

Lars Norén as Stage Director

The playwright Lars Norén (born 1944), one of the most prominent artists in Sweden today, has always worked on his dramas until the last moment before the première, often participating in the rehearsals, and so the step towards directing was not so big when he made his debut in that role in 1993. "The way I am working now", he said a few years later, "I can continue working as a writer when directing. It's interesting to develop the stage directions [...] the postures, the distance between the actors, the placing of the voices".ⁱ So far, he has directed some twenty plays, both his own and plays written by others.

Norén's play *Kyla* (*Cold*) (published 2005), which may be characterized as a study in youth violence, twisted ideologies and the inability to express oneself, opened in his own production at Riksteatern in Varberg in March 2003. The show later toured Sweden and the world until 2005: it was shown at theatres, schools and prisons as well as at music festivals and the Swedish Parliament, and it was broadcasted by Swedish television on 11 December 2004.

With *Kyla*, Norén introduced a new kind of artistic process, in which the playwriting continued not only during the rehearsal process, but even after the première, which necessitated new rehearsals. But the unusual working process was also indicative of the direction in which Norén was

going as an artist, and it seems to have foreshadowed a major creative crisis in his life: an unprecedented writing block that began when he returned from his production of *Krig (War)* in Paris later in 2003, and which lasted more than a year. Norén described the crisis as being “Like a death. Not being able to reach... myself.”ⁱⁱ

This essay presents an attempt to connect that sense of artistic death to the imaginary scream, which prompted Norén to write *Kyla* and which later translated into the chilling scenic image that opened the show: “I wrote [the play] that summer two years ago [2001]. It was like a stroke of lightning that went right through me: I simply wrote it. I heard some people approaching who were screaming and then shouting. I sometimes hear lines, and sometimes I’m so lucky that I can use them as the basis for my work.”ⁱⁱⁱ The interrelation of the working process, the crisis and the image of the scream throws light on Norén’s work as a stage director, on the dramatic craftsmanship that he has acquired during his more than forty years of writing, on the tension between naturalism and expressionism in his work, and on his artistic development towards the place where life cannot reach: death’s place.

In fact, nothing has previously been written about Lars Norén’s artistic processes. Since his debut as a poet in 1963, he has been writing within a variety of genres, publishing three novels, a diary, fifteen collections of poetry – and about eighty plays, which range in style from the painful

expressionism of his early works to the minimalist reduction, calmness and purity of his later works. In 1997, however, literary historian Mikael van Reis summarized the state of Norén research as follows: “Both little and much has been written about Lars Norén. The sheer size of his oeuvre has generated plenty of reviews and other newspaper comments, but, in comparison, few critical analyses and academic studies.”^{iv} Not much has happened since then, and, moreover, the existing studies have focused on the writer: mostly on the poet, less on the playwright, and barely on the director.

My thesis *Inter esse – Det skapande subjektet, Norén och Reality* (*Inter esse – The Creative Subject, Norén and Reality*) (2008) and my documentary film *Kall – Noréns drama* (*Norén's Drama*) (2007), in which I follow him producing *Kyla*, sheds light on Norén’s artistic process both as a writer and as a director, by looking at how he directs, at how he captures the tone in what remains unsaid, and at the way his views on the text relates to the physical language of the actors.^v The *Kyla* process offered a particularly fruitful opportunity to study a drama come into being: since the play was not finished when rehearsals began, it became more like an artistic search instrument. Norén wanted the performers to influence the script, which was to be a work-in-progress, he said, the author and the actors continuing to develop the text for a year, sometimes with an audience present in the rehearsal room. This was

certainly a kind of collaboration that was entirely new to him, and it emerges from his own description that he was at a crossroads: the outcome was not given.

Norén's process

Kyla, which revolves around the relationship between four men in their twenties, is loosely based on a notorious Swedish murder case: the assault and killing of John Hron, a fourteen-year-old boy of Czech origin, by four teenagers of neo-Nazi persuasion, which occurred close to Kode, a suburb of Kungälv, on 16 August 1995.

In *Kyla*, three men, led by Keith, spend a summer evening in a forest somewhere in southern Sweden. They are half- drunk, frustrated and full of contempt towards other people. At the arrival of Kalle, a young man of Korean origin, neo-Nazi sympathies come to the fore, and suddenly everyone is up in arms. The play ends in violence and death.

