, but at the same gives to the literary an elevated epistemological position because it appears in the closure.

It is legitimate to talk about narrative closure in *Cosmodolphins* as the authors themselves claim that the book was consciously written in "a literarily narrativized way" and it has a "narrative plot structure that can be compared to that of a novel" (Lykke 2010, 175). The deliberate composition of the book forms the third strategy, which restores the literary in knowledge production by employing diverse writing styles in academic works. Composing a plot structure also aims to stress on the authors' main claim on an epistemology that sees science and knowledge production as story-telling practices (178). This is a brave attempt to deconstruct the binary oppositions of nature and culture, subject and object, emotion and reason and shift the boundaries between academic and creative writing. I claim that the latter was not successfully achieved, which I am going to explain in the final chapter.

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<sup>11</sup> When Lykke gives a detailed synopsis of *Cosmodolphins* she doesn't mention the methodological and epistemological importance of the Conclusion (Lykke 2010, 175–178).

Lykke states that they used Derrida's three step model of deconstruction as plot structure and 'motor' that unfolded the narrative. This structure constitutes the storyline and generates the narrative flow of the text. Therefore they see argument as a genre governed by narrative, where "the ordering or internal progression of a discourse depends upon a narrative structure in which a premise is elaborated, developed, proved or refuted" (Goodrich 2005, 348). Their statement raises several questions: Does deconstruction's mode of argument always function as narrative? Can the plot structure of an argument be compared to that of a novel? Does giving attention to the narrative composition and the plot structure mean that the work is going to be "literarily narrativized"?

Lykke and Bryld use narrativity as an analytical tool to deconstruct master narratives and at the same try to reflect on the narrativeness of their own work. They read different narratives through the lens of literary genres and claim that their writing is characterized by genre-blending. However, when I try to read *Cosmodolphins* "out of context" and perform the authors' disruptive reading strategies, I see the book through the lens of the travelogue. A hybrid genre that reconstructs a journey by translating travel experience into a travel plot that reflects on culture specific discourses, on the constructedness of alterity and identity and imagings of countries and people, and "requires a basic narrative structure, but it makes ample use of non-narrative modes of presentation" (Korte 2005). As I mentioned earlier, Bryld and Lykke position themselves in the beginning of the book as travelers and they finish it stating the same: "We have travelled a long way in the writing of this book—from a feminist conference in Dublin to the void beyond the edges of the universe—and traversed some truly amazing landscapes" (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 225). They also happily subscribe to be heroines in the fairy-tale of the questing self in search of adventure (27). However, when it comes to look at the book as a "literarily narrativized" work they stay with the three step structure of deconstruction, and choose not to explore in their writing style the potentials of

the travelogue. This choice for the conceptual, for the rational is the major obstacle which impedes them to shift the boundaries of academic and creative writing in *Cosmodolphins* as I will demonstrate in the next chapter.

## *Amazement*

*Amaze* was first recorded in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century as *amasian* meaning ‘stupefy, make crazy’. The *a-* is an intensive prefix, and *masian* is related to the word *maze*. From the late 16<sup>th</sup> century *amaze* has been used in its actual meaning, ‘overwhelm with wonder’ but its obsolete connotation conserved the original sense of ‘to perplex, bewilder’. The root *maze* originally meant ‘delusion, bewilderment’ (also used as a verb ‘to stupefy, daze’), and possibly comes from the Old English *mæs*, ‘to confound, confuse’. The actual meaning ‘labyrinth’ was first recorded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> To be in a maze therefore was to be in a state of bewilderment and uncertainty that could make one crazy. There is an important shift in the meaning of maze from denoting a state of mind to a spatial configuration. Going a step further *amazement* can signify ‘the state of mind of one who is in a confusing network of intercommunicating paths or passages’ (Rochfort 2012).

“Exploring the maze is a social occasion, leading us away from the stress of modern life, making us laugh and relax. We are entertained during a pleasurable interlude, one of surprise and novelty thanks to the maze maker’s imagination. And although we venture far away from the solemnity and spirituality of the labyrinth, perhaps it is the joy of the ‘journey’ that we need to experience in order to understand and find comfort in our perplexing world—in some way what the labyrinthine path tried to do” (Kingsley 2010, 92).

