

«VISSERLIGEN SANT MEN KNAPPAST SANNING»:  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL  
DISCOURSE IN P.O. ENQUIST'S *ETT ANNAT LIV*

Massimiliano Bampi

Ca' Foscari University of Venice (<m.bampi@unive.it>)

In 2009 the Swedish author Per Olov Enquist<sup>1</sup> was awarded for the second time the prestigious Augustpriset (August Prize) for his work entitled *Ett annat liv* (Another Life), in which he recounts his own life from his childhood in Hjöggböle, in the Thirties and Forties, to the early Nineties. The title *Ett annat liv* takes the end of Enquist's long period of alcohol abuse as the starting point of a new life. Although the matter treated is undoubtedly based on the writer's own life, *Ett annat liv* offers a fertile ground for analysing the relationship between his search for truth – a major theme in Enquist's literary production – and his autobiographical writing. In the present article I will offer some observations on this relationship, using Philippe Lejeune's and Gérard Genette's theoretical work as a background<sup>2</sup>. Special attention will be devoted to analysing the way in which the construction of autobiographical discourse is carried out both within and outside the text.

In his seminal study *Le Pacte autobiographique*, written in 1975, Lejeune provides an overview of the major characteristics of autobiography, based on an extensive study of texts belonging to the French literary culture of various epochs<sup>3</sup>. He defines the relationship between author and reader

<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to some of the major themes in Enquist's work, see Shideler 1984. After Shideler's, no other major introductory work has been published on Enquist. More recent studies on some of the themes in Enquist's oeuvre include, amongst others, Bredsdorff 1991 and Ekselius 1996.

<sup>2</sup> So far, *Ett annat liv* has received scant attention in international scholarship. The only relatively detailed study devoted to it that I know of is An Willems's MA thesis (2008/2009), available online, which refers to Lejeune's work as a major reference point. In the present article, the perspective adopted is partly different, in that it includes Genette's notion of paratext in order to illustrate the ambiguous and even contradictory nature of Enquist's *Ett annat liv*. Furthermore, the aim of this paper is to offer some observations on how the autobiographical discourse is constructed, thus contributing towards widening the scope of the analysis as presented in Willems's thesis. Kvist 2012 also contains some interesting material on *Ett annat liv*.

<sup>3</sup> Since the publication of Lejeune's study, discussion about autobiography as a genre has mainly revolved around whether it is possible to distinguish autobiography

in autobiographical writing as a contract. Such a contract, Lejeune claims, «supposes that there is identity of name between the author (such as he figures, by his name, on the cover), the narrator of the story and the character who is being talked about», trans. by Leary; Lejeune 1989: 12). Along with the autobiographical contract, Lejeune introduces the notion of a referential pact, which is based on the nature of autobiography and biography as referential texts:

Exactly like scientific or historical discourse, they claim to provide information about a reality exterior to the text, and so to submit to a test of verification. Their aim is not simple verisimilitude, but resemblance to the truth. Not “the effect of the real”, but the image of the real. (Trans. by Leary; Lejeune 1989: 22)

According to Lejeune, all referential texts «entail [...] a referential pact, implicit or explicit, in which are included a definition of the field of the real that is involved and a statement of the modes and the degree of resemblance to which the text lays claim» (trans. by Leary; Lejeune 1989: 22).

One of the most interesting aspects of Lejeune’s study is the relevance attributed to the position of the readers and their role in the hermeneutic process. On the assumption that literature is first and foremost a communicative act, autobiographical texts acquire full meaning when they enter into a dialogue with the reader. However, such a dialogue is not built only on the content of the text itself. Of paramount importance to the interpretation of the text are indeed also those elements that, especially since Genette’s studies, are customarily labelled as paratexts:

More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, or – a word Borges used apropos of a preface – a “vestibule” that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an “undefined zone” between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world’s discourse about the text), an edge, or, as Philippe Lejeune put it, “a fringe of the printed text which in

