

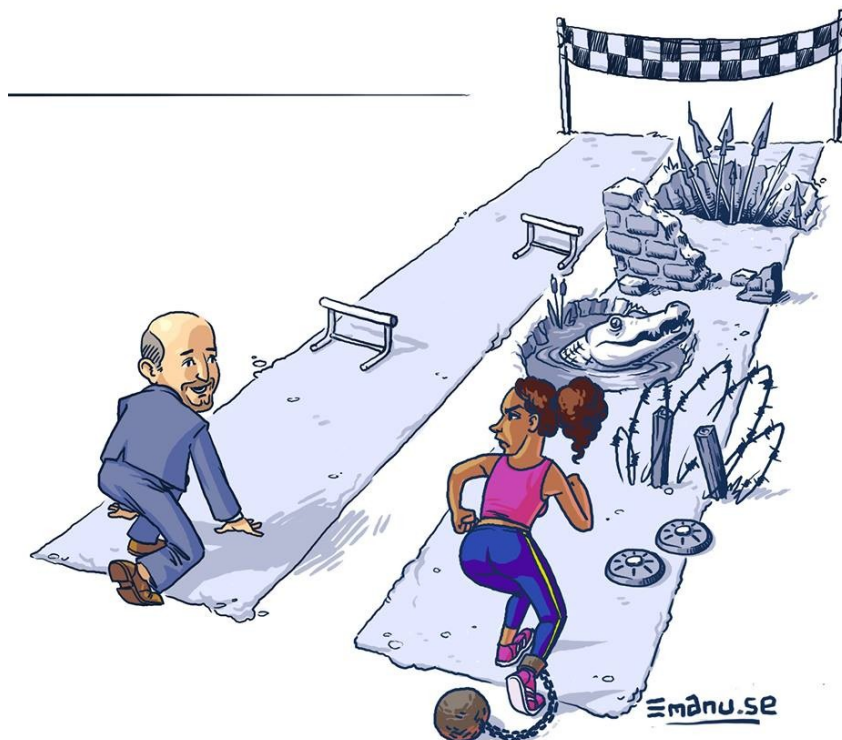


UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

Department of Cultural Sciences

Drawing resistance -

*Swedish cartoonists and their relation to politics, power and
the art of making others laugh*



“What’s the matter?
It’s the same distance!”

Master’s Thesis in Gendering Practices 30 hec
Faculty of Arts, Spring 2016
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Firstly, I would like to thank the activists involved in this thesis: Elin Lucassi, Amalia Alvarez and Emanuel Garnheim. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to solidarise with you!

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ABSTRACT

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This essay analyzes conversations between the author and three Swedish cartoonists concerning ideas of politics, art and comics. The cartoonists are Elin Lucassi, Amalia Alvarez and Emanuel Garnheim. The aim is to examine how political cartoons can be constructed within a frame of feminist and political activism. Do the cartoonists view cartoons as a method for political change and in which way is this idea then formulated with the cartoonists? What ideas are being negotiated within the discourse of cartoons concerning its relationship to art as activism? What forms of feminist resistances can laughter create in a political struggle that is presented through cartoons? With discourse theory, feminist theory and political philosophy, some answers to these questions are searched for. The result shows that they all considers themselves as acting within an activism framework and that they do so by drawing cartoons concerning certain issues. Humor seems to act as a special ingredient when conveying difficult political matters and the cartoonists relationship to notions of art is a complicated one. And so, the result indicates an intricate affair concerning the cartoonist own ideas around their artistic and activistic practices.

Keywords: Swedish cartoons, feminist theory, political art, humor, activism, discourse theory

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Introduction: Drawing up the panels

In comics, a panel is a single drawing and an individual frame in a sequence of a comic strip. This panel is frozen in time and moment. But when put together with the rest of the sequences, the other panels, a story is created. Movements and sounds are constructed through the readers imagination and their ability to follow the narrative that is unfolding. It can be as simple as seeing someone lift their hand and wave, which in itself is a very complex idea about how we can interpret our reality. In comics, nothing is really moving. It is a sequence of still images organized in a specific order. But it manages to convince us that it does move, that the hand is actually waving. This thesis is not only about comics – it is also about the ones that convinced us a still image is as alive as you and me.

In this thesis I will examine through three Swedish cartoonists own ideas, the relationship between politics, satire and the art of comics. I will lift the focus from the paper, to the ones that hold the pen. From their different subjects of inquiry when creating a comic to discussions about how a democratic society can be formulated, this thesis tries to grasp the intricate question: Do the cartoonists view cartoons as a method for political change? I started to wonder about the cartoonists own ideas around their creative practices almost a year ago, when working together with some very talented cartoonists on an exhibition about political comics in Sweden. The exhibition was called *Serieupproret! En utställning om makt, konst och politik (The Comic Riot! An exhibition about power, art and politics)* and was created in collaboration between me and Charlotta Hanno, art developer at Kungsbacka Konsthall. In this exhibition, we wanted to explore the comic scene of Sweden, with a focus on the comics that could be considered political: which in the end almost everyone of them was. With subjects varying from abstract collages in which a person takes out its brain and cuddles with it, to critical comics about international adoptions, the themes of the exhibition was multifaceted. The visual expressions as well as the subject matters differed vastly. When having conversations with the artists, one of them said that she was so tired of hearing the same statement about how political her art is: she just wanted to draw stories about what she felt, without being labeled as “female political cartoonist”. This was important to her, to have a discussion about the different ideas that are being smothered onto female artists, that they almost by default have a political agenda. Why should she take anymore responsibility for social issues than any other person that work with a different profession should? she argued. And that is something that lingered with me during this process – how do the cartoonists see themselves in a context that assumes the cartoons political nature? What happens when they are given a space to analyze their own reality concerning this? The variety of works with serious tones and abstract nonsense was

mixed together in *Serieupproret!*, not focusing only on “funny comics” or comics that handled issues of racism, sexism and transphobia with less comical relief. Even so, the issue of satire was something I wanted to examine further: what role does laughter play in a context of feminist and political cartoons? The outcomes of this thesis have given me many interesting new views on the supposed power of comics and what according to the cartoonist themselves, the drawings actually can do in a context of a feminist/activist discourse. The research questions are as following:

- Do the cartoonists view cartoons as a method for political change and in which way is then this idea formulated with the cartoonists?
- What ideas are being negotiated within the discourse of cartoons concerning its relationship to art as activism?
- What forms of feminist resistances can laughter create in a political struggle that is presented through cartoons?

Structure of the thesis: Locating the lines

I have constructed the thesis into six parts. Firstly, I explain in the introduction my research aims, the subjects of the research and the research questions along with an extensive overview of the research field. In the second part I discuss my theoretical and methodological approaches as well as presenting my research material. Here I also evaluate the ethical implications of the same and a short discussion about ethical considerations of translations are presented. After that, I use the ideas explained in the second part to analyze my interviews with three Swedish cartoonists and their activist relationship to political cartoons. Thereafter I give a short summary concerning the results of my analysis, followed by further remarks. The last part consist of appendices in which quotes from transcribed conversations can be found in Swedish, as well as the pre-texts and interview guide.

The research field: Gender studies and cultural studies of comics

There has been a lot of studies of comics from a linguistic perspective throughout almost 20 years, trying to examine the ways we read and interpret the images of comics. As this is not my aim, I will not include this type of research even if the researchers involved have done a very important work in their chosen field of study. I will focus on research done within the context of cultural or gender studies, where they try to negotiate the ways representation, humor and gender are constructed and

connected through comics. The first important researcher I will present directly breaks from my set limitations. Scott McCloud, a cartoonist and writer, published in 1994 a comic book called *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. In this book he talks about comics in a meta-perspective, writing his arguments as well as drawing them. He will be given an own sub-chapter in this research overview as his theories have made such an impression on the research field of comics.

I could unfortunately not find any material that discusses this subject in the same way I am going to, but I hope the articles presented will give a bigger understanding of how one can analyze and understand comics. Even if I had good intentions of narrowing down the introduction, the research overview is still 8 pages long. This because of two reasons: Firstly, many books and articles that have been published in the last years focuses on American comics and there is so much more research than what has been done in that context. Secondly, it is my opinion that when discussing comics and cartoons in a Swedish context, there is a lack of understanding of comics in a popular sense – let alone in an academic context. Therefore, a more extensive presentation of the different ways you can take when studying them is needed. I have divided the overview into three chapters to make them as easy to understand as possible: comics as representational, as political and as humorous. This is of course not a clear cut division, as they tend to overlap and merge into each other. The division is made to give this micro cosmos of comics some kind of coherence and hopefully make the reading easy to follow. These are also not the only divisions one can make: they are personal choices and I would very much like to see different discussions on how to “box in” and understand the vast world of comics. To categorize is to create realities, as Malin Wreder in *Diskursanalys i praktiken* writes.¹ To that extent, the ideas mentioned below are only a few of very, very many possible realities one can create.

Exploring an art form full of potentials: Scott McCloud's “Understanding Comics” and “Reinventing Comics”

What can be considered a “comic”? In Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics – The Invisible Art* (1994) he tries to break down the structure of comics and understand how they “work”. By creating the entire book as a comic, a meta-perspective is created. He talks for example about the language of comics, the importance of color, the history of comics and how we can define what a comic is: “Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence”.² But to define what a comic is, relates closely to how we describe its history. With Scott McCloud's definition (juxtaposed pictorial and other images...) he argues that we can go as far back as to the pre-columbian picture

1 Börjeson, Mats & Palmblad, Eva red. (2007) *Diskursanalys i praktiken* p.38

2 McCloud, Scott (1994) *Understanding comics – The Invisible Art* p. 9

manuscript from 1049 AD that tells the tale of a military and political hero called 8-deer “Tiger-Claw”. The manuscript convey a story through deliberate sequences of pictures – like a comic! Even Egyptian hieroglyphs and The Bayeux tapestry can be defined as comics if we agree with McCloud's definition.³ McCloud states that what we in the western world usually calls “comics” is the pictures and characters that appeared around the 20th century. Considering this, McCloud argues that his definition open up our understanding of the art that is comics: some of the most inventive comics of our century have never been recognized as comics. McCloud argues that this depends on the negative connotations that comes with the word “comic” and even the most devoted artists has throughout time preferred to be called illustrators, commercial artists or at best cartoonists. Comics' low self esteem is therefore self-perpetuating, McCloud argues.⁴

If *Understanding Comics* concentrates on the medium and how we read it, *Reinventing Comics* (2000) focuses more on the cultural and contextual issues American comics have struggled with and are struggling with. McCloud writes/draws more in depth about representations of gender, race and class, comics fragile relation to national economy and the new forms of digital distributions. Some of the themes visited in small passages in *Understanding Comics* (like the comics' low self esteem) is given more attention in *Reinventing Comics*. Referring back to Will Eisner's idea (presented publicly for the first time in 1940) that comics were a legitimate literary and artistic form, McCloud argues that this statement did not achieve applause but rather laughs from his fellow cartoonist colleges. Will Eisner was according to McCloud one of the few persons in the industry that believed comics had the potential of being an art form, thus fighting the idea that comics should remember its place as a “simple” form of communication or as humble entertainment.⁵ McCloud dedicates a whole chapter to these fractions, stating that: “The split between comics as literature and comics as high art may seem to reflect comics own split between words and picture, but in fact the literature of comics is a subset of the much larger issues surrounding comics and art”.⁶ McCloud argues that the future of “art comics” centers around the frontier of sequential art as an *own* form of artistic expression. Many cartoonist are still reluctant to call comics some kind of “art”, even if they themselves are very dedicated performers of the craft. McCloud argues that to some, it is exactly this “outlaw” status that gives comics its tempting structure: what can the art establishment bring to comics other than stifling it? But art and the art establishment are hardly the same, McCloud continues.⁷ His own definition of art evolves around

3 McCloud, Scott (1994) *Understanding Comics* p. 10-13

4 Ibid. p. 18

5 McCloud, Scott (2000) *Reinventing Comics* p. 27

6 Ibid. p. 42

7 Ibid. p. 43

the idea of art as actions rather than objects, seeing art as a branch of human behavior.⁸

Even if McCloud's books are somewhat “outdated” and certainly narrow in global perspective, they are interesting to read. It is for me a great shame that I can only quote his words and not his images – which really does give the books a much deeper meaning and more complex levels of interpretations. It is clear that he has made an impression on later cartoonist as well as later researchers. This will be visible in the following sub-chapters on comics as funny, political and representational, where some researchers directly use McCloud's books as sources. I will also present more of his ideas in the theory chapter. He explains the traditional comic world and challenges it (to some extent), giving us an understanding of what the following researchers are pushing up against. This is why McCloud is given this space in the thesis, as his impressions on the field can not go unnoticed.

On comics – as representational

When negotiating gender roles, Robert and Julie Voelker-Morris's work on masculinity within superhero comics is important to mention: how is the male stereotype constructed within comics? In the article *Stuck in tights: mainstream super hero comics' habitual limitations on social constructions of male superheroes* from 2014 they argue that this construction is quite a narrow one. By looking at three well-know male comic book superhero characters (Batman, Superman and Spiderman) Voelker-Morris tries to deconstruct the way male identity is portrayed within hetero normative American marital and filial structures.⁹ Arguing that visual imagery shows us ideal versions of our self, they write that this visual representation also show how a given culture defines masculinity and femininity, often posing them as dualities. The superhero narratives are no different: when the characters are created to cater to male readers, a specific cultural and idealized definition of masculinity is presented. Voelker-Morris argues that these representations ignores the complexities, fluidity and constructions of lived masculinity.¹⁰ Yet, there is no consistent heroic ideal as there is no consistent masculine ideal, Voelker-Morris continues. Tracing back to literature heroes like Moses, Achilles, Hamlet and Harry Potter, they see similar narratives in comic book heroes lives. Often, the main family of the protagonist is removed by narrative and forces him into a public role, thus creating a “leader”. Moving him from biological family (Bruce Wayne's parents are murdered, Peter Parker's uncle is accidentally killed just like Superman's adoptive parents in different versions are killed or murdered by antagonists of the story) the society becomes the hero's

8 McCloud, Scott (2000) *Reinventing Comics* p. 45

9 Voelker-Morris, Robert and Julie (2014) *Stuck in tights: mainstream super hero comics' habitual limitations on social constructions of male superheroes* p. 101

10 Ibid. p. 102

adopted family in which he takes it upon himself to protect. He becomes a benevolent leader, a role usually associated with the workplace CEO or political figure.¹¹ Even if Superman, Batman and Spider-Man sometimes tries to stretch the boundaries of stereotyped masculinity, the idea of a strong (male) leader is prevailing. Voelker-Morris refers to Scott McCloud's *Reinventing Comics* in the conclusion, pointing to his initial framework for addressing the lack of diverse representations of masculinity. The authors argues that despite this dominant view of maleness, characters traits could develop and promote empathy, love for others (not only in a heterosexual manner) and challenge themselves and their relationships in personal ways, becoming more than the adolescent power fantasy. Voelker-Morris states that: “With fully realized superheros, comic books can become a powerful tool for both entertaining a diverse cultural selection of readers and informing a diverse selection of personal traits related to one's gender”.¹²

Concerning visual representations and its possible implications, Qiana Whitted's article '*And the Negro thinks in hieroglyphics': comics, visual metonymy, and the spectacle of blackness* (2014) concerns itself with the way comics grapple with the transnational discourses that historically highlighted and muted blackness as Other. Through examples from Kyle Baker's graphic novel *Nat Turner* and Marguerite Aboutet and Clément Oubreie's comic series *Aya*, Whitted argues that these comics experiment with subversive acts of black speech and spectatorship. She starts by putting representations of the black body in a historical perspective, analyzing the late 19th century racial caricatures in the “Johnson Family” cartoons by Peter Newell. Doing this, her aim is to present the historical context for her readings and show what is at stake for writers and artists involved in these subversive acts.¹³ It is unfortunate that this thesis has a limited amount of pages, as I therefore am forced to make a very compromised summary of this important article.

Whitted writes in the introduction that: “Black writers have long wrestled with the artistic standards that privilege whiteness and use black bodies s surrogates for deeper social and moral anxieties”.¹⁴ Whitted's goal is similar to this issue, where her analysis asks how pictures of the comics form can maneuver to address the dilemma of black bodies being used as props or surrogates and how they can explore ways to challenge this representation of blackness. Whitted begins with an analysis of the comic “The Johnson Family”, giving the reader a historical understanding of this problematic issue. The comic was published in the 1893 issues of the American newspaper *Harpers Weekly* and the racial “othering” through public speech and spectacle is clearly visible, Whitted argues. We follow a middle-class, African-American family during their

11 Ibid. p. 104

12 Ibid. p. 112

13 Whitted, Qiana (2014) '*And the Negro thinks in hieroglyphics': comics, visual metonymy, and the spectacle of blackness* p. 80

14 Ibid. p. 81

visit to the World' Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Newell represents their attendance at the exposition by putting their bodies, actions and speech in displays that reinforced the racial and social-economic divisions of the 1890s. When the Johnson family visits the Dahoman village exhibited in the fair, a Dahoman man in a ceremonial dress reaches down to shake Mr. Johnsons hand. This interaction makes Ms. Johnson nervous and she says that Mr Johnson should “stop shakin' Han's wid dat Heathen!”¹⁵ She continues by wondering if Mr Johnson would like the whole fair to to think that he is associated with this “poor relation”: a more primitive member of his racial family. Whitted argues that these remarks makes it clear that the Johnson’s occupy an own space in the crowd, stretching further that the people around them visiting the Dahoman village. Despite their efforts to obtain the empowered gaze of the fair-goer, Ms Johnsons words (created by Newell) restores the authority of the gaze to the white spectators.¹⁶

Building on this historical representations of blackness as a spectacle, Whitted then turns to different kinds of comics that tries to challenge this notion, one of them being Kyle Baker's *Nat Turner* from 2008. The comic is about the “self-freed slave” Nat Turner and the Virginia slave rebellion in 1831, where Nat played a great part. Whitted focuses on Bakers images of books, pamphlets and the subjects reading them, arguing that the comic discusses the rebellion but also the “dangerous freedom of the disembodied black subject that *reads* and *sees*.”¹⁷ The comic centers around the so called “Confessions of Nat Turner”, a book composed by Thomas Gray through interviews with Turner. Gary has among other things difficulty to describe Turner, even if he is the object Gary argues he must convert to text in order to satisfy the public curiosity. Turner is seen as terrifying, so much so that Gray can not look at him without the blood in his veins curling.¹⁸ After this section in the story, Turner uses his knowledge of the Bible to take rhetorical control, even if it is just for a moment. His words makes Gray gasp for air, whose pen also snaps when it is pressed too hard onto the white paper, thus rending him momentarily speechless in both spoken and written words. Whitted continues and writes:

Despite the controlling influence of the *Confessions* in the comic, the broken pen renders the page before Gray inadequate to the task of ventriloquising the full picture of Turner's subjectivity. Gray's ekphrastic fears open up a gap that Baker hopes to close with his art – an image of Turner that begins when words fail.¹⁹

15 Ibid. p. 82

16 Ibid. p. 82-83

17 Ibid. p. 85

18 Ibid. p. 89

19 Ibid. p. 89

Whitted ends her article by questioning Will Eisner's idea that stereotypes are an “accursed necessity” of comics storytelling. Whitted does not agree, as she argues that those stereotypes are drawn from well-known traditions of racial caricature to render the humanity of African-Americans to an unrecognizable Other. Comics like *Nat Turner* and *Aya* do according to Whitted, defy the status quo and invites to critical self-reflection.²⁰

On comics – as political

In the article *Facing the Arab “Other”?: Jerusalem in Jewish women's comics* from 2015 Nina Fisher argues that we rarely see the Arab presence in form of a direct interaction between the comic artists characters but rather in distant, through media representations or as persons in the background of the frame. She writes that this is closely tied to the current situation between Israelis and Palestinians, where fear of the Arab “Other” makes them invisible in the comics concerning Jerusalem and the lives of the people living there.²¹ Through analysis of three different comics from three different Jewish women Fisher seeks to highlight their participation in political discourses surrounding the Israel/Palestine conflict after the second intifada that ended 2005. The comics that earns the most focus from Fisher are Mira Friedman's *Independence Day* (2008), Sarah Gidden's *How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less* (2010) and Miriam Libicki's *Jobnik! An American Girl's Adventures in the Israeli Army* (2008).²² Fisher writes that she brings together stark socio-political issues with the comics, not only because the material discusses these issues but also because the role popular culture plays in our daily lives. What does that do to the political landscape of Jerusalem if 37 % of the population is not seen? Fisher writes:

In this article I argue that in the comics we rarely see the Arab Other of the Israeli Jerusalemites, concerning of the Other in the sense of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman for whom 'enemy is the other of friend', “them” is the other of “us”. Indeed, the texts I read are a testament to the situation in Jerusalem, where there is segregation and little social contact between Palestinians and Jews.²³

Going through the comics one by one, she argues that the most extensive face to face encounter with the Arab Other is made between a Jewish child and a Jordanian soldier. The child gets lost and accidentally enters one of the “No Mans Land” areas, parts of the city that are still in dispute. The

20 Ibid. p. 97

21 Fisher, Nina (2015) *Facing the Arab “Other”?: Jerusalem in Jewish women's comics* p. 291 (abstract)

22 Ibid. p. 292

23 Ibid. p. 293

soldier notices the child and approaches her, asking her in Arabic “yes, my pretty one, tell me what you want”. This is not translated in the comic and the child does not know Arabic: making the alienation through linguistics more evident, according to Fisher. Until that moment in the comic, all of the Israeli characters are represented as English-speaking and unless you know Arabic the reader sees this interaction from the child's perspective, thus highlighting the Jordanian soldier as Other.²⁴ In Fishers conclusion, she argues that the comics are closely tied to the sensitive situation in Jerusalem, where separation tightens the fear of the Arab Other. Despite the fact that the artists all write from their own personal perspective, similar situations are created: Fisher argues that all comics documents situations where little or no contact is depicted between Jews and Arabs. This can't all be blamed on the security situation: it's a matter of choice Fisher continues. The cartoonists all have had the chance to interact and to make the characters interact with each other but choose not to.²⁵

On comics – as humorous

In Ylva Lindbergs *Satiriska feministiska serier – Nina Hemmingson och Liv Strömqvist* from 2014, she discusses two Swedish cartoonists named Nina Hemmingson and Liv Strömqvist. According to Lindberg, both Hemmingson and Strömqvist are the front figures of a movement in the Swedish comic world where feminist messages (like breaking up the traditional gender roles of men and women) are the main subject. Through the intersection of image, text and satire, Hemmingson and Strömqvist discusses among other things the feminist critique of heteronormativity and the 1900th century romantic-realist ideal of the woman as timid and submissive. Lindberg uses Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of the carnival grotesque when analyzing Hemmingsons comics and Franz Fanons thoughts on post-colonial power relations when analyzing Strömqvists comics. Lindberg also argue that this article does not mainly concern itself with the humor within comics, but rather the different levels of interpretations that the artists creates through narrative and visual choices.²⁶ Even so, this article is presented under “humorous”, as she is one of the few researchers in Sweden that in some way discusses feminist satirical comics. Lindberg's main issue with satire is the fact that women for a long time, and still today, are not considered funny. She refers to Wendy Wong and Lisa M. Cuklanz *Humor and Gender Politics* (2001) and writes: “They show that funny comics traditionally been a masculine genre and that women for the main part acted as an object for the male humor. Because humor has been known to be a male dominated area, it does not welcome the opposite sex

24 Ibid. p. 297

25 Ibid. p. 308

26 Lindberg, Ylva (2014) *Satiriska feministiska serier – Nina Hemmingson och Liv Strömqvist* p. 83

to acknowledge a more active participation. Female comedians instead becomes an own category and are being studied as acting on the fringe of this comic world: therefore, female comedy accumulate stronger political undertones.”²⁷ Lindberg continues with stating that Hemmingson and Strömqvist, even if they use feminist satire, are not necessarily active “on the fringe” as they have both received multiple prizes for their comic novels. Other than that, the analysis stands: humor is Hemmingsons and Strömqvists main tool for communicating feminist messages. Satire and irony is a well used literary technique when discussing serious matters, Lindberg argues. Referring back to philosopher Henri Bergsons *Le Rire* (1900) she writes that his essay series made it possible to study humor as a scientific subject. When using comedy, it is possible to critique the hegemonic societal views without necessarily hurting someone's feelings: it's just a joke!²⁸ It is therefore satirical humor is so effective when criticizing contemporary gender conditions, Lindberg argues.²⁹

Finishing the outlines: We are just getting started

All of the articles above negotiates different ways comics or cartoons can be interpreted as part of cultural or gender studies, which is also why none of them could have been left out: these articles are written in different times and places and do therefore not exist in a coherent context. Which I believe is a good thing, as friction and complex expressions about our realities are what makes academic inquiry thrive. In this thesis, the idea of friction is very apparent, which can be considered an important part of political discussion. I will in the following chapters present my theoretical and methodological aims of the thesis, as well as my material on which these aims will be incorporated with later on in my analysis. Ethical considerations concerning these choices and researcher reflexivity are also presented before we dive into the analysis of the cartoonists ideas around art, activism and laughter.

27 Ibid p. 85, the authors translation: “De visar att humoristiska serier traditionellt varit en maskulin genre och att kvinnor ofta fungerat som objekt för den manliga humorn. Eftersom humor har ansetts vara ett manligt område, inbjuder det inte det motsatta könets aktörer att ta för sig. Istället blir kvinnliga humorister en egen kategori som studeras i periferin. Därför får också kvinnlig humor starkare politiska undertoner.”

28 This is somewhat debatable, for example: jokes about rape does work in a similar way but is not necessarily help feminist struggles. Raúl Pérez & Viveca S. Greene's article *Debating rape jokes vs. rape culture: framing and counter-framing misogynistic comedy* (2016) is discussing the intersections of rape culture and humor in an interesting manner.

29 Lindberg, Ylva (2014) *Satiriska feministiska serier – Nina Hemmingson och Liv Strömqvist* p. 86

Theoretical approaches: Thinking along or outside the lines?

When constructing my theoretical framework I will use Jacques Rancière's ideas around the paradoxes he considers surrounds politics and political art, Scott McCloud's ideas around the comic as an art form and the issue of representation, Wendy Willems work on editorial cartoons and its relationship to social change, Wong and Cuklanz's ideas concerning the comic as a possible tool for feminist practices, Sara Ahmed and her thoughts on the feminist killjoy and lastly Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of the ambiguous laughter. I will dedicate one sub-chapter for each of these theorists ideas to be presented, starting with Jacques Rancière.