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<sup>12</sup> [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

## Chapter 4: On Amazement

Bryld and Lykke conclude *Cosmodolphins* saying that they have crossed *amazing* landscapes during the journey of writing of this book (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 225). They started it by looking at an “*amazing* mission”, captivated by an “extraordinary and *amazing* topic of discussion” on an “*amazing* and fascinating story of real life travel to distant and alien worlds”, and they “felt much more *amazed* and awe-struck” than they expected, because the space flight is “*amazing* and fascinating” (9–11).<sup>13</sup> Amazement is a key concept in *Cosmodolphins* and there is a clear aim to transmit to the readers the “current of high voltage” that run through the authors’ body when they “stumbled upon” fascinating stories during the collection of the material for the book and when they found themselves in unexpected situations (23; Livholts 2012c, 139). Find and confront amazement is part of their working methodology and they seek to express this feeling to their readers. Amazement is not only a method, but a “vital element of analysis”, part of the writing and reading strategy of the book (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 23). The authors claim to open up a room for amazement to let the unexpected work on them and their public (Livholts 2012c, 138). In this final chapter I am going to examine what their strategies are to transmit amazement, how this is related to the literary mode of knowledge production and what the inclusion of the literary does mean for feminist theory writing.

However central the concept of amazement is in *Cosmodolphins* as a methodology it doesn’t stand on its own, but forms part of a dichotomy that gives the title of the second chapter: “Between Amazement and Estrangement”. The authors borrow the literary technique of estrangement from Darko Suvin which means that by using the “oblique angles of literary reading” they de-automize and de-naturalize the reader’s perception of the world (Bryld and

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<sup>13</sup> Italics added.

Lykke 2000, 50–51). Estrangement is achieved by reading the different narratives on the spaceship, the horoscope and the dolphin through the lens of literary genres. This move is important in order to achieve a critical distance that aims to even out amazement. Bryld and Lykke agree with the anthropologist Kristen Hastrup, who claims that critical distance and amazement should be balanced against each other in a research (69). In this binary, amazement is related to the genre of romance and fantasy in a broad sense denoting stories that insist on ‘a radical discontinuity between [their] world and the world of ordinary human experience’ (50). An extraterrestrial perspective is likely to evoke amazement, but the narrative of romance should not win over the narrative of estrangement (69–70). Whereas the book’s main goal is to deconstruct master narratives and binary oppositions Bryld and Lykke create a new one by drawing a line between estrangement and amazement. This dichotomy is closely related to, and reinforces, the traditional opposition of rationality and spirituality.

Why is it so essential for the authors to balance out amazement while at the same time they repeatedly claim that this is the driving force behind their research? I argue that the answer lies in their embeddedness in the academic tradition of rationality. No matter how committed they are to embrace amazement they have a strong urge to avoid relegating critical distance to a secondary position. This aim to maintain equilibrium, to balance the two concepts against each other, to see them as supplementary terms that evoke a double perspective, finally tips the balance in favor of estrangement or critical distance, which stands here for rationality.

#### **4.1 Amazement and Spirituality**

Bryld and Lykke position themselves as tourists from the humanities in the world of science, women who can only peep into the masculine world and they define themselves as “individuals brought up in a rationalist tradition” (27–28). In the binary oppositions of gender

and the gendered hierarchy of disciplines they stand alongside the “female” side, but when it comes to the binary between rationality and spirituality they make explicit their belonging to the former one, which traditionally is related to the masculine. They make this distinction to explain their attitude towards astrology, which they find “extremely exotic”. However they dedicate a whole subchapter to lay out reasons as to why they include the analysis of spirituality in their study. They acknowledge that feminists have tried to keep “spiritual ecofeminism, goddess-worshippers and the like at safe distance” (36), but they see an important common goal between discourses of feminist science studies and the ones of spirituality: the deconstruction of the master narrative on nature. Yet the authors are cautious with the naming of the new disciplinary field represented in *Cosmodolphins*—feminist cultural studies of science and spirituality—and make explicit the binary opposition between rationality and spirituality.<sup>14</sup>