Kyla is naturalistic in form and, with a few brief exceptions, takes place in real time, but it does include some expressionistic elements. The dramatic terminal point, Kalle's murder, is choreographed in slow-motion, and the drama begins with the scenic image of the actors walking to the front of the stage where they scream.

Hence the beginning of the play resembles the imaginary scream that generated the writing process. Although Norén entertained the hypothesis at the beginning of the process that an inability to express oneself generates violence, this was not the actual impetus of the play: if one intellectualizes the core too much, he says, the whole thing may die. By beginning from zero, so to speak, he hoped to become so receptive towards his impressions that something genuine would emerge. The scream was like a seed out of which everything waited to grow, and when that image was in place, he began to investigate its implications, moving forward by way of associations. Norén always begins with his inner imagery, which he compares to rebuses, referring to the tradition of the surrealists. Like Salvador Dalí, he relies on his dreams.

Norén's long experience with psychoanalysis, too, is reflected in his attitude towards the artistic process, which, like the therapeutic process of the patient, leads to greater clarity of vision, culminating in the finished work, the ability to express an idea being closely associated with the idea itself. "When you are writing and when you are enacting the words, you find yourself in one position", he says, "then you rise. It may be important to express these things, but it's important not to express them before you *can* express them."^{vi}

In this way, his work has developed his attention to, and his understanding of, the issues that occupy him, and *Kyla* emerges as part of

an on-going spiral of accumulating knowledge in himself as well as in his writing. It also emerges as a companion play to the much-debated *Sju tre* (*Seven Three*) (1998), in which he documented and dramatized his personal encounters with three heavy-duty criminal inmates in a prison. Kalle is as locked in the situation as is Norén's alter ego in *Sju tre* (played by Reine Brynolfsson in the author's 1999 production at Riksteatern), and as was Norén himself in his meetings with the three inmates who were later to play themselves and partly stage their own performances in the production. As companion pieces, *Sju tre* and *Kyla* can both be said to dramatize the close link between violence and language. Both the author's alter ego in *Sju tre* and Kalle in *Kyla* are subjected to the pressure of violent groups but have the advantage of their superior ability to articulate themselves, whereas the groups, ultimately, with their self-hatred and language deficiencies, can only express themselves through violence.

The violence

Norén claims always to be in the process of learning as a writer, while at the same time being very conscious of his choices: "I make five hundred decisions every time I write. I always know exactly why every sentence is

there, why it is wrong, why I have not succeeded.”^{vii} He is only able to make the right artistic decision, however, when he has reached the right stage of insight, and "in order to let something unexpected and important happen" he must start out by being as "empty" as possible, without entertaining any particular views or opinions:^{viii} one cannot take shortcuts or make an artistic choice before one is ready to take in the relevant impressions from the surrounding world. When working on *Kyla*, he imposed this way of working upon the actors, wanting them to postpone decisions, just as he does as a writer, and therefore he could not have given them the directions at the beginning of the process that he gave them at the end. By keeping the text open during rehearsals and during the performance period he wanted to extend his writing process, making it possible for something new to take shape in the meeting both with the ensemble and with the audience.

To the question of what constitutes the finished work if everything is in a continuous state of transformation until it has been played for the last time, Norén responds that you know when a text is ready, and then you leave it, but that the topic of the text is another matter: interest in a certain subject may lead to further work. "A topic is not finished just because the text about it has been completed. To know or understand is both a stage in one's acquisition of knowledge and a stage in one's impotence."^{ix}

Indeed, artists tend to return stubbornly to the same subjects again and again precisely because they know what they ‘mean’, some finding their images within themselves, in their dreams, or in certain physical places. A “stroke of lightning”, such as the scream that started the process of writing *Kyla*, requires a charge, and the subject of the play – violence, exclusion – was not new to Norén: many of his plays are filled with violence. When he imagined the scene with the screaming and shouting people, his creative process was already underway, and topics dealt with in *Kyla* were indeed related to issues central to many of his earlier plays. “It’s the same thing as in *Sju tre*”, he says, “I’m really scared of violence. I’m a coward, physically.”^x

His plays often contain autobiographical elements, as several people have noted, and a personal experience provided the background for *Kyla* too:

"I have experienced the same thing as Kalle: as a child, when I moved to another part of Sweden," he tells, referring to his maltreatment by violent schoolmates, "The violence has remained within me as a trauma [...] I'm not trying to understand it, but I'm going through it, repeating it to myself."^{xi}

During the work on *Kyla*, someone familiar with the process of *Sju tre* observed that the actor playing Keith was uncomfortably similar to the intense and aggressive character Mats, one of the inmates in the earlier play: "I get the chills," the person said, "Keith looks so much like Mats,

and he's even worse."^{xii} The comment is revealing, as Norén has himself implied that he is similar to Mats: he sees himself reflected in the perpetrator as well as in the victim. In *Sju tre*, in any case, his alter ego says: "I am like Mats. I recognize myself very much in Mats, in his way of being when I was younger. [...] Why am I here [in the prison]? Because I am so like you. We have about the same childhood and memories. I have just been lucky. [...] I am afraid of the violence within myself. Therefore I can go to extremes in the other direction."^{xiii} Some critics have regarded Norén's attraction to these violent characters as problematic, but the author declares that one of the reasons he writes is "to conjure up the aggressive forces within myself. Creation is in itself aggressive; every creative act is a violent act".^{xiv}

The recurrent violence in Norén's plays, which, according to the author, originates in his own childhood memories, is further developed in his study of accumulated violence in *Kyla*, but by taking mental control over his artistic processes, it is as if he repels the violent power discourses he has encountered in real life. He explains that the play was conceived as the prologue to the last – and, at that time, still unwritten – part of the trilogy *Morire di classe*, the first two parts of which were *Personkrets 3:1* (*The Human Circle 3:1*) (1997) and *Skuggpojarna* (*The Shadow Boys*) (1998). Like *Kyla*, both these plays portray people on the borders of society, which provide a fertile breeding ground for violence: social

outcasts in Stockholm and male prisoners, respectively. Norén says of the relationship between *Kyla* and the last part of the trilogy: “They are connected. *Kyla* is another part of that which is coming, but which will have a quite different form.”^{xv}

À la mémoire d’Anna Politovskaïa, which was eventually premiered in 2007 as the last part of the trilogy, is a tale as black as night set in an unspecified war-torn country where human society and ethics have collapsed.

To end

Although Norén's decision to continue writing during rehearsals is certainly a novel creative principle, it also reflects a recurring aspect of his creative life: his unwillingness to end. That his desire to postpone the completion of his plays is far from new appears from the observations of the director Suzanne Osten, who collaborated with Norén in the early 80s: "He rewrites again and again, revises three times, and then new changes, clarifications, throwing in new jokes, cutting text again. During rehearsals Lars finds out which actors are willing to receive new texts and how far into the process they are able to receive them."^{xvi}

To Norén, the finished work should stand as a model for everyday life, and he postpones choices of text revision and casting because they are of existential and moral significance to him: one cannot open a door until it is there, he says, and when one opens it, it's a moral decision.

Norén's view of the première is, therefore, characteristic of his vision of theatre as something real and true rather than something produced for the entertainment of an audience: "I would like to avoid having a première. I would like to just play. I don't want to play for critics or for an audience who see the first performance and who define themselves as a 'première audience'. I want it to just be."^{xvii}

But what does it mean for a performance to "just be"? Be for whom? For Norén himself?

The idea that the work will continue to live, grow and develop in the encounter with the audience is not new. Nor is Norén by any means the first artist who wants to open up the theatre by letting the audience in during the writing and rehearsal process: openness and flexibility is indeed a trend nowadays. It more rarely happens that the play is written parallel to the rehearsal process, especially if the same person is both writing and directing. But to continue developing the text during the performance period, as Norén's plan was, is unique in modern theatre. But is it possible to avoid the première altogether? At least in this case it was not. The separation from the play, which its completion implied, was

probably difficult, but Norén had to go on: his professional life is extremely squared and other obligations were waiting. The failure to avoid the premiere was not only due to the market conditions to which even a giant like Norén must submit, however, but also to an existential and considerably more complex limitation. Talking about open processes is one thing, but a truly open process is another: not having an end means exposing oneself to anxiety – the *horror vacui*, which makes artists cover the white spots of their artworks with details. "It's a relief that we have an end", Norén says himself; "We can correct ourselves in relation to an end. We can say: 'This I haven't done yet, this is important to do'. In this way we find out who we really are: something only death can demand from us."^{xviii}