The paradoxes of politics and political art: Rancière

I am going to use Rancière's ideas presented in the book *Dissensus – on Politics and Aesthetics*, which consists of several essays translated and edited by Steven Corcoran in collaboration with Rancière. I will take my point of theoretical departure from three of these essays: *The Paradoxes of Political Art*, *The Monument and Its Confidences*; or *Deluze and Art's Capacity of 'Resistance'* as well as *Ten Theses on Politics*. I think the later chapter, *Ten Theses on Politics*, in a clear way explains the basis of his understanding of the nature of politics which is a good starting point. His first argument (or thesis) is that politics is not the exercise of power but rather should be defined in its own terms as a specific mode of action that is enacted by a specific subject. When politics is defined as the exercise of power and the struggle for occupying it, Rancière argues that the politics is dispensed with from the outset. He relates this to Aristotle and his ideas around the citizen as one that [...] *partakes in the fact of ruling and the fact of being ruled*.³⁰ The conditions of the possibilities to *take part* of its meaning are according to Rancière what politics is in its essence. It is this political relationship that makes the subject of politics conceivable.³¹ He continues by arguing that the problem lies within how this relationship is interpreted, where the assumption is that there is some “specific” way of life in political existence. This makes room for speculation about the presence of some “good” or “universal” figure, put in contrast to the private or domestic world of needs and interests. Politics is then viewed as an accomplishment by those seen to be destined for this life. Politics is not a relationship between subjects, but rather as something that works between two contradictory terms that define a subject, Rancière writes. He argues that politics disappears the moment this “knot” (as he calls it) between a subject and a relation is removed.³² As I understand it,

30 Rancière, Jacques (2010)(2015) *Dissensus – on Politics and Aesthetics* p. 27

31 Ibid. p. 27

32 Ibid. p. 28-29

he questions the idea that politics consists of someone or something exercising power over something or someone, and that he rather sees the conflict (or knot) between a subject and relation as the basis for calling something “politics”. What is important in his first thesis and that he develops in his second thesis is the idea of “mode of action”. He writes: *What is specific to politics is the existence of a subject defined by its participation in contraries. Politics is a paradoxical form of action.*³³ The idea of taking part of something is very relevant here. Going back to Aristotle, Rancière argues that a being who is an agent of an action and at the same time the matter upon this action is exercised, a paradox is created. This paradox contradicts the traditional logic of action where an agent that possess the possibility to produce an effect upon an object, only that one specific effect is produced. Using Aristotle's ideas around *poesis* (roughly, to make or to transform) as something that gives form to matter and *praxis*, something that subtracts from this relation with the “inter-being” of people committed to political action, Rancière argues that this opposition underlines ideas around politics as “pure”. Leaning on Hannah Arendt, he writes:

[...] The order of praxis is an order of equals who are in possession of the power of the *arkhein*, that is the power to begin anew (*commencer*): to act, in its most general sense, she explains in *The Human Condition*, means to take an initiative, to begin (as the Greek word *arkhein*, “to begin”, “to lead”, and eventually “to rule” indicates): she concludes this thought by going on to link *arkhein* to 'the principle of freedom'.³⁴

If I understand him correctly, he argues that the logic of arkhe (as he writes, the power to rule) need someone to go behind the one that leads. This means then that for a political subject (and politics) to take place, this logic of politics as someone “governing” someone else and that this someone else stays silent and submissive (walking behind) needs to be questioned.

In his eighth thesis, the idea around the political subject and its needs to make its own space is important to my analysis later on. As Rancière writes, for a political subject to take place, it demands a space for this to happen. The eighth thesis is thus formulated like this: *The essential work of politics is the configuration of its own space. It is to make the world of its subjects and its operations seen. The essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus as the presence of two worlds in one.*³⁵ Retelling Louis Althusser's idea about interpellation (when someone in a public space calls “Hey, you there!” and we feel compelled to react) Rancière argues that the public space is now a space of “moving along”, a space of circulations. Politics stands in contrast to this and

33 Ibid. p. 29

34 Ibid. p. 29

35 Ibid. p. 37

consists of transforming this space into a place where the subject can appear: the people, the workers and the citizens. To reconfigure this space into a place where something can be done, seen and spoken of is the main agenda of politics.³⁶ Rancière continues by examining the traditional separations of “public” and “domestic”, arguing that these have been done to denying certain categories (such as workers or women) political quality. If the issues were seen as something individual and not structural or common, the unjust processes could continue to exist. But when seeing an issue in the opposite view, as a demonstration of a shared perception of something, it becomes a demonstration of the community and therefore part of a discourse. This is according to Rancière very important when talking about politics: it is a way of transforming these spaces from “circulations” and “moving along” to spaces of the community, making the unseen visible and the unheard audible. But most importantly, politics is about *dissensus*, Rancière argues. This dissensus is not a confrontation between interests, but rather a manifestation of the gap in what he calls the sensible. The sensible in this context is what can be envisioned or not in a common space. Furthermore, the partners of dissensus are no more constituted than the object/stage of discussion is. The one that makes something visible (or show the gap in the sensible) has to make others vision the world they live in, even if they do not share common frames of references. Rancière writes:

Political argumentation is at one and the same time the demonstration of a possible world in which the argument could count as an argument, one that is addressed by a subject qualified to argue, over an identified object, to an addressee who is required to see the object and to hear the argument that he 'normally' has no reason either to see or to hear. It is the constitution of a paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds.³⁷

I will not go through all Ten Theses presented in his essay, as I think these three will be enough for my research. I would rather present his ideas around the problematic relationship we have with political art as a form of resistance. The idea of dissensus is prominent in those also, as we will notice.

In Rancière's essay *The Paradoxes of Political Art*, he begins by presenting processes in recent art expressions that have contributed to what some calls art's return to politics. Not naming anyone, he tells the reader about artists that creates big statues out of media and advertising to make us aware of the impact they have over our perception, while others silently buries invisible monuments dedicated to last century's crimes. Regardless of the practice, Rancière argues that these

36 Ibid. p. 37

37 Ibid. p. 38

processes all try to reassert art's capacity to resist forms of economic, political and ideological domination. In their multifaceted expressions, they share the idea that art is effective in a political sense because it displays the marks of domination (or makes parodies out of them).³⁸ The undertones of these processes are that art compels us to revolt when it shows revolting things, that it somehow can mobilize when placed outside the museums/workshop and that it should incite us to protest the system of domination simply by criticizing its own participation in those systems, Rancière writes. He continues by arguing that the politics of art have become irrational, as it contradicts itself: even if it constantly repeats that we must re-think the politics of art (pushing everything into ever newer contexts) it does at the same time linger firmly by the paradigm of the efficacy of art that Rancière argues was debunked over two centuries ago. Here he refers back to the classical theater, stating that the hegemony of the mimetic paradigm first was questioned in the eighteenth century. For example: Molière's *Tartuffe* supposedly taught the spectators about how to recognize hypocrites. The theater was considered to work as a magnifying glass, inviting people to examine the behavior of their contemporaries through fiction.³⁹ Arguing that this is no longer a view held in contemporary society (that theater can by showing virtues and vices improve human behavior), Rancière writes that we still see the reproduction of a commercial idol as a form of resistance. Take for example photographs of victims of genocide: can it create a form of rebellion against the perpetrator? Or does the artist ought to be questioned for turning pain into aesthetic matter? Rancière questions the artworks' power of the effects it is supposed to evoke on the behavior of the viewers.⁴⁰

Furthermore, one of Rancière's main notions about art is his formulation about "the aesthetic regime of art", which is presented in this essay. What he argues for, is that the "aesthetic" labels the interruption of every determinate relation correlating the production of art forms and a specific social function. If an artist has no agenda and their artwork is not formulated to please a special audience or to evoke some mobilization of bodies: what happens then?⁴¹ Rancière writes:

This means that the aesthetic rupture arranges a paradoxical form of efficacy, one that relates to a disconnection between the production of artistic *savoir-faire* and social destination, between sensory forms, the significations that can be read on them and their possible effects. Let us call it the efficacy of dissensus, which is not a designation of conflict as such, but is a specific type thereof, a conflict between *sense* and *sense*.⁴²

38 Rancière, Jacques (2010)(2015) *Dissensus – On Politics and Aesthetics* p. 134

39 Ibid. p. 135

40 Ibid. p. 136

41 Ibid. p. 138

42 Ibid. p. 139

Dissensus is thus a process between a sensory presentation and the way of making sense of this presentation. It dwells in the heart of politics, Rancière argues: it breaks with the self-evidence of “natural order” that creates specific individuals to occupy positions of rule or being ruled. As well as creating new subjects, it also invents new forms of collective enunciation in re-framing the given by conceiving new ways of making sense of the sensible. If it exist a connection between art and politics, Rancière continues, it should be formulated in terms of dissensus.⁴³ And it seems Rancière opens up a small corner for this to be possible within his theories, if art starts to restore social functions and taking part in a common world, rather than just proclaiming to unveil hidden contradictions of this world. He writes: “[...] art is starting to appear as a space of refuge for dissensual practice, a place of refuge where the relations between sense and sense continues to be worked and re-worked.”⁴⁴

This leads us to the last chapter I am going to use, which is his essay on the possibilities of art as a form of resistance. In *The Monument and Its Confidences; or Deluze and Art's Capacity of 'Resistance'* Rancière argues that as we already describe art as having a virtue of resistance, it becomes hard to challenge this notion even if it is a problematic description of arts capacities. Not only have art been given a dubious narrative, but the symbolism of “resistance” has received a similar paradoxical meaning. Whilst words like revolt, revolution or emancipation connotes something negative, “resistance” in itself is ambivalent. To resist, Rancière writes, “is to adopt the posture of someone who stands opposed to the order of things, but simultaneously avoids the risk involved trying to overturn that order.”⁴⁵ Here Rancière asks us, if it is possible to build a link between art and resistance and what would in that case this link entail? It is a complex question, a question Rancière himself struggles with. Arguing for the need of many intricate passages and different conceptual leaps, he lands in a metaphor:

It is necessary that, in the immobility of the monument, the vibration appeals to another, speaks to another. But this speech itself is twofold: it is the transmission of the effort, or of the 'resistance', of the people, and it is the transmission of what resist humanity, the transmission of the forces of chaos, the forces harnessed on it and incessantly re-captured by it. Chaos has to become a resistant form; the form must again become a resistant chaos. The monument must become the revolution and the revolution again become a monument.⁴⁶

43 Ibid. p. 139-140

44 Ibid. p. 145

45 Ibid. p. 169

46 Ibid. p. 172

Even the “resistance of art” becomes a double edge paradox, Rancière argues. If it aims to give a promise or do something for the people, art must suppress itself and thus can not act as a form of resistance. This paradox relates to the paradox of the aesthetic regime, where the objects of art are no longer defined by the rules of a practice, but defined by their belonging to a specific sensory experience.⁴⁷ What I think Rancière argue for is that the artists, if they want to achieve some form of “resistance” must create art that can free itself from the humanity that created it. And how can you possibly achieve that? Without ending on this melancholic note, Rancière continues by writing that dissensus is the only thing that can give art a chance of carrying “resistance”. It comes down to an idea of art and an idea of politics: art has lived for a long time with this tension of being itself and beyond itself, promising a future yet unseen. The issue here is then not to “force” it back to something it never was, but to care for this balance between art and politics. By arguing for art and politics to always tend towards each other but never meet, Rancière claims that this will make neither of them suppressing the other. He writes: “To prevent the resistance of art from fading into its contrary, it must be upheld as the unresolved tension between two resistances.”⁴⁸

As I see it, Rancière questions the problematic ideas that have been forced upon art and its possibilities of resiting the hegemonic order of things, but at the same time arguing for this idea to be achievable. He maintains that it is the dissensus of a process (whether art or politics) that has the possibility of, if not achieving resistance in the world of humanity, at least uphold a space for something to happen or be done within.

The matter of who is holding the pen: McCloud

As written in the research overview, Scott McCloud's book *Reinventing Comics* from 2000 grapple among other things with issues of representations and comics relationship to art. Even if comics has developed its style concerning form and content by 2000, McCloud argues that the future of “art comics” centers around the frontier of sequential art as an *own* form of artistic expression. Many cartoonists are still reluctant to call comics some kind of “art”, even if they themselves are very dedicated performers of the craft. McCloud argues that to some, it is exactly this “outlaw” status that gives comics its tempting structure: what can the art establishment bring to comics other than stifling it? But art and the art establishment are hardly the same, McCloud continues.⁴⁹ His own definition of art evolves around the idea of art as actions rather than just objects, seeing art as a branch of human behavior.⁵⁰ With so many different aspects of human behavior, Scott McCloud

47 Ibid. p. 179

48 Ibid. p. 183

49 McCloud, Scott (2000) *Reinventing Comics* p. 43

50 Ibid. p. 45

argues that there is really no clear distinction between art and non-art, meaning that we all have the ability to exercise art to a varying degree throughout our lives. But society has marked some of its members as “artists” and some of the creations as “art” in hope of making sense of the world.⁵¹ It is clear that McCloud give this book a bigger responsibility than the former when discussing the possibilities of change through comics. In the introduction, he writes: “They [Understanding Comics and Reinventing Comics] are two very different books; the first, a collection of battlefield essays: the second, a full-blown manifesto for radical change”⁵². He has other than the discussion around comics as art/non-art, also chapters that focuses on for example the representations of gender, race and class, concerning both the characters in the comics and the ones who are making them. McCloud writes that comics has in the US been a “boys club”, where even the few popular comics read by girls was mainly created by men. Most of all, young boys were aggressively marketed through the superhero's comics, making the world of comics a male-dominated one. But women was making comics and have done so for a very long time, he continues, naming for example artists Rose O'Neill in the late 19th century and Gladys Parker in the middle of the 1940's.⁵³ Even if more and more female cartoonist in the late 1960's started shaking the status quo (often through politically and sexually charged comics) many obstacles remained and are still remaining for female cartoonist. The “boys club” image is prevailing in comic book stores, as well as the hard climate of discrimination from publishers and the creative community.⁵⁴ On the issue of minority representations, McCloud argues that both women and for example persons of color have meet similar kinds of blind prejudice: but the later suffers from very different obstacles. His argument lies in the interaction – men do encounter women, even if their interpretations of the discourses are distorted. But in parts of North America, it is possible for a majority of people to go weeks or even months without interacting with persons of color or with people that are openly gay. The isolation can give great consequences, making biases and ignorance towards minorities a difficult thing to challenge.⁵⁵ The one that is holding the pen matters! When writing about a social or physical condition which only a minority experience, members of that minority will have an advantage in portraying it. Everyone else is just guessing, McCloud writes: “And while guessing is harmless enough when it comes to dragons and starships, it can create a distorted view in popular culture when members of a given minority, for whatever reason, have little or no outlet of their own.”⁵⁶

I understand him as such, that comics (at least in a US context) have had a history of being

51 Ibid. p. 50

52 Ibid. introduction

53 Ibid. p. 100-101

54 Ibid. p. 102-104

55 Ibid. p. 105

56 Ibid. p. 106-107

this boys club not only because the known writers were men, but also because the market targeted boys and presented ideas around stereotypical gender biases. The fact that few women were prominent in this area of work was not because they did not draw, but rather because they were unfairly subjected to gender prejudices. The same is true for people of color and because of racist structures, they were not able to achieve the same success as white male cartoonists. And lastly, comics as art is not a given presumption, but a divided discussion that seems to be prominent even today.

But comics can not change anything: Willems

In her article *Comic Strips and “The Crisis”: Postcolonial Laughter and Coping With Everyday Life in Zimbabwe* Wendy Willems examines the idea around comics as a mode for social change in Zimbabwe. Even if the context is not the same here, her critique of what comics actually can *do* is important for further discussions about political comics.

Referring back to other studies that examined comics and cartoons and its relationship with concepts of power and resistance, Willems argues that these studies focuses on a specific type of comic: the one that directly critique the political elites.⁵⁷ The debate, according to Willems, has centered around the way cartoons ridiculed those in power but also what the implication of these cartoons has given those in power. One theorist, Lyombe Eko, argues that cartoons have the agency to impact the political climate and even considers them to be possible dangerous texts: “This is because cartoons are addressed mostly to urban dwellers who were at the forefront of agitation for democratization and liberation in the 1990s.”⁵⁸ Even if another theorist quoted, Andrew Mason, does not to want exaggerate the role comics had in the fight against apartheid, he still argues that it contained the power of crystallizing the issues of identity and introducing revolutionary concepts into public discourses. As Willems seems to be more cautious with endowing cartoons too much power, she also presents Achille Mbembe's ideas around cartoons: the very act of making the autocrat (the dictator or oppressor) visible in cartoons reproduces its power. The representation of the autocrat as a human being does not strip him of his power but rather enhances the same. This is then counteracted by Francis Nyamnjoh, who argue that the forms of visibility are what is crucial here. The autocrat is generally presented in a negative way, which according to Nyamnjoh obviously has a greater effect than if the press were to ignore him. Willems argues that these scholars have been occupied with the idea of comics or cartoons as a space for resistance and if they

57 Willems, Wendy (2011) *Comic Strips and “The Crisis”: Postcolonial Laughter and Coping With Everyday Life in Zimbabwe* p. 126

58 Ibid. p. 127

are effective or not is not the main area of study.⁵⁹

It is against this background of discourses she constructs her paper, with the cartoon Chikwama as material for the study. Willems argues that the medium in which comics and cartoons in Zimbabwe was published is important to consider, as these pictures could be found mainly in newspapers. Even if the newspapers formulated different kinds of reporting on the crisis and highlighting the government forces as accomplices, the cartoons themselves faced another problem. Willems writes that even if the political cartoons could be seen as a form of political resistance, she still questions to what extent these cartoons could offer spaces for political dissent. She argues that the cartoons did not naturally constitute a space for which the regular news could not occupy and with newly implemented legislations that imposed restrictions on publications that undermines the authority of the president, the cartoonists had to take extra care in visualization and argumentation.⁶⁰ Willems is then less interested in the way in which cartoons may provoke social changes and more intrigued by the way they reflect political change, as she argues cartoons seldom provoke change in such a scale that it could be called resistance. Willems seems to rather view cartoons as Jürg Schneider sees them: “the value of comics may not so much lie in its potential to provoke (instant) political change but in the way comics keep track and record actual and historical reality. As such they form an important part of the public memory.”⁶¹

As I can understand it, Willems does not definitely discard the notion of the cartoon as resistance, rather she argues that this is seldom the case: instead cartoons often takes on the part of *recording* the public conversations and serve as a well of many (sometimes contradictory) collectives.

Comics can change something: Wong and Cuklanz

Wendy Wong and Lisa M. Cuklanz's ideas on feminist comics and what humor can give to a feminist struggle is an important theoretical perspective. In their article *Humor and Gender politics: a textual analysis of the first feminist comic in Hong Kong*, the authors argues that Hong Kong's comics (as most of the comics around the world) are highly layered by gender. The artists themselves were almost always male and the readers were at the time divided into two different audiences: boys reading books about martial arts and girls about romance.⁶² Even if this may have changed since 2001, their arguments and ideas still stands on whether comics can be used as a part

59 Ibid. p. 127

60 Ibid. p. 128-129

61 Ibid. p. 130

62 Wong, Wendy & Cuklanz, Lisa (2001) *Humor and Gender Politics – a textual analysis of the first feminist comic in Hong Kong* p. 69

of a feminist practice or not. They quote Alice Sheppard, who writes that we conceptualize 'women humorists' as its own category because humor is a male dominated territory: the terms cartoonist, humorist and comedian are implied as belonging to a certain gender. This is why we feel the need to re-gender it again, using words like comedienne or female cartoonist.⁶³ By naming something as other, Wong and Cuklanz argue that women who endeavor into these fields are already proclaimed as outsiders. Building on Trina Robbins ideas around this, they argue that comics and venues where they are sold have mainly been a male activity, therefore pushing out and marginalized women.

Wong and Cuklanz continues by writing that comics have been a means of social critique and the cartoonists active agents within a political sphere, which many others have noticed – for example Kathleen Turner that writes: “like other symbolic acts, comics as popular art cannot be isolated from the times from which they developed and with which they contend.”⁶⁴ Turner also argue that comics can help people cope with their own situations, by providing tools that make us understand the realities we are living in. This idea that comics have an influence of our daily lives seem to be apparent in Wong and Cuklanz's arguments. Content, ideology and audience are all engrained by gender and like any other political cartoons the feminist ones have had a tradition of partaking in different social and political contexts.⁶⁵

Wong and Cuklanz also note that the basis of feminist humor is the will and attempts to expose different realities, especially the realities of gender inequality and oppression under patriarchal ideology.⁶⁶ Taking Lau Lee-lee's *Mom's Drawer at the Bottom*, the authors argue that she with comics aims to on a symbolic level discuss different feminist issues. According to Lau herself, she tries to resist and to disrupt something with her work, which Wong and Cuklanz argues is a feminist practice. They write that Lau use feminist methods to challenge the power systems of Hong Kong and by portraying her own observations in a comical way, they encourage critical thinking about power, social relations and gender. But using “feminist” as a way of characterize herself and her work was something Lau had grappled with. Wong and Cuklanz writes: *As Lau says, using the word feminist for herself is a result of some internal struggle, since she understands that the term is misinterpreted in many ways in Hong Kong, and is often considered to refer to a dogmatic ideologue.*⁶⁷ They continue to present what these connotations contains for Hong Kong inhabitants, as many (as they write) even 'well educated men' may consider feminists an untouchable group with whom they may not want to be associated with. Wong and Cuklanz argue this is because most Hong Kong people have had limited interaction with feminist ideas of social justice and have been given a

63 Ibid. p. 70

64 Ibid. p. 71

65 Ibid. p. 71

66 Ibid. p. 72

67 Ibid. p. 78

misguided portrayal of what feminism entails. This gives Lau a special opportunity to change the misunderstanding, they argue. By not directly saying “this is a feminist issue” but rather through visual expression open up a debate of a certain issue, Lau's comics can create a different view of feminism. Quoting Lau herself, Wong and Cuklanz writes that this definition is the use of a principle of self-awareness, to see and to think critically about ones daily environment, using a fair analytical attitude.⁶⁸ One comic where Lau's work can be seen as a more direct form of activism, is in the comic *Who's next* from 1998. In this, she draws about a child being sexually abused by her father, but only showing the girl being engulfed by shadows while her thoughts are presented. The girl reflects on what she would do, but would rather not tell anyone what is going on. “I can move out when I grow up” she thinks and adds that if she told anyone they would have a hard time believing her: “Classmates and teachers will say I must be lying. The neighbor says we're the model family.” When coming to the realization that her sister may be the next person her father abuses, the reader can in the last panel see a depiction of a police station. Lau says that she targets some of her comics towards a younger audience, arguing that young people will read comics almost regardless of the subject. Wong and Cuklanz sees *Who's next* as a way of calling attention to both realizations of sexual abuse but also about a gendered reality rarely depicted in comics.⁶⁹ They end their article by hopefully stating that as Lau's comics may reach a “non-feminist” audience, the stories (often told with a comical aspect) may achieve important political work for the issues she is depicting.⁷⁰

As I perceive it, Wong and Cuklanz clearly see something within the act of creating cartoons about feminist issues, and they remain hopeful about its possibility to create social awareness about certain subjects. At least they have given a strong case within the context of Hong Kong and because Lau Lee-lee's comics was quite well received, they come to the conclusion that comics can in someways be an important part of political discourses.

Willful subjects around the feminist table: Ahmed

Ahmed writes in the article *Feminist Killjoys (And Other Willful Subjects)* from 2010 that we can perhaps make sense of the complexity of feminism as an activist space if we give an account of how feminism is an object of feeling. She writes that her story of becoming a feminist starts with a table: a table where the family gathers, a memory of an everyday experience that literary happened every day.⁷¹ Around this table, the family is having polite conversations, making certain topics taboo.

68 Ibid p. 78-79

69 Wendy & Cuklanz, Lisa (2001) *Humor and Gender Politics – a textual analysis of the first feminist comic in Hong Kong* p. 86

70 Ibid. p. 94

71 Sara Ahmed (2010) *Feminist Killjoys (And Other Willful Subjects)* p. 1

Suddenly, someone say something that is problematic. You may respond to the things that are said and the situation is tensed. By speaking up, you transform into the object that is upsetting everyone around the table. Ahmed writes: “That you have described what was said by another as a problem means you have created a problem. You become the problem you create”.⁷² Activism is often a matter of seats, Ahmed writes. If you are unseated at the table of happiness, your seat is the site of disagreement. The word dissidence, meaning roughly to sit apart, becomes your chair around the dinner table. But to be unseated at the table of happiness might not only threaten that table, but also what and who's gathering around it.⁷³

To be known as a feminist is to be categorized as difficult, Ahmed continues and writes: “My point here would be that feminists are read as being unhappy, such that situations of conflict, violence, and power are read as *about* the unhappiness of feminists, rather than begin what feminists are unhappy *about*.”⁷⁴ Thus the feminist killjoy is born. Being a feminist killjoy is to be a body that gets in the way: how many feminist ideas are about making room and who is occupying which spaces? Ahmed writes that the figure of the killjoy can be understood in terms of politics of willfulness. Our activist archives are unhappy ones: the feminist critique of the “happy housewife”, black critiques of the myth of the “happy slave” and queer critiques over heterosexuality as the “domestic bliss”. To be willing to cause this sorrow can also be how we come to be in a collective struggle, as those that are unseated by the table can find each other through this alienation.⁷⁵ She later suggests that this archive can be considered a willful one instead: it is about being persistent in a struggle together with other willful subjects.⁷⁶

I think Ahmed's article centers around this idea of politics as tables, where those invested (willing or unwillingly) in these issues can be formulated as a feminist collective and that the figure of the willful one (the feminist killjoy) is something we should embrace. The fear of being the one that causes discomfort is a reaction to the norm of happiness. You rather stay silent when problematic things are spoken about, because you do not want to be the one who is causing sadness. Even if the problem is not you (as the problems are the things you spoke up against) you transform into the problem. The focus drifts from the problematic sayings and sticks on you instead. Embracing the feminist killjoy is thus an act of resistance against this hegemony of happiness around the table.

72 Ibid. p. 2

73 Ibid. p. 3

74 Ibid. p. 6

75 Ibid. p. 4

76 Ibid. p. 9

Laughter as an ambiguous process: Bakhtin

Taking the medieval carnivals and the 16th century writer François Rabelais as starting points, Bakhtin examines the folk culture of humor. Laughter and its forms represent the least scrutinized sphere of peoples creation⁷⁷, Bakhtin argues in his book *Rabelais and His World*, first published in 1965. Laughter is not as forgotten as Bakhtin feared in 1965, as there is now extensive works on satire, laughter and the human processes involved. Even so, Bakhtin's book is still valid in this discussion.

Concerning the festival, Bakhtin argued that in the framework of class and feudal politics, the marketplace festivals played an important role as a time of sanction from everyday life. They were the second life of the people, who for a period of time could enter a world of community, freedom, equality and abundance. The official feasts (ecclesiastical, state-led or feudal) of the Middle Ages did not constitute this reliefs from reality, Bakhtin writes. They sanctioned an existing pattern of things and reinforced it: the hierarchies, the political, moral and religious values, norms and prohibitions was still prevalent. Laughter was therefore alien to it.⁷⁸ The unofficial festivals, those created by the people, could on the other hand be in ever-changing playful forms. Bakhtin argues that all the symbols of the carnival was filled with pathos of change and renewal. The sense of the relativity of the prevailing truths and authorities is prominent, thus creating a special logic of a world “inside out”. Or *à l'envers*, as Bakhtin writes: the travesties and parodies, the comic crownings and un-crownings, the humiliations and profanity were all a part of this life turned upside down.⁷⁹ But what is important to remember is that this festive laughter of the people differs from the satire of modern times. The laughter of the festival is directed at those who laugh. The people do not exclude themselves from the “wholeness” of the world, Bakhtin argues. The satirist that places himself above the object of his mockery is in opposition, rendering the comic to a private reaction and not a part of the wholeness of the world. Bakhtin writes: “The people's ambivalent laughter, on the other hand, expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it”.⁸⁰ As I understand it, he argues that the laughter of the festival is not an individual subject that reacts to an isolated comic event, but rather the collective laughter of a people aimed at everyone, the participants included. This laughter is also ambivalent as it is both mocking and jolly, assertive and denying; thus differs from the satire he argues is evident in modern times satire. The laughter can expose realities as they are: by mirroring the norms and look at them from an “inside out” perspective, the laughter of the collective serves as a moment of sanction.

77 Bakhtin, Mikhail (1965)(1985) *Rabelais and His World* p. 4

78 Ibid. p. 9

79 Ibid. p. 11

80 Ibid. p. 12

Methodological approaches: Practicing a discursive reading

I will in this thesis use discourse theory on qualitative studies with three cartoonists. By using Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau's ideas around discourses, I will understand the interviews more in depth as I search for an understanding of how the cartoonists view their own artistic and political practices as part of a certain or several discourses. In this chapter I will explain my methodological starting points, firstly presenting ideas around my qualitative study from Monica Dalen's book *Intervju som metod* and then Mouffe and Laclau's concepts around discourse analysis.