The positioning of the researchers and of their interdisciplinary field reinforces this gendered dichotomy, which becomes even more visible in the sixth chapter—“One Does not Stir without the Other”—when they address the master narratives on astrology. They call astrology a kind of cosmic or heavenly *écriture féminine* and claim that it can be compared to the texts of Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva. This statement is based on the view that both astrology and *écriture féminine* are a certain type of writing “that negotiates the rationality of the dominant cosmology [...]; articulates the bodily-spiritual forces of cosmos [...], and erupts inappropriately in the margins of a culture dominated by the scientific world view” (140–141). The authors argue that they turn to *écriture féminine* to avoid simplistic essentialism, but at the same time they find astrology—what they previously labeled as

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<sup>14</sup> In her later work Lykke never again makes this distinction in the name of the interdisciplinary field of feminist cultural studies of technoscience while she keeps insisting on the importance of including spirituality in the research.

cosmic *écriture féminine*—extremely essentialist. They celebrate the subversive moves of both pointing out the analogies and differences, but the fact that *écriture féminine* stands alongside astrology reinforces the gendered binary opposition between rationality and spirituality: a trap they have tried to avoid.

“One trap is to side totally with the rational, anti-spiritual and disembodied outlook of modern mainstream culture and to reject the New Agers’ opting out as an irrational act of unscientific nostalgia. The other trap is to give up critical analysis and distance and to accept the universalist, essentialist and at the times extremely phallogocentric truth claims of the astrologers” (141).

Although Bryld and Lykke acknowledge that their approach should not be founded only on narratives of rationality and they should not discard spirituality they are afraid of losing critical analysis and distance. The reading of astrology as cosmic *écriture féminine* is motivated by the same fear that urged them to balance out amazement against estrangement. With this move they place amazement alongside spirituality in binary opposition with critical distance and rationality. *Écriture féminine* belongs to the realm of the former while Bryld and Lykke position themselves in the later. I argue that this dichotomy and the authors’ embeddedness in rationality have a strong effect on their writing style and finally is the major impediment to transmit their amazement.

Before I move on to look at their writing methodologies I try to specify my claim about the fear that motivates them to relegate amazement, spirituality and *écriture féminine* to a secondary place. My argument here is quite hypothetical as there are very few hints in *Cosmodolphins* and in Lykke’s work about her and Bryld feelings regarding these issues. Nevertheless I claim that they fit in a larger frame, which I summarize as the fear of “not being taken seriously” in academia, the origin of which is the fear of being associated with the “feminine” irrationality. At the very beginning Bryld and Lykke start the book from a

presumably inferior position in academia, because they come from the humanities. It is revealing that they identify themselves as “only tourists” in this research. Feminist cultural studies of technoscience struggles against this feeling of inferiority that is attached to human sciences, especially to literary studies. Lykke paraphrases this fear saying that:

“Moreover, I think that the question ‘When, in your career, can you use alternative forms “safely”?’ played a role for me. When we wrote *Cosmodolphins*, I had my doctoral degree: I was an established researcher” (Livholts 2012c, 139).

The topic of the book itself, especially the addressing of New Age narratives, is loaded with gendered assumptions, and increases the possibility for it to be taken as a new age text. The authors’ explicit claim for rationality might serve to prevent this kind of reading.<sup>15</sup> The desire for safety and the fear of being marginalized is inherent for a scholar in feminist studies whose disciplinary status and interdisciplinary claims are constantly questioned in academia. Because of this fear, Bryld and Lykke’s theoretical commitment to embrace amazement, to include spirituality as an object of study and to use alternative writing methodologies has been translated into practice only to some extent.