– and the autobiographic novel – from another kind of narrative, which has been tentatively called *autofiction*. However, as Eva Ahlstedt (2011) has recently pointed out in an overview article, the current state of the debate is such that it is still not even clear what is meant by autofiction. Thus, given the uncertainty surrounding the notion of autofiction, and given the limited scope of my essay, I have preferred to stick to Lejeune’s definition of the *espace autobiographique*, which still offers a good starting point for any study of autobiographical writing. It may be added that the more recent developments in the field of autobiography studies, mainly in France, are directly connected with Lejeune’s pioneering work.

reality controls one's whole reading of the text." Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that – whether well or poorly understood and achieved – is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it. (Trans. by Lewin; Genette 1997: 1-2; italics in the original)

On the basis of the notions described above as a methodological framework, the construction of autobiographical discourse in *Ett annat liv* appears to rest upon two main pillars: on the one hand, the account of the writer's life as presented in the text, and on the other elements surrounding the text, i.e. the paratext in all its multiform manifestations. As will be shown below, the information provided by the two sources is not homogeneous. The differences that arise from the comparison between textual and paratextual clues indeed reveal the complex nature of Enquist's work.

Following Genette's description of the paratext as a threshold, we will first look at how *Ett annat liv* is presented in the space surrounding the narrative itself.

Let us start from the peritext. The book cover is the physical space in which the contract with the reader is sealed. The illustration of *Ett annat liv* would seem to leave no doubt about the identity of the protagonist. Indeed, under the author's name and the title there is a large picture of Enquist sitting on a chair against a dark background. If one looks at the epitext<sup>4</sup>, though, things appear more controversial. On Norstedts's website, *Ett annat liv* is described as a book of memoirs («Den är en memoarbok som med humor, värme och nyfikenhet beskriver ett livsöde som format ett av vår tids stora författarskap»); it is a memoir describing, with humour, warmth and curiosity, a destiny which has formed one of the great authorships of our times<sup>5</sup>. However, in an interview published in 2012 in the magazine «Vi», Enquist denies that *Ett annat liv* is a collection of memories from his life:

<sup>4</sup> Epitext and peritext are terms used by Genette to describe textual material that is placed outside the book (epitext) and within it (peritext). The epitext can be further divided into public (e.g. interviews) and private (e.g. letters). On both terms see Genette 1997: 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> <[http://www.norstedts.se/bocker/utgiven/2008/Host/enquist\\_per-olov-ett-annat\\_liv-inbunden/](http://www.norstedts.se/bocker/utgiven/2008/Host/enquist_per-olov-ett-annat_liv-inbunden/)> (07/2014). Translations are mine throughout unless otherwise stated.

Det är inte mina memoarer. Jag har alltid tyckt att memoarer är pretentiösa och har sagt mig att några sådana ska jag då aldrig skriva. Och så hatar jag när någon till exempel träder ut ur garderoben med en sådan här historia i kvällspressen [...]. (Quoted from Kvist 2012: 18)

These are not my memoirs. I have always thought that memoirs are pretentious, and I have said to myself that I will never write any. Furthermore I hate when somebody, for example, comes out with such a story in the evening press [...].<sup>6</sup>

Quite remarkably, the identification of the author with the protagonist of the story is established most clearly in the peritext, not in the text. Indeed, the back cover of the book features a short quotation by Enquist himself that is meant as a brief presentation of the whole story:

Han föds den 23 september 1934 i Hjöggböle, en bondby i norra Västerbotten. Han lämnar sin by, blir författare, reser långt. Allt går så bra, sedan går det mycket illa. Den 6 februari 1990 börjar ett annat liv. Boken handlar om detta.

He was born on 23 September 1934 in Hjöggböle, a farmers' village in northern Västerbotten. He leaves his village, travels far and wide. Everything goes fine, then it goes very bad. On 6 February 1990 another life begins. The book is about this.