Semi-structured and qualitative interviews: Thinking freely with one foot on the ground

Following Monica Dalen's ideas in *Intervju som metod* (Interviewing as a method) I will conduct three interviews with three different Swedish cartoonists: Amalia Alvarez, Emanuel "Emanu" Garnheim and Elin Lucassi. Dalen suggests that the researcher firstly makes an interview guide⁸¹, which I have done in Swedish and that can be found in appendices. As my interviews were conducted in Swedish, I have translated their answers when using them in my text. I have not translated my transcriptions of the interviews, as it is not directly connected to my thesis: I will do a discourse analysis and not a literary analysis. The interviews themselves were semi-structured, as I think following a strict questionnaire would have been unfruitful in this case. Having a more "open" conversation about the questions could hopefully give partly: a more calm climate for the participants and partly give me more information if they have the possibility to think freely about themselves. This is also why I asked them to write a short pre-text, as I hoped this would create more time for them to start to think about their own practices and maybe it made it more clear for them what my aims are with this thesis. For me, it is a question of creating a transparent process where the persons involved (both the readers of the thesis and the participants) have the ability to trace my reasoning and different choices regarding the interviews. Interviewing was a difficult task, but as Dalen writes in *Intervju som metod*, this kind of difficulties are common and argues that it is important in these situations that you as an interviewer need to show empathy, understanding and tolerance when confronted with other people's opinions. An interviewer should also tell the interviewee who you are, why you are there, what you want with this conversation and what will happen to the material.⁸² I told the cartoonist this when we met and I formulated an information sheet, which can be found in appendices. I gave the cartoonist one copy each and also told them that

81 Dalen, Monica (2007)(2015) *Intervju som metod* p. 35

82 Ibid. p. 45

if they ever wondered anything they should call or mail me (my mobile number and email address could of course be found on the information sheet). I also asked the interviewees to answer a short questionnaire before we met. During the process I have come to call this “pre-text” or in Swedish “för-text” and as I never had a revelation of what else to call it, it has kept its name. This pre-text was sent to them over mail and they answered it back over mail. When we met in person I used this pre-texts as base for my questions with the cartoonist. When it comes to why I choose these persons to be part of my thesis, I wanted to have one person that saw themselves as part of Dotterbolaget, one that has been affiliated with Tusen Serier and one that sort of “worked outside” these two groups. These groups have different kinds of aims with their activist and artistic work and I thought it would be more representative if the persons interviewed entered from different angles into this conversation. I also chose for example not to interview the cartoonists who were involved with me in the creation of the exhibition *Serieupproret!* as I wanted to have other perspectives concerning political cartoons. Dalen argues that the importance of what she calls “lämpliga urval” (proper selection) is a thin line between needing qualitative material that is enough for a thorough analysis, but at the same time be limited in the choice of how many interviewees that should participate as time is always an obstacle.⁸³ I have therefore settled with three interviews, each approximately one hour long, as I think they give me enough information to do a proper analysis. The pre-texts, the interview guide and quotes from the conversations will be available to read in Swedish in the appendices.

Discourse analysis: Laclau and Mouffe on the discursive struggle

To make Mouffe and Laclau's ideas around discourse theory more palatable, I will take my point of departure from Marianne Winther Jorgensen and Louise Phillips reading of their ideas. In the book *Diskursanalys som teori och metod* they go through not only Laclau's and Mouffe's theories but also among others Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough. Even so, I will focus on the first ones. I argue that Laclau's and Mouffe's understanding of the discourse as *constitutional* is good for an attempt to try to grasp how the field of comics can be understood. I do not consider any of the other ways of departure any less “good” to use in this instance, as I think it depends on the material, the researchers relationship to the material and what kinds of areas of study the researcher wants to examine. This is thus the one that I as a researcher choose and I will explain in more detail why. Firstly, I will begin by presenting the basics of Mouffe and Laclau's introductory ideas around what a discourse can be.

83 Ibid. p. 58

Their theory has its starting point in a post-structuralist worldview, where the discourse constructs the social world in meaning and that this meaning can never be “locked down” because of the basic instability of language. No discourse is therefore a closed entity, but rather in constant struggle through the contact of other discourses. The different discourses, representing a specific way of understanding the social world, are always in conflict with each other. They want to archive hegemony by “locking down” language in the ways it wants, Winther Jorgensen and Phillips writes.⁸⁴ In Laclau' and Mouffe's discourse theory they do not separate discursive and non-discursive social practices: all practices are seen as discursive. Even infrastructure, institutions and economy are therefore considered as different forms of discourses, not only texts and speech. They argue that the discourse is completely constitutional of our world: there is nothing outside a discourse but another discourse.⁸⁵ As Winther Jorgensen and Phillips write, Laclau and Mouffe constructs their theory by merging together Marxism and structuralism/post-structuralism, where the social field is seen as a mesh of meaning-making processes. They continue by writing that in the understanding of what a discourse can be, one can use a metaphor of a fishnet. As structuralism concerns itself with our perception of language, we can try to view it through this metaphor where all the signs can be seen as the knots in the net. They achieve their meaning by separating themselves from the other knots, by being placed in determined places in the net. But in post-structuralism, our use of language becomes a social phenomenon ruled by its uncertainty: through conflict, conventions and negotiations in a social room the meaning of the sign (or the knots in the net) can become both fixated and questioned. Laclau and Mouffe builds on this by keeping the structuralism view in the back of their head. To try to fixate the meaning as if there were a determined structure, is the basis of meaning-making as a social process, Winther Jorgensen and Phillips argue. We are constantly trying to lock down the language so that the signs have a strong relationship to the other signs in the net. As this project is impossible, the main concern of discourse analysis is to map the processes where we fight over how the meaning of the signs should be locked down.⁸⁶

Mouffe and Laclau have four important concepts concerning their theory: Articulation, discourse, moment and element. Winther Jorgensen and Phillips explains furthermore five other important notions: nodal point, the discursive field, closure, floating significant and antagonism. If a discourse is conceived as the fixation av meaning within a certain domain, all of the signs in this can be seen as *moments*: the knots in the net. The discourse establishes by meaning being crystallized around a few *nodal points*. This is a privileged sign, from where the other signs are

84 Jorgensen Winther, Marianne & Phillips, Louise (2000) *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*. p. 13

85 Ibid. p. 26

86 Ibid. p. 32

arranged and accumulate meaning. For example, in the political discourse “democracy” is a nodal point and in a medicinal discourse “the body” is a nodal point. In the later, signs as “symptoms”, “tissue” and “scalpel” are fixated by its relation to “the body”.⁸⁷ But not everything is a part of every discourse. The discourse is a totality and by excluding every other possible meanings a sign can have, the sign is created. A discourse is thus a reduction of possibilities where the goal is cohesion between the signs, Winther Jorgensen and Phillips writes. All the other possibilities that are excluded are called the *discursive fields* by Mouffe and Laclau. They can be seen as collections of meaning attributions that signs have or have had in other discourses, but are being ignored in the specific discourse to create a clear cut division. But this is not of course a stable definition and here the notion of *element* makes its entrance. An element is a sign that do not contain a definite meaning and is therefore not fixated to a discourse. The discourse is therefore trying to make the elements into moments by reducing its ambiguous nature to an unambiguous one. The discourse is then a *closure*, a temporary standstill in the signs process of meaning making. The idea of temporary fixations is important: the creation of an element into a moment is never finished, Winther Jorgensen and Phillips writes.⁸⁸ The element is always different in different discourses, “the body” for example has different versions of explanation models in traditional science, in alternative medicine and in religious discourses. The word in itself needs to be put in relation to other signs to gain meaning in that specific discourse and this is done by *articulation*. Every practice that creates this relation between elements (and therefore changes its identity) is seen as a form of articulation. Winther Jorgensen and Phillips continues by explaining the last important notion about discourses, namely *floating significant*. If “the body” is so interchangeable in meaning depending on discourse, it is also an element that to a large extent is open for attribution of meaning. Winther Jorgensen and Phillips writes:

Floating significant are those signs that different discourses try to give content to in their own way. The nodal points are floating significant, but while the notion of nodal points refers to a crystallization point in the individual discourse, the notion floating significant refers to the struggle over important signs that is being conducted between different discourses.⁸⁹

87 Ibid. p. 33

88 Ibid. p. 34

89 Ibid. p. 35, the authors translation: “Flytande signifikanter är de tecken som olika diskurser försöker ge innehåll åt på just sitt sätt. Nodalpunkterna är flytande signifikanter, men medan begreppet nodalpunkt hänvisar till en kristalliseringspunkt i den enskilda diskursen hänvisar begreppet flytande signifikant till den kamp om viktiga tecken som förs mellan olika diskurser.”

A discourse can be seen as a structure of signs in a web of articulations, even if the discourse is never definite. There can always be other meaning making processes that when articulated can question the structure of the discourse. It fixates the meaning in a certain way, but this does not mean it has to be fixated like that forever: a discourse is therefore a temporary sealing of reality. The articulations are *contingent interventions* in an uncertain terrain and are always interrupting and shaping the meaning making processes in random ways. It is therefore Mouffe and Laclau argue that the discourse is always in a struggle in how the structure should look like, which discourse that will be hegemonic and which meaning the sign should be inscribed with.⁹⁰

Another important notion from Laclau and Mouffe that arises here is *antagonism*: the discourse theory word for conflict. Antagonism appears when different contradictory identities finds each other. Winther Jorgensen and Phillips takes the identities Danish and worker as an example: you can be both, but if the worker identity hinders you from doing your duty for the country in war or if the national identity request you to murder other workers in other countries, an antagonistic relationship is created between the two identities. The opposite demands the identities constructs, forms a blockage. You can say that all that the discourse has chosen to exclude is threatening its existence and therefore demonstrates its contingency. Antagonistic relationships develops where and when the discourses impacts each other, but can dissolve when hegemonic interventions appears. It is an articulation that through a *force* restores the unambiguous state of the discourse. The force oppress an existing set of possibilities in which the discourse is constructed. It is therefore, Winther Jorgensen and Phillips argue, that it was for example possible to recruit soldiers from the working class during the World War 1. Their worker identity was suppressed in favor of their national identity.⁹¹

Romanticizing the possibility of change: The critique against Laclau and Mouffe
The basis of discourse theory is the fluidity of signs and this has also been the main critique from other scholars. For example, Lillie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough claims that Mouffe and Laclau disregard the fact that not all individuals and groups have the same possibilities to articulate different elements and thus creating new meanings in the discourse. The discourses of humans are often subject to strong limitations: not from the discourse but from the structures. Class, race or gender can severely restrict the possibility to be an active agent in the discourse, Chouliaraki and Fairclough argue. When focusing on the contingency, these restrictions are overlooked. Instead, you need to formulate a structural domain where the structures are socially constructed but hard to

90 Ibid. p. 36

91 Ibid. p. 55

change for certain groups. Beside this, a contingent domain can be composed in which things can be subject to negotiations and changes, Chouliaraki and Fairclough mean.⁹² Winther Jorgensen and Phillips theorizes on what Mouffe and Laclau's defense could be, based on their knowledge of discourse theory. They write that just because everything in the discourse is contingent, everything in the society could be different than it is today. But this does not mean everything is fluid or that change necessarily is easy to execute. The discourse theory does separate the “objective” and the “political”, to point to that even if everything is contingent there is always an “objectivity”: a set of social constructions we take for granted and thus do not question. Their theory has taken it into account that not all the agents have the same opportunity and can therefore not make their re-articulations known. Agents of groups or individuals are seen in discourse theory as subject positions made by the discourses. Everyone do not have access to the same subject positions and in our society these limitations can be for example class, race or gender. The main purpose of discourse theory is therefore to map how people are categorized and how this influences their abilities to act.⁹³

This hypothetical answer created by Winther Jorgensen and Phillips is interesting, as I wonder if a direct answer from Mouffe and Laclau exist or not. In either case, this answer seems to correspond well with the concepts of discourse theory and as the aim here is not to analyze discourse theory in itself, this short presentation of it is quite sufficient. As I wrote in the beginning of this chapter, no discourse is a closed entity: they are in constant friction with other discourses. This process does Mouffe and Laclau call *discursive struggles*, as the discourse can always have other possible meaning making structures because of the instability of language – the fight over what shall be “locked down” is an indeterminate and never ending struggle.⁹⁴ This is partly why I chose their methodological approaches, as I also argue that there can not be anything outside the discourse but yet another discourse. If we can formulate something into some kind of language we have constructed it into a discursive understanding of our reality. The way Mouffe and Laclau presents the discourse as ambiguous and unstable, but at the same time constitutional, is very interesting. The idea of discursive struggles pair well with what I want to examine and I therefore consider Mouffe and Laclau's ideas to be the best suitable in this context.

92 Ibid. p. 62-63

93 Ibid. p. 63

94 Ibid. p. 36

Ethical considerations: Solidarity problems, “the split” and sensitive subjects

As I have worked outside the academia with exhibitions on political cartoons and have a personal interest in comics, some ethical issues concerning this need to be discussed. I have also talked about political comics in the media a couple of times, where I had a different position as a curator and not as a researcher. These are not two conflicting titles, they just speak to different kinds of aims with my argumentation over time and in which contexts they were presented. My closeness to the field is what Monica Dalen calls a “solidarity problem” in her book *Intervju som metod*. Solidarity can become important during both interpretation and when showing the results. Even if Dalen's reasoning depends on the issue with anonymous interviews, her arguments still matter to my thesis. She writes:

The interviewer can ask the informant to say things about their experiences that he or she would not have asked a friend or a work colleague about. Later, the informants statements are analyzed, interpreted and put together with other information and with academic theories concerning the subject. The researchers version of the thematic can in some cases be seen as unrecognizable and provocative for the informants.⁹⁵

One important difference between Dalen's examples and the individuals in my thesis is the fact that the cartoonists are public figures. They have chosen a life where anonymity is difficult and being interviewed in the media or for a research paper is common practice for them. Nevertheless, it is still of course proper to be considerate and respectful. It is here my ethical considerations start to appear: how do I handle possible responses from the cartoonist if they feel that they have been misinterpreted?⁹⁶ The solidarity conflict can therefore affect the inter mediation of the research results, Dalen writes. The line between what should be known and what that can be known is a difficult issue to grapple with. Dalen writes for example: “Is it defensible to describe a group of people that you have become close too and let their life stories serve as warning signal to our self and to others?”⁹⁷ The issue according to her lies not only in the mediation of facts but in how these results are constructed through language. Using Bourdieu's theories, she argues that the abstract

95 Dalen, Monica (2007)(2015) *Intervju som metod* p. 22, the authors translation: “Intervjuaren kan be informanten uttala sig om upplevelser och erfarenheter som han eller hon knappast skulle ha frågat en vän eller arbetskamrat om. Senare blir informanten uttalanden analyserade, tolkade och sammanställda med annan information och med akademiska teorier i ämnet. Forskarens framställning av tematiken kan i vissa fall upplevas som oigenkännlig och provocerande för informanterna.”

96 Ibid. p. 22

97 Ibid. p 23

language of the researcher and the researchers ability to analyze written material can be an issue when trying to reach knowledge. The researcher has the power and the upper hand, both linguistically and symbolically through the cultural capital they are in possession of.⁹⁸

Even if I don not contest to this idea, bringing forth Ulrika Dahl's ideas around studying “ones own community” can be interesting. Dahl argues that even if she both participate and study the queer feminist movement, this is not the great ethical issue it may seem. It is a question of long lived ideas surrounding objectivity in research, Dahl writes.⁹⁹ This ties into tropes of “home” and “away” structure of ethnography: in the academia, home is where one studies and away is in the field. These tropes are a reminder of the hierarchies central to knowledge productions and power regimes that excludes women, queers and non-western subjects. This dichotomy then points to the racial and classed markings of the academia and the assumption of who belongs there, Dahl argues.¹⁰⁰ Even if we seem to agree on this dictum to a large extent in the academia, Dahl is often questioned on whether her work can be seen as “scientific” rather than ideological or activist. A split between theory and practice is maintained, as social science seem to still put positive connotations to analytic distance and privileging this split. Dahl writes: “While anthropologists are frequently asked to speak on the behalf on subjugated groups, a clear distinction is made between 'activism' and 'science'.”¹⁰¹ It is clear to Dahl that we are neither fully at home nor fully outside any community we aim to study. The fact that research subjects and objects exist in the same universe makes this split an academic illusion. Even so, limitations are necessary for scientific projects, Dahl writes. I am not a part of the creative comic community in that sense, as I am not a cartoonist. Despite this, I have worked with them for some time and I would like to continue this collaboration. I share the basic ideological view of feminism and anti-racism with them and consider my self to be a political being in the Swedish discourse. In a political sense, we are in the same community. This friction between the researcher and the interviewed is important in Dahl's reasoning: she would like to challenge the dichotomy between the theorizing academic and the “informants”, arguing for a femme-inist ethnography focus on citation, collaboration and co-production of ideas.¹⁰² I agree that it is certainly a collaboration and co-production: without the cartoonists this thesis would not have been what it is. Dalen does theorize in a small scale on the researchers agency but Dahl digs deeper into this ethical dilemma. Mouffe och Laclau argue the same as Dahl, that the researcher is never really “outside” any discourse or field of study. They propose that the researcher is almost always

98 Ibid. p. 23

99 Dahl, Ulrika (2011) *Femme on Femme: Reflections on Collaborative Methods and Queer Femme-inist Ethnography* p. 2

100 Ibid. p. 9

101 Ibid. p. 10

102 Ibid. p. 1

established in those discourses she wants to analyze. Even if the work depends on the researchers attempts to distance themselves from these discourses and show “how they really are”, there is no hope for this distancing to be achieved. You can not go outside the formation and tell the only truth, as the truth is always a discursive construction.¹⁰³

Another problem I faced in this thesis was how to handle the cartoonists' expressed feelings of depression or angst, histories of body complexes and experiences of racism. They were very open with these personal subjects, which came as a surprise for me. I had not prepared for hearing or much less analyze this sensible information. We just surfaced the issues and yet I was moved by the stories they told me. For example, Amalia told me how she is being supervised by personnel in the grocery store when she goes shopping, because they racially profile her as “someone that steals”. Even if I know this happens to many people it never stops to be an upsetting fact. My thesis does not in a specific manner examine the life of the cartoonists, but it becomes quite unethical if I were to leave these stories out. They say something about why the cartoonists do the things they do and the feelings become very important in this context. Therefore, these conversations and sometimes my reaction are incorporated in the text in different ways because of two reasons: to make this co-production of ideas clearer for the reader and to examine the way I as a researcher have linguistic and symbolic power in these contexts.

The last ethical issue is a translation issue. Amalia uses the word “blatte” in Swedish when talking about her immigrant experiences and in general when she refers to non-white people. This word does not contain the same connotations as the word “immigrant” and is thus hard to translate. The easiest way to write it is in German as “Kanake”, meaning roughly the same thing: “foreignness”. Yet, the use of both “kanake” and “blatte” is no easy etymological or moral matter. On the one hand they can be used for means of identification and on the other hand in a derogatory way. The word can be seen in the same ethical context as “queer”, that is a common slur towards homosexuals but has been reclaimed as a positive word for identification and even named a whole field of scientific research. Since my aim is to try to have a clear process of interpretation, I am going to leave the word “blatte” untranslated when it appears in quotes. I think despite the etymological worries it might contain, this is the word Amalia uses to describe herself with and should not be taken away from her.

103 Jorgensen Winther, Marianne & Phillips, Louise (2000) *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*. p. 56

Analysis: Reading the panels

Instead of making the chapters totally separate from each other, the different parts are connected and the analysis will run through all of them, as one analysis with four “in depth detours.” Firstly, I will try to understand the notion of politics through Rancière and how this idea responds to the cartoonists’ understanding of politics. The analysis in the next detour will focus on the paradox between art and activism from Rancière, Scott McCloud’s theories of the cartoons’ relationship to art and what the cartoonists think of this connection. Here I will also relate the analysis back to the questions posed in the first detour, bringing forth Willems’ concerns of what comics actually can do to a political landscape. Thereafter I will present and discuss the notion of humor in cartoons and what kinds of feminist strategies that can be formulated through satire with Wong & Cuklanz. The concept of humor as ambiguous through Bakhtin will also be discussed. Lastly, I will with the help of Ahmed’s thoughts about the feminist killjoy and Rancière’s notion of dissensus, try to develop an understanding of the cartoons’ possibility of resistance. Mouffe and Laclau’s discourse theory will run along side of all the chapters, supporting the readers’ understanding of my reasoning and help me bring out knowledge from the material.

The first panel unfolds: Cartoons and the understanding of politics

I will begin with Laclau and Mouffe’s ideas around discourse theory and try to grasp how the discourse of politics can be a driving force for the interviewed cartoonists. Then I will discuss the conversations through Rancière’s ideas around dissensus as a basic condition for politics, focusing on his chapter *Ten Theses on Politics* that was presented in the theory chapter.

As Laclau and Mouffe argue, discourse is a formation that tries to formulate a specific understanding of the world within a certain context and that the discourses fight over “locking down” a certain reality. In this case we see the same issues, with several possible processes that are in a discursive struggle with each other. Firstly, if we look solely on arguments regarding politics from the cartoonist, they all have a different understanding of what “politics” means. Emanuel Garnheim argued that politics is “everything that people think is difficult to handle, everything that is wrong in society. The things you don’t want to talk about at the family dinner”.¹⁰⁴ In our conversation he developed this thought and said that politics is everything that influences the relationships between people, but he has to rethink and rephrase his answers. He doubted, saying “that’s maybe a strange answer, I don’t know... what is politics”.¹⁰⁵ I tried to assure him that this is a

104 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 1

105 Ibid. p. 1

process, that I do not really know the answer myself. He continued: “You can argue that politics is what the parliament should do, but that's not the case. Everything that people argue about around the dinner table is politics.” I asked him if anything is unpolitical, and he answered that if a vacuum suddenly appeared with no other humans in it, then it may be unpolitical: if you are the last person on Earth. The discussion on how we should live our life becomes political, Emanuel said.¹⁰⁶ This discrepancy in Emanuel’s argumentation (politics is both the things you do not want to talk about during a family dinner but do anyway) is something I will come back to in chapter 4. Politics in either case is described as something that creates friction according to Emanuel: it is something that people “do not want to handle”, especially over the family dinner. It also requires more than one person. As soon as there are two people, politics is created. This is evident in Amalia's reasoning too and she gives a straightforward example of it: politics is what “we ordinary people do everyday”.¹⁰⁷ Amalia immediately questioned the politicians and the way they rule over her life that they themselves have not lived. She said that she would trust them if they lived her life: where they should wipe bottoms everyday, going to work at 4 am and live on 6000 SEK a month. Elin Lucassi does as Emanuel did doubt for a second when faced with the question of what is political: she said that she never thought about it and argued that “politics according to some special party, that's never something I have never done.”¹⁰⁸ But she then said that she has occasionally aimed her arguments against The Swedish Democrats, without spelling it out. So even if she never done politics according to some special political party, she has questioned a party directly. She continued by saying that she tries to uphold her self with ideas around different political matters or political currents, and that almost everyone wants things to be better. Those that spread hate also think this, because they have a will of changing something to the better even if she and them have different opinions on how it should be done, Elin argued. She somewhat lands in the thought that politics is about foundational moral and ethics and thoughts on how we should improve the society. Then she said that she never ever thought about this, but developed her concerns about this and said that she uphold herself with ideas around how we should constitutionalise the society.¹⁰⁹ So when asked, the cartoonists all have different ideas around what they connote with the word “politics”. They also discussed politics throughout the conversation with ease, but some of them doubted for a second when faced with the question directly. Just based on the conversations, “politics” becomes in this discourse both a nodal point and a floating significant. If we argue along Mouffe and Laclau, the nodal point is where something crystallizes. But the nodal point needs other signs to be able to be

106 Ibid. p. 1

107 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 1

108 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 1

109 Ibid. p. 1

articulated and in this instance these other signs could be both “friction”, “interaction”, “parliament” and “ethics”. The idea around politics opens up and more signs develops when the issue resurfaces in the conversations, often when they are not directly asked to define what they mean with a specific opinion. Elin said for example when discussing why she draws political cartoons, that she does it to handle and process things she thinks are difficult, upsetting or important.¹¹⁰ The idea that doing something “important” is very present in all the conversations. Emanuel did for example argue that he draws because it is a way of combining something he is passionate about with something important: the love of drawing and the importance of political activism merges. When asked about what he means with “doing something important” he said that he feels it is important to change the society, especially now when Earth is dying. Then he questions himself, asking a rhetorical question of why he does not draw so much about the environment if he thinks it is going under. He argued that before we can do anything about saving the planet we must try to get along, but this is blocked by all the sexism and racism that exists in the society.¹¹¹ The idea of doing something important is visible in Elin's argumentation too, most clear when asked why her first book of collected cartoons is called *Jag är den som är den*. “I'm the one who's the one” is a title paraphrasing and changing a Swedish idiom that originally goes “Man vill ju inte vara den som är den”, which translates roughly into “You don't want to be the one who's the one”. The idiom refers to an idea of not wanting to be a person that is viewed to be demanding or intrusive. In our conversation she said that she wants to be this person, an unapologetic person that does not diminish herself. That she stands for her opinions and remind herself that she has something important to say.¹¹² Amalia did also talk about the weight “of doing something important”. When discussing why she answered that politicians uses art as propaganda in the pre-text, she refers to herself and her identity as a South American native. She said that if she was living up to the stereotypes that prevails of her people in Europe she would have been famous a long time ago. Amalia argued that if she “drawed about flowers and suns and El Condor Pasa” and played the recorder that different political parties would have used her to bring themselves into a better light, thus attracting more voters. That is why she feels it is important not to play the song of the politicians, but draw the songs of her neighbors and friends: poor workers. “I draw for my people” she said.¹¹³ All of the cartoonist consider their work to be a part of something important. I think we could view this idea as another process visible in this discourse, a process that we need to see in relation to “politics” and of course “cartoons”. As I juxtapose these ideas, I am also adding to the

110 Ibid. p. 1

111 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 2

112 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 1

113 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 1

discourse. Through articulation I argue that “important”, “friction” and “politics” are intertwined and a part of a specific discourse about Swedish cartoons.

The last question I had to all of the cartoonist was that I asked them to describe their utopian society, thus trying to grasp more of what they are fighting for. Amalia answered that the perfect society does not exist, but that she wishes for a society that is in constant conflict. Not a violent one, just a society that is more open to political discussions. We should try to make a difference and not be afraid of conflicting ideas. Amalia said she wants a society that constantly is in motion and in discussion without oppressing someone. That people should start to think for themselves and enrich themselves, not be indoctrinated by others.¹¹⁴ Elin answered with a joke when I asked her the same question and said “Where everyone is like me!”. She acknowledged that it was a joke and worked her way up to stating that a more forgiving society would be nice. Where you are allowed to be different and where you do not act to every bias that emerges within you. She said that people will always have feelings and biases but that she thinks a society where you have the most basic needs, safety, food and housing is a good start. This, she thinks, will give people the possibility to take a break and consider why they act in a certain way in a certain event. Then she exclaimed “Oh god this is so dopey!” and quickly asked me if I wanted her opinion on if we should have a neoliberal or a socialist society, to which I answered that I did not feel the need for her to choose or to be that specific. Here, Elin re-entered the discussion about politics and referred back to my question about what politics means for her: she said that everything she does is political and that it is about people and their approach to things. She is very interested in human behavior, she continued. Why do people think and act the way they do? She summarizes herself saying: “So, the utopian society is then about... that you have a human behavior that feels forgiving and permissive and illuminating. Both towards yourself and towards others”.¹¹⁵ Emanuel on the other hand, has a different approach towards the utopian society. He said that he has lost the hope of humans ever getting along or achieving anything that can be considered the best for every citizen. Emanuel argued that we need to build a AI (artificial intelligence) that can calculate objectively what is best for everyone and that has everyone’s well being as a first priority. We should also have basic income, so that we can work on improving our self and not just work for survival. He added that if we stopped eating animals and started to explore the universe that would be good to. He laughed and said that they had a good thing going on in Star Trek, which makes us both laugh. When I asked him more on why these are his wishes for the future, he argued that we are not designed to think in such a global scale we are doing right now. With the internet and the way we interact with thousands of people we may be in

114 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 2

115 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 2

trouble. He refers to Robin Dunbar, who argues that a human is fit for interacting with around 200 individuals and not much more. When he said he did not have a solution I answered that that is fine, because he is not a politician. We laughed again and he underlined that he thinks the world will end anyway, but it shall certainly not be his fault when it happens.¹¹⁶

Even if these excerpts of our conversations are just small pieces of a more complex matter, I found it interesting how they all had (sort of) a common understanding of politics and such vastly different utopian societies. They clearly have different aims with their work in a practical sense, but share a common idea of why they do what they do. They want to do something important and change the society as they think it is failing on giving the best possible life for every citizen. If we go back to Rancière's arguments about politics, he writes that politics is not a relationship between subjects, but rather as something that works between two contradictory terms that defines a subject. Politics disappears the moment this "knot" between a subject and a relation is removed.¹¹⁷ As I understand it, the idea that politics consists of someone or something exercising power over something or someone can not be considered politics. He rather sees the conflict (or knot) between a subject and a relation as the basis for calling something "politics". This is confusing for me, as the idea of exercising power over someone is something I definitely should call part of politics. Rancière argues that issues that traditionally been seen as domestic or private have made it possible for people to ignore these issues, not considering them part of public politics. As he writes in his first thesis, if we argue that politics is the exercise of power and the struggle to occupy it, politics is dispensed with from the start. This makes room for a "specific" way of life in political existence. The ability to *take part* of politics is what makes the political subject visible.¹¹⁸ So as I understand it he is less interested in a struggle between two subjects and more focused on the relationship between two contradictory terms that defines a subject. If we agree with his arguments it does sound quite similar to the way discourse theory tries to understand reality. The discursive struggle and what constitutes a subject within these discourses are more interesting than arguing for right or wrong. But why can an argument or struggle between two subjects not be seen as a consequence of their different ideas of reality? Is the way the cartoonists work not a consequence of different ideas of what a society should be?

