



Inez van der Spek, Ph.D., a researcher and lecturer of Women's Studies at the University of Utrecht has published three versions of an essay on Lisa Moren's "la_alma" interactive video book and installation. The essay has been published twice in English, in a theoretical book by an international German press (Lit Verlag); and a theoretical journal located in Baltimore, and distributed internationally (LINK). Dr. van der Spek also wrote a Dutch version of her essay for a popular art magazine in the Netherlands. Excerpts from her essay are from the LINK journal:

*la_alma, Moren's video book installation, may be understood as a postmodern and post-1989 radicalization of both [Walter] Benjamin's break with the analogous representation of woman and city, and [Maxie] Wander's "hearing women into speech." Benjamin's childhood memories and the monologues of the women in Guten Morgan reflect the modern investigation and formation of the self in literature. The multimedia and interactive character of la_alma constantly puts the self at stake. Authorship is uncertain: is it Moren's, the editing viewer's, the critic's? As Moren herself formulates, "multiple horizons ultimately fuse the artist, the interactive device, and the viewer as well as their 'performative gestures' interacting within the entire process." And where is la_alma located — in Berlin, Brooklyn, the art gallery? Post-cognitive questions are implied such as "Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?"⁹ (McHale Post-modernist Fiction, pp 10 quoting Dick Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, 1978) These questions are inextricably bound up not only with the loss of confidence in the rational and controllable self, but also with the collapse of the seemingly neatly arranged world order of the Cold War period." pp 143-144*

"Moren's approach to the subjectile differs from [Heinz] Kimmerle's interpretation. The subjectile is not "sacrificed," destroyed, or damaged, but manipulated by technological means. Nevertheless, there is a resemblance in the way both Moren and Artaud make the subjectile visible only to erase its meaning again." pp 146

"Moren's story underscores the subjectile-like character of language stripped away by Alzheimer's disease. She explains: 'It is this physical instinct of talking I wanted to capture in the piece and in the end it seemed these scraps of information in the box were like scraps of words. The scraps are true but everything we fill in means we're making up links to feel logical... la_alma could be considered an alternative view of communicating historical events. Perhaps not very logical, but in some ways more truthful than the conventional narrative.'" pp 148.

"...the embeddedness of the lives of Moren's ancestors in the global developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries attests to the interface of the personal and the political. la_alma is about kinship, found not only in the family ties between Lisa Moren and her grandmother but also in the momentary relationship between strangers that comes into existence through the viewer's active involvement with the piece. What may be named as a "kinship of soul" takes place in both Moren's associative word search with Alma and the viewer's interacting with la_alma."

A viewer "expresses a desire to bridge the gap between the world of the viewer and Alma's world when he says, "Her world was one of constant free association, as is the world of the one who wishes to communicate with her." The footbridge of la_alma may hold out just long enough to enable such a crossing over from one medium to another, from one genre to another, from one person to another." pp 150-151

Inez van der Spek, "A Critical Reading: Lisa Moren's *la_alma* Interactive Video Book" **LINK 8: Codex A Critical Journal on the Arts**, (Baltimore), September 2002. pp 137-152

Inez van der Spek "la_alma: Kinship of the Soul" **Common Bodies** (Munster, Germany: Lit Verlag, English), 2001. pp 77-92

Inez van der Spek, "Loopbruggetjes in Lisa Moren's 'la_alma'" **LOVER. Tijdschrift over feminisme, cultuur en wetenschap** (LOVER, Journal on Feminism, Culture and Science), (Amsterdam) January 2000.