The discrepancies that arise from comparing the different kinds of information provided by various sources located in the paratext can be explained as depending on different purposes. On the one hand, the publishing house foregrounds the intimate dimension of the story told in *Ett annat liv* in order to advertise the book in the most effective way possible. On the other, we have Enquist's well-known inclination to involve the reader in an intricate and demanding hermeneutic game, made up of contradictions and deviations, as will be shown below.

So far, in short, the paratextual level. Let us now turn to the textual level. As shown above, the protagonist of the story is the author himself. Although the narration is in the third person, it is an autodiegetic narrative, in which the narrator relates events he is supposed to have experienced<sup>7</sup>. Enquist explains this choice as arising from the difficulty of writing in the first person. Only the use of the third person<sup>8</sup>, he claims, could enable him to keep some critical distance:

<sup>6</sup> On facts and fiction in Enquist's work, see especially Willems 2008/2009.

<sup>7</sup> When discussing the different forms that autodiegetic narrative can take, Lejeune (1989: 5-6) mentions Genette's classification of different kinds of 'voice' to give support to the idea that even narratives in the third person can be counted among the examples of autodiegetic narratives.

<sup>8</sup> The use of the third person is one of the elements that remind the reader of *Tjänstekvinnans son* (*The Son of a Servant*), the autobiographical account of August Strindberg's life in four parts. The same attitude towards the narration of personal matters in Strindberg's autobiography can be found in Enquist's own autobiography. In a preface to *Tjänstekvinnans son*, Strindberg wrote: «Om författaren verkligen, som han stundom trott, experimenterat med ståndpunkter eller

<p>Det kändes pretentiöst och lite smetigt. Därför bytte jag till tredje person och då blev det mycket enklare att skriva med värme och även kritisk distans. "Enquist" blev en romanfigur. En romanfigur som jag känner bättre än någon annan. (Westberg 2008)</p>	<p>It felt pretentious and a bit ingratiating. I therefore changed to the third person, so then it got much easier to write with warmth and even critical distance. "Enquist" became a fictional character. A fictional character that I know better than anyone else.</p>
---	--

Describing oneself as one of the characters in a novel acquires special relevance in the context of the present essay. Indeed, the identity of name between author, narrator and protagonist is, following Lejeune's reasoning, what makes *Ett annat liv* an autobiographical account of Enquist's life. This leads to the important question of how the reader should assess the truth claims that are intrinsic to any autobiographical work and that are strictly related to the referential pact as defined by Lejeune. In the case of Enquist, this fundamental question proves even more relevant in that the notion of truth and its role in the artistic process are central to Enquist's philosophical universe (Syrén 2000). As a documentarist<sup>9</sup>, Enquist gives shape to his stories by blending factual and made-up elements in a way that makes it extremely difficult for the reader to decide what is truthful (and trustworthy) and what is not. Even when it comes to analysing the description of real events and historical figures, as is often the case with many of Enquist's works<sup>10</sup>, truth

inkarnerat i olika personligheter, polymeriserat sig, eller om en nådig Försyn experimenterat med författaren, må framgå ur texterna för den upplyste läsaren. Ty böckerna äro ganska uppriktigt nedskrivna, icke fullständigt naturligtvis, ty det är omöjligt» (1989: 377; Whether the author, as he thought at times, really experimented with viewpoints or incarnated himself in various figures, polymerised himself, or whether a merciful Providence experimented with the author, is for the enlightened reader to draw out from the texts. For the books are written quite sincerely, albeit of course not completely, as it is impossible). A proper discussion of all motifs from Strindberg's work would exceed the scope of this essay.

<sup>9</sup> On Scandinavian documentarism in the twentieth century, see especially Houe, Rossel 1997. On the relationship between facts and fiction in the documentary novel, see especially Hansen 1996: 21-27.