If we go back to the partaking of politics, Rancière argues that the mode of action is what makes the subject visible. In the second thesis he writes: *What is specific to politics is the existence of a subject defined by its participation in contraries. Politics is a paradoxical form of action.*¹¹⁹ I

116 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 3

117 Rancière, Jacques (2010)(2015) *Dissensus – On Politics and Aesthetics* p. 28-29

118 Ibid. p. 27

119 Ibid. p. 29

think what Rancière argues for is not understandable in a context of two persons in a struggle, but rather two (or more) *ideas* in struggle. I think that is why he argues that politics can not be seen as someone exercising power over another: that requires *persons* in a hegemonic relationship to each other. So the cartoonists all have different ways of expressing an idea that seems to be in conflict with what is conceivable in a specific discourse. Amalia argues that the reality of undocumented women is not articulated enough so she aims to make them visible. Emanuel comments on news events and tries to put them into a bigger context. Elin takes her personal experiences of (among other things) sexism and work with the drawings to try to understand why people do what they do. Even so, the idea of a person “doing politics” is not something Rancière can agree with. He seems to uphold himself with the abstract idea of politics as conflicting ideas. I think discourse theory can help with understanding how the ideas or signs that move within this discourse are formulated. If we look at Laclau and Mouffe's reasoning, the discourse is constantly trying to close the process of meaning making. But since this is always temporary, as language is always changing, the aim is to understand what kinds of struggles that are being played out in a specific discourse at a specific time. If the different signs within this discourse can be for example politics, friction and cartoons, they all say something about the ideas that are present in the discourse. If we break it down further, undocumented women, sexism, racism, drawing and class can also be signs in this discourse, each of them containing many more layers of meaning in this and other discourses. It seems impossible to grasp every process of meaning making in the discourse of Swedish cartoons, which I do not intend to do. The issue lies in understanding which processes that drives the cartoonists to draw about what they call political matters.

If we look at Rancière's eighth thesis, he writes: *The essential work of politics is the configuration of its own space. It is to make the world of its subjects and its operations seen. The essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus as the presence of two worlds in one.*¹²⁰ Here again he lingers between the utterly abstract and the material. The need for space can imply both a discursive space and an actual space, as he continues to talk about the role of the public room. Who can occupy this space? Who or what is it for? As it is now, he argues, it is a place of circulation and “moving along”. Politics is in direct opposition to this and works to transform this space into a place where subjects can be made visible as citizens. As I wrote in the theoretical chapter, to reconfigure this space into a place where something can be done, seen and spoken of is the main agenda of politics according to Rancière.¹²¹ Here he moves closer to a practical understanding of where politics can have a platform. The idea of “make the world of its subjects and its operations seen”

120 Ibid. p. 37

121 Ibid. p. 37

through politics is something important to Rancière. To have a space where this can happen is crucial, if I understand him correctly. This space is not necessarily a geographic space, but can just as well be a discursive one. Preferably, to be called political, it should also maintain the manifestation of dissensus. This is another key concept of Rancière that becomes important in this context. Dissensus is not the confrontation between interest, but the manifestation of the gap in between what he calls the sensible. As I wrote in the theoretical chapter, the sensible is what can be envisioned in or not in a common space. The partners dissensus or the stage of discussion is not definitely constituted, and to make something visible is to make others be able to vision the world they live in to someone unfamiliar with that world. If a subject normally has no reason to hear about this other world they have no frame of reference to, it is politics that can envision this platform where something can be heard or seen.¹²² Here I am inclined to take Rancière literary. Can cartoons occupy this discursive space for dissensus he argues is the basis of politics? If the people in Amalia's book are made visible through her drawings and telling of their stories, do that confirm the cartoon as political? I will come back to that thought later on, but first I would like to introduce the cartoonists ideas around their activism and their identifications, which will help me evolve my argument concerning politics and dissensus.

Drawing politics – doing activism

I asked all of the cartoonists what they would like to define themselves as, for example are they more comfortable with comic creator or cartoonist? They all did of course give me very interesting answers. Amalia did not consider herself as neither of those two, but her main identifications are being a black activist and a poor black native. This means more to her than art or cartooning, and she feels she has the authority to draw and write the things she do.¹²³ Emanuel argued he is fine with political cartoonist and does also work with designing the graphics for children games apps¹²⁴, while Elin likes cartoonist and illustrator in this context. In other contexts Elin is an authority administrator for the National Library of Sweden.¹²⁵ Amalia does not specify a particular job, but said that she works a lot with a variety of jobs.¹²⁶ So the cartooning is not their main source of income. Why I bring this up is because I want to highlight that cartooning is not a profitable job in many cases, which makes the need for additional incomes strong. This refers back to my argument about discourses: the cartoonist all see themselves as activists but also many other layers of

122 Ibid. p. 38

123 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 2

124 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 3

125 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 3

126 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 2

identifications are present. This gives the discourse another set of possible signs to interpret, but in an attempt to be concise I will concentrate on their ideas around cartoons as activism. Amalia is the one that ranks “activist”, “black”, “poor” and “native” higher than artist or cartoonist, so I will begin with her ideas around what activism means for her. She said that she wished for more practical political processes:

When you are left, you have to feel sorry for all immigrants and all undocumented, they have to push “like”... they, I don't know. That the immigrant succeed and so on. But they do not care about being a little more practical. I have seen many women that I work with, but you always want someone to marry undocumented people. You should marry someone seeking asylum. That's a practical thing. Or, you should not vote for some fucking politician that promise one thing and then does another. That, that' how it is. Those practical stuff. And stop liking on Facebook or feel sorry for us.¹²⁷

She also argued that there have been many people who have helped her over the years and that she would have been in a hell if it was not for those people. But they do not becomes politicians, Amalia argued: they are the one that are called anarchists or autonomous and do not want the attention. When I asked her if it is the extraparliamentary activists that do the most of the heavy lifting she answered that people engaged in a certain political party do some, but not enough. The anarchists, those that sometimes becomes incarcerated or even killed, are the people that have a practical understanding of politics. That is the experience she has had concerning her situation, Amalia continues. “The poor, the old women, the drunkard! I don't know... The miserable, the disturbing, repulsive! But someone who is strong!” is her depiction of her own situation.¹²⁸ But she also talked about the disadvantages of being an activist. Many people feel guilty when they can not be the person they want to be in a political context, for example you may not have a lot of time if you are a mother or you may have worked too hard and is currently burned out. You need to solidarise with your self first and then others, Amalia argued. She thinks the guilt of never being enough is something that sort of has grown in every person in the Swedish society. We have not sufficiently discussed our history of war or racism. In Latin America, she argued, everyone is so activistic in their thoughts and actions, giving their life to fight for example the patriarchy. You do not have to be political correct, Amalia said. She is tired of the rules in Sweden, that someone else always have to decide over the one that fights, taking political correctness as an example of a

127 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 3

128 Ibid. p. 3

structure that she argues “rules” over what can or can not be done in a political context.¹²⁹

Emanuel does not have the same direct ideas around activism as Amalia, but instead thinks a lot on how he portrays the characters in his cartoons and comics. He said: “I try to think outside the box, you know, and not to do what is expected, as when I did an erotic comic where the woman dominates.”¹³⁰ He argued that it felt it was not so common to do that and by switching the traditional roles of the characters he tried to make it more queer in its expression. In his pre-text he wrote that he is currently in a period of political depression and quite unsociable, so his creation of images is his activism at the moment.¹³¹ When I asked what he meant with political depression, he said that it is a feeling of being “not enough” even if you are doing important work, because things only seem to be getting worse. At the same time, he does not want to surrender to this feeling, as that would be too simple. He also reflects over the fact that he can give in, which he considers to be worrying. “Because of that privilege, I can't give up” Emanuel said.¹³² I ask him if there is something in the comic world in Sweden that he misses and after I said “well, the cartoonist in Sweden is very white” he replied yes precisely, but argues that it is quite a good distribution in relation to gender and queerness. But those that succeed are in general white people, Emanuel answered. That makes him feel uncomfortable, because it is pretty unfair that it should matter if you succeed depending on that, or on how much time and money you have. They are those people who are given medial space, which feels wrong, he continued.¹³³ He tries to focus more on politics and societal discussions in that sense, than on his work with computer games and apps. It comes down to doing something important with the things you love. When I asked him why it is important to do “something important” he quickly replied:

Because, or this I know: It is because I have such fucking death anxiety. I wrestle with the thought of my own ending. [...] The stress of trying to do something that matters, in some way, with time and... That is also one of those good insights, that you want to prioritize stuff in your life. Nothing really matters anyway so you can focus on the things you like instead.¹³⁴

Elin on the other hand talks a lot about her artistic work in relation to activism, building a clear correlation between her cartoons and her political purposes. She said that she thinks the stereotype

129 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 4

130 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 3

131 Pretext. Appendix 4

132 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 3-4

133 Ibid. p. 4

134 Ibid. p. 4-5

of an activist is someone who goes around outside on the streets and demonstrates or paints political quotes on walls. She does this occasionally, but she sees cartoons and art something bigger. You do not create something just because it is pretty, but because you want to make a difference and distribute what you have done Elin argued. It is not enough to paint these pictures and have them in the drawer. Because she draws issues that concerns itself with our common society, she wants others to see it.¹³⁵ One of those issues is for example the body, which is very much in focus in her cartoons. The body is round and bombastic, sex organs and breasts are visible through pants and shirts. Firstly, she likes the way a round shape feels, in contrast to a straight shape: in a cosmetic sense she thinks this is more visually pleasing. In a political sense, she does this to process issues she finds upsetting, for example the unrealistic body standards many women are exposed to. She has had a problematic relationship to this and she said that there are structures that forces her to reflect a lot on her body, whether she wants it or not. Elin argued that it demands a lot of strength not to think about your body and be totally relaxed about it. There are very few people who can manage this relaxed approach and by drawing the body she creates a space of owning it, Elin said. To reclaim the expression and not let anyone else decide over it.¹³⁶ But she does always try to put things in perspective, Elin argued. She reflect on why and how we do things, what we are thinking about. Not only to tell stories about herself, but if it is about herself she tries to place the story in a bigger context or process.¹³⁷

If we look at Rancière again and on his eighth thesis concerning the politics and its need for creating an own space, I think the cartoonists in their way tries to make this space become. It is important to them that they need to be seen and read by others, because cartoons does nothing in the bottom of your drawer as Elin said. They all have complex reasons to why drawing is their choice of method in a political struggle: maybe you are doing it for your friends, or to handle issues that disturbed you. Or maybe you feel that you need to do something important with the time you have left. Abstract concepts of citizenship, democracy and ethics are present in Rancière's reasoning but also in my opinion with the cartoonists. They talk about these subjects as something that are obvious in politics, for example when Elin specifically claims politics is about “basic moral and ethics” or when Amalia said it is something “ordinary people do everyday.” We all have different ideas of an ethical way of living or acting, but what role can cartoons really play in a context of art as activism? To be able to make a further analysis, we need to look at the next panel in the cartoon.

135 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 4

136 Ibid. p. 3-4

137 Ibid. p. 4

The second panel unfolds: Cartoons and the relationship to artistic activism

In this part of the thesis, I will build on the first part of my analysis but also incorporate more ideas from Rancière presented in his chapters *The Paradoxes of Political Art* and *The Monument and Its Confidences; or Deluze and Art's Capacity of 'Resistance'*. I will also continue using Mouffe and Laclau's understandings of discourses when presenting new quotes from my conversations with the cartoonist and in this case I will concentrate on their formulations of cartoons as art. Some ideas concerning comics' hesitant relationship to art is also discussed through the ideas of Scott McCloud.

The cartoonists have complex ideas around what art can be and whether their work can be considered art or not. This becomes important, as Rancière creates his arguments around political art in a traditional sense: sculptures, painting and performances. If we are to begin to discuss cartoons as art, we need to see what the cartoonists themselves think of art and how they define it. Firstly, as we saw in the last chapter, none of them defines themselves as an artist. They seem to put a specific connotation to the epithet that they do not feel are aligned with the reality of their practice. Amalia does for example not really identify with the word cartoonist either, but sees herself of more as an activist that happens to use cartoons as a mode of action. She said it was the only way for her to make a movie, as she is never going to earn the money that would make it possible to create the visual story she aims for.¹³⁸ When asked about her relationship to art, she argued that she does not know so much about it, but that art to her is when people show their emotions. She talked about a demonstration against Nazism that happen in her home town Lund a couple of months ago and she told me it was so beautiful and powerful. That they all translated their feelings in different ways but in a practical sense and that was art to her. I asked her if she considered her book to be a work of art, but she did not really settle with only one thing. She said: "My book... well, I think it is a lot of things, the book is a stone you throw at the cops, a stone you throw at the Nazis, against ignorance, towards those who are ignorant, a bible you can read on the toilet or a kick in the bottom in the morning when you don't want to go up." If that can be considered art, she does not know but argues that you can call it whatever you like. It is a result of many voices. If that is art, it means the voices are the artworks and that their stories are works of art. To impact people, to share these stories, translate this events and to make something happen are important, Amalia argued.¹³⁹ Emanuel on the other hand, does not really seem to care much for defining what art is or is not. He thinks there is a lot of discussion about this dilemma and he does not understand why it is important. At a basic level he thinks art is something that means something or speaks to peoples emotions and if you define it like that cartoons is definitely art. Most creative

138 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 4

139 Ibid. p. 4-5

expressions are then art, he continued. But when curators at The Museum of Modern Art or the art market decides what art is the discussion becomes boring, Emanuel said: “And then it becomes really fucking uninteresting for me to have a wish of ever becoming an artist”.¹⁴⁰ I asked him to develop his thoughts and wondered if it this process of marketing he does not want to belong to. He said this was precisely it and that people concern themselves too much with the idea of producing “great art” instead of making drawings or illustrations or do crocheting.¹⁴¹ When I asked Elin what she thinks of the notion of art, she referred back to the beginning of our conversation and said that she would never call herself an artist:

No, because, I've thought about this... I don't think it is... If I say that I'm an artist no one will get that it is this I'm doing! [...] But when I say that I'm a cartoonist, as well as a satiric, people get it pretty quickly. It is effective to say that, erhm and then I would not say that... no, I just feel more at home with “cartoonist”. Because it describes in a more accurate way what I'm doing.¹⁴²

Cartoonist is a more efficient word for describing her artistic practice and she feels more at home with it, Elin argued. She continued by talking about how artists also can work as activists, or work in an activist manner. Good art does often rise urgent questions in some way and that can be political, she said. But no, she would not call herself an artist.¹⁴³

My starting point in this conversation was that I built my questions on the idea that they saw their practice as art, which turned out to be in direct opposition to the cartoonists ideas. They seem to have a clear idea of what they are *not* and they are not artists. They are activists, creatives, political: but never artists. What creates this opposition towards identifying as an artist? Elin seems to have a practical reason, as it is easier for others to understand if she calls herself a cartoonist. Yet she seems uncertain on why and tries to reflect more on it, but can not reach a different conclusion during our conversation. Emanuel is simply uninterested in upholding himself with that conversation because if something creates feelings it is art, end of discussion. Amalia has a broad understanding of art and incorporate feelings, manifestations and peoples life stories as art. The big question before I turn to Ranciè's theories around political art is thus: is cartoons really art? Or, more precisely: can they be considered to be judged in the same way Ranciè examines art? I think the answer lies in the discourses negotiated around “art” and “artists”. The cartoonists seem to not

140 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 6

141 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 6

142 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 6

143 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 6

be against the concept of art, but rather the idea of what an artists is. What is the difference between these concepts then? If we look at Emanuel's argument he means that when someone with some form of power, like a curator at The Museum of Modern Art, *decides* what art is, he do not want to be a part of it. If we accept the idea that art is simply expressions that creates feelings, he is in the game. Elin said that the processes are too different between cartoonists and artists: that one of them in a more effective way describe her artistic practices. Amalia seems to argue that art is so connected to people and their interactions that an "art object" beside the people is not required. Going back to Mouffe and Laclau's concepts around the discursive struggle, "not art" or "something other than art" can be considered a nodal point in the discourse of cartoons. As the cartoonists are reluctant and opposed the idea of this kind of artistic practice being "art", being against something is also taking a stand for something else. "Not art" is based on the idea that "art" is a notion that does not really explain the processes in the discourses. By doing "something else" than art, the discourse of cartoons become in a direct struggle with the discourse of art. Thus, no discourse is a closed entity: the constant struggle between and within discourses is a consequence of the instability of language and therefore constitutes the instability of discourses. Even if the different discourses represents an own way of understanding the world they are always in conflict, or in antagonistic relationships, by Mouffe and Laclau's argumentation.¹⁴⁴ In Laclau' and Mouffe's discourse theory they do not separate discursive and non-discursive social practices: all practices are seen as discursive. This idea of the discourse as constitutional is important in this context. Not only texts and speech can be considered discursive, but institutions, economy and infrastructure are also part of a discourse. The discourse is thus completely constitutional of our world: there is nothing outside a discourse but another discourse.¹⁴⁵ The discourse of cartoons is no exception. It talks with other discourses and fights with them, always trying to get the hegemonic advantage of "locking down" meaning. In this case, it seems the ongoing discursive struggle is about seeing cartoons as art or not.

Even so, I am unsure of what art would do to cartoons: what does it entail by describing something as belonging towards a specific process? Would the articulation itself rob the cartoon from an "under dog" perspective? If it is the art establishment that worries about "uninteresting things like what art is or is not", referring back to Emanuel's statement, is it the theorizing that then transform artistic practices into "Art"? The naming, the formulations and negotiations: is something art as soon as we have thought that it is possible for it to be this? There seems to be gap in practicing art and in theorizing art, the latter leading towards something undesirable for the cartoonist. The practice is always in focus, whether it is the drawing process, the people depicted or

144 Jorgensen Winther, Marianne & Phillips, Louise (2000) *Diskursanalys som teori och metod* p. 13

145 Ibid. p. 26

the politics that are negotiated. But if art can be interactions, feelings and something you do to handle or understand your reality, cartoons can in my opinion be considered works of art. Based on the cartoonist own broad ideas around art, I think that there is no reason why cartoons could not be art: as long I do not call the creators “artists”. Even so, I sense a discrepancy between placing cartoons in the same spotlight as Rancière has done with other works of art, like sculptures or theater pieces. If we look back at Scott McCloud's reasoning (presented in the research overview) when discussing art and comics, he brings up Will Eisner as a person that battled for comics to be seen as a legitimate literary and artistic form. This discussion about comics relationship to art is thus a process that has been negotiated since the 1940's.¹⁴⁶ McCloud writes that the split is not because of comics intricate word/picture nature, but rather a symptom of a bigger discussion concerning art.¹⁴⁷ As comics has developed its own style concerning content and form, the question of sequential art as an *own* form of artistic experience is the future of “art comics” being a genre or not. What happens if comics confess itself to the idea of being a legitimate “form of art”? According to McCloud, many cartoonists were skeptical to this and if we look at Elin, Amalia and Emanuel it is still a complex conversation today. McCloud's argument centers around the identification of comics and cartoons as an underdog or “outlaw” form of expression and wonders what the art establishment can bring to comics other than stifling it. Even so, he argues, art and the art establishment are not the same.¹⁴⁸ Here me and McCloud are in agreement, as I also question if calling comics art necessarily give the art establishment “power” over it. He does also lean towards Amalia's understanding of what art can be and writes that art can be formulated around actions and as a branch of human behavior.¹⁴⁹ He ends his argumentation in a very egalitarian conclusion, stating that there is really no clear distinction between art and non-art, but that society has marked some of its member as “artists” and their creations “art” in hope of making sense of the world.¹⁵⁰ The making sense, the creating of signs into something that defines something so it seems understandable – this is always the discourses' aim and therefore also evident in the discourse of cartoons as art or not.

“Doing art means displacing art's borders” – the paradox in the cartoon

Even if the discursive struggle about cartoons as art is unstable and moving, if I assume that cartoons is art: how do they interact with Rancière's theories concerning political art? In *The*

146 McCloud, Scott (2000) *Reinventing Comics* p. 27

147 Ibid. p. 42

148 Ibid. p. 43

149 Ibid. p. 45

150 Ibid. p. 50

Paradoxes of Political Art he writes: “Art is presumed to be effective politically because it displays the marks of domination, or parodies mainstream icons, or even because it leaves the spaces reserved for it and becomes a social practice.”¹⁵¹ He continues by arguing that this presumption builds on the notion that art urges us to rebel when it shows us rebellious things, which creates a special relationship between cause and effect and intention and consequence.¹⁵² Rancière claims that dissensus can only be produced by art if it neither gives lessons nor has a specific destination.¹⁵³ If you intend to “do political art” dissensus is never achieved and thus no politics can be formulated within the work of art, if I understand him correctly. But as Rancière writes, there is a difference between the politics of art and political art: the first implies institutions (museums, books or theaters) that gives definite distributions of space and time, and that the frameworks of these wows fabrics of perceptions. What can be visible or not visible in these aesthetic realities form around what sensory experiences that are considered “common sense” or not. An artist is a person that aims to change the frames of what can be sensed or perceived, to rupture the meanings we see as given and creates new links of meaning processes, Rancière argues. This also means that fiction is a word that need to be reconstructed: it is not the imaginary opposed to the real, but fiction should rather be seen as a re-framing of the real. This can build new connections between reality and appearance, and between the individual and the collective, Rancière continues. If it creates a change of distribution of the sensible, it is here art can have a similar function as political action.¹⁵⁴ But the collective is important, Rancière argues. Without the forming of demonstrations (or manifestations) of a *we*, nothing can be disrupted within politics. Even so, Rancière is cautious and writes: “This politics of aesthetics, however, operates under the conditions prescribed by an original disjunction. It produces effects, but it does so on the basis of an original effect that implies the suspension of any direct cause-effect relationship.”¹⁵⁵ Is it then impossible to ever consider art as a form of political action? Maybe not, if I understand Rancière's reasoning. He writes that if an artistic practice disrupts the distribution of places it also blurs the borders of its own activity. “Doing art means displacing art's borders, just as doing politics means displacing the borders of what is acknowledged as *the* political” he argues.¹⁵⁶ Rancière writes that art does not provide forms of social awareness or rebellious impulses for politics, but rather contribute to a form of polemical commonsense, thus creating a new landscape of what is visible, seen or heard.¹⁵⁷

151 Rancière, Jacques (2010)(2015) *Dissensus – On Politics and Aesthetics* p. 134

152 Ibid. p. 135

153 Ibid. p. 140

154 Ibid. p. 141

155 Ibid. p. 142

156 Ibid. p. 149

157 Ibid. p. 149

When reading Rancière's *The Monument and Its Confidences; or Deluze and Art's Capacity of 'Resistance'* he still seems to doubt art's power to form resistances. He writes that as we already describe art as having character of resistance, this makes it harder to challenge. As art has been given this dubious narrative, both art and resistance have received a paradoxical meaning. Rancière writes: "To resist is to adopt the posture of someone who stands opposed to the order of things, but simultaneously avoids the risk involved trying to overturn that order."¹⁵⁸ A new link between art and resistance is something Rancière struggles with, but seems to land in an idea that it is necessary for a complex relationship to be cultivated within them. He writes: "Chaos has to become a resistant form; the form must again become a resistant chaos. The monument must become the revolution and the revolution again become a monument."¹⁵⁹ He is implying that for art to be considered to work as a form of resistance, it needs to be in a contradictory, paradoxical mode. If art are to give promises or do something for the people, it must suppress itself: thus not function as a form of resistance. It is not the objects of art that is being discussed here, but rather the ideas that accompanies them and their belonging to a specific sensory experience.¹⁶⁰ As I see it, it comes down to questioning an idea of art and an idea of politics, that they in this time and age seem to have some inner core it in self that can change human behavior. By not forcing art into something Rancière argues it never was, it is important to care for the balance between art and politics. If they work towards each other but never fully meet, neither of them can be suppressed. As he writes: "To prevent the resistance of art from fading into its contrary, it must be upheld as the unresolved tension between two resistances."¹⁶¹ It then seems to me that Rancière's ideas stands in direct opposition towards the cartoonists ideas. They strive relentlessly for social change and believes that cartoons and politics does go hand in hand. It is not paradoxical for them: it is given. As Rancière argues that art can never be resistance if the ideas around them are not in dissensus, cartoons seems at a first look to be neither art nor political. But the question here lies in the discussion around cartoons as art: if they are not art, can they occupy a space where resistance is possible? As my aims with this thesis are to examine how the artists see cartoons as activism, this discussion maybe becomes a bigger problem than is needs to be. The cartoonists view their own practices as political and it is I (and McCloud and Eisner) that keep insisting cartoons is art. This becomes in itself a dissensus: I have an idea that stands in contradiction towards the cartoonists ideas. We are in disagreement concerning the ideas of what comics and cartoons is. It may be said that this seems to be a discursive struggle within the discourse. Art is art and cartoons is cartoons, yet cartoons and

158 Ibid. p. 169

159 Ibid. p. 172

160 Ibid. p. 179

161 Ibid. p. 183

comics are visual objects that are being exhibited in art galleries and museums. Is it not art if it is presented in those contexts? Laclau and Mouffe argue that this kind of contradictions of meaning building is the basis of discourses. As the discourse constructs the social world in making meaning of signs, this is also a process that never can be “done”. The basic instability of language sees to that. No discourse is a closed entity because of its struggle through the contact of other discourses. They all want to achieve hegemony by “locking down” language but as language always change this is impossible.¹⁶² The discourse of cartoons' complex relationship to art has been an ongoing discussion for at least 80 years and does not seem to be “locked down” yet. Many pieces in the discourse are still missing, thus a profound explanation of this relationship can not be achieved in this short thesis.

Creating politics or mirroring the already present – what can the cartoon achieve?