Perhaps the open process of the *Kyla* production was really the result of the author's obsessive quest for perfection, of his dream of liberation, of letting the text continue to breathe and improve. But did his play, in the end, express the scream he originally heard? In fact, he says he never found the exact expression for the "rash outburst of powerlessness and violence", which he was searching for.^{xix}

The author's directorial experience

Norén's aim with *Kyla* was to portray the social impotence of inarticulate people while avoiding psychological explanations.^{xx} But when he began violating the text together with the actors, it departed from his original vision. The pared-down and incoherent language that had interested him from the beginning was suddenly lost. He has difficulties describing, retrospectively, how and when it happened, but to do the production “for the young, for schools, for the 15-16-17-year-olds”^{xxi} was a decision of great consequence, he says. *Kyla* is the first production he ever did for a particular audience, and the text may have been polished in order to accommodate an unschooled audience of youngsters. “I wanted a much more impoverished language, a more broken, more blurred, more inaudible language. [...] During the first two weeks I tried to enhance the language, to fill in and add to the text. [...] I made the text a bit nicer. I didn’t keep that truly naked skeleton that existed in the first version and to which I was attracted as a writer.”^{xxii}

The linguistic change influenced the characterization, and he later admits that the play lost the expression of powerlessness he aimed for. The characters were originally meant to be less individually characterized, but the psychological nuances disrupted that effect, and they became three individuals. “Maybe I went too far in making them distinct individuals instead of a blind, faceless group,”^{xxiii} he says, and later adds: “On that occasion I didn’t really trust the silence. I didn’t have enough faith in my

own work to wait it out. Instead I began to answer questions before the questions had sufficient relevance.”^{xxiv}

Norén mentions two, related, reasons why the director's process reduced the quality of the writer's work, the finished text being no longer as raw as the original. The first is that his general wish not to repeat himself affected his work as a director: during the rehearsals he kept making additions and changes that ruined the raw material. "Therefore I really shouldn't direct my own plays", he says, "I make changes since I think it's so boring to do something I have already written. It's terribly unsatisfying to transfer onto the stage something that has been inside my head. [...] That process is never as good as the writing process. I make additions and changes in order to feel the inspiration and the desire, in order to start the mental images.”^{xxv} The statement implies that Norén had changed his attitude towards the directorial process since he began directing: from being curious about the exploration of his text in the rehearsals to being bored with it.

The second reason why he, in the rehearsal process, lost "the scream" that started the process and is the essence of the play – and with it the hoped-for insight into the “silence”, with which he seems to refer to that which should remain unsaid in a play – is that he allowed the actors to interfere with his writing. They may have contributed with creative energy, but he also felt a need to give them more verbal nourishment. "I wanted to give

them better lines”, as he says.^{xxvi} In other words, he did not dare to let them play the raw material. Their influence grew, without them asking for it, and the group identity became so strong that Norén became part of the collective: the space of the sovereign author was invaded.

One wonders if he could have reached the expression he aimed for with the open, collective process if the cast and the style of the production had somehow been closer to the impoverished language of the original text.

Perhaps the outcome had been different if he had chosen to cast, say, three physically similar actors, or if he had worked with masks or identical hairdos. In that case, they might have appeared as an undifferentiated unity, which would have shown the violence to be blind. Or, he could have worked with younger and more inarticulate actors rather than with fairly well-educated and articulate adults in their twenties. But the actors were who they were, and he wanted to do them justice and not blur their individual traits: he almost became like a father to them.

