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Chapter 3: Strindberg and Nietzsche as Tropes in the Anti-Realist Discourse: Two Swedish Examples and a Norwegian Interlude

Ich will keine »Gläubigen,« ich denke, ich bin zu boshaft dazu, um an mich selbst zu glauben ...

(I do not *want* any »true believers,« I think I am too malicious to believe in myself ...)¹

Man vergilt einem Lehrer schlecht, wenn man immer nur der Schüler bleibt.

(One repays a teacher badly if one remains only a pupil.)²

A strange essentialism marks the end of the last chapter; one based on a notion of blood and culture on the one hand, and an elitist reaction to foundational and collective claims on the other. Nietzsche anticipated that in matters of his reception belief would always create distortion. In the late nineteenth century, the Nietzsche legacy was often colored by the image of Nietzsche either as prophet or as a madman. Yet time and time again, even in his most megalomaniacal moments, Nietzsche makes a gesture, an existential gesture that pushes away thoughts of imitation or emulation.

Perhaps the most profound teaching that his Zarathustra shares comes when he sees his own image distorted in the mirror.³ The Nietzschean gesture creates an empty space for reflection and into this void, the Scandinavians, whom Nietzsche called »Meine natürlichen Leser (my natural readers),«⁴ leapt and proclaimed their own authenticity,

1 NIETZSCHE: KSA 6, 1988d, 365. The English comes from NORMAN (tr.) 2005, 144.

2 NIETZSCHE: KSA 4, 2002, 101. English translation, HOLLINGDALE: 1969, 103.

3 See NIETZSCHE: 2002, 105–108: »Das Kind mit dem Spiegel.« See HOLLINGDALE: 1969, 107, »The Child with the Mirror« for an English translation. In this section, Zarathustra dreams that a child brings him a mirror, which he looks into and sees his reflection distorted into a devilish aspect. At that moment he understands that his teachings have been distorted through their dissemination in the world. For a reading of this section in term of »Zarathustra's Will to Truth,« and his fear of the »repetition« of the »Christian-Platonic Man« see GOODING-WILLIAMS: 2001, 151–152.

4 NIETZSCHE: KSA 6, 1988d, 360. The English translation comes from NORMAN: 2005, 141. Nietzsche writes: »Meine natürlichen Leser und Hörer sind jetzt schon Russen, Skandinavier und Franzosen, – werden sie es immer mehr sein? (My natural readers and listeners are now the Russians, Scandinavians, and French, – will it always be this way?)«

thereby repeating the mistake of overdetermination made by Zarathustra's admirers. In any case, Nietzsche's reception by Georg Brandes and Ola Hansson alert us to two prominent strains in late stages of the long nineteenth Century that have implications up to our own time: namely the notion of the »good European« as a type of transnational citizen and the national romantic notion of the essential racial type.⁵

In the previous chapter, we interrogated these two ideological positions: Brandes' notion of the great personality as a conduit for *dannelse* (Bildung) and Hansson's protestations against »materialistic« thought and his call for the revival of Scandinavian culture along essentialist lines. Despite the differences between the two men's positions, the pre-existent discourse of authenticity was shown to be the stock upon which Nietzsche was grafted in the discourse of his reception. These early readings inflected the discourse that shaped the various meanings attributed to the name Nietzsche in the Scandinavian literary environment. The salient exception to this was the performative reading by the man who shared Nietzsche's madness, his method, and his fear of being deemed a holy buffoon. I am thinking of August Strindberg whose encounter and reception of Nietzsche is the subject of the second half of this book.