<sup>10</sup> Most of Enquist's works deal more or less indirectly with historical figures. Since 2000 his literary activity has focused on such figures as Pierre and Marie Curie (*Boken om Blanche och Marie*, 2004; *The Story of Blanche and Marie*, trans. by Nunnally 2006), Petrus Lewi (*Lewis resa*, 2001; *Lewi's Journey*, trans. by Nunnally 2005), Struensee and King Christian VII (*Livläkarens besök*, 1999; *The Royal Physician's Visit*, trans. by Nunnally 2001). Another major figure that has inspired him in more than one work is August Strindberg, on whom Enquist wrote, amongst other things, a kind of biography for the Swedish television (*Strindberg: ett liv*, 1984; *Strindberg. A Life*), and a play (*Tribadernas natt*, 1975; *The Night of the Tribades*, trans. by Shideler 1977). Other names from Scandinavian culture that become protagonists of other works by Enquist are H.C. Andersen and J.L. Heiberg (*Från regnormarnas liv*, 1981a; *Rain Snakes: A Family Portrait from 1856*, trans. by Dessau 1981), Knut Hamsun (*Hamsun. En filmberättelse*, 1996; *Hamsun. A Screenplay*), and Selma Lagerlöf and Viktor Sjöström (*Bildmakarna*, 1998; *The Image Makers*).

is not necessarily what guides the writer – not even a documentarist – in the artistic process, nor is it the final aim of writing: «[...] vi bör vid det här läget ha lärt oss, att något inte behöver vara sant, bara för att det är dokumentärt. Det är lättare att ljuga med dokumentarism, än med fiktion. Något behöver ju inte vara “sant”, bara för att det har “hänt”» (Enquist 1981b: 121; By now we should have learnt that something is not necessarily true only because it is documentary. It is easier to lie with documentarism than with fiction. Something does not need to be “true” only because it has “happened”).

In Enquist's view, rather than reduplicating reality, literature should clarify and foreground the elements that the writer deems relevant in the story («att lyfta fram, tydliggöra och gestalta det relevanta i det som har hänt»; Enquist 1981b: 121) he is about to tell from the sources he has used. Hence, it is safe to assert that lies are part of the creative process as much as is the search for truth. Truth, though, is elusive: not something one can grasp but rather something one can strive for. Thus the search<sup>11</sup> is itself more relevant than any attempt at «trying to pin down a “verifiable truth” about any individual or sequence of events», as Rochelle Wright (1996: 414) puts it. In addition to this, one should also consider Enquist's not infrequent warnings about his own unreliability, especially when he writes or talks about himself<sup>12</sup>.

As will be shown in what follows, *Ett annat liv* is indeed replete with clues that more or less directly appeal to the reader's attention in seeking to evaluate the content of the story in terms of veridicity. In the limited scope of the present article I will focus on some of the clues that, more or less explicitly, seem to invite the reader to take a critical stance towards what is being narrated.

One of the most interesting scenes is where young Per-Ola<sup>13</sup> is forced by his pious and rather strict mother to confess his sins. Since he believes that he has none to confess, he makes one up:

<sup>11</sup> The main character in *Legionärerna* (1968; *The Legionnaires*, trans. by Blair 1973), Enquist's breakthrough novel, is indeed called the Investigator («Undersökaren»). On *Legionärerna* and Swedish documentarism in the Sixties see Jansson 1987: 68-76 and Hansen 1996: 218-240.

<sup>12</sup> By way of example, in an interview with Henrik Kyhle, Enquist says: «Författare ljuger ju nästan alltid om sig själva» (Kyhle 1985: 169; Writers lie almost always like rugs about themselves).

<sup>13</sup> The fact that the name of the protagonist is Per-Ola, and not Per Olov, is probably another clue in Enquist's game with the reader, a game in which the identity of the protagonist and the author is constantly negotiated by Enquist himself. In support of this view, one might add that Per-Ola is also the name given to Enquist's elder brother, who died immediately after birth. This fact enhances young Per-Ola's uncertainty (i.e. Per Olov) about his own identity. See Enquist 2008: 23.