Crisis and transformation

Since Norén began directing in the early 90s he has located more and more of the writer's process to the production period. He himself links the

writing block of 2003-2004 to his experience with directing: "as I began to write, I thought to myself: 'I can solve this when I direct. I don't have to write it now.' [...] Then I started writing and realized I was skipping things." In order to improve on this situation, he says, "I worked my way back to a sort of foundation: I tried to become just a writer again, to not think about directing or about the actors, to just think about the play and myself."^{xxvii}

When talking of his work during the crisis, he illuminates, indirectly, what it means for a work to "just be". He is the only one who can tell if a text is ever completed, if it remains true to what he wished to express on stage, and the finished *Kyla* is indeed different from the feeling he originally wanted to communicate, which was something "much more raw and poor."^{xxviii} It did not become the play he had hoped for, partly as a result of the open process, which anticipated the creative crisis that began shortly afterwards. In this period, his plays became shorter and shorter, as was the case with the last poems he wrote before he stopped writing poetry back in the late 70s. In fact, his crisis in the 2000s can be compared to his literary development in that period, in which his writing was so intense that he had to slow down the flow. In 1978, the year in which his father died, he decided to devote himself entirely to playwriting, which he found less emotionally demanding, and in the 80s he wrote about twenty plays. In a 1990 interview, which appeared at a

time when he went regularly to psychoanalysis after his father's death, he says that they “come from a molecule in the late 70s, almost all the plays come out of that”.^{xxix}

Thus, his playwriting originally seems to have been an attempt at self-preservation. "The work with [*Fursteslickaren* (*The Prince Licker*)] created an enormous flow of images within me, which did not halt”, he says, referring to his first play (1973), “The images just kept coming, ceaselessly, and they triggered a psychotic period. I had to medicate myself. Then I tried to find more peaceful ways of writing, but the flow went on and on during the 70s, and it was closely associated with poetry, so I had to stop writing poetry.”^{xxx} Since writing, to him, is an existential activity, a way of living, thinking and feeling, he needed to anchor it in “slower” material – i.e. originally in drama, and later in the realism that was to characterize his following plays – in order not to succumb to the lyrical flows of more evocative images.

"Poetry and drama are genres far from each other, and the conflict between them was very divisive. I had to decide, and I chose drama because the poetry shrank – it was disappearing and became tinier and tinier, as if reduced to small skeletons.”^{xxxi}

It was not the last time that he was to doubt his ability to write and to achieve the artistic results he was aiming for. In 1997 Norén claimed that his plays from the 80s were “full of ironies”, but that this had now

changed. He associated the new feeling with the state of world politics, and with a sense of being more true to his time than before: "Something happened in 1989-90, at the time when the Berlin Wall came down, which was incredibly liberating and made me feel more at home. I never felt at home in the 60s or 70s: the last five or six years have been the happiest, as well as the most terrible. Try to read Heiner Müller's *Gesammelte Irrtüme*: he has a lot to say about having a true or a false time mode. He also says important things about Chekhov and that sort of drama: that you become an epigone the moment you are no longer interested in the real world. People without a tragedy are people no longer interested in reality..."^{xxxii}

In the 90s, when Norén felt he became more true to his time, he entered a broader, and much darker, social space as a playwright, which was further removed from his personal experiences, and which sometimes demanded research, as was the case with *Sju tre* and *Kyla*. This was also the time he started directing, the writing continuing right into the rehearsal space, but when working on the last part of his trilogy *Morire di classe* in 2003-2004 – originally, a play dealing with African refugees – he was forced to return to his writing room (in fact, he never wrote the asylum play, and, as mentioned above, *À la mémoire d'Anna Politovskaïa* is now considered the last part of the trilogy).

Had the 'real', external world of wars, refugees, prisons etc. become too large for him? He had intended to write, direct and collect material simultaneously in connection with the asylum play, "But then it became more collecting materials than writing, so I felt I had to stop. I had to stop directing, because writing is the most important thing to me."^{xxxiii}

Death's place

Norén's exceptionally high demands on himself, to which the *Kyla* process testifies, are characteristic of his artistry, the open work process emerging as part of an on-going search for perfection, for a form that just "is". Norén is always searching for the 'moment of silence' in a play, for the right tone in what remains unsaid, and when he waited for *Kyla* to make the right impression, this was what he was waiting for. Similarly, he declares that the "fastidious" theatre is his ideal, recognizing the exactness he aimed for in *Kyla* in the work of what he describes as "the great silent geniuses": the painter Vilhelm Hammershøi and the film directors Carl Th. Dreyer and Robert Bresson.^{xxxiv}