#### 4.2 Amazement and the Literary

The comparison of astrology to *écriture féminine* expulses the latter from the realm of the rational, which goes parallel to that astrologers are not part of academia and astrology is not a science. There is much uneasiness and resistance towards the continuation and teaching of the writing practices of *écriture féminine* in the academic world of feminist studies (Belsey 2000; Roberts 2012; Sheridan-Rabideau 2008). One of the main claims against it is that it

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<sup>15</sup> “Some readers might shy away from *Cosmodolphins* presuming it addresses only new age gurus. [...] Sometimes *Cosmodolphins* reads as if it could be a new age text simply by virtue of its own engagement with the specificities of that discourse” (Parks 2001, 118).

reasserts the feminine as irrational and is often seen as irreconcilable with characteristics such as logical, clear and coherent. Belsey fears that *écriture féminine* marginalizes women one more time to such an extent that their last resort is going to be madness (Belsey 2000, 1157), while Sheridan-Rabideau argues that it cannot be taught in academia because its main goal is to dismantle university (Sheridan-Rabideau 2008, 259). However, the subversive move to challenge the masculine, rational academic language is a living tradition in feminist studies. I claim that writing strategies inherited from *écriture féminine* continue to exist in two main forms: the first is the focus on the literary quality of theory writing; the second is the inclusion of diverse writing styles in post/academic writing. Both of them embrace literature as a mode of knowledge production. When Bryld and Lykke compare *écriture féminine* to astrology they refuse to take part in this subversive writing tradition in feminist studies, and although theoretically they are committed to cross-genre, interdisciplinary writing that experiments with style, in practice they subscribe to a very even academic language. I will explore how the literary is excluded from their writing by looking at their claims, the style of *Cosmodolphins* and, finally, at the positioning of *Amazing Stories*.

Culler states that one symptom of the pervasiveness of the literary is that philosophical texts and in general theory have become literary in the sense that they cannot be paraphrased and they require rhetorical reading like poems (Culler 2007, 38–39). This means that theoretical writing have a degree of complexity that has previously been associated with literature. This complexity is often seen as “needless obscurity”, and this assumption leads to accuse theorists to be deliberately difficult and bad writers. Culler and Lamb states that the discussion around bad writing has its origin in that theoretical writing that constantly challenges assumptions “failed to question its own ‘common sense’” (Culler and Lamb 2003, 8–9). When Bryld and Lykke challenge the master narrative on the rationality of science they forget to reflect on their own rational writing style. Badness in

writing means, argue Culler and Lamb, when writing is not treated with the difficulty it deserves. I claim that this kind of complexity is missing in the writing style of *Cosmodolphins*. The book might have fallen victim to what Haraway calls the “tyranny of clarity” and of the assumption that clarity is politically correct (Haraway and Lykke 2004, 333), as the authors were told that they had to write in a ‘lively and engaging’ way if they aimed to be accepted by an international publisher (Livholts 2012c, 139).

This complexity and difficulty in writing what is associated with the literary is consciously embraced in feminist theory writing. Haraway’s books are literary texts which on her part involves a political and epistemological commitment to a stylistic work that makes it difficult to fix the meaning (Haraway and Lykke 2004). Braidotti urges feminists to make the same step, “to break away from the patterns of masculine identification that high theory demands, to step out of the paralyzing structures of an exclusive academic style” (Braidotti 2011, 24).<sup>16</sup> She consciously mixes different modes of writing and of knowledge production to resist the division of labor between the “logos-intensive” philosophy and the “pathos-intensive” literature (69). Many feminist theorists are committed to writing styles that articulate “contradictions, messiness and doubts” (Livholts 2012b, 1). While theory writing that explores the complexity of the literary mode of knowledge production is accused to be unnecessarily obscure, creative, reflexive and experimental writing tends to be marginalized or excluded from academia and established journals in feminist studies (3). Therefore every move to claim back literature in knowledge production is a struggle against the disciplinary norms based on the classical concept of rationality.

Lykke states that the application of literary techniques in academic writing would help researchers to focus on the “poetic truth” of the text rather than on results and findings

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<sup>16</sup> She makes a clear connection between new forms of theory and the writing tradition of second wave feminism.