One person that do not see the cartoon as automatically “doing something political” is Wendy Willems. She argues that the studies on political cartoons have centered around the way the cartoons ridicule those in power and what implications that can be derived from this. Lyombe Eko even considers them as possible texts of agitations for democratization. Willems seems reluctant to give the cartoons that much political agency and presents a theory of comics as “hidden scripts”. They can show discourses that takes place offstage and not in a public sphere, thus not being in the view of those in power. Comics represents what the oppressed say about those in power.¹⁶³ Political cartoons could be seen as a form of political resistance, but Willems writes if cartoons were unique in offering these opportunities for political dissent. The newspapers could have easily occupied this space according to her.¹⁶⁴ Treating cartoons as primarily forms of resistance can contribute too much weight to them as being the only space for this dissent to happen. Willems argues that the provocation of social change from comics rarely happens, but does not explain further why. She seems to be more interested in how the comics keep track and record present and historical reality (things that are happening or have happened) seeing them as an important part of public memory.¹⁶⁵ Even if I see her arguments as valid, it is the things she does not talk about that bothers me: she evades the complex questions of comics as resistance by saying it is not her area of study, yet she argues that they rarely do provoke political change. She posed a conclusion without a deeper analysis first. Because of this, she seems uncertain of the cartoons role in processes for example

162 Jorgensen Winther, Marianne & Phillips, Louise (2000) *Diskursanalys som teori och metod* p. 13

163 Willems, Wendy (2011) *Comic Strips and “The Crisis”*: *Postcolonial Laughter and Coping With Everyday Life in Zimbabwe* p. 127

164 *Ibid.* p. 128

165 *Ibid.* p. 130

democratic changes, leaning back and forth without creating a coherent presentation of her ideas concerning this issue. So when Willems argues comics are “hidden scripts” that dwells offstage, I wonder what places she considers to be public spaces. Is not a newspaper a public space where discourses can be negotiated? And if the comic is in that newspaper, can it not be considered a discourse within the discourse and thus occupying a public space? But then one can argue that “those in power” just do not read these newspapers and then not the comics. The main issue with Willems arguments is that they are based on the dialogues in Chikwama: the image is seen as just another text explaining the same thing twice. As Elin argues, she never tells the same story with the image and the text, as they are two components that build a third story together. Willems does reflect upon the problem of privileging the text over the picture and relates this to issues of class belongings, quoting Olaniyan that writes:

Picture driven cartoons are fully keeping in line with the popular conceptions primarily a visual art: and to give primacy to the visual over the verbal is to privilege the more mass-oriented and easily accessible of the two languages [...] Word-driven cartoonists violate the common idea of visuality as the essence of cartoons; their privileging of words over pictures often makes their works overly cerebral, highbrow or elitist.¹⁶⁶

She knows that by focusing on the dialogues, which is in focus in Chikwama, she does so at the expense of the pictures.¹⁶⁷ As the drawings are so crucial in Elin's, Amalia's and Emanuel's cartoons according to themselves, I argue that they can not be examined in the same way Willems examines Chikwama. The post-colonial laughter on the other hand, is interesting to my study. Willems concludes that Chikwama is a demonstration of mocking the powerlessness in itself and not any agent in the discourse. Humor does not always addresses those in power and can not always be treated as a form of resistance. The laughter mediated in comics that point fingers at those subject to power, can thus create a space for the readers to cope with tragic event in their different realities. Humor becomes self-reflexive and self-persevering.¹⁶⁸ It is here me and Willems can be found in agreement. Based on the conversations with the cartoonists, this idea of humor as a protective and reflexive process is very evident. This I view as a form of resistance – even if the laughter is not always aimed at the ones we argue are in power positions (like politicians), it creates a mode of action. Here, the ability to sometimes laugh at the horrendous structures and oppressions can be considered a space of “resting” from these structures. Even the resting becomes an active process

166 Ibid. p. 135

167 Ibid. p. 135

168 Ibid. p. 141

for the activists and cartoonists involved in the culture of laughter. By resisting “seriousness”, the satire mirrors human behaviors and oppressing structures, but also function as a soft bed on which we can lay our dire bodies when everything seems to be just too much to handle. But I also agree with Willems that we can not always assume that anything will change something just by saying it will do this. I think we need to lay our eyes on the third panel in this story and examine the role of satire and laughter – both in a context of feminist strategies and in the historical understanding of laughter as resistance.

The third panel unfolds: Cartoons and the negotiations of laughter

I think we need to remind ourselves of the research questions presented in the beginning of this thesis. Even if they are all connected, in the second and third “panel” I tried to examine the way cartoons related to notions of politics, art and activism, thus beginning to touch upon the first two research questions. The third one, “What forms of feminist resistances can laughter create in a political struggle that is presented through cartoons?” will thus become this part focus point. Concerning the development of the analysis it becomes evident that comical cartoons are interesting to Rancière's ideas around dissensus, giving this analysis a sharper edge. Therefore, I will in in this chapter bring forth new material concerning humor as a feminist strategy but also relate the discussion to the previous panels dialogues.

Laughing matters – feminist strategies and humor as the bitter-sweet medicine

In her answer to the questions posed in the pre-text, Elin wrote that humor is really important, as it works as a disarming practice. She thinks just because she is humorous, she is shielded from the threats other people may receive when talking about the same subjects, the only difference being that Elin does it in pictures and not just text.¹⁶⁹ As she said, she does try to handle difficult things through cartoons and the fact that she do this by being funny is a method for disarming both herself and the readers. “You know, for my own sake, if humor is present it is easier for me to withstand this crap” Elin argued.¹⁷⁰ She also thinks humor is a good gateway, as she often has as a purpose to get the readers to think or to gain a new perspective of things. If humor is present, this aim becomes easier. Her first reaction when she is faced with injustice is often anger, but if this feeling were to be in incorporated into the cartoons the communication between her and the reader diminish, she argues. Even if anger can be a good thing, humor is more constructive.¹⁷¹ She relates this process to

169 Pre-text. Appendix 4

170 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 7

171 Ibid. p. 7

the activism of for example writing an article: she could have written a piece with extended reasoning of for example why some behaviors are never seen in the public eye with female agents. Elin argued that that does not work as well as she would like. Firstly, the persons she want to address may not read it because of its length or intricate language. Secondly, she thinks she would have had more threats from people than she has today if she would pose her arguments in that kind of media.¹⁷² The drawings that can be called “one panel cartoon” (*enruting* in Swedish) are so quickly read and still contains so many layers of meaning you do not have to explain, Elin continued. When you see a picture that goes directly in to your consciousness there are no steps on the way that you need to process beforehand, so the message lands quickly with the reader. But despite this Elin does not strive for instructing the reader what to think. With the drawing you have the possibility to both, but for her it is important to not force something through the expression.¹⁷³ She herself has a difficult time when a writer does not trust a reader to make her own conclusions. In a cartoon she can create opinion without making the reader feel unintelligent. She explains: “Well, I think that you that read the cartoon can deduct this on your own and if you succeed to think about the things I also grapple with, it will be a knowledge that sticks to you in a better way. [...] I does not belittle you and I don't give damn, well some cartoons may not be appealing to you at all and then you just go on to someone else. And that's fine”¹⁷⁴

Emanuel also has a similar idea concerning humor and cartoons. He argued in the pre-text that pictures can in a lighter manner bring forth difficult messages and that the humor acts as an extra spice: it is like the sugary substance that makes the bitter medicine easier to swallow.¹⁷⁵ When I asked him to develop this thought on why cartoons can be easier to digest, he answered that it is something in the pictures nature that makes it easier to visualize issues that are seen as complex. He personally feels it is easier to grasp an explanatory picture than an explanatory text and he thinks this is a common feeling. Humor is of course a part of that, Emanuel continued. He repeats his analogy with humor being the component that makes it simpler to swallow the bitter medicine and argues that this is really his biggest victory. The fact that he receives comments from people that sympathize with the political party he often attack, The Sweden Democrats, is a result of this method he argues The comments are not hateful, as he expected in the beginning, but the commentators often tells him that they think he is a good cartoonist and that he makes them laugh.¹⁷⁶ Amalia has on the other hand a different approach. She wrote in the pre-text that

172 Ibid. p. 8

173 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 8

174 Ibid. p. 8

175 Pre-text. Appendix 4

176 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 8

“Humor/satire is important when you mock the power”.¹⁷⁷ During our conversation, she argued that humor can be effective when trying to understand and handle things she thinks is unfair:

Personally, I think that the politicians and the structures, every system, both here and in Chile, it's like a circus. It's pretty ridiculous, they don't think we can organize and act right and so on. It is, well... Sometimes when I'm depressed, I turn on the radio and see some discussion by a politician and then I laugh! [...] Well, claro they have it worse than me, I have depression but they don't have a brain! Yes, it's like that, they have no brain but they have the power to put us in jail [...] and that is weird.”¹⁷⁸

I asked if humor is a way to protect yourself and your sisters and she agreed. There is enough of harassment when women move in the society and she takes her friends as an example. They try relentlessly to be liked, Amalia said. They buy new clothes, buy men drinks and are very concerned with their appearances. There are so many demands on women: you have to be pretty, you have to be social and you have to be intelligent, she continued. So there is really a lot of material to make satire of.¹⁷⁹

If we look to Wong and Cuklanz's theories, the idea of feminist humor and its strategies becomes an interesting approach to these conversations. They write that comics have been a method for social critique and an active participator in political spheres. Comics as popular art cannot be isolated from the context and time in which they were created, Wong and Cuklanz argues.¹⁸⁰ Quoting Kathleen Turner they also write that comics can help people cope with their own living situations, just by providing tools that can make us understand the realities we are in. Comics does seem to have an impact on the reader, according to Wong and Cuklanz. One topic that is frequently negotiated in this field is gender: content, ideology and audience are all affected by this. To Wong and Cuklanz, feminist comics and cartoons have a tradition of partaking in different political contexts throughout history.¹⁸¹ Wong and Cuklanz also note that the basis of feminist humor is the will and attempts to expose different realities, especially those realities of gender inequality and oppression under patriarchal ideology.¹⁸² They discuss a couple of methods that reoccurs in feminist comics and lands in four different approaches one can take when drawing about patriarchal

177 Appendix 4 Pre-text

178 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 5

179 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 5-6

180 Wong, Wendy & Cuklanz, Lisa (2001) *Humor and Gender Politics – a textual analysis of the first feminist comic in Hong Kong*, p. 71

181 Ibid. p. 71

182 Ibid. p. 72

structures. They consists of: directly attacking or critiquing gender roles, exposing the realities of gender inequality and discrimination under patriarchal ideology, expressing elements of experience that are shared by women generally and expressing hope towards a vision of change.¹⁸³ It is here I am dubious of their arguments, as one method seems less compatible with a intersectional feminist ideology where not just women can take part. “Expressing elements of experience that are shared by women generally” is such an abstract idea of a method, as it is quite open for interpretation. I think by adding the word “generally” they try to make this a more open statement but the example they give later on is focused on cis-womens experiences. When connecting Lau's comics to one or the other method, for this particular proof of her feminist practices they present a comic about periods. The girl in the comic uses her worn sanitary napkins and throws them on kids that teases her. As funny as I think the comic is, I am confused over Wong and Cuklanz's feminist approaches. Despite the fact that people other than cis-women also have periods, if they base their feminist ideology on a notion where no other persons than cis-women are included it seems difficult to argue with them on feminist comics and its expressions. They does not acknowledge that it can be very different realities between black women and white women, or between women from the bourgeoisie and women from the working class, or between cis-women and trans-women. It can not exist a “general” way of existing in this world. But despite this, I have to see this text in its context. They use these theories from a book that was published in 1994 and use their own interpretation of this book in the article. Their aim is to examine one specific comic from a specific context where these methods are applicable. In that sense the argumentation is fully understandable. Even so, I want to try to broaden these methods in a way that does not center around the white middle class cis-woman experiences and I do therefore not try to fit the cartoonists practices in this problematic category of feminist methods.

Going back to the first approach, “directly attacking or critiquing gender roles” this seems to be a frequently used method in Elin's and Emanuel's work. It is just Amalia that does not in a clear way upholds her self with that question. But it comes down to how you interpret “directly attacking or criticizing”. Elin argued that the combination of text and image is very effective, as they rarely depicts the same thing. She tried to explain this by going back to herself and said that when she draws a person expressing feminist statements, she do not give the character a t-shirt with the word “feminist” on it. She draws one thing and writes something else, she argued. She does not explain the same thing in the text if she think the picture does the trick.¹⁸⁴ But this does not mean that she shy away from critiquing gender roles. Elin also argued that by switching things up, it can show the

183 Ibid. p. 72

184 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 9

structures behind the gender roles: this gives her the opportunity to shed light on issues she thinks are unfair but never have to shame anyone for their behavior for “playing along” with this structure. We are all victims of the structures, she argued and reflected on why or if acting with rage is a good thing. By putting up a mirror, people can by themselves come to conclusions on what Elin means and hopefully they understand her message better this way, than if her images creates guilt or aggression in the reader.¹⁸⁵ Emanuel does also try to think more on the gender role he himself is in, stating that: “[...] I don't want to give up, because that would be too easy. And it is also fucked up that I have the possibility to give in as not everybody can do that. And because of that privilege I can't give up.”¹⁸⁶ He also sees himself in relation to the patriarchy in other ways, for example when he said that he has not received any negative critiques he assumes it is partly because he is a man. Women are perceived by society as more annoying when they have an opinion, Emanuel argued.¹⁸⁷ Other than draw cartoons about for example gender roles or racism he tries to give money to political organizations by selling his drawings. Both Feminist Initiative, Animal Rights Sweden and Föreningen Hem (an organization for homeless EU-migrants) have been given donations by this method.¹⁸⁸

The other feminist approaches presented in Wong and Cuklanz's text are quite clearly present in all of the cartoonists work. When it comes to “exposing the realities of gender inequality and discrimination under patriarchal ideology”, Amalia does for example have a lot to say about that. The issue of racism in Sweden is something they all touch upon through their comics, but in the material it was Amalia that frequently related her experiences of racism to her activist work. She had during the conversation said the word “assimilation” on a few occasions so I asked what she meant with this word. She argued that she is treated differently in the society than her blonde friends (her white friends) but she is treated better than the women with veils. She is not a *blatte* in that context, despite looking like one she argues. Why people assimilate is because of the fear of not being accepted, telling me about the countless times she had been followed by personnel that thinks she should steal anything in the grocery store, or when men in streets ask her if she would sell her body to them. Amalia continued: “I have on some occasions said that I vote for the Sweden Democrats just to avoid the confrontation. Sometimes you meet racists and you are like yes, yes, I'm a good *blatte!*”¹⁸⁹ By positioning herself in the same ideology and assimilate, she can evade racist attacks. She also relates to this in an intersectional manner, bringing forth the reality of the black woman experience under patriarchal and racist ideology. She laughed a lot during our more

185 Ibid. p. 9

186 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 4

187 Ibid. p. 5

188 Interview with Emanuel Garnheim, March 26 2016. Appendix 1 p. 7

189 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 6

than one hour long conversation and joked about “stupid politicians” or “ignorant racists”. The laughter seems to be a comfort zone and a way of protecting yourself and your sisters.

Elin also experiment with ideas of reclaiming, for example by taking back the perception of her own body. She argued that with drawing she can view things from a different perspective: “So when I for example draw my self, when I on occasion do self-portraits, I can suddenly... it is like I break down my appearance into lines and then I can see it in a more objective way and like, yeah, this is nice because lines are nice.”¹⁹⁰ It is the same thing with a body, she argued. She can view these lines as beautiful and in an easier way grasp that her appearance is beautiful. Thus also exposing the realities of gender inequality and discrimination under patriarchal ideology, as the question that arise is: why do you need to break yourself into lines to reclaim the perception of your own body? Yet, it seems to be an effective strategy. By making the body move around, be big and take up space in her cartoons, Elin said that this is both a personal and political choice. She does it partly because she likes the feeling of drawing round shapes over straight lines and because she wants to process the structures that made her cultivate a problematic relationship to her own body.¹⁹¹ Funny poses and jokes that depends on body movements lightens up the conversation and serves as a way to create a more relaxed view on our bodies. The last point, creating a vision of change, becomes clearest in what I have already written: their utopian societies are fantasies, but never the less hopeful imaginary futures which they strive for. Wong and Cuklanz end their article by hopefully stating that as Lau's comics may reach a “non-feminist” audience, the stories (often told with a comical aspect) may achieve important political work for the issues she is depicting.¹⁹² Whether this is the issue with the Swedish cartoonists in this context, remains to see.

A place of sanction? Grasping the role of collective amusement

Laughter appears to be something special. Something specific, almost indescribable. Can crystallizing the nodal points around satire be of assistance in this? If we go back to Mouffe and Laclau's understanding of the net of signs, where the nodal point is sort of the “strongest” knot in the web, humor can in this context be followed by the idea of being “effective”. It is effective when you are trying to express feelings or politics, it is effective when mocking the power and so on. It does something efficient with the understanding of the cartoon, if the reader thinks it is funny. For Elin, this interaction is an important part of her work. She trusts her readers to make their own conclusions, to deduct what they want out of the images presented. This way the knowledge

190 Interview with Elin Lucassi, April 1 2016. Appendix 3 p. 4

191 Ibid. p. 3-4

192 Wong, Wendy & Cuklanz, Lisa (2001) *Humor and Gender Politics – a textual analysis of the first feminist comic in Hong Kong* p. 94

“sticks” without belittling you, Elin argued. This can be another knot in the web: communication. With humor present, the road from the cartoonist to the reader becomes more clear and humor act as a constructive method for presenting your aims. This seems evident in Emanuel's reasoning too: pictures can bring forth difficult messages in a lighter manner than just texts and the humor is the extra spice. The satire becomes this sugary substance that makes the reader receive the information conveyed more effectively. The fact the persons that sympathize with the ideology of the Sweden Democrats laughs, is his biggest victory Emanuel argued. The bridge of communication is maybe not clear, but visible. When asked why cartoons is easier, he replied that it is something in the picture that makes it easier to visualize complex issues. A picture says more than a thousand words, to a certain degree. So the ideas formulated in this discourse seems to center around humor as an effective method of communication. Amalia argued in a slightly different way: humor is good for mocking those in power. Posing this in relation to Bakhtin's ideas around the laughter seems suitable in this context.

As written in the theory chapter, Bakhtin argues that the unofficial festivals, those created by the people, could be in ever-changing playful forms. All the symbols of the carnival was filled with pathos of change and renewal. The sense of the relativity of the prevailing truths and authorities was prominent, thus creating a special logic of a world “inside out”. Or *à l'envers*, as Bakhtin writes: the travesties and parodies, the comic crownings and un-crownings, the humiliations and profanity were all parts of this life turned up side down.¹⁹³ It seems the cartoonists agrees with this idea, that humor can bring forth something that has been hidden, like norms or in Mouffe and Laclau's words, the “objective”. By mirroring behavior in a comical way, the cartoonists can shed light upon issues they feel are important to talk about. Bakhtin's mission seems to be to examine and broaden the understanding of the medieval festival: it is not merely a negative nor recreational drollery, but should be seen in greater philosophical context. He writes:

Let us here stress the special philosophical and utopian character of festive laughter and its orientation towards the highest spheres. The most ancient rituals of mocking at the deity have here survived, acquiring a new essential meaning. All that was purely cultic and limited has faded away, but the all-human, universal, and utopian element has been retained.¹⁹⁴

The issue here is that satire of this sort is considered a low culture, a title often given to popular culture. Bakhtin is trying to legitimize the laughter of the collective, proving its ambiguous nature

193 Bakhtin, Mikhail (1965)(1985) *Rabelais and His World* p. 11

194 Ibid. p. 12

and complexity as a method to give status back to this process in time. It is not “simple” but rather highly philosophical – thus marking it as belonging to the high cultures of human history. He writes that it was Rabelais that brought the carnival laughter into world literature. Bakhtin argues that the problem of folk humor is the current literature of it: it is either presented as purely negative satire or fanciful jesting deprived of higher meaning. The ambivalent nature as being both and nothing of this is usually ignored, Bakhtin argues.¹⁹⁵ The comic literature of the times were infused with carnival spirit and used wide forms of carnival images. The influence of this spirit seemed irresistible: men of high status as monks, scholars or clerics renounced their official state and perceived the world in its laughing aspect. The number of manuscripts of medieval parody is immense, Bakhtin writes. They all seemed to indulge in cheerful relaxation from the sanctimonious seriousness.¹⁹⁶ Here we can anticipate a similar notion of laughter in the cartoonists reasoning. As Amalia said, humor is important when you mock those in power. She laughs at the politicians and argues that humor is a way to protect yourself and your sisters in this political context of oppressions. Even if the carnival laughter is not as common-spread today as in the medieval times, how Bakhtin explains the laughter is important. He sees its ambiguous nature and the complexities of the peoples laughter. It was drollery *and* high culture: the hierarchic relationship between them should not be seen separately but together. It was many contradictory ideas in one place. The laughter was also a way of relaxing from the everyday life, whether you were a cleric or a shoemaker.

As presenting the Renaissance ideas of laughter, Bakhtin argues that laughter is considered to be of deep philosophical meaning concerning history and man. It is a peculiar point of view of the world, where it can be seen anew and by no means less than we can see from a serious standpoint. Both laughter and seriousness tells us about the realities we live in. Laughter can pose as many universal problems as the former and Bakhtin argues that even some aspects of the world is accessible only through laughter.¹⁹⁷ This stands in stark contrast to the 17th century ideas of humor, where laughter is a light amusement of low persons. It can only refer to individually typical phenomenon of the social world and is thus neither philosophical nor can tell us anything about the universe. History or persons could not then represent this process, making it impossible to depict kings, generals and heroes in a comical manner. The place of laughter belongs to the lower genres, showing the process of inferior social levels, Bakhtin writes.¹⁹⁸ The 17th century idea of humor is something Bakhtin argues against. He tries to bring the folk humor up from the “low” and into the

195 Ibid. p. 12

196 Ibid. p. 13

197 Ibid. p. 66

198 Ibid. p. 67

“high”: in the process he unfortunately accepts the hierarchical aspects of the low and the high when expressed in these terms. Even so, this discussion of high and low culture seems familiar. When Scott McCloud talks about the cartoons relationship to art, he argues that the future of art comics centers around the sequential image as its own form of art. This idea is still in debate, with many cartoonists being reluctant to call their works art (or themselves artists). It is the outlaw status, the idea of cartoons as something other than art, that for some is the tempting aspect of cartoons. Cartoons is not high art: is it therefore low culture instead? As discussed briefly in the second panel about comics and art, I argue that my wish to define cartoons as art is part of this discussion. When reading Bakhtin it almost feels like I have the same mission as him but considering cartoons rather than the festive laughter. I, McCloud and Eisner and many more want to bring the cartoons up to the spheres of art: but why? Do we not just then do the same problematic reasoning as Bakhtin and favor the high over the low? The hierarchies of artistic expression are maybe just reinforced if we constantly try to lift something up from what we argue do not belong in the below. Something then always has to be lower than the thing we lifted up. This seems to be a typical example of the discursive struggle within cartoons as art, but also within the cartoons as funny. When certain expressions of laughter are spoken of and treated as more important than other laughs, some things have to fall below. When defining the political laughter as more effective or more important as something else, what new hierarchies are created? Despite this ethical dilemma, this discussion is certainly a part of the meaning making processes Mouffe and Laclau talks about. We are constantly trying to lock down signs and create the net as we feel fit, but this will of course always be a never ending struggle.

But I do not want to leave Bakhtin just yet. He argues that the medieval laughter is not a subjective biological consciousness of all the people. It is the *social* consciousness of all the people. This is why the festive laughter becomes a process of victory, not only over supernatural awe or the sacred: but it also a process that defeats power, earthly kings and upper classes. The defeat of all that restricts and suppress, Bakhtin argues.¹⁹⁹ It seems that this is also a notion that the cartoonists shares: the laughter is a bridge, a communication tool, a body reclaiming process and good method to win over the ones in power. Bakhtin marks the festive laughter as something that contains mighty power itself. He writes:

The serious aspects of class culture are official and authoritarian: they are combined with violence, prohibitions, limitations and always contain an element of fear and of intimidation.

These elements prevailed in the Middle Ages. Laughter, on the contrary overcomes fear, for

199 Bakhtin, Mikhail (1965)(1985) *Rabelais and His World* p. 92

it knows no inhibitions, no limitation. Its idiom is never used by violence or authority.²⁰⁰

But jokes are uncertain. The laughter of today can not be seen in the same context as the medieval one. We can use satire to hurt: rape jokes and transphobic or racist satire are just the beginning of the problematic consequences of “it’s just a joke!”. This does not seem to be a discussion that exists with the cartoonists, yet as in the research overview this is slightly touched upon. Willems is one that tries to untie this doxa of the laughter as effective resistance and make it more complex. She argues that even if the cartoons could be seen as a form of political resistance, she questions to what extents these cartoons could shape a political landscape.²⁰¹ Willems is less interested in the way which cartoons may provoke social changes and more intrigued by the way they reflect political changes. She argues cartoons seldom provoke change in such a scale that it could be called “resistance”. Willems seems to rather view cartoons as Jürg Schneider sees them: “the value of comics may not so much lie in its potential to provoke (instant) political change but in the way comics keep track and record actual and historical reality. As such they form an important part of the public memory.”²⁰² I am inclined to agree with her, as there is as of now not enough material nor research to actually “prove” that the cartoon does something other than mirroring the political landscape. Even so, they do seem to give the cartoonists a well needed and important space of political outlet and work as a way of showing us the hidden realities of our everyday life.

The fourth panel unfolds: Cartoons and the possibility of resistance

This chapter will be shorter than the others, as it is here I will try to bring the discussion to some kind of “temporary closure”. I will discuss Sara Ahmed's thoughts about being the one that becomes the killer of happiness and the need for being this person that unintentionally creates friction. How can these thoughts of the feminist killjoy be connected to the idea of the political comic? I will also relate my presented thoughts throughout this thesis in relation to Rancière's ideas around dissensus, but also what consequences cartoons seem to have on a political landscape outside Sweden. This in an attempt to create some kind of starting point, from which a further discussion around cartoons and their possibility of resistance can be developed.

200 Ibid. p. 90

201 Willems, Wendy 2011) *Comic Strips and “The Crisis”*: Postcolonial Laughter and Coping With Everyday Life in Zimbabwe p. 128-129

202 Ibid. p. 130

Feminist Killjoys – drawings that get in the way

As Ahmed write in *Feminist Killjoys (And Other Willful Subjects)*, we can perhaps make sense of the complexity of feminism as an activist space if we give an account of how feminism is an object of feeling. She begin by writing that her story of becoming a feminist starts with a table: a table where the family gathers, a memory of an everyday experience that literary happened every day.²⁰³ Around this table, the family is having polite conversations, making certain topics taboo. Suddenly, someone say something that is problematic. You may respond to the things that are said and the situation is tensed. By speaking up, you transform into the object that is upsetting everyone around the table. Ahmed writes: “That you have described what was said by another as a problem means you have created a problem. You become the problem you create”.²⁰⁴ This seems to relate to what Emanuel argued when asked what he means with politics, that it is everything that is not discussed at the family dinner. The discussion of such problems are not welcomed, since family gatherings around the table are supposed to be *happy* occasions, Ahmed writes. She argues that the happy gathering is an image of the good family, a polished surface that should not be disturbed by family members talking politics. “You become the cause of distortion. You are the distortion you cause. Another dinner, ruined.”²⁰⁵

Well, in Emanuel's case he is actually saying two contradictory things. First he argues that politics is everything you *do not* want to talk about at the family dinner, he then said politics is everything you *do* talk about during the family dinner. I interpret Emanuel as posing the idea of a conversation about something that may cause discomfort during something that should be “pleasurable” and calm. Or happy, in Ahmed's words. These occasions, where someone at some point speaks up, are inevitable when one member of the family becomes a feminist subject. Becoming a feminist can according to Ahmed be an alienation from happiness. When we feel happiness towards the “right” objects we are aligned with the others around the table. But we are alienated when we do not experience joy from these “right” things and thus become out of line with the others around the table.²⁰⁶ Ahmed talks about the affective community, that in its simplest form can be described as the emotional possibilities in a certain context. She writes: “The gap between the affective value of an object and how we experience an object can involve a range of affects, which are directed by the modes of explanations we offer to fill this gap.”²⁰⁷ Ahmed continues and argues that you can not always close the gap between how you do feel and how you should feel.

203 Ahmed, Sara (2010) *Feminist Killjoys (And Other Willful Subjects)* p. 1

204 Ibid. p. 2

205 Ibid. p. 2

206 Ibid. p. 2

207 Ibid. p. 2

You can not always be quiet at the family dinner when someone says something problematic. She asks herself, does activism act out of this gap – can it work as a bridge between the continents *do* feel and *should* feel? You might be disappointed or angered and these feelings might be directed against the causes of these affects, or towards the people that promised you happiness by marking these objects as “right”.²⁰⁸ Elin does for example argue that her first reaction is anger when faced with something she dislikes. But she does not go through with the anger and instead tries to transform the anger into a cartoon. The anger is according to her at rest, but the affect still made her become aware of processes that are unjust or unequal.