Perhaps this search for a perfect silence is what led to the writing crisis that suddenly silenced his voice? Perhaps his ideal of silence and the fear of silence and of ending is one and the same thing? Perhaps the perfect

play is a deadly form? "The way forward [in Norén's authorship]", says van Reis, "goes backwards towards the original scenes of birth and privation [...] First as last the closed space is the place where death becomes a dimension of life, and Norén seeks it again and again. One could even argue that Norén's poetry is generated from the closed space."^{xxxv}

As a playwright remaining close to the dramatic tradition, Norén has always imitated the styles of other writers, something that, according to Mikael van Reis, "should not be viewed as secrets or loans, dependencies or allusions. It is rather Norén's way of making himself clear and open in relation to tradition. Other people's drama is almost a kind of filter that his own dramatic subjectivity may pass through."^{xxxvi} But as a director who has not worked his way through the history of directing and thus is not anchored in a tradition to the same degree, Norén does not seem to use such filters, and his open process is therefore more of a writer's than a director's process: he has come to see the performance as a matter of finding the right rhythm in the lines, the correct words and movements. He directs "lightly", as did Beckett, too, when directing his own plays. His independence of directorial traditions is also reflected in his view of the director's profession: "one can't really learn from other directors, for one is exposed to tests every second, and there is nothing to lean on. Yet I have no ambition to direct: my passion is writing."^{xxxvii}

After many years, Norén has become better at paring down the language of his plays, he says, comparing that development to his development as a stage director as well as to his earlier development as a poet. As a director, he has gradually abolished everything on stage, except the characters, perhaps for the same reason why poetry was formerly closer to him than the novel: "I was more interested in writing in a direct way, in feeling the essence of the words, than in working with large fictional contexts."^{xxxviii}

Instead of letting the action develop in 'real time', for example, as he did in his earlier plays, he began breaking down the unity of time, space and action. In his plays centring on death and birth from the last decade, such as *Detaljer (Details)* (2001) and the suite of plays known as *Terminal* (2004-2005) – as well as in the non-dramatic prose of *En dramatikers dagbok (A Dramatist's Diary)* (2008) – he has experimented increasingly with time warps. "Dreamtime", which is the designation he gives to these experiments, already appeared at an earlier stage in his playwriting, however. A famous example is the element of unreality found in the otherwise realistic *Natten är dagens mor (Night Is the Mother of Day)* (1982). In the middle of a conversation, the character David suddenly takes a carving knife and cuts his mother in the face "so that the blood trickles out of a large incision". After washing himself and the knife, he

sits down. Mother collapses, but soon revives, acting as if nothing has happened.

In fact, the scenic naturalism normally associated with Norén's plays dates back to the way they were performed at the time of his breakthrough in the early 80s rather than to the texts themselves, which have always featured expressionistic imagery. "In the beginning [of my career as a playwright] I was very interested in the prolongation of time", he says, "I was very affected by slowness, accuracy, extraction and repetition, and wanted to somehow break down the expectations of the audience for kicks or some kind of American dramaturgy. I really disliked that, and still do."^{xxxix}

According to Norén himself, there is no real contradiction between realism and expressionism: "it is not I who breaks with the realistic frame; it is the realism that eventually becomes so concentrated that it can only be expressed through hallucination".^{xl} Dreamlike scenic images are an important aspect of the otherwise naturalistic *Kyla* production, too, in which the most decisive moments are stylized: The scream that opens the play is presented as an abstract scenic image, and for the murder scene Norén first wanted light changes or even a blackout, but then decided in favour of a slow-motion choreography with frozen images: the last, fatal, kicks were originally directed at the wall at the back of the stage, but were later directed at the audience.

Norén's development seems to resemble that of Beckett who also moved toward the end of realism in minimalistic and precisely choreographed, sometimes wordless tableaux: death's place. S. E. Gontarski sees Beckett's art from *Play* (1963) onwards, including the author's own productions of his plays, as monologues rather than dialogues, as a "renewed emphasis on the static scenic image, the still point, tableau vivant, which bears more resemblance to a sculpture than traditional theater."^{xli} According to one of his actors, Billie Whitelaw, Beckett said during one of his last productions: "I do not know if the theater is the right place for me anymore."^{xlii}

Perhaps Norén is seeking ways out of the theatre, too?

Per Zetterfalk

ⁱ Lars Norén in Håkan Lager, "Samtal med Lars Norén", in *Dramat*, nr 4 1997, p. 14–18. Quote p. 16. My translation.