Han löser då dilemmat, efter att tre lördagar å rad till sin egen och moderns besvikelse ha tuggat i gräset utan synd, genom att dikta en synd. Han bekänner, under tårar, att han vid besöket å Koppra i Forsen för att handla stulit en karamell av handlaren när denne såg åt sidan. (Enquist 2008: 28-29)

He then solved the dilemma, after having bitten the dust without sin, to his mother's and his own disappointment, for three Saturdays in a row, by making up a sin. He confesses in tears that during a visit to Koppra in Forsen to buy something he stole a piece of candy from the shop when the owner looked aside.

I think there is more to this scene than meets the eye. Considering that the protagonist is the young writer, we are led to think that the confessional game that is represented here is, at a different level, the one the author engages in with the reader. Furthermore, the expression «att dikta en synd» becomes even more relevant if one considers the double meaning of the verb «dikta» ('to compose' and 'to invent'). Writing is thus equal to fabricating things, and literature adds to reality and enriches it.

Of crucial importance for understanding the nature of *Ett annat liv* is also the passage in which Enquist tells us about how he started out on his career as a writer by drawing maps<sup>14</sup>. The comparison between drawing and writing is revelatory of the nature of both activities in Enquist's mind:

Eftersom det är synd att ljuga eller tilldika känner han sig villrådig. Att tilldika är ju tillåtet endast om det sker i andlig syfte, för att förklara Jesu gärningar och underverk [...]. Men att rita kartor är ju något annat. Ingen granskar heller vad han gör. Ingen ser över hans axel för att bestraffa lättfärdighet, tecknen är abstrakta, kartorna skenbart likartade [...]. Först ritar han landskap som är vackra och riktiga, sedan som de borde vara [...]. Han är i allt detta ensam om hemligheterna. Han kan inte avslöjas. Kartorna liknar skenbart byn, men är inte byn. (Enquist 2008: 51-52; italics in the original)

As it is a sin to lie or make up things, he feels at a loss. To invent is permissible only if it is done with a spiritual intent, to explain Jesus's deeds and miracles. Yet drawing maps is something else. Nobody checks on what he does. Nobody looks over his shoulder to punish moral laxity, the signs are abstract, the maps seemingly similar [...]. First he draws landscapes that are beautiful and correct, then as they should be [...]. In this he is the only one to know his secrets. He cannot be unmasked. The maps apparently resemble the village, yet they are not the village.

As with drawing maps, Enquist suggests, writing stories is depicting things in a way that makes them *appear* real.

Another passage that is relevant to our purpose is one in which Enquist recounts the period of his military service:

<sup>14</sup> *Kartritarna* (The Cartographers) is the title of a collection of short stories and essays published by Enquist in 1992. One of the stories in the collection bears the same title.

Han refererar gärna till svåra uthållbarheten, till exempel två månader i tält i januari i skogarna utanför Hällnäs, med outhärdlig kyla, samt vintermanövrar i Tärnabyfjällen. Visserligen sant, men knappast sanning. Han har svårt att kontrollera dessa poetiska överdrifter. (2008: 132)

He refers often to difficult hardships, for example the two months in a tent in January in the forests outside Hällnäs, in the unbearable cold, as well as winter manouvers in Tärnabyfjällen. Surely true, yet hardly the truth. He finds it difficult to avoid such poetic exaggerations.

Here the author highlights the fact that, whenever it comes to retelling facts from the past, he takes poetic liberties with his memories. As was seen above, the main purpose of literature is not that of reconstructing events in an objective way. We will come back to the expression «visserligen sant, men knappast sanning» at the end of this article.