Activism is often a matter of seats, Ahmed writes. If you are unseated at the table of happiness, your seat is the site of disagreement. The word dissidence, meaning roughly to sit apart, becomes your chair around the dinner table. But to be unseated at the table of happiness might not only threaten that table, but also what and who is gathered around it.²⁰⁹ It is here the figure of feminist killjoy arrives in Ahmed's reasoning: the one that threaten the loss of the seat and kills the joy of the seated. In the context of feminist critique, happiness is the thing that defines social norms as automatically being social “goods”. To not agree to this is to be the one that kills the joy over social norms, thus political activism is an involvement in the struggle against happiness, Ahmed writes. Our activist archives are unhappy ones: take for example black critiques of the myth of the “happy slave”. Even if unhappiness is not your cause, to be willing to go against a social order is to cause unhappiness, Ahmed argues. But, to be willing to cause this sorrow can also be how we come to be in a collective struggle. Those that are unseated by the table can find each other through this alienation.²¹⁰ To be known as a feminist is to be categorized as difficult, Ahmed continues and writes: “My point here would be that feminists are read as being unhappy, such that situations of conflict, violence, and power are read as *about* the unhappiness of feminists, rather than begin what feminists are unhappy *about*.”²¹¹ But to be the one that (often reluctantly) takes on the role of being the difficult one can be a knowledge project, Ahmed argues. It can be a world-making project, a way of exploring the familiar and reveal what has been hidden under the surfaces of “happiness”.²¹²

I think the way Ahmed writes out the image of the dinner table as a space of conflict and discussion, can be interpreted as a metaphor of discourses. The things that can not be spoken of, are the norms within the discourse. The signs that are locked down. When someone reveals the norms, the instability of the discourse starts to re-happen. A discursive struggle is not just in this image

208 Ibid. p. 3

209 Ibid. p. 3

210 Ibid p. 4

211 Ahmed p. 6

212 Ibid p. 6

something abstract, it is the tension between family members when the feminist killjoy stands in opposition to the rest. A fight over the meaning making processes starts again and the killjoy can lose its seat – but the disruption has already shaken the discourse. This image is both abstract and material: we do have discussions (that may or may not be tense) around this dinner table almost every day. Amalia wondered if I would put her personal information in my thesis and when I looked confused about this she said she has a secret address because of received death threats. I said that I of course wouldn't put her address or personal information in the thesis and that I never planned to. Amalia continued and said that she has been hated her whole life: she does not fill the role the society wants her to and she is a native that speaks up.²¹³ She is the killjoy that threatens the serenity of the dinner table. But Amalia does not call herself a feminist. She said that she is a post-feminist and identifies more with categories like native, poor and black woman. Amalia argued that if she would call herself a feminist, she would have been questioned by other feminists on how she should act as a “proper” feminist. It becomes one more rule to conform to, she argued. Furthermore, she insinuated that if she would become more involved in feminist issues, she would have had demands on the feminist activists that they would not be prepared to hear. “They are not on my level” Amalia said during our conversation and laughed.²¹⁴ It is clear that she means white feminists and that she feels there is a division in what kinds of struggles they face. So instead of focusing on that struggle, Amalia is involved with other kinds of activism like for example drawing cartoons and showing the life of undocumented women in Sweden. This internal critique Amalia expresses was also visible in chapter 1, when arguing that it would be more effective to for example marry a person seeking asylum than to “push like” on social media. She stirs it up again at the feminist table.

Ahmed writes out the figure of the feminist killjoy as juxtaposed the figure of the angry black woman, exposed by for example bell hooks and Audre Lorde. “The angry black woman can be described as a killjoy; she may even kill feminist joy, for example, pointing out forms of racism within feminist politics”, Ahmed argues.²¹⁵ She might not even have this as an aim, but her body still creates tension among white feminists. The mere proximity of some bodies involves different kinds of affective alterations, Ahmed continues.²¹⁶ The figure of the angry black woman is a fantasy figure capable of producing its own effects. It is yet again this question of becoming the cause of the problem rather than be allowed to expose the problems that caused you to react. Ahmed writes: “You become entangled with what you are angry about because you are angry about how they have

213 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 2

214 Interview with Amalia Alvarez, March 29 2016. Appendix 2 p. 7

215 Ahmed p. 7

216 Ibid p. 7

entangled you in your anger.”²¹⁷ Being a feminist killjoy is to be a body that gets in the way: how many feminist ideas are about making room and who is occupying which spaces? Ahmed writes that the figure of the killjoy can be understood in terms of politics of willfulness. The activist archive, as Ahmed spoke of, was proposed to be an unhappy one. She suggest this archive as being a willful one instead.²¹⁸ It is about being persistent and determined in a struggle against the happy, the norms of the society that we marked as “good”. But it is not simply about lonely individuals going against the flow of the society, Ahmed argues and writes:

Rather, willfulness is a collective together, of those struggling for a different ground for existence. You need to be supported when you are not going the way things are flowing. This is why I think of a feminist queer politics as a politics of tables: tables give support to gatherings, and we need support when we live our lives in ways that are experienced by others as stubborn or obstinate.²¹⁹

If we look at the cartoonists arguments, their artistic practice is closely related to their understanding of activism. This is something that has been evident during the whole analysis: cartoons is a mode of action that they use to bring forth political issues, like migration, sexism, racism and in Emanuel's case even animal rights. The cartoon is a table where we discuss our society and negotiate aspects of democracy and equality. The drawings act as entities that disturb the flow of society. They also seem to be killers of feminist joy around the table: some bodies gets in the way. They are discourse within a discourse, a conversation about who is allowed to take a seat within the conversation of cartoons. This will be more discussed in the next part, where Rancière resurfaces and I try to take a look on what can be beyond the lines of the cartoon.

Looking beyond the panels

I would like to take some time and relate this back through Rancière's concerns around dissensus. By saying something is political will not necessarily do anything with the political landscape, as Rancière argues in *The Paradoxes of Political Art*. It is the assumption that all art have this subversive core that is the problem with “political art”: then dissensus is dispensed with from the start. I agree with Rancière on this, because how can you create anything that tries to take resistance against something if that resistance is a part of the system you try to resist? It is of course a paradox, as Rancière argues. Therefore, a space where contradictory ideas can touch but never merge is needed and I think the space for that can be found in the idea of the cartoon. It is both a space of

217 Ibid p. 8

218 Ibid p. 9

219 Ibid p. 10

understanding, of relaxations and of tension. When trying to relate the comics political power outside of the Swedish context, you don't have to look far. Cartoonist Atena Farghadani was for example just released from an Iranian prison after spending a year there for her satirical cartoons and open critique on social media of the Iranian government.²²⁰ She did among other things draw politicians as animals in reaction to a law that restricts women's rights to contraception and criminalize voluntary sterilization. The animals depicted referred to cultural ideas of certain animals as seen as possessing negative traits, leading Atena to be convicted of "insulting members of parliament through paintings" and spreading propaganda against the system.²²¹ This is not just about the drawings: it is about democracy and the freedom of speech. The flow of activist cartoonists around the world supporting Atena and her work culminated last year in what has been called "Draw4Atena". Under different social media outlets and newspapers the cartoonists gathered in a collective attempt to bring light on the unfair treatment Atena and other political cartoonists have been or are going through.²²² Amnesty International writes that she is not the only one: at least five other activists are grossly unfair imprisoned in the country, making them prisoners of conscience.²²³ The cartoon can then if combined with other acts of political actions be seen as an important part of the political landscape.

In Sweden, another problem seems to be that the books are not being discussed enough. The images exist but little public or cultural debate is evident. Amalia argued that her book is for the undocumented women but also for "ordinary people": the ones that may not identify as feminist or political. The book is not gaining enough visual space and is therefore not as available as she would like it to be. Amalia said: "I would really like to have a discussion about it, why my book is not there, but I already know the answer. It's about racism and nothing else. But I like it and the people like it very much, so why is it so invisible? That's my wish, that it should be more visible in the public debate."²²⁴ It seems some stories gain more visual exposure than others. Amalia argued that it is the racism that stands in the way and I can understand her reasoning. The comic organization Tusen Serier does for example not exist just for fun. They argue that the

220 Cavanaugh, Michael : *Cartoonist Atena Farghadani, sentenced for satirizing government as animals, is freed in Iran*. Retrieved 2016-05-19 from Washington Post's webpage <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/comic-riffs/wp/2016/05/04/cartoonist-aten-farghadani-sentenced-for-satirizing-government-as-animals-is-freed-in-iran/>

221 Amnesty International UK's webpage: *Painter Atena Farghadani imprisoned for drawing a cartoon in Iran*. Retrieved 2016-05-19 from <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/iran-aten-farghadani-prison-cartoon-womens-rights-activist#.VWz8-PnF-Sq>

222 Walsh James: *#Draw4Atena: add your cartoons in support of the jailed Iranian artist*. Retrieved 2016-05-19 from The Guardian's webpage <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/12/draw4aten-aten-farghadani-your-cartoons-support-jailed-iranian-artist>

223 Amnesty International UK's webpage: *Overdue release of artist must be followed by freedom for other prisoners of conscience*. Retrieved 2016-05-19 from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/iran-overdue-release-of-artist-must-be-followed-by-freedom-for-other-prisoners-of-conscience/>

224 Appendix 2 p. 7

Swedish comic climate is about knowing the right people if you want to get published: the problem is that those people are white swedes that often exclusively know other white swedes. The comic world is just as segregated as the rest of the Swedish society.²²⁵ By publishing stories by swedes with influences from other parts of the world, Tusen Serier aims to both highlight the creators that have been ignored and to work against racist structures through comics. They write:

To work with anti-racism can be about pointing out inequity. It can also be about creating understanding between various groups, to create contexts in which persons with different backgrounds can meet and get to know each other. To highlight the voices that are not as audible as others, to create a space for writing the history from diverse perspectives.²²⁶

The cartoon is the chosen method for Tusen Serier as it is for the cartoonists involved in this thesis. The thought of the cartoon as contributing to “doing something political” is prominent and the idea of the political cartoons as resistance can be seen as a basis of the cartoonists activistic goals and practices. Even if the drawing itself may not “do something”, it certainly seems to help create these spaces of collective struggles, meeting points and bridges between people you never thought would exist. The fact that it was difficult for me to find papers or books concerning feminist or political comics, tells me this is a field where cartoons and gender studies rarely meet. When they do, it is not a clear cut vision of how to handle the comic in an academic field. Some focuses on masculinity norms, others on representation. Some think laughter is an important component, others argues for more discussion around the things that are not seen. But the majority seem to avoid (or just, forget) the discussion around the cartoon as a method of political resistance. To try to merge feminist theory and for example a political theorist like Rancière is an attempt to bridge the gap of understanding of what cartoons can do to feminist politics and vice-versa. As Ahmed writes, the feminist killjoys are not only willing to put their bodies in the way of the flow, but willing to *cause its obstruction*.²²⁷ To partake in the political and to be in resistance of current orders is essential.

But amidst all this, humor seems to serve as the space where contradictory ideas meet but never merges, as being in constant discursive struggle over meaning making. The feminist kill joys are making us laugh with them. Can drawing (humorous?) resistances be this space of dissensus, so important for politics? Even if it seems that the cartoon can do *something*, the negotiations of what are still in dispute and the history of laughter, art and politics tells us the cartoon is an intricate site

225 Tusen serier's webpage: *Om seriesverige*. Retrieved 2016-05-18 from <http://www.tusenserier.com/om-tusen-serier/om-seriesverige/>

226 Tusen serier's webpage: *Antirasism*. Retrieved 2016-05-18 from <http://www.tusenserier.com/antirasism/>

227 Ahmed p. 11

of discrepancy. I think the philosophical finish of McCloud's *Reinventing Comics* is a suitable (un)ending of this thesis, as it formulates the complexities surrounding comics as an idea that for me have occupied a hidden space for so long. It seems that this idea, deemed to act in the fringe of the public stage, is finally beginning to thread slowly into the bright lights of collective consciousness as something more than what we thought it could be.

Comics is a powerful idea, but an idea that's been squandered, ignored and misunderstood for generations. Today, for all the hopes of those who value it, this form seems increasingly obscure, isolated and obsolete. So small at times as to almost drop out of sight. Small... like an atom... waiting to be split.²²⁸

228 McCloud, Scott (2000) *Reinventing Comics* p. 238-240

Conclusions: It is a confusing, funny and dead serious comic world out there

In an attempt to try to grasp this intricate discourse that cartoons seems to move in and constitute, I asked myself three questions. In the first chapter, I tried to examine in which way the cartoonist views cartoons as a method for political change. I began with Laclau and Mouffe's ideas around discourse theory and how the discourse of politics as a driving force for the cartoonist interviewed was formulated. Then I discussed this through Rancière's ideas around dissensus as a basic condition for politics, focusing on his chapter *Ten Theses on Politics*. When asked the cartoonists all have different ideas about what they connote with the word "politics". Just based on the conversations, "politics" became in this discourse both a nodal point and a floating significant. I argued along Mouffe and Laclau, stating that the nodal point is where something crystallizes. All of the cartoonists considers their work as part of something *important*. The idea of "doing something important" became another sign in this discourse, juxtaposed with "politics" and of course "cartoons". I brought these ideas together, thus also adding to the discourse. Through articulation I argued that "important", "friction" and "politics" are intertwined parts of a specific discourse about Swedish cartoons. I used Rancière again and his eighth thesis concerning the politics and its need for creating an own space, arguing that the cartoonists in their way try to make this space become. Abstract concepts of citizenship, democracy and ethics are present in Rancière's reasoning but also in my opinion with the cartoonist. They talk about these subjects as something that is obvious in politics, for example when Elin specifically claims politics is about "basic moral and ethics" or when Amalia says it's something "ordinary people do everyday."

In the second chapter I wondered what ideas were negotiated in the discourse concerning comics as art and its relationship to activism. The cartoonists have complex ideas around what art can be and whether their work can be considered art or not. This becomes important, as Rancière creates his arguments around political art in a traditional sense: sculptures, painting and performances. If we are to begin to discuss cartoons as art, we need to see what the cartoonists themselves thinks of and define art as. None of them defines themselves as an artist, yet my starting point in this conversation was that I built my questions on the idea that they saw their practice as art. This turned out to be in direct opposition to the cartoonists' ideas. They seem to have a clear idea of what they are not, and they are not artists but rather activists and cartoonists. The question before I turned to Rancière's theories around political art was thus: can cartoons be considered to be judged in the same way Rancière examines art? Going back to Mouffe and Laclau's concepts around the discursive struggle, "not art" or "something other than art" can be considered a nodal

point in the discourse of cartoons. As the cartoonists are reluctant and oppose the idea of this kind of artistic practice being “art”, being against something is also taking a stand for something else. “Not art” is based on the idea that “art” is a notion that does not really explain the processes in the discourses. By doing “something else” than art, the discourse of cartoons become in a direct struggle with the discourse of art. As the different discourses represents their own way of understanding the world they are always in conflict, or in antagonistic relationships, by Mouffe and Laclau's argumentation. The discourse of cartoons' complex relationship to art has been an ongoing discussion for at least 80 years and does not seem to be “locked down” yet. Based on the conversations with the cartoonists, the idea of humor as a protective and reflexive process is also discussed in this chapter. This I view as a form of resistance – even if the laughter is not always aimed at the ones we argue are in power positions it creates a mode of action. The ability to sometimes laugh at the horrendous structures and oppressions can be considered a space of “resting” from these structures. By resisting “seriousness”, the satire mirrors human behaviors and oppressing structures, but also function as a soft bed to rest on. But I also agree with Willems that we can't always assume that anything in the political landscape will change just by saying something (like cartoons) will do this.

In the third chapter I tried to understand what forms of feminist resistances laughter can create in a political struggle. Basing my arguments on Wong and Cuklanz ideas on the Hong Kong based cartoonist Lau Lee-Lee's feminist comics. They argue that comics can help people cope with their own living situations, just by providing tools that can make us understand the realities we're in. Wong and Cuklanz also note that the basis of feminist humor is the will and attempts to expose different realities, especially those realities of gender inequality and oppression under patriarchal ideology. For example, Amalia relates to this in a intersectional manner, bringing forth the reality of the black woman experience under patriarchal and racist ideology. She laughed a lot during our more than one hour long conversation and joked about “stupid politicians” or “ignorant racists”. The laughter seems to be a comfort zone and a way of protecting yourself and your sisters. It does seem that laughter is something special. Going back to Mouffe and Laclau's understanding of the web of signs, where the nodal point is sort of the “strongest” knot in the web, it seems that humor in this context is followed by the idea of being “effective”. It is effective when you're trying to express feelings or politics, it is effective when mocking the power and so on. It does something efficient with the understanding of the cartoon, if the reader thinks it's funny. This way the knowledge “sticks” without belittling you, Elin argued for example. This can be another knot in the web: communication. With humor present, this road from the cartoonist to the reader becomes more clear and humor does act as a constructive method for presenting your aims. Here I also present

Bakhtin and his theories on the collective laughter in the Medieval festivals. He is trying to legitimize the laughter of the collective. By proving its ambiguous nature and complexity, he aims to promote this historical process. It is not “simple” but rather highly philosophical – thus marking it as belonging to the high cultures of human history. He writes that it was Rabelais that brought the carnival laughter into world literature. Bakhtin argues that the problem of folk humor is the current depiction of it: it's either presented as purely negative satire or fanciful jesting deprived of higher meaning. The ambivalent nature as being both and nothing of this is usually ignored, Bakhtin argues. When Scott McCloud talks about the cartoons relationship to art, he argues that the future of art comics centers around the sequential image as it's own form of art. This idea is still in debate, with many cartoonists reluctant to call their works art (or themselves artists). It is the outlaw status, the idea of cartoons as something other than art, that for some is the tempting aspect of cartoons. As discussed briefly in the second panel about comics and art, I argue that my wish to define cartoons as art is part of this discussion. I question if I then do the same problematic reasoning as Bakhtin, and favor the high over the low. This seems to be a typical example of the discursive struggle within cartoons as art, but also within the cartoons as funny. When certain expressions of laughter are spoken of and treated as more important than other laughs, some things have to fall below.

In the fourth chapter I discuss the cartoons possibilities of resistance through Ahmed and Rancière. To try to write some kind of “temporary closure”, I discuss Sara Ahmed's thoughts about feminist killjoys and the need for being the one that unintentionally creates friction. Here I relate my presented thoughts throughout this thesis in relation to Rancière's ideas around dissensus and what consequences cartoons seems to have outside Sweden. This in an attempt to create some kind of starting point, from which a further discussion around cartoons and their possibility of resistance can be developed. Ahmed's writing that her story of a feminist becoming begins with a table. This seems to relate to what Emanuel argued when asked what he means with politics, that it is everything that is not discussed around the family dinner. The discussion of such problems are not welcomed, since family gatherings around the table are supposed to be *happy* occasions, Ahmed writes. Activism is often a matter of seats. If you are unseated at the table of happiness, your seat is the site of disagreement. The word dissidence, meaning roughly to sit apart, becomes your chair around the dinner table. But to be unseated by the table of happiness might not only threaten that table, but also what and those who gather around it. Here the figure of feminist killjoy arrives in Ahmed's reasoning: the one that threaten the loss of the seat and kills the joy of the seated. In the context of feminist critique, happiness is the thing that defines social norms as automatically social “goods”. To not agree to this is to be the one that kills the joy over social norms, thus political activism is an involvement in the struggle against happiness. Being a feminist killjoy is to be a body

that gets in the way. It is about being persistent and determined in a struggle against the happy: the norms of the society that we marked as “good”. The cartoon is a table where we discuss our society and negotiate aspects of democracy and equality. The drawings act as entities that disturb the flow of society. But they also seem to be killers of feminist joy around the table: some bodies does get in the way. They are a discourse within a discourse, a conversation about who is allowed to take a seat within the conversation of cartoons. Here I go back into Rancière's arguments in *The Paradoxes of Political Art*, that the assumption that all art have this subversive core is the problem with “political art”. The basis of politics, dissensus, is then outset from the start. I agree with Rancière on this, because how can you create anything that tries to take resistance against something if that resistance is a part of the system you try to resist? It is of course a paradox. Therefore, a space where contradictory ideas can touch but never merge is needed: and I think the space for that can be found in the idea of the cartoon. It is both a space of understanding, of relaxations, of tension. Taking the example of Cartoonist Atena Farghadani, I argue that the cartoon can then if combined with other acts of political actions be seen an important part of the political landscape. In Sweden, another problem seems to be that the books are not being discussed enough. The images exist but little public debate or cultural debate is evident. It seems some books gain more visual exposure than others and Amalia argued that it is the racism that stands in the way and I agree. Presenting the work of Tusen Serier, I try to put this into a bigger context. Tusen Serier argues that the Swedish comic climate is about knowing the right people if you want to get published, and those people are white Swedes that often exclusively know other white Swedes. The comic world is just as segregated as the rest of the Swedish society. To try to merge feminist theory and for example a political theorist like Rancière is an attempt to bridge the gap of understanding of what cartoons can do to feminist politics and vice-versa. As Ahmed writes, the ones who are willing to put their bodies in the way of the flow are not only willing *not* to go with the flow but willing to *cause its obstruction*. But amidst all this, humor seems to serve as the space where contradictory ideas meet but never merges, as being in constant discursive struggle over meaning making. The feminist killjoys are making us laugh with them. Can drawing (humorous?) resistances be this space of dissensus, so important for politics? Even if the cartoon can do *something*, the what is still in dispute and the history of laughter, art and politics tells us the cartoon is an intricate site of discrepancy.

Further remarks

As this thesis is part of a bigger context in Sweden concerning comics and its different processes, I would like to mention the activist collectives that are currently trying to shape the future of comics in their own way. One of the biggest is Dotterbolaget, a trans and women separatist comic collective that celebrated their 10th year anniversary last year. Their aims are to work against the patriarchal structures they think are evident in the comic world and to support the women and trans people involved in this area. They create exhibitions, hold workshops and publish fanzines and comic books. There are many groups around Sweden, for example in Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm.²²⁹ Another interesting project concerning cartoons is Underlandet, a free digital platform for cartoonists. Jenny Taravosh and Saskia Gullstrand, comic artists and curators, started the project because they want to expand the Swedish comic scene. By mapping important information like how to finance projects, build new networks and sharing knowledge, they hope to create a comic culture more people can be a part of. Through journalistic work and critical readings they also aim for a more public discussion, that they hope will stimulate and challenge the comic artists and their artistic practices. They also want to experiment with new ways of producing, reading and exhibiting cartoons and comics.²³⁰

A person that studies one of these collectives is Gabriela Barruyllle Voglio, PhD student at Uppsala University. In her midterm paper she writes that she aims to examine the motive and the premisses to organize through a feminist approach, as well as to what extent this creates possibilities for being active as a cartoonist. A feminist approach in this context is the will to work without hierarchies which is called “flat structures”, or in Swedish: “platta strukturer”. Barruyllle Voglio examines how the current economic structures interact in relation to this type of networking, in terms of acceptance, inclusion and exclusion. She is doing a qualitative study of Dotterbolaget Malmö, the comic collective mentioned above. She also compares Dotterbolaget to female cartoonists in Berlin who work in similar forms of collectives. The comparison, Barruyllle Voglio argues, can help with the understanding of Malmö as “the comic city” and the structures within this context.²³¹ I feel it is important to mention Barruyllle Voglio's research, as this is something that can become the spark of an academic conversation I have longed for. Even if her research is done within the context of Social and Economic Geography, this is still relevant for the interdisciplinary field of gender studies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Original quotes from interview with Emanuel Garnheim

AK: Jag skulle vilja gå tillbaka lite till politik, när du säger "politik" vad menar du då? Vad lägger du i begreppet politik? Att nånting är politiskt liksom

EG: Hm, ja nä är inte nånting jag tänkt på så innan...

AK: Ingen fara jag har brottats med det här ett bra tag nu haha (paus)

EG: Men det är väl liksom alla samhällsfrågor och allt som påverkar såhär relation mellan människor, lite konstigt svar jag vet inte... vad är politik...

AK: jag tänker att det är en fråga som kommer bli eller är lika komplicerad om vad som är konst (skratt)

EG: jaaa jo. Men det är väl liksom allt som folk tycker är jobbigt att ta i, allt fel i samhället. Det man inte vill prata om på familjemiddagen

AK: jaa haha

EG: i bästa fall så är det saker som inte alls börjar som politik men som blir politik, typ som såhär folks könsidentitet, att det kan vara politik. Det tycker folk är jobbigt att snacka om så...

AK: så har det blivit ett "problem"?

EG: Ja så har det blivit politik

AK: Men sånt är jätteintressant också sånt där, om nånting som kanske egentligen inte borde vara så himla upprörande eh, kan göra människor så frustrerade

EG: Man kan ju tycka att politik borde vara det riksdagen ska syssla med egentligen men det blir inte så

AK: ja att det finns en skillnad mellan politiker och vad som är politisk, det är lite olika saker

EG: Allt folk tjafsar över matborden runt om i landet, det är politik.

AK: haha jaa

EG: ja det är ju så jävla mycket som är politik så...

AK: det blir för stort att bara säga en sak? Är det nästan så att allt kan bli politik? Hur man gör det till... är det lättare att säga, finns det något som är opolitisk?

EG: Nä haha det gör det nog inte. Om det helt plötsligt bara finns vakuum med inga andra människor i då kanske det blir opolitisk, om du är den sista människan på jorden...

AK: Då kanske!

EG: (skratt) ja kanske. Då kan vi sluta med politik

AK: att det då handlar lite om relationer då?

EG: Ja absolut, det blir ju en diskussion om hur vi ska leva det här livet som blir politik

AK: haha ja vi kan ta det sen och en sak jag tänker lite nu när vi ändå är inne lite på politik och så där att du skriver att för att du gör det för att kombinera din passion med att teckna med nånting viktigt

EG: hm

AK: eh när du säger ”göra nånting viktigt” vad menar du med att göra något viktigt? Vad betyder viktigt liksom in den här kontexten?

EG: Hm nä men att förändra samhället en liten bit det känns ju väldigt viktigt just nu, när jorden håller på att gå under och så där ärligt talat. Och så kan man ju säga såhär då, ”varför fokuserar du inte på miljön då? Om du tror att jorden ska gå under”

AK: ja?

EG: men för att kunna rädda miljön så måste ju alla komma överens men det är massa rasism och sexism och annan dynga som står i vägen

AK: känns som om jag har fått med mycket nu, jag har bara en sista fråga som jag ska ställa till alla också... erm, hur ser ditt utopiska samhälle ut? Du får vara hur fantasifull som helst, inga hämningar! (skratt)

EG: okej, eh. Jag har ju tappat hoppet litet för att vi människor är inte tillräckligt smarta för att komma överens, se vad som är bäst för alla och så där. Jag tänker att vi behöver bygga en AI som tar alla människors välmående i beaktning och räknar ut objektivt det bästa för alla... och sen ge oss alla medborgarlön så vi kan jobba på att förbättra oss själva istället för att bara jobba för överlevnad. Och så slutar vi alla äta djur och så...

AK: ja det har vi ju inte pratat om ens det borde vi prata om sen...

EG: och så borde vi jobba för att utforska universum... (skratt) enkelt!

AK: Enkelt, det var... det klarar vi om 10 år! (skratt)

EG; som i Star Trek! Dom har ju en good thing going on

AK: du har en plan här... kommer bara ta några hundra år

EG: singulariteten kommer ju år 2050 om du frågar han Ray Kurzweil... kanske då AI diktatorn kommer och...

AK: det är ju i vår livstid herregud (skratt) då har vi ju nåt hopp i sikte. Vad intressant att du svarar att vi inte kan ta hand om oss själva, att vi behöver en annan entitet, för att liksom göra det så bra som möjligt för vi är...