(Lykke 2010, 174). Based on the work of the philosopher Hywel D. Lewis she argues that the poetic truth has the same aesthetic and ethical effect as literature, because it shows something well-known in unexpected ways. Once fascinated, the reader experiences a moment of epiphany. Therefore the application of diverse writing methodologies can transmit the amazement of the researcher-writers and cause amazement in the reader. If the *Amazing Stories* are claimed to be written in a literary way why do they fail to amaze?

### 4.3 Amazing Stories

I came all this way along to find amazement, to let the text work on me, to feel the unexpected, to be fascinated. I was wondering about how an academic text would achieve an effect that I had experienced so many times in reading literature. Therefore I looked at the place of the literary in between the disciplines, and I found it outside of academia. I wondered about the gap between the scientific and the literary, the rigid walls that separate science and literature and hoping that once more border-crossing was going to be possible, and that at the end the boundary that separates academic and creative writing would turn out to be porous and the dislocated literary would be relocated (Livholts 2012b). When I first held the book in my hand I was so excited about the new experience to come that I jumped the first chapter and started with the reading of the *Amazing Stories* (AS). I thought it would be a nice exercise as the authors promised to leave it largely to the reader to trace links and draw conclusions (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 23). They said the stories would serve as general appetizer and that they were going to tune me into amazement (44). I knew from my readings on *Cosmodolphins* that the authors wrote AS in a literary way using different writing styles and genre-blending and that the structure of the whole book is deliberately composed as a novel (Lykke 2010; Livholts 2012c). My position towards the book was one of whom expects to read literature, waiting to experience another form of operational mode in the text that is

not the one associated with the academic. I didn't want to be persuaded by arguments I wanted to get the *feeling* of the authors' methodology as that was how they saw the role of AS (Livholts 2012c).

I was suspicious of the fact that the AS appear scattered between the chapters because I feared that they wouldn't be an organic part of the book, just mere illustrations, and that literature was again going to be simple decoration to science. My distrust increased when I noticed that the headings of the AS were different from the regular chapters. The yin-yang of the two jumping, flying dolphins in the heading not only reinforced the distinction between the supposedly different writing styles but also made me realize that literature's epistemological position in Bryld and Lykke's interdisciplinary writing is more related to something playful rather than being acknowledged as a mode of knowledge production.<sup>17</sup>

I started to read. I was told that *Amazing Stories* was the title of the first science fiction magazine published in the USA founded by Hugo Gernsback who coined the term 'scientifiction'. The author reassured me in good academic manner that they borrowed the title "to spotlight the amazement, the feelings of disbelief and wonder" (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 44). I grew impatient, I didn't want to be told, I wanted to find out myself, to experience and feel. I wanted my authors to keep their promise that I would have a share of the amazement involved in re-search. I went through the texts and become more and more annoyed, more and more disappointed. The stories about the moon, the dolphins, the astrologers and space travelers were all the time explained to me in a very rational way, interrupted and followed by comments from the authors who positioned them in their

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<sup>17</sup> After the submission of this thesis in July 2014 will be published by Routledge *Writing Academic Texts Differently* in edition of Nina Lykke (and al.) with the subtitle *Intersectional Feminist Methodologies and the Playful Art of Academic Writing*. I find it unfortunate to introduce the word 'playful' in the subtitle as it reinforces the assumption that it is easier and less complex to combine different writing styles than to stick to the traditional rules of academic writing.

theoretical framework. It felt like reading interesting stories with the interpretation included. Apparently the authors couldn't let amazement do its job. They had to constantly remind me of their critical distance and my obligations as a critical reader. As much as they claimed to be able read out of the context, they didn't respect my context as a reader in front of a book that promises amazement. And I expected amazement as I have experienced it most of my life through the complex mode of the literary. *Cosmodolphins* is an exciting scholarly work, but as a ravenous literary reader I put it down feeling cheated. However, as a researcher I felt inspired to take on the task to find myself where the literary remains, where amazement has been lost and how it can be claimed back.