Another interesting textual clue in this respect is the one in which Enquist tells the reader about the life of the Danish actress Johanne Luise Heiberg, whose house at Sortedammen he was able to see from the window of his flat in Copenhagen:

Där skrev hon sina memoarer, "Et liv". [...] Hennes memoarer var före publiceringen granskade och förkortade av hennes vänner, så att icke livets smuts måtte vidlåda hennes minnen. Det strukna publicerades senare i en särskild volym, korta eller långa fragment med det förbjudna. Så fick det bli. (2008: 400)

There she wrote her own memoirs, "Et liv". [...] Before publication her memoirs were checked and shortened by her friends so that the dirt of life might not be included in her reminiscences. What was left out was then published in a special volume, short or long fragments with what was prohibited. This is what should happen.

The fact that memories can be selected and rewritten to serve a given purpose is surely another interesting clue that the author leaves to the reader to interpret.

Sometimes the author's warnings take a more general, almost gnomic tone, as when the narrator affirms, quite peremptorily, that «misstänksamhet är en dygd, sanning ett tvivelaktigt begrepp» (2008: 146; suspiciousness is a virtue, truth a dubious notion): a principle that contains *in nuce* Enquist's whole philosophical universe and its influence on his writing. Strictly connected with this is the recurrent theme of the suspicion of being deceived, which crops up here and there in the narrative. The expression «tänk om man fört oss bakom ljuset» (what if they have deceived us), that is repeatedly used by Enquist in *Legionärerna* to refer to the gloomy story of the so-called *baltutlämningen* (the deportation of Baltic soldiers from Sweden in 1946)<sup>15</sup>, may be

<sup>15</sup> This is how Phil Holmes sums up the story of the extradition: «In May 1945, as the war came to a close, a large number of soldiers of the German army fled to Swe-



interpreted, amongst other things, as his appeal to his readers to be cautious and suspicious.

From all the above, I think, we can draw some tentative conclusions about how Enquist constructed *Ett annat liv*. As in most of his previous works, the author appeals to his readers' willingness to believe and at the same time invites them to be sceptical<sup>16</sup>. On the one hand, by writing an autobiographical account of his life he seals a pact with the reader by establishing, in a seemingly uncontroversial manner, the identity of author, protagonist and narrator. This is done both at the level of the text and at that of the paratext. On the other hand, though, both paratext and text are marked by the presence of signals of different kinds which are meant to warn the (attentive) reader against a simplistic interpretation of the story. Once sealed, however, the pact with the reader is not conclusively binding. Whenever he is warned against the trustworthiness of the story, the pact is dissolved and the reader is at a loss when trying to determine the relationship between narration and factual reality.

In other words, Enquist wants the reader not to fall victim to the illusion of grasping the truth. Through this strategy, the author is also able to hide behind a glass window, one that, despite its transparency, never grants the observer (i.e. the reader) a clear view. This leads us back to the

den. Among these were 167 men from the formerly independent Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. They were all interned in camps in Sweden. In November 1945 the Swedish government announced its intention of returning these Baltic soldiers to their homelands, now of course part of the Soviet Union. The internees, fearing Russian reprisals, protested at this decision by means of hunger strikes, self-mutilation and even suicide. On 26 January 1946, 146 of these men were taken aboard the Soviet vessel *Be-loostrov* at Trelleborg» (1999: 370-371). Chapter 7 in *Ett annat liv* (*En expedition; An Expedition*) is devoted to the description of the investigations that led to *Legionärerna*.

<sup>16</sup> Talking about his novel *Magnetisörens femte vinter* (1964; *The Magnetist's Fifth Winter*, trans. by Britten Austin 1989), Enquist says: «Jag försökte konstruera en berättelse med skenbar auktoritet, med skenbar historisk tyngd – men en berättelse som vid närmare granskning visar sig vara artificiell, konstruerad, ohistorisk [...]. Den som går längre in ser att min berättelse är artificiell, förstår att den måste betraktas med misstro – men jag vädjar om tilltro» (Branting 1967: 58; I tried to construct a narrative with apparent authority, with apparent historical weight – yet a narrative that upon closer examination proves artificial, fabricated, unhistorical [...]. Those who take a step further in see that my narrative is artificial, and understand that it must be treated with suspicion – still, I appeal for belief). In the same interview, the author explains the role of the writer in contemporary society: «Att visa på ett sätt att bearbeta verklighetsmaterial. Det jag kan ge är ett av många möjliga; inte det slutgiltiga. Men jag kan tvinga läsaren att ta ställning, till materialet, till mig, till mitt sätt att bearbeta materialet. Gör han det, då är jag nöjd» (Branting 1967: 58; To point to a way of recasting material from reality. What I can give is one out of many possible ways, not the definitive one. Yet I can force the readers to take a position, on the material, on me, on my way of recasting the material. If they do so, I'm satisfied).