EG: nä för vi är liksom inte skapta för att tänka så här på ett globalt plan som vi gör liksom, vi försöker interagera i en sån här sfär på internet där vi interagerar med tusentals människor, men om du tittar på ”Dunbar-numret” så är ju skapta för att ha en flock om typ 200-250 individer... så jag

tror vi är ute lite på djupt vatten... men har ingen lösning så tyvärr (skratt)

AK: nä det är lugnt vi pratar utopiska samhällen, du är ingen politiker (skratt)

EG: fast jag är ganska övertygad om att allt kommer gå åt helvete ändå

AK: (skratt) men det är bra, undertonen kommer upp här

EG: men det ska i alla fall inte vara mitt fel när det händer

(skratt)

AK: bara några basfrågor det här liksom... Hur vill du benämna dig själv som? Seriekonstnär, Serieskapare, illustratör... Har du nån sån som du är bekväm med eller andra såna?

EG: Ehh ja satirtecknare och serietecknare är jag väl helt bekväm med allihopa

AK: Så satirtecknare hamnar ganska högst upp

EG: jaa det är väl min main thing

AK: det *enda* vettiga... har du något annat som du gör utöver serieskapandet? Vad gör när du inte ritar satirteckningar? Jag tänker de flesta har ju inte, lever ju inte på sitt tecknande

EG: ja nä jag jobbar deltid med mobilspel, gör grafik till det. Mobilspel till barn (skratt) (host) jobbar tre dar i veckan med det så

EG: jag försöker försöker tänkta utanför lådan liksom och inte göra det förväntade, som när jag gjorde en erotisk serie där kvinnan dominerar kändes inte liksom så inte standard och relationen till rollspel för att byta kön och roller på karaktärerna liksom

AK: hm

EG: det är väl lite så

AK: ja men det tyckte jag ändå att jag kände i den där serien, lite dystopisk sci-fi framtid. Att den var queer i sitt sätt på ett sätt

EG: bra att det gick fram

AK: ja vilken tur... du skriver ju också i texten att du är politisk deprimerad, vad lägger du i det ordet, politisk deprimerad?

EG: Ehm att det är väl en känsla att det inte riktigt fungerar att göra något vettigt, saker blir värre. Samtidigt så vill jag ju inte ge upp för det vore ju alldeles för lätt. Och det är ju också för jävligt att jag har möjligheten att ge upp, det är ju inte alla som har det

AK: hm

EG: på grund av det privilegiet så får jag ju inte ge upp

AK: hm

EG: om det låter logisk

AK: absolut

AK: Nä, de är en organisation eller typ förlag där som släpper liksom serier som inte är, av personer som anses vara mindre svenska för att de kanske inte har ett ”svenskt” klingande namn, skulle rita om saker som kanske självbiografier från en mellanstadieskola i typ södra Sverige. Jag bara funderar så här, är det nånting som du har eller saknar...?

EG: Eh ja

AK: Nu kommer jag ju lite osökt in på att serieskaparna i Sverige är ju onekligen väldigt vita

EG: Ja precis, ja det är väl de, för det är ganska bra könsfördelning och ganska stor queer scen liksom men jo det är väldigt vitt

AK: hm

EG: Men dom som lyckas är ju genomgående white people liksom

AK: hm

EG: Det känns ju lite vidrig

AK: hm, varför känns det vidrigt?

EG: För att det är skevt att man lyckas, man kan ju ha olika tid och teckna och tjäna pengar. Och de är ju de som får medial exponering. Tyvärr är ju definitionen på ”lyckas” att kunna leva på det, på tecknandet. Det är lite fel tycker jag

EG: Men att fokusera på politik och samhällsdebatten är mycket roligare än att göra spel tycker jag, jag försöker att träna mer på satiren. Men allt handlar ju om att försöka göra något vettigt med det man älskar.

AK: Hm förstår det... Sen jag har funderat lite på såhär, det kanske blir lite svårt det här och du får gärna ta tid på dig att tänka, men det känns som om du har en stark ide om, att du känner själv såhär, jag vill göra något vettigt med mitt liv eller göra något viktigt med min tid – varför tror du att, eller varför känns det så att man måste göra nånting viktigt?

EG: För att det, eller det vet jag: Det är för att jag har sån jävla dödsångest. Jag brottas med tanken på ens eget upphörande.

AK: Att du liksom måste göra nånting hela tiden?

EG: Precis, stressen över att försöka göra nåt som betyder nåt, på nåt vis, med tiden och att... det är också en sån där nyttig insikt att man vill prioritera saker i sitt liv. Ingenting spelar egentligen någon roll så kan lika gärna fokusera på det du tycker är viktigt istället.

AK: hm absolut

EG: och inte bara göra samhällets grejer. Det kan man i och för sig vända på, till nånting dåligt också, att man skiter i livet då istället

AK: ja jo det är en tunne linje där också

AK: kul! ehm. Eh i vanliga fall, vad får du för reaktioner på dina teckningar när dom sprids på facebook är det positivt, negativt?

EG: det är väldigt positivt

AK: väldigt positivt

EG: jag är förvånad att jag får så lite negativ feedback... tror det dels är för att teckningar är lättsmälta och dels för att jag är snubbe, eh to be frank

AK: tror du att det är därför det går så bra, för att du är snubbe? (skratt)

EG: haha ja det är ju säkert en del av det eh

AK: kanske

EG: som tjejer som uppfattas som mer jobbiga när dom har en åsikt sådär...

AK: det är ju intressant..

EG: ja de får ju mer skit och så

AK: ja

AK: varför är serier mer lättsmält än något annat? Tror du eller varför känner du att serier når ut så bra, är det nåt med seriemediet?

EG: jo men det är ju bilden liksom, det är ju en bild säger mer än tusen ord haha nä men (skratt) det är väl tacksamt att visualisera saker som kan vara lite komplexa

AK: ja

EG: jag känner ju väldigt väl igen mig att det är lättare att få till sig en förklarande bild än en förklarande text och det tror jag är ganska allmänt vedertaget

AK: hm

AK: du får du jättegärna lägga till, det här en pågående process, men vi börjar med konstbiten nu för jag tänker att vi har lite att diskutera hm, lite om vad du tycker serier är och så och så skriver du att jag tycker inte uttrycket konst är så viktigt, att fastna i definitioner istället för att göra nånting skulle du vilja utveckla det hur menar du?

EG: Det finns ju en massa diskussioner om vad som är konst och inte och jag vet inte varför det uttrycket är viktigt. Jag antar att liksom konst från början betyder nåt som tilltalar eller talar till folks känslor, och om man definierar det så så är ju serier konst. Och det mesta kreativa är ju konst,

finns ju folk typ curatorer på moderna som bestämmer vad som är konst och så där. Erm men en sån där konstmarknad som bestämmer också om vad som är konst. Och då blir det jävligt ointressant för mig att ha någon önskan om att bli konstnär

AK: Så något slags konstnärsideal är inte riktigt din grej?

EG: Nä, det finns inget lockande i det. Jag är ju tecknare liksom. Men det kanske är det som är svaret på din första fråga, vad jag definierar mig som, är då kanske tecknare.

AK: Ja! det är sådana saker en kommer på under tiden. Så det ligger nånting i att det erm, finns en marknad som är... eller en process som du inte håller med om som du känner att du nödvändigtvis inte skulle vilja tillhöra?

EG: Nä, precis. Folk lägger för mycket vikt vid att göra ”konst” (E gör citationstecken i luften) istället för att göra teckningar eller illustrationer eller virka eller vad det nu kan vara haha.

AK: För det fundera jag också lite på sådär, för jag har ju haft en diskussion med mig själv, är serier konst? För det utgår man kanske ifrån ändå om det har med värdet att göra då till exempel. På en konstmarknad liksom, ju högre värde desto bättre konst. Och blir ett bra miljonbelopp på ett verk så blir det en status i det (E hummar med) men serier erm, inte har kommit dit än, eller kanske aldrig kommer komma dit, om det inte handlar om första utgåvan av Kalle Anka då kommer upp i bra belopp

EG: fast är det konst, jag vet inte...

AK: ja nä, det kanske det inte är. Men om man bara utgår ifrån det materiella värdet så har den ju konststatus...

EG: men om jag skulle såhär använda min egna definition så skulle jag säga att serier absolut kan vara konst, sen om mina är det, det är vete fan. Men jag tycker inte det är så viktigt

AK: nä

EG: sen också så är jag rätt insatt i spelvärlden också, dataspel som jag jobbar med, där fanns också sådär diskussioner om spel är konst, Roger Ebert som ju va recensent snackade om spel som konst men jag fattade inte varför det var så viktigt. Det väl bara vara vad det är. Jag tror inte att du njuter mindre av det

EG: Nja jo absolut. Det tycker jag nog att det blir, men jag menar, det finns ju en skala där nånstans, det finns ju såna serier som bara är bild och serier som är nästan bara text.

AK: Hm hm, men det är tunn linje tänker jag också.

EG: Ja jo, absolut

AK: Är det, barnboks illustrationer serier? Beror på hur långt man drar det liksom

EG: Jo absolut. Fast serier ska nog ändå vara några slags bilder i sekvens, som berättar någon slags

historia, tycker ju väl ändå.

AK: vi har ju inte pratat så mycket om ditt djurrättsliga engagemang, hur tänker du... de syns kanske inte så mycket i dina satirteckningar

EG: jo en del men det blir liksom aldrig riktigt samma fart på det, folk är inte så engagerade liksom.. det är tacksammare att liksom...

AK: prata om SD?

EG: Ja

AK: blir lite mer..?

EG: Jag har ju gjort lite såhär gratis kneg åt djurens rätt och djurrättsalliansen, försöker göra lite aktivism genom att ge dom illustrationer

AK: Ja just ja

EG: typ den här animal liberation kassen som djurens rätt har sålt massa av

AK: ja den är jättefin, den har jag ju (skratt) den är asfin. Där blir ju ett väldigt tydlig engagemang, tänker jag, att du ger av din konst på ett direkt sätt... bra att kunna använda sina skills på det sättet

EG: jo men det är ju ett skönt sätt att begå aktivism... jag kan tycka det är jobbigt på ett sätt att gå på demos ibland för att man känner sig så här utsatt men då kan jag bara kanske dela med mig av mina teckningar istället På samma sätt har jag även samlat in pengar till FI!, pengar till valet och till såhär och Föreningen Hem som är en förening för hemlösa Eu-migranter. Det är skönt att kunna hjälpa till på det viset.

AK: Lite tips på hur man ritar här! Vad bra vad härligt ehm jag tänker att vi släpper lite mina politiska frågor nu och det känns lite som att vi kommer in ganska tydligt på humor... som inför karikatyrteckningar, känns det viktigt att så här ha just humor när man prata om jobbiga saker? (äter lite) (lång paus)

EG: eller asså jobbigt och så det är väl alltid humor till en viss del men om de är jobbigt så är det svårt att ta till sig och då hjälper humor för att liksom få skölja ner medicinen med ett gott skratt liksom

EG: och det är väl liksom för att det är liksom min största seger är, hjärtat på handen ibland så får jag ju kommentarer av SD sympatisörer som liksom "jag skrattade åt den här" och det känns ju väldigt bra då. Den här frågan, vad det nu är även om det är kritik mot deras parti då.

AK: varför är serier mer lättsmält än något annat? Tror du eller varför känner du att serier når ut så bra, är det nåt med seriemediet?

EG: jo men det är ju bilden liksom, det är ju en bild säger mer än tusen ord haha nä men (skratt) det är väl tacksamt att visualisera saker som kan vara lite komplexa

AK: ja

EG: jag känner ju väldigt väl igen mig att det är lättare att få till sig en förklarande bild än en förklarande text och det tror jag är ganska allmänt vedertaget

AK: hm

(tystnad)

EG: sen så är ju humor en del i det också men det kanske kommer sen

Appendix 2: Original quotes from interview with Amalia Alvarez

AK: Hm absolut! Det förstår jag. Hm, jag funderar lite på såhär när vi pratar om allt det här som vi pratade om innan haha, vad menar du med politik? Vad är politiskt?

AA: Egentligen jag, eftersom jag tillhör vanliga människor så naturligtvis den politiska den aktivistiska, där några gubbar och några gubbar i kvinnokläder tycker dom ska bestämma över mig, och dom aldrig har haft mitt liv, liksom det litar jag naturligtvis inte på. Absolut inte. Jag skulle lita på nån politiker som skulle leva mitt liv, som skulle torka rumpa varje dag, som skulle gå jobba kl fyra på natten som skulle leva på 6000 kr varje månad. Men politik det är, jag förstår att det är det vi gör, vi vanliga människor. Varje dag.

AK: Hm. I den här för-texten som jag bad dig skriva så skrev du att politiker använder konst för att agitera, göra propaganda – skulle du vilja utveckla det lite, hur menar du?

AA: För att de... de är att bara titta på historien, om du tar eh, tex om det hade varit nån indian som skulle teckna om blommor och sol och el condor pasa och alla såna grejer, jag hade varit väldigt kändis. Det är den bild man har är i Europa om indianer, att vi spelar panflöjt och condor pasa och såna grejer. Stereotyper liksom. Erm... och dom skulle använda mig, liksom politiska partier skulle använda mig att jag skulle dra folket, förstår du?

AK: Använda dig som ett plakat?

AA: Exakt, det är väldigt bra dom använder ganska mycket konst, men eh, och naturligtvis att göra, att agitera, men det viktigaste tycker jag att när man ska teckna så man måste tänka på att man ska inte teckna, eller inte spela politikernas sång. Utan det är, den som jag tecknar i alla fall, den sång är mina grannar, mina kompisar, fattiga arbetare. Jag tecknar för mina människor.

AK: (Paus) Erhm, finns det nåt idealsamhälle, eller har det liksom så här typ, hur skulle ditt idealsamhälle se ut? Eller är allt för mycket åt helvete? (skratt)

Ja hm... har du varit i helvetet? (skratt)

AK: (skratt) nää...

AA: Jag vet inte, helvete är här så att det är inte roligt. Men jag bara tänkte, ett perfekt samhälle inte existerar, men ett samhälle som jag kommer vilja ha är ett samhälle som är i konstant konflikt. I konflikt konstant, men inte våld utan en konflikt i det att det ska bli annorlunda, det ska bildas en tredje, fjärde och femte, folket ska tänka annorlunda. Dom ska tänka annorlunda, och vi ska försöka göra skillnad. Och gärna med massa färger och så (skrattar)

AK: Så att det kan vara en ide att prata om konflikt för att utvecklas?

AA: Si, och om man till exempel, nu håller jag på att skriva en bok eftersom jag gillar att skriva så mycket. jag skriver en bok om en framtiden, om samhället, och då hoppas jag att (hör ej) men också att ifrågasätta mig själv, hur skulle det bli i framtiden. Men nu, nu för tiden eftersom vi börja ett primitiv moment, en historiskt, "momento primitivo de la historia de hombre", så i den primitiva momentet som vi går i nu, skulle jag säga idag att ett samhälle som är hälsosamt och att människor skulle vara i ett samhälle där man skulle rullas konstant konstant, att diskutera allt utan makt. Att berika sig, och börja på morgonen och säga nu ska jag ändra mig idag. Och så. Asså, det modigt att tänka att egentligen man kan ingenting. Och det kan för andra människor, inte indoktrinera det som vi tänker. Vi ska hitta, ett sätt själv att tänka.

AK: Haha okej det blir bra då säger vi 100 år. Hur vill du benämna sig själv som, är du en serietecknare, serieskapare, konstnär?

AA: Nä, jag är aktivist naturligtvis, en svart aktivist, en fattig svart indian. Eh och detta betyder mycket mera än konst och serietecknare och detta betyder att jag har auktoritet på nåt sätt, att skriva och teckna, det är sånt jag gör eftersom eh, det sitter i min, den indianska historien, som vi har blivit utsatt. Våra egna historier som vi inte skriver utan vi talar, vi talar vi berättar... genom generation, från generation till generationer.

AK: Hm såklart! Nu har du ju pratat lite såhär om att du inte vill vara med med adress och så eftersom du fått hot och så, har du fått några andra reaktioner på boken, positivt eller negativt?

AA: Nä jag tror att det asså...folket som hatar andra folk... jag har blivit hatad hela mitt liv: för det första jag fyller inte den rollen av samhället som folket vill ha haha. För det andra jag är en indian som kan inte stänga munnen! Och så sen har finns ju andra människor också i Sverige, liksom gubbar som hatar andra och sig själv. Jag kan inte stå och vara helt allvarlig, jag fortsätter göra som det jag tycker är viktigt

AK: Ja absolut, gött. Har du något annat arbete utöver serierna?

AA: Hm, si. Det måste man ha, speciellt när man har såna åsikter att bli assimilerad, alltså att assimilera sig så måste man ha andra arbete

AK: Hm

AA: Jag hade varit blond och svenskt och serietecknare och allt sånt då kanske det hade varit lite lättare för mig. Men jag gör alla möjliga jobb, varje dag så jobbar jag ganska mycket. Och det handlar om min kultur också att jobbet är en sak man gör, inte för att tjäna pengar utan för att det är skönt att jobba haha

AA: Hm såklart, claro. När man är vänster så måste man tycka synd om alla invandrare och alla papperslösa, dom måste trycka like... dom ja, jag vet inte. Att blatten lyckas och så. (1.08) Men att dom inte bryr om att vara lite mer praktisk. Jag har sett ganska många kvinnor som jag jobbar med, men vill alltid att man ska gifta sig med papperslösa. Man ska gifta sig men en asylsökande. Det är en praktisk grej. Eller, man ska inte heller rösta på någon jävla politiker som lovar en sak och sen gör en annan. Så, så är det. Såna praktiska grejer. Och sluta lika på Facebook eller tycka synd om oss.

AK: Gör liksom nånting?

AA: Ja, ja.

AK: Absolut det håller jag med om.

AA: men naturligtvis, jag måste erkänna att det finns några, det finns människor som gör ganska mycket här. Och om det inte görs hade det varit ett helvete för mig och några andra. Människor som gör mycket, vilket gör att jag klarar mig ganska bra. Men såna människor brukar inte bli politiker eller nånting sånt. Brukar liksom, de är dem som kallas för anarkister och eller autonomer brukar man kalla dom. Dom vill inte ha uppmärksamheten men dom gör ganska mycket.

AK: Absolut. Vi pratade lite innan, liksom att vänstern är tycka synd om, är det liksom, lika illa? Eller känner du att det finns olika typer av... Jag tänker Alliansen har ju gjort ganska mycket för att verkligen motarbeta en rättvisare värld liksom. Eh, tycker du att vänstern gör nånting eller är det anarkisterna, som är på ett sätt utanför ett politiskt system, som gör nånting praktiskt, som gör att det händer saker?

AA: Jag tror att vissa personer inom vänsterrörelsen gör mycket, många få, eller få personer som är engagerade inom politiska partier, dom gör grejer, men inte tillräckligt mycket, men dom gör. Men dom som gör mest, enligt min erfarenhet, är dom som kallar sig för anarkister. Det är dom som gör mest och dom som får fängelse eller ibland dom offerar sina liv osv. Det är den upplevelsen jag har utifrån den situation jag befinner mig i liksom. Fattig, gammal kvinna, som är full haha! Jag vet inte... (Skrattar båda) den miserabla, äckliga, avskyvärda! Men som är stark!

AK: Härligt, absolut! Jag tänker så här, att känna medlidande, det är såna saker som kommer upp i boken också. Så här att kvinnorna du pratar med tittar på en och säger "ha inte medlidande, du vet inte hur det är, vi är inte från samma ställe", liksom. Kändes det viktigt att ha med dom här bilderna? För dom reagerade jag jättemycket på, för att jag känner så hela tiden. Att man gör inte tillräckligt. Och så blev det liksom som ett sätt att såhär, här kan jag sitta och inte veta dom här detaljerna: de skriver du också såhär; "vad har du gjort i ditt för att inte veta vad som händer vid gränserna?" Erhm... jag tror att det är jäkligt effektivt. Men kände du att det var viktigt att ha med

just de här bilderna? För uppenbarligen har det ju gett nånting!

AA: Det är, jag menar, jag har naturligtvis, jag har många kompisar som växt upp i detta landet, blonda, svenska... alla mina kompisar är så. Och dom har sagt också det, men jag tror att det man har, när man ser så stora orättvisor man vill göra mycket. Men varje person har sina uppgifter, erh. Inte alla kan göra allt, och det är, liksom speciellt kvinnorna. Dom känner sig liksom, man är mamma med två barn, eller student eller man har kaos i sin egen liv. Och så man också vill prestera liksom med sina värderingar osv osv... det är inte lätt, jag tycker att den skulden, sätter sig in i det svenska samhället. Eftersom, eller jag är inte socionom, men jag tror att det är skuld som sätter sig i varje person. Eftersom vi har inte diskuterat tillräckligt mycket här, i Sverige, hur vi liksom har... como se dice... har inte blivit neutral inom andra krig. Och att vi till och med diskuterar inte så mycket om rasism. Och så existerar de som är så jävla politiskt korrekta, som är så trött, man blir så trött. I Latinamerika därifrån kommer jag, alla är så superaktivistiska. Och det finns människor som har offrat sina liv och där finns ju i stora mått patriarkatet och så. Men man behöver inte vara politiskt korrekt. Erhm. För den delen indoktrinen erh. Como se dice... Men reglerna, jag gillar inte regler. De här reglerna som gör att en annan bestämmer över, personer som kämpar. Så jag tror att det finns nåt som måste fylla den den uppgift som samhället ger till oss, att solidarisera. Men först måste man solidarisera med sig själv, först. Sedan med dom andra. För det, ibland utbränner sig man och det är en aktivistminus.

AK: är det nånting liksom såhär, jag fattar ju att det är jätteviktigt, men hur kommer du in på det överhuvud taget, har det alltid varit att berätta historier och berätta just då kanske kvinnornas historia?

AA: Si, jag gillade så mycket att skriva egentligen än att teckna porque jag, min dröm har alltid varit att göra en film men jag kommer aldrig göra nån film för jag är så jävla fattig. Och kommer jag ha pengar kommer jag köpa eller nåt, jag kommer förlora pengarna ändå. Så.. ja!

AK: Absolut! (paus, tittar på frågorna) Vill du prata om konst, eller vill du prata om något annat? (båda skrattar)

AA. Konst, jag förstår inte så mycket om konst, men jag tycker att hm... konst gör för mig, så är det konst när en... min stad, lund, kommer i november jag kan inte komma ihåg vilken dag men var massa människor på gatorna mot nazisterna, det var massa färger, blonda och mörka, det var mina grannar som ibland dom säger till mig saker som jävla blatte och så, men det var massa människorna mot nazzarna, hela lund alltså, si! Jag tänker att det skulle bli nåt (...) men det var fantastiskt bra, det är konst för mig, när det finns vanliga människor som visar sina känslor. Och alla

översätter dessa känslor på olika sätt, men det är en praktiskt känsla. Det är konst för mig.

AK: Så det här med att, skulle du typ säga att din bok är ett konstverk, eller är det....

AA: Min bok... Nja jag tror att den är, eller den är massa saker, boken är en sten som man kastar till polisen (skratt), en stan som man kastar på nazzar, mot ignorans, mot dom som är ignorant, en bibel som man kan läsa när man är på toaletten (skratt) en spark i rumpan när man börjar på morgon och vill inte gå upp. Om man vill kallas konst, jag vet inte kanske, man kan kalla den vad man vill. Och klart att det är ett resultat av många röster.

AK: Hm

AA: Och om det är konst, då betyder det att dom är konstverken. Och deras berättelser är en konst. (Paus) Jag tror också på nåt sätt att konst är det om man läser, jag har många vänner som skrivit till, och det påverkade dom mycket, och jag delade vidare det till mina kamrater, för det är ju deras röst egentligen. Jag tycker det finns en konst, att översätta de och sen göra i ditt liv annorlunda.

AA: Si? (skrattar båda) Men om humor. Jag tycker att personligen att politikerna och strukturer, varje system här och i Chile, det är som en cirkus liksom med en ganska löjlig, dom tror att vi inte kan organisera oss, kan inte bete oss på rätt sätt osv. Det är, ja. Ibland när jag går ut och är lite deprimerad så sätter jag på radion och ser nån diskussion av en politiker och då skrattar jag hahaha si det är...

AK: att bara liksom...

AA: ja claro dom har det värre än mig, jag har depression men dom har ingen hjärna liksom (skratt) ja det är så, dom har ingen hjärna med dom har den makten att sätta oss på fängelse och (...) oss, men det är det är konstigt. Men kommer att inte bli så lätt. Det börjar bli lite jobbigt

AK: det börjar bli lite störigt! Jag tänker ju att då blir ju humor lite både som en såhär att kunna slappna av och som ett vapen, att skydda sig själv och sina systrar.

AA: Si si

AK: håller du med?

AA: Si, absolut för att det finns tillräckligt mycket trakasserier när vi kvinnor går ut, som man är... jag har en grupp av kompisar och några kompisar är äldre än mig och dom gillar unga killar till exempel. Och dom går ut, och dom är inte så mycket politiskt engagerad, dom kan inte så mkt politik. Men dom går på lördag, dom har väntat hela veckan, som gick till whatever och köpte kläder som skulle passa, och så går dom ut och dricker öl och bjuder dricka för dom ska ragga. Till slut blir dom ledsna för killar dom har bjudit vill inte ha dom. Och så mycket krav finns på kvinnorna, att man måste vara söt, man måste gå ut man måste göra sig till man måste bli intelligent man måste, måste, måste. Och till slut så bara gör man en como se dice, satir! Så man liksom..

AK: skiter i det?

AA: Jaa liksom vad faaan dom skrattar ganska mycket av det. Men dom skrattar av det politiska också men dom är ju indoktrinerade... att vara ung och fin och lukta gott! Så det går att hitta inspiration överallt.

AK: Är det det du menar med assimilering?

AA: Jadå, det är det.

AK: Att, liksom. Inte värdesätta sig själv högre men...

AA: Det är av rädsla liksom, att inte bli accepterad. Du vet man går till affären och så kommer det en gubbe bakom dig, om du ska röra nånting.

AK. Ja just det

AA: Det är det, typ om jag ska dricka öl på fredag. Efter jobbet, som folk kan tänka på mig eller så. Gubbar frågar om jag är alkoholist och om jag ska sälja mig till dom asså... de tänker massa trams. Du ska klä dig fint som de vanliga liksom, men stopp! (skratt) Massa krav bara. Man ska assimilera sig så det är ett problem mindre. Jag har sagt några gånger att jag röstar på SD bara för att undvika tjafset. Ibland det finns rasister så man liksom "Ja ja jag är en bra blatte"

AK: För att slippa konflikten?

AA: Hm hm. För att de...

AK: eller utsattheten

AA: Ja!

AK: Hm! Absolut. Ja nä jag tror inte jag har mer frågor... Erm... så att jag har nog fått med att jag har funderat på... absolut... fast nu kom jag på en till fråga! Så här, du är feminist? Eller vad lägger du i ordet feminist?

AA: Nä jag tror inte jag... jag är post-feminist, jag är fri från ismer. Och jag tror att jag är en kvinna, en svart kvinna, indian, fattig och...

AK: så många andra saker som

AA: ja de andra är mycket mer, mycket mer. Om jag skulle säga feminist, då skulle de börja med desamma, jaha hon är feminist? Det betyder detta och detta...hon läser detta, hon älskar kläder, hon målar sig, men hon ska inte göra så måla sig så. Nä jag vill inte vara så. Jag är frii från alla ismer! (skratt)

AK: Känns det som det, att du får mer krav liksom och du säger att du är feminist?

AA: Jaa

AK: Ännu en till regel att anpassa sig till?

AA: Jag tror att det kommer bli så att dom inte kommer kräva till mig, utan jag kommer kräva till dom. Och jag tror inte att de kommer var beredd på det, de kommer inte vara på min nivå (skratt).

AK: Och det är liksom därför den är så jäkla bra, så jäkla viktig. Ah men den behövs. Man måste kunna föra en inomkritik utan att folk ska balla ur, vi måste utveckla oss själva.