ⁱⁱ Lars Norén in conversation with Per Zetterfalk (2005). My translation.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. Norén did not make it quite clear whether the scream was imaginary or whether he was referring to an actual event. But the wording and the fact that Norén usually derives inspiration from his dreams and interior images suggest that the scream was imaginary.

^{iv} Mikael van Reis, *Det slutna rummet. Sex kapitel om Lars Noréns författarskap 1963–1983* (diss. Göteborg; Stockholm 1997). Quote p. 24. My translation. See also Cecilia Sjöholm, *Föreställningar om det omedvetna. Stagnelius, Ekelöf och Norén* (diss. Lund; Stehag 1996), Lars Nylander, *Den långa vägen hem. Lars Noréns författarskap från poesi till dramatik* (Stockholm 1997), Patrik Mehréns, *Mellan ordet och döden. Rum, tid och representation i Lars Noréns 70-talslyrik* (diss. Uppsala 1999) and Yvonne Blomberg, *Att besvärja döden. Död- och återfödelsematiken i Lars Noréns författarskap 1963–1999* (diss. Stockholm; Möklinta 2008). Only one

dissertation is concentrated on Norén as a playwright rather than a poet, namely Björn Apelkvist, *Moderskonflikten i Lars Noréns åttiotalsdramatik* (diss. Lund; Möklinta 2005). In Anders Johansson, *Avhandling i litteraturvetenskap. Adorno, Deleuze och litteraturens möjligheter* (diss. Göteborg 2003) is a chapter on Norén's plays: "Sju tre och dramatikens gränser", pp. 123–62.

^v Per Zetterfalk, *Inter esse - Det skapande subjektet, Norén och Reality* (diss. Stockholm; Möklinta 2008) and Per Zetterfalk, *Norén's Drama* (Stockholm 2007).

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Lars Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2003). My translation.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2005).

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} From a conversation that took place on 8 February 2004 in Studio 1 at Swedish Television in connection with the TV production of Norén's version of *Kyla*.

^{xiii} Michal Leszczylowski, *Repetitioner* (2005).

^{xiv} Lars Norén, in a conversation between Lars Norén and Etienne Glaser, "Teatern och det onda", in *Teatertidningen*, no 1, 2004. Quote p. 14. My translation.

^{xv} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2003).

^{xvi} Suzanne Osten, *Mina Meningar. Essäer, artiklar, analyser 1969–2002* (Uppsala 2002). Quote p. 59. My translation.

^{xvii} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2005).

^{xviii} Lars Norén in Betty Skawonius, "Publiken fick följa Norén", in *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 January 2006. My translation.

^{xix} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2005).

^{xx} Ibid.

^{xxi} Ibid.

^{xxii} Ibid.

^{xxiii} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2003).

^{xxiv} Ibid.

^{xxv} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2005).

^{xxvi} Ibid.

^{xxvii} Ibid.

^{xxviii} Ibid.

^{xxix} Lars Norén in Carl Otto Werkelid, "O'Neill-pjäsen är färdig, efter åtta år. Lars Norén ser allt" (interview with Lars Norén), *Svenska Dagbladet*, 21 January 1990. My translation.

^{xxx} Norén in Nylander, op. cit., pp. 350.

^{xxxi} Lars Norén in Sanna Björling, "norénskt", in *Dagens Nyheter*, 24 June 2005.

^{xxxii} Norén in Nylander, op. cit., pp. 358.

^{xxxiii} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2005).

^{xxxiv} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2003).

^{xxxv} van Reis (1995), pp. 260.

^{xxxvi} Mikael van Reis, "Den omänskliga komedin", i *De döda pjäserna IV* (Stockholm 1995), pp. 253–281. Quote p. 273. My translation.

^{xxxvii} Lagher (1997). Quote p. 16. My translation.

^{xxxviii} Norén in Nylander (1997). Quote p. 352.

^{xxxix} Norén in conversation with Zetterfalk (2003).

^{xl} Lars Norén in Ingemar Björkstén, ”Man slåss för sitt liv medan man arbetar”, in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 9 October 1983. My translation.

^{xli} Gontarski in Wilmer (1992). Quote p. 39.

^{xlii} Billie Whitelaw in Kalb (1989). Quote p. 235.