quotation that was used in the title of this article: «Visserligen sant men knappast sanning». This expression, I believe, is the key to approaching *Ett annat liv* as a whole. As seen above, for Enquist any attempt at defining truth is doomed to fail. As much as a story may be based on true events, truth becomes elusive as soon as a standpoint is taken in relation to it, and this is certainly the case with any form of narration. For the author of *Ett annat liv*, the golden rule that one should stick to, when reading about something that is presented as truthful, is expressed by the words put in the mouth of the Investigator, the protagonist of *Legionärerna*: «Godta inte en presentation, tänk själv, var misstänksam. Det finns ingen helgonlik objektivitet, ingen yttersta sanning, befriad från sina politiska utgångspunkter. Pröva, var misstänksam. Ifrågasätt» (Enquist 1968: 242; Do not accept a presentation, think for yourself, be suspicious. There is no sacred objectivity, no ultimate truth, free from its own political starting point. Try, be suspicious. Call into question; my trans.). These words acquire a general validity in Enquist's philosophical universe and recur in slightly varied forms throughout his literary production. As a general warning, they may apply to *Ett annat liv*, too. As a retrospective narrative, this work is the result of a selection and montage of memories – either real or presented as such – made by the author to convey an image of his own life, leaving out those aspects that he does not want to share with the reader. Paraphrasing Paul de Man<sup>17</sup>, one could say that if autobiography creates life, in the case of Enquist's account what is created is «ett annat liv», another life: the one, we are led to believe, that he has not lived in the very form in which it is presented to the reader.

#### References

- Ahlstedt Eva 2011, *Den franska autofiktionsdebatten*, in Eva Ahlstedt, Britt-Marie Karlsson (red.), *Den tvetydiga pakten. Skönlitterära texter i gränslandet mellan självbiografi och fiktion*, Göteborgs Universitet, Göteborg: 1-34.
- Branting Jacob (red.) 1967, *29 röster-67. 29 svenska författare intervjuade av Jacob Branting, Björn Håkansson, Kjell Sundberg*, Fib:s Lyrikklubb, Stockholm.
- Bredsdorff Thomas 1991, *De sorte huller. Om tilblivelsen af et sprog i P.O. Enquists forfatterskab*, Gyldendal, København.
- de Man Paul 1979, *Autobiography as De-facement*, «Comparative Literature», 94: 919-930.

<sup>17</sup> «We assume that life *produces* autobiography as an act produces its consequences, but can we not suggest that, with equal justice, the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer does is in fact determined, in all its aspects, by the resources of its medium?» (de Man 1979: 920; italics in the original).