AA: Vad bra, du vet att jag skulle gärna vilja att denna boken skulle vara på många ställen där man kan köpa, men det är bara, publiken är de intellektuella eller feminister. Och nazzar. Det är tre publik, och papperslösa naturligtvis. Men inte den vanliga människor, skulle på nåt sätt läsa den. Och det är så synd, att det blir så, att den boken är blatte, en fattig svart blatte. För att om jag hade varit helt etniskt svenskt då hade det varit på massa ställen

AK: då hade den varit i alla bokhandlar

AA: oh jaa som du sa. Erm, och det skulle jag vilja gärna att det ska diskuteras varför är den inte där men jag vet ju svaret. Det handlar om rasism och inget annat. Men jag gillar den skarp och den boken som folket gillar så mycket, varför syns den inte? Det är min önskan, att den ska diskuteras.

Appendix 3: Original quotes from interview with Elin Lucassi

AK: Nu pratar vi såhär om ja, politiska serier... hur definierar du politik? För jag tänker att det kan vara viktigt också

EL: Alltså det har jag nog aldrig gjort...

AK: Är allt politik, eller? Kan allting bli politik?

EL: Ja säkert, ja det kan det väl. Absolut. Jag håller ju inte på jättemycket med såhär partipolitik, jag håller väl kanske mer... att teckna serier i serieform i och för sig, jag har gett mig på sånt som... ett tag så kanske jag gav mig på SD utan att skriva att det var det jag gjorde.

AK: Hm

EL: Sen har jag gjort serier där jag faktiskt skrivit att det är SD. Men rent generellt så är det väl mer såhär, politiska idéer, politiska strömningar... Erh, politiska åsikter liksom som jag uppehåller mig vid. Aldrig på nåt sätt om att, jag tror ju att dom flesta har... jag tror att dom vill att det ska blir bättre, även dom som sprider hat som jag sa. Att förändra saker, jag tror ändå att dom vill förändra det till, att det ska bli bättre, faktiskt. Sen har vi olika syn på vad som är bättre, och det tycker jag då är intressant att lyfta upp såhär, vad är det vi pratar om här egentligen?

AK: Hm

EL: Och det handlar ju om grundläggande moral och etik och tankar om hur vi ska lösa samhället, liksom.

AK. Hm.

EL: Jag har liksom inte formulerat för mig själv vad som är politik.

AK: haha

AK: vilken tur! nä för om det var några bekymmer så skulle vi ju ha börjat med dem i såfall, så vi kunde få undan det, vad bra! Erm, då tänker jag att jag börjar prata om humor först, haha! Ehm jag tänker att, du skriver att det är jätteviktigt: varför är det viktigt?

EL: Jag tror jag skrev också, en av anledningen till att jag tecknar den här typen av serier, alltså när man pratar om politiska serier, så är det ju mycket för att stå ut och för att bearbeta saker som jag tycker är svåra eller upprörande eller viktiga på nåt sätt.

AK: Hm

AK. Hm, så är det... Ja just det, ”jag är den som är den”?

EL: Det har liksom blivit som en motto för mig, det har hjälpt mig att ha den där titeln... för att det påminner mig om att verkligen såhär: nä men jag är det. Jag ska inte hålla på att förminska mig

själv

AK: Nä

EL: Jag får lov att stå för det här nu, och faktiskt när du frågar... varför gör du det här så måste jag liksom kunna våga säga såhär... nä men för att jag tycker att jag har nåt viktigt att komma med

AK: hm

EL: och för att jag vill påverka. För att jag tycker att det här är bra. Sen är det ju såklart att alla har ångest över att man känner att... nä idag känner jag mig helt värdelös. Varför håller jag på och så där... men jag får för fan skärpa mig.

AK: Men det måste ju ge nåt ändå tänker jag, att ha det där mantrat. Jag är den som är den, jag tänker stå för det här... erhm. Det låter som ett jättebra...

EL: (skratt) Ja ja men jag var ju tvungen att bara skriva ner skiten för att kunna... nä men det är verkligen, jag använder det själv för att påminna mig. Typ.

AK: Nä men vad intressant, vad kul. Eftersom du är lite stressad så tänker jag fråga sista frågan, som är helt enkelt: hur ser ditt utopiska samhälle ut?

EL: Mitt utopiska samhälle? Oh my god!

AK: Helt fantasi, du får säga helt...

EL: Men sluta haha, vilken slutfråga

AK: Ja!

(båda skrattar)

EL: Där alla är som jaaag. (skratt)

AK: Men då skriver vi det! (skratt)

EL: Nä men gud det är ju en jättejättesvår fråga såklart.

AK: Jag kanske ska ringa och återkomma

EL: Ja precis! Nä men. Alltså, jag vill ju ha ett samhälle som inte är... som är lite ett förlåtande samhälle kanske. Ett mer förlåtande samhälle, som inte är erhm... Där man kan få va lite olika, och där man tar personligt ansvar för att inte agera på varenda fördom som poppar upp i sitt huvud. Och där man orkar pausa och se inåt lite grann. Alltså, lite så om jag försöker göra. Jag tror inte att vi kan ha, jag tror inte att det utopiska samhället existerar så som att, där vi alla är perfekta människor liksom. Det finns inte, det är en del av den mänskliga naturen att vi verkligen inte är perfekta. Vi kommer aldrig bli det. Vi kommer alltid ha fördomar, vi kommer alltid ha känslor. Men om man har ett samhälle där, också där folk inte behöver... alltså där man kan känna sig lite mer trygg. Alltså, att man har nånstans att bo, och mat typ.

AK: Hm

EL: Såna här så du vet, nån slags grundtrygghet så att man har råd att pausa och känna inåt och fundera: varför känner jag såhär som jag gör nu inför den här situationen? Vad beror det på, handlar det om att jag behöver förändra nånting eller att samhället behöver förändra nånting... Eller typ den här människan som jag ställs inför behöver förändra nånting. Erhm. Gud vad flummigt. Jag vet inte om du vill ha svar på liksom om jag tycker att vi ska ha en nyliberal ordning utan myndigheter eller om vi ska ha ett socialistisk samhälle... (skratt) Eller om vi ska ha, jag vet inte

AK: (skratt) Nä det är inga såna specifika svar, jag tycker mest det är väldigt roligt eftersom man pratar om... det är en sån här fråga jag ställt till alla och alla har gett väldigt olika och roliga svar. För jag tror att det blir väldigt mycket så att man, när man pratar liksom om politiska serier: dom ska göra nånting, eller det finns en ide att dom ska tillföra en speciellt typ av ordning, kanske.

EL: Hm, hm

AK: Och då tycker jag det roligare att öppna det lite. Att man inte har kanske... alltså det utopiska samhället existerar ju inte

EL: Nä det gör ju inte det

AK: Självfallet

EL: Och jag tror att, nu när jag tänker vidare: jag har inte funderat på det här så specifikt, men... för du frågar säger här vad är politik och jag tror inte, jag tänker inte så mycket på partipolitik, utan det jag gör är politiskt, visst, men det handlar ju ofta om människor och människors inställning till saker och ting. Och... human behavior liksom. Jag är väldigt intresserad av det. Alltså, varför gör vi som gör, varför känner vi som vi känner. Och varför, tycker vi som vi tycker?

AK: Hm

EL: Så det utopiska samhället handlar väl då också om... om att man har ett human behavior som känns förlåtande och tillåtande och uppbyggligt.

AK. Hm

EL: Både gentemot sig själv och gentemot andra

AK: erhm, jo vad vill du benämna dig själv som, är du liksom konstnär, serietecknare...

EL: Nä i det här sammanhanget så säger jag serietecknare

AK: ...i andra sammanhang?

EL: Ja eh jo i vissa sammanhang så är jag ju myndighetshandläggare

EL: Det är därför jag är här

AK: jaha!

EL: Det är mitt kontor

AK: okej! För det var min tredje fråga

EL: det är att jag jobbar på kungliga biblioteket, eh som är en myndighet. Där är jag handläggare med ansvar för nationella frågor kring utbildning och lärande.

AK: Hm

EL: Så från början så är jag utbildad lärare. Gymnasielärare, så jag är inte bibliotekarie eller så utan jag jobbar med utbildning och lärande frågor. Men sen så, i det sammanhanget så blir det serietecknare och illustratör.

AK: Kan du utveckla det lite? Hur ser den relationen ut?

EL: Hm, Alltså jag tror att, jag tänker mig... att min fördom är att när man säger att man är aktivist så ser många framför sig att man är ute på gatan och går omkring och kanske demonstrerar eller kanske... målar slagord på en vägg eller så. Det gör jag väl kanske ibland, men jag ser, alltså jag ser verkligen serier och konst och så inte bara som att man sitter och skapar nånting för att det är fint utan att man faktiskt vill påverka, därav det här som vi pratade om förut att man vill sprida det.

AK: Hm

EL: Alltså det räcker inte för mig att rita dom här sakerna och sen ha det i min låda hemma. Eftersom jag ser det som ett aktivistiskt arbete.

AK: Hm

EL: Därför vill jag sprida det, därför vill jag att andra ska se det. Och som sagt, jag håller ju på med sånt som handlar om vårt gemensamma samhälle.

AK: Hm

AK: i dina teckningar, typ som att blygdläpparna syns genom byxorna

EL: Hm

AK: Och snoppen och bröstet: hur viktigt blir kroppen i serierna liksom?

EL: Jag tror att jag gör kroppen, jag gör också mycket så här svulstiga kvinnokroppar.

AK: Ja

EL: Som skumpar runt, eller har... för det första så är det roligare att rita, eller tycker jag att det är roligare att rita runda former än raka former, så rent hur hur pennan rör sig skönare när det är rundat.

AK: Hm

EL: Erm jag tycker det ser finare ut, haha så det är rent ytligt så ritar jag så. Sen är det ju, jag är ju mycket för kroppen precis som att jag gör politiska serier för att bearbeta saker, saker jag blir förbannad över eller tycker är dåligt eller så... och jag gör ju mycket kropp för att bearbeta att jag liksom väldigt många andra kvinnor med mig har och har haft ett problematiskt förhållande till sin

egen kropp. Och att vi som kvinnor, eh, det finns ju strukturer som gör att jag måste fundera ganska mycket på kropp. Vare sig vi vill eller inte, det krävs väldigt mycket kraft för att inte, för att vara så här ”äh jag bryr mig inte alls om min kropp, jag är helt avslappnad inför det här”...

AK: hm

EL: och så, men det är ju väldigt få som klarar det. Och det är ju också ett sätt att hämta hem kroppen, ja, äga den, uttrycket. För att inte nåt yttre ska bestämma det. Det blir typ samma sak som jag tänker kring tatueringar, eh...

AK: hm, är det samma princip liksom, äga kroppen?

EL: Ja, ja.

AK: Eller, sin egna kropp

AK: Eller, sin egna kropp

EL: Precis. Genom att göra tatueringar är det som om att man claimar sitt territorium på nåt sätt. Lite samma sak med teckningar, genom att teckna för det är också nånting som gör, när jag sätter nånting på papper, så kan jag se på det... på ett mycket mer objektivt sätt. Så när jag till exempel tecknar av mig själv, när jag gör självporträtt ibland, så kan jag plötsligt, då är det som om jag bryter ner mitt utseende till linjer, och då kan jag se på det mer objektivt och typ ja men det här är fint, för jag kan se att linjer är fina. Samma sak med en kropp. Jag kan se dom här linjerna som fina, att det tillsammans blir väldigt fint, men det är ju mer problematiskt och ta in, typ som jag.. det är ju egoistiskt såklart, allt man gör för man för sig själv, så här ritar om jag bryter ner till linjer så kan jag liksom ta in det på ett sätt

AK: intressant att man måste bryta ner lite för att bygga upp

EL: ja det är nog det tror jag

EL: Och hur vi gör, hur vi gör det. Och vad vi sysslar med, och vad vi tänker på. Det handlar liksom inte bara om mig själv eller så. Handlar om mig själv så försöker jag alltid sätta det i nån typ av större sammanhang. Jag kanske tar mig själv som exempel, eller nånting jag känt eller tänkte eller så. Och då vill jag bara att det ska fungera som ett exempel på nånting större.

AK: Hm

EL. För då tycker jag att det blir intressant. Men det är ju också en såhär, kanske en process att komma till, att verkligen... det kanske var därför jag skrev med stora bokstäver, att verkligen kunna stå för det. Nä men jag tycker verkligen att det här är viktigt, så det, det kan ju vara lite läskigt att outa sig själv och bara... visa att man har... att man är den som är den!

EL: om man då har humor med så blir det lättare tycker jag. Jämfört med att om jag bara skulle

förmedla min första känsla som oftast är då ilska, så blir det lite en ja, så det öppnar ju inte upp så jättemycket. Det blir ju ganska så här som ett stopp

AK: stängda...

EL: jaa

AK: stängd kommunikation typ

EL: ja precis! Det blir mer bara att man, att jag då skulle kräckas ur mig nån typ av ilska och vad ska folk göra med den kakan...? Liksom...

AK: nä ja "hej varsågod"

EL: för vissa som håller med kanske bara "jag är också arg" och så, men jag tycker inte det känns...

AK: hm det kan vara svårt

EL: ja, jag tycker i alla fall att humor är skönare. Mer konstruktivt liksom.

EL: Ja och det jag har svårt för när en skribent inte litar på mig som läsare och förklara allting, liksom "det här betyder alltså att" alltså du vet för mycket, då känner jag mig så här ja jag fattar det, tror du att jag är helt dum i huvudet! Eh och en serie funkar, eller jag försöker få serier att funka så så att jag inte behöver vara jätteövertydligt, jag behöver inte skriva längst ner; och det här betyder... alltså dels behöver jag inte skriva så här obs! Jag uppmanar alltså inte alla kvinnor att börja runka bulle tillsammans, haha, det är inte det som är grejen. Jag skiter i det och gör inte massa sånhära "det här är alltså ett tecken så den här strukturen i samhället"... alltså, utan jag tänker att du som läser serien själv kan tänka ut det, och om du lyckas tänka ut det, samma sak som jag kanske tänker förhoppningsvis, så kommer det bli en kunskap som landar i dig på ett bättre sätt.

AK: Hm, det blir lite mer ett samarbete?

EL: Exakt. Det förminskar inte dig och jag skiter i, alltså vissa serier dom kanske inte landar hos dig alls och då går du vidare till nån annan. Och det, det är ok.

AK: För det blir mycket om frågan om högt och lågt, vad är riktig konst och inte riktigt konst och så där. Erhm, jag tänker liksom såhär hur... ser du... du kanske inte bryr dig om så mycket om begreppet konst heller?

EL: Haha, ja vad bryr jag mig om...

AK: Nä men alltså, det är inga konstigheter, för att så här, andra jag pratat med... är liksom så här: jag bryr sig inte så mycket om det för det är inte så viktigt för mig.

EL: Nä och det frågade du i början om vad jag ville kalla mig. Jag skulle aldrig kalla mig för konstnär.

AK: Nä

EL: Det skulle jag inte

AK: Varför inte då?

EL: När för, jag har funderat på det, dels så tycker jag inte att det är... säger jag att jag är konstnär så är det ingen som fattar att det är det här jag håller på med!

AK: Nä kanske inte

EL: Nä, men säger jag att jag är serietecknare och dessutom satiriker så fattar ju folk ganska snabbt. Alltså det är ju mer effektivt att säga det, erhm sen så skulle jag inte säga att jag... nä jag känner mig bara mer hemma med serietecknar-epitetet

AK: hm!

EL: För att det beskriver bättre vad jag gör.

AK: Hm! Absolut. Erhm...

EL: Ja... och sen kan ju konstnärer också jobba som aktivister, alltså jobba aktivistiskt... och gör... bra konst är ju ofta, lyfter ju också brännande frågor på något sätt och det kan vara politiskt. Liksom, politisk konst och så. Erhm. Nä jag skulle nog ändå inte kalla mig konstnär.

AK: Hm ja det får man ju ändå säga, jag skrattade jättemycket när jag läste boken erm...

EL: vad bra!

AK. Och vilken var det nu som var så himla rolig... jo den här att man sällan ser kvinnor som startar microbryggerier och runkar i grupp (skratt) alltså dom var så jäklar roliga, för att det är liksom nånting, nä det är nog inget jag kommer se under min livstid liksom

EL: Nej, det är ju sorgligt men det finns ju tydligen ett bryggeri har jag fått höra nu, kanske en men kanske inte den runkar i grupp

AK: nä den är väl också en sån sak man inte skulle prata om, som en rolig grej

EL: och då hade jag kunnat skriva en artikel om det här, eller en lång, men långa resonemang om vad det betyder att den typen av uttryck aldrig visas i offentligheten med kvinnliga agenter, eh och då skulle det för det första kanske dom som jag ville skulle läsa den kanske inte skulle orka läsa den. För att den är lång, dessutom skulle det bli, kännas kanske, inte vet jag, jag skulle förmodligen få mer hat på mig också

EL: Jämfört med att kunna göra då en snabb, alltså en, det är enrutningar du pratar om dessutom, det går ju skitsnabbt och läsa och ändå kan man få med så många lager. Som man inte behöver förklara. Hm... och jag tycker det är intressant, dels att när man gör en bild så så är det ju så när man ser en bild så går det direkt in, i medvetandet på ett annat sätt, det är liksom inga steg på vägen som att man måste processa och så, det landar snabbt.

AK: Hm

EL: Erm, plus att det blir att man undviker det här som vissa texter kan bli, att man liksom, jag hatar att läsa texter där jag blir skriven på näsan, jag vill liksom inbilla att jag kommit fram till nånting på egen hand.

AK: Att man klarar sig genom texten eller?

EL: Ja och det jag har svårt för när en skribent inte litar på mig som läsare och förklara allting, liksom "det här betyder alltså att" alltså du vet för mycket, då känner jag mig så här ja jag fattar det, tror du att jag är helt dum i huvudet! Eh och en serie funkar, eller jag försöker få serier att funka så så att jag inte behöver vara jätteövertydligt, jag behöver inte skriva längst ner; och det här betyder... alltså dels behöver jag inte skriva så här obs! Jag uppmanar alltså inte alla kvinnor att börja runka bulle tillsammans, haha, det är inte det som är grejen. Jag skiter i det och gör inte massa sånhära "det här är alltså ett tecken så den här strukturen i samhället"... alltså, utan jag tänker att du som läser serien själv kan tänka ut det, och om du lyckas tänka ut det, samma sak som jag kanske tänker förhoppningsvis, så kommer det bli en kunskap som landar i dig på ett bättre sätt.

AK: Hm, det blir lite mer ett samarbete?

EL: Exakt. Det förminskar inte dig och jag skiter i, alltså vissa serier dom kanske inte landar hos dig alls och då går du vidare till nån annan. Och det, det är ok

AK. Tack haha

EL: Du får la gå och läsa Emanus jävla serier då
(båda skrattar)

EL: ja det är det som jag tycker är härligt med...

AK: ja men varför såhär, varför blir det en ny enhet?

EL: Men det är liksom lite som jag sa förut att, grejen är att det som jag gör i mina serier, skulle jag ju egentligen kunna skriva en artikel om.

AK: hm

EL: som är lite samma sak, men det finns så mycket som blir, liksom kombon text och bild är så himla effektivt. Som jag prata om förut här, det blir en ny enhet på det sättet att, genom att man inte bara har texten utan oftast bilden för ofta så kan ju den liksom... jag ritar sällan exakt samma sak som det står i texten. Utan jag ritar en sak så säger texten en till sak. Jag skulle ju kunna, alltså jag tror jag aldrig gjort så här en figur som säger typ, säg att det står en person som ser ledsen ut så eller gud... jag skulle aldrig ha en replik som är så här jaha, här står du och ser ledsen ut och har på dig en feministisk t-shirt... alltså man skulle inte... jag beskriver ju inte samma sak med bilden som

med texten, förstår du vad jag menar?

AK: Det blir jättebra! (paus) Jo men vi kan fortsätta där, det här med att vända på saker och ting, man vänder upp och ner på saker som är normala eller så här ska nånting se ut, erhm varför är det så effektivt? Eller hur...

EL: Därför att...

AK: Hur funkar det liksom?

EL: Det funkar lite på samma sätt som att jag behöver inte shama nån, jag behöver inte säga så här "är du helt dum i huvet" som går på den här strukturen. Jag vill inte lägga skuld på nån, för alla är offer under strukturerna, jag är offer för strukturer hela tiden. Jag har fördomar om allt och alla.

AK: Hm

EL: Jag som sagt blir förbannad på saker men sen tar jag ju mitt ansvar och pausar lite, när jag känner shit, här kanske jag har en fördom som kanske inte, min första reaktion är inte att gå ut och skriva att alla som håller på med det här är dumma i huvet. Utan jag pausar upp lite, tänker efter. Och folk svarar ju inte bra på skuld och aggression, alltså är det bra att sätta upp den här spegeln, så att man själv kan dra slutsatsen. För då kan man typ välja att dra slutsatsen, "gud vad sjukt att vi tycker att det är helt normalt att snubbar gör det här" men man kan ju också välja att inte dra den slutsatsen. Att se den här bilden som jag har gjort med en kvinna istället och bara "jaha mm vad menar hon här" och så gå vidare. Men man blir ju oftast inte förbannad, eller känner sig påhoppad eller så. Men jag har inte heller skrivit ut, eller det det jag menar med skriva på näsan.

AK: Hm

EL: Jag skriver inte det så därför blir det också att jag du drar den slutsatsen, jag har inte sagt att du behöver dra den slutsatsen.

Appendix 4: Pre-text

Elins svar:

Varför gör du serier?

För att bearbeta sånt jag ser och upplever i samhället och privatlivet.

För att få folk att reflektera över sådant jag tycker är intressant och viktigt.

För att lyfta upp det som är kärnan i en företeelse utan att skriva någon på näsan.

Hur tror du serier och politik kan använda sig av varandra?

Svår fråga, osäker på om jag förstår exakt vad du menar. Men seriens användande av bild och text i samspel är mycket effektivt för att snabbt få budskap att landa på djupet. Den kan mao föra ut budskap (tex politiska) på ett effektivt och smart sätt. Personligen använder jag ju dessutom ofta politik som stoff för mina serier.

Vad finns det för relation mellan din konst och din aktivism?

Min konst ÄR min aktivism.

Är serie en konstform eller något helt eget?

Alla konstformer är väl något alldeles eget? Serier är bildkonst och textdito som tillsammans skapar en ny enhet.

Hur viktigt/oviktigt är det med humor? Vad tror du humoristiska inslag kan ge för genomslagskraft?

Superviktigt. Humor är avväpnande. Jag tror att det faktum att jag är humoristisk skyddar mig från det hat och hot som många som för fram exakt samma sak so jag, fast bara i text, får utstå.

Amalias svar:

Varför gör du serier?

för det är det enda sätt jag har, att göra en film.

Hur tror du serier och politik kan använda sig av varandra?

politik o politikerna använder alla konst för att göra propaganda, agitation, des-informera, pacificera, etc.

Vad finns det för relation mellan din konst och din aktivism?

Jag vill berätta historier, med deras egna röster, av människor som majoriteten av folket inte ser eller inte vill se.

Är serier "konst" eller något helt eget?

det kan bli konst oxo, det beror på hur man definierar "konst".

Hur viktigt/oviktig är det med humor? Vad tror du satir eller humoristiska inslag kan ge för

genomslagskraft?

Humor/satir är viktigt när man förlöjligar makten.

Emanuel's svar:

Varför gör du serier?

För att använda min passion för att teckna till att göra något viktigt.

På vilket sätt tror du att serier och politik kan använda sig av varandra?

Jag tror det är ett lättsmält sätt att förklara viktiga och svåra frågor, att använda bilders lättillgänglighet för att förmedla ett svårt budskap.

Är serier "konst" eller något helt eget?

Jag tycker inte uttrycket "konst" är så viktigt, det finns så många definitioner på vad konst är, och folk snöar in sig på att diskutera definitioner istället för att göra bra saker.

Vad ser du för relation mellan ditt serieskapande och din aktivism?

Just nu har jag en period då jag är politiskt deprimerad och folkskygg, så mitt bildskapande är min aktivism i stort sett.

Hur viktigt/oviktigt är humor? Vad kan satir och humoristiska inslag ge för genomslagskraft?

Som jag var inne på ovan tror jag bilder kan agera som ett sätt att lättsmält förmedla svåra budskap, och där är ju humorn en extra krydda, sockret som får den bittra medicinen att gå ner.

Appendix 5: Interview guide in Swedish

Information om mastersuppsats i Genusvetenskap för Göteborgs Universitet -
Intervjuer med tre svenska serietecknare

Kontaktuppgifter till författare av uppsatsen:

Andrea Karlsén, student på mastersprogrammet Gendering Practices på Göteborgs Universitet
Tel: 0705959626 och mailadress: andrea.karlsen@live.se

Kort beskrivning av uppsatsen:

Målet med mastersuppsatsen är att undersöka hur tre serietecknare i Sverige ser på sin egna konstnärliga praktik och vad den eventuellt har för relation till en aktivistisk praktik. Genom semi-strukturerade intervjuer med Elin Lucassi, Emanuel "Emanu" Garnheim och Amalia Alvarez vill jag få till ett samtal om seriekonstens eventuella politiska dimensioner. Hur ser konstnärerna själva på att bli kallade för "politiska"? Vad innebär det att rita "politisk" enligt dem själva? Ser de sin konst som en del av ett eventuellt aktivistiskt engagemang? Vad har serier för relation till andra konstformer? Vidare vill jag lyfta en diskussion om humorns roll i serier: hur viktigt eller oviktigt är humoristiska inslag i deras serieskapande? Genom en diskursanalys av materialet (intervjuerna) vill jag undersöka hur serietecknarna ser på sig själva som politiska subjekt inom serievärlden i Sverige: hur de ser sig själva som människor med politiskt agenskap inom en given diskurs? Ytterligare teoretiska analyser tillkommer, som att föra en diskussion kring serier som konstform, serier som politiska och humor som en del av en feministisk strategi. Uppsatsen kommer skrivas på engelska inom ramen för mastersprogrammet Gendering Practices på Göteborgs Universitet.

Preliminärt titel på uppsats:

"Politics, art and comics: Swedish comics artists political subjectivity and feminist practices"

"Politik, konst och serier: Svenska serietecknares politiska subjektivitet and feministiska praktiker"

Ytterligare information om uppsatsen:

Uppsatsen kommer under 2016-2017 publiceras i Göteborgs Universitets databas, där intervjupersonernas namn och svar på intervjun kommer finnas med. Utdrag av de transkriberade samtalen av samtalet kommer också finnas med som bilaga – vill ni läsa hela transkriberingen eller resultaten av projektet hör av dig till Andrea Karlsén (kontaktuppgifter ovan).

Ytterligare information om intervjuerna:

Intervjuerna kommer ske i mars 2016: 26 mars med Emanuel Garnheim, 1 april med Elin Lucassi samt 29 mars med Amalia Alvarez. Intervjuerna kommer äga rum i Stockholm respektive Lund och varje person får ungefär en timme var att diskutera frågor som rör deras olika praktiker. Samtalen sker på svenska och kommer även att spelas in och sparas som digital ljudfil hos författaren av uppsatsen.

Kort "för-text" inför intervjuerna:

Varje person har fått i uppgift att skriva en kort sammanställning av deras egna konstnärliga och politiska praktik, runt en halv sida var. Frågorna de utgick ifrån var följande:

Varför gör du serier?

Hur tror du serier och politik kan använda sig av varandra?

Vad finns det för relation mellan din konst och din aktivism?

Är serie konst eller något helt eget?

Hur viktigt/oviktigt är det med humor? Vad tror du humoristiska inslag kan ge för genomslagskraft?

Intervjufrågor:

Varje person kommer få samma basfrågor ställda till sig, se nedan. Vidare kommer varje person få fler följdfrågor beroende på hur samtalet utvecklar sig och är därför inte med i denna informationstexten. Dessa följdfrågor, för-texten samt utgångsfrågorna kommer finnas med som bilagor i den slutgiltiga uppsatsen.

Basfrågor:

- Namn, födelseår, boendeplats?

- Hur vill du benämna dig själv som: seriekonstnär, serietecknare, serieskapare eller något helt annat? Varför?

- Hur började du rita serier?

- Har du något annat arbete utöver serieskapandet?

- Vad har du fått för reaktioner från andra om dina verk? Hur kändes det?

- Hur kändes det att skriva för-texten?

- Var det några speciella frågor som fångade din uppmärksamhet eller var det något påstående som du reagerade på?