## A Self-Reflexive Conclusion

I have finished my last chapter in a disappointed tone. One might ask why I bother then with a book that left me so dissatisfied. I have several answers to that question, but the main reason is that discontent is an important driving force in feminist studies. Discontent is what makes feminist studies political. And for me claiming a place for the literary in interdisciplinarity is a political question on various levels. It affects how we, feminist scholars, write and how we think about writing, how we teach it. Our writing relates us to other disciplines and locates our work. It is a means of communication that raises questions around representation, articulation and translatability. Writing reflects feminist studies' struggles for autonomy on one hand and for acceptance on the other.

Discontent is essential for feminist studies in order to remain reflexive. Reflexivity and especially self-reflexivity is an ethical and political need. Feminist scholars shouldn't ignore what Mona Livholts expresses so vividly in the introduction to her volume on *Emergent Writing Methodologies in Feminist Studies* that "mainstream textual forms are often related to a system that privileges certain kinds of knowledge over other, subjugated knowledge" (Livholts 2012b, 3). Therefore writing is a form of activism that can challenge the institutional practices of academia and the established structures in feminist studies as well. Exploring the transformative potential of textual forms is related to the question what feminist theory is and what the silenced or relegated modes of knowledge production are in academia and in feminist studies.

When as a feminist researcher I started to work on *Cosmodolphins* the feeling of discontent drove me, which followed my hunger for amazement. I entered into the discussion about writing methodologies by focusing on literature, not only because of what the case of *Amazing Stories* exemplified for me, but because I had a personal interest in creative writing.

I still wonder if my conclusions on the non disciplinary status of literature don't reflect my own positioning towards academia: struggling to get in, and wanting to be out.

I am passionate about *Cosmodolphins* as a research which is why I had the urge to explore how, in spite of my fascination, *Amazing Stories* disappointed be. My first reaction was that they lacked literary quality, and this statement got me into the debate about what is literary. I defined it as a complex mode of knowledge production, and I distinguished it from literature and literary studies. I examined its disciplinary position because it helped me to form claims about the persistent gendered nature of academic hierarchies. I focused my theoretical framework on the dividing lines between science and literature, a borderland, which has been widely researched, but still offers a lot to think about. Then I started to concentrate on *Cosmodolphins* and particularly the authors' disciplinary location and their methodological framing. I pointed out the important role of cultural studies and the narrative turn that had been explored in the book as a theoretical foundation to claim back literature as a mode of knowledge production. However, looking at Bryld and Lykke's work from the "oblique angle of the literary"—to borrow an expression from the authors—it fails to perform what I call the third strategy, because their writing style is embedded in the rationalist academic tradition.

I see *Cosmodolphins* as a maze and I admire the maze-makers' imagination. I wandered around, I relaxed and I made some discoveries. I tried to figure out the entangled web of the paths to learn how to place the fountains and statues and what they can teach me in my journey.

## *Epilogue*

Budapest 7<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Dear Nina Lykke,

I wanted to write you earlier than this. I wanted to send you a real email, not a message closed in an MA thesis that might not ever reach you. I wrote a study on your book, *Cosmodolphins*, and on questions around writing and literature in feminist studies. For months I was visiting the website of Routledge regularly because I wanted to read the forthcoming book you co-edited on *Writing Academic Texts Differently*. It was supposed to come out in 2013. Finally I had to give up when I saw that the publication had been postponed to July 2014 well after my thesis had to be submitted. I was disappointed, so I thought I might write you and ask if I could read part of the material to be published. So I was browsing the net looking for your or Mette Bryld's email address in February when I came across the news of her death that had happened only a couple of days earlier.

I felt embarrassed and I still do. I don't know you and didn't know her but I have made claims on a book you had written together. About something that now must be more than a research work but a dear memory to you. I knew she was your partner because you said it in an interview with Mona Livholts, an interview on *Cosmodolphins* that I have learned by heart, because it had so much relevance for my study. You enjoyed the conversation, laughed a lot in that short piece.

I don't know how to finish this letter and what the purpose of it: is if not only to express how close one can get to the people one writes about and to send you my sympathy and my thanks.

Sincerely

Éva Cserhádi

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