- Ekselius Eva 1996, *Andas fram mitt ansikte. Om den mytiska och djuppsykologiska strukturen hos Per Olov Enquist*, Symposion, Stockholm.
- Enquist Per Olov 1964, *Magnetisörens femte vinter*, Norstedt, Stockholm. Trans. by Paul Britten Austin 1989, *The Magnetist's Fifth Winter*, Quartet books, London.
- 1968, *Legionärerna*, Norstedt, Stockholm. Trans. by Alan Blair 1973, *The Legionnaires*, Delacorte Press, New York (NY).
- 1975, *Tribadernas natt*, PAN/Norstedt, Stockholm. Trans. by Ross Shideler 1977, *The Night of the Tribades*, Hillard Wang, New York (NY).
- 1981a, *Från regnormarnas liv*, Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern, Stockholm. Trans. by Frederik Dessau 1981, *Rain Snakes: A Family Portrait from 1856*, Samleren, Copenhagen.
- 1981b, *Tydliggöra eller spegla verklighet*, «Vår lösen», 77: 120-122.
- 1984, *Strindberg: ett liv*, Norstedt, Stockholm.
- 1992, *Kartritarna*, Norstedt, Stockholm.
- 1996, *Hamsun. En filmberättelse*, Norstedt, Stockholm.
- 1998, *Bildmakarna*, Norstedt, Stockholm.
- 1999, *Livläkarens besök*, Norstedt, Stockholm. Trans. by Tiina Nunnally 2001, *The Royal Physician's Visit*, Overlook Press, New York (NY).
- 2001, *Lewis resa*, Norstedt, Stockholm. Trans. by Tiina Nunnally 2005, *Lewis's Journey*, Overlook Duckworth, New York (NY).
- 2004, *Boken om Blanche och Marie*, Norstedt, Stockholm. Trans. by Tiina Nunnally 2006, *The Story of Blanche and Marie*, Overlook Press, New York (NY).
- 2008, *Ett annat liv*, Norstedt, Stockholm.
- Genette Gérard 1997, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge UP, Cambridge (éd. orig. *Seuils*, Seuil, Paris, 1987).
- Hansen Peter 1996, *Romanen och verklighetsproblemet. Studier i några svenska sextiotalsromaner*, Symposion, Stockholm.
- Holmes Phil 1999, *Per Olov Enquist*, in Irene Scobbie (ed.), *Aspects of Modern Swedish Literature*, Norvik Press, Norwich: 369-377.
- Houe Paul, Rossel Sven Hakon 1997, *Documentarism in Scandinavian Literature*, Rodopi, Amsterdam.
- Jansson Henrik 1987, *Per Olov Enquist och det inställda upproret. Ett författarskap i relation till svensk debatt 1961-1986*, Åbo Akademis förlag, Åbo.
- Kvist Samuel 2012, "Det är inte mina memoarer!" *På spaning efter intention, självbiografi och representativitet i P.O. Enquists Ett annat liv*, Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen, Lunds Universitet, Lund <<http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=2827627&fileOId=2827636>> (07/2014).
- Kyhle Henrik 1985, *Snart kanske jag slutar att skriva*, «Damernas värld», 10: 38-39, 168-169.
- Lejeune Philippe 1989, *The Autobiographical Pact*, in Id., *On Autobiography*, trans. by Katherine M. Leary, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis (éd. orig. *Le Pacte autobiographique*, dans Id., *Le Pacte autobiographique*, Seuil, Paris, 1975): 3-27.

- Shideler Ross 1984, *Per Olov Enquist: A Critical Study*, Greenwood Press, Westport.
- Strindberg August 1989, *Samlade Verk*, 21, *Tjänstekvinnans son I-II*, red. Hans Lindström, Norstedt, Stockholm.
- Syrén Gunnar 2000, *Mellan sanningen och lögnen. Studier i Per Olov Enquists dramatik*, Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm.
- Willems An 2008/2009, *Tänk om man fört oss bakom ljuset. Fakta och fiktion i det Enquistska författarskapet*, Universiteit Gent, Gent, <[http://lib.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/001/414/953/RUG01-001414953\\_2010\\_0001\\_AC.pdf](http://lib.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/001/414/953/RUG01-001414953_2010_0001_AC.pdf)> (02/2015).
- Westberg Örjan 2008, *Synd, sport, sprit och skrivande*, <<http://www.minabibliotek.se/101474/synd-sport-sprit-och-skrivande>> (07/2014).
- Wright Rochelle 1996, *Literature after 1950*, in Lars G. Warme (ed.), *A History of Swedish Literature*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln (NE)-London: 380-471.