However, despite my earlier claim that Nietzsche and Strindberg were treated in a common fashion in the anti-realist discourse, the latter was conspicuously absent from the discussion of the reception in Chapter two. This omission was purpose for two reasons. First, I wanted to establish first that the concept of authenticity in the Nietzsche reception was a *strong misreading* of the philosopher. In other words, I wanted to show how »Nietzsche« as the doer was *hinzugedichtet* (poeticized back) into the deed of his text. It is this species of reading that integrated Nietzsche as a »great personality« into the literary discourse of second-wave Scandinavian modernists, and it was within this environment that the surface aspects of the intersection of Nietzsche and Strindberg's authorship are linked. For the names Strindberg and Nietzsche are utilized in a paradoxical manner in this discourse. They are employed as the representations of both a radical break with the past and of a reemergence of essential characteristics, acting as stand-ins for two seemingly contradic-

⁵ Perhaps we now live in an age where the sublation of these two types remains fluid in a dynamic tension where globalization and fictive racial essentialities clash tragically and violently.

tory terms at once, namely, continuity and the appearance of the radically new.

With this in mind, it is my intention to illustrate how this worked, to show how both men functioned as tropes in a discourse that had larger concerns than allowed for in an analysis based solely on a study of influence. For a model of analysis that relies upon a one-sided notion of influence as its guiding principle repeats this *strong misreading* of the Nietzschean text in two moments. In the first moment the construction of a personality called »Nietzsche« is poeticized into his own text, and in the second moment the force of this personality colonizes the text of the writer said to be under its influence. Instead, my interest here is how the names »Nietzsche« and »Strindberg« fit into the ideological interests of the parties involved in the reception and the anti-realist discourse, and how the aestheticized notion of the self in the discourse of authenticity set the parameters for the scholarship on the encounter. Once this is established, we will turn to the encounter between the two men and explore their deeper commonality, the *genealogy of self*. Therefore, my intention in this chapter is twofold: to illustrate how the anti-realist discourse shares the concern for authenticity with the Nietzsche reception and to discuss the place that Nietzsche and Strindberg occupy in the debate.

In order to accomplish this task, I will analyze four texts that were initially published within two years of each other. The first of these texts to appear was Verner von Heidenstam's pamphlet *Renässans*, whose publication was closely followed by Hansson's *Nietzscheanismus in Skandinavien* (Nietzscheanism in Scandinavia) in October of 1889. Hansson also wrote an essay on Strindberg that was published as part of *Das Junge Skandinavien* (*Young Scandinavia*) in 1891.⁶ Knut Hamsun's *Lidt om Strindberg* (*A little about Strindberg*) was first published in two installments in December of 1889, and Arne Garborg's *Den idealistiske Reaktion – Ny-idealismen* (*The Idealistic Reaction – New Idealism*) was written the following year. Our analysis will start with Verner von Heidenstam's *Renässans*. We will then violate the chronology, briefly discuss Arne Garborg's response to Heidenstam, use Hamsun's Strind-

⁶ This excerpt was not published in Swedish until 1921 when it appeared as the eleventh volume of Ola Hansson's collected works.

berg essay as a bridge to Hansson, and conclude with the Swede's conflation of the Nietzsche reception and the anti-realist discourse.

Verner von Heidenstam: Egotism, »The Joy of Life«:
The Artist as the Bearer of Aristocratic Values

Var Stund av glädje är en stund av egotism, ty den är utan medlidande med de tusen, som samtidigt lida

(Each moment of joy is a moment of egotism, for it is without compassion for the thousands who simultaneously suffer.)⁷

The Nobel Laureate, Verner von Heidenstam⁸ belongs to a generation of Scandinavian writers who connected realism to democratic political values and the subsequent »leveling« of social positions. Like Ola Hansson, he characterized this connection negatively. It is no accident of literary scholarship that the pamphlet *Renässans* is collected in the eighteenth volume of his *Samlade verk* under the rubric of *Stridsskrifter* (Polemics). For the generation of writers who followed the initial modern breakthrough, an attack on realism was part and parcel of a rejection of Brandes' seventeen-year-old demand for authors to engage their work politically and to join Scandinavian culture to the main currents of European development.

Heidenstam rejected the notion of a pan-European literature. If the early exemplars of the modern breakthrough were pan-Scandinavian, even pan-European in outlook, the second wave of modernists who emerged in the »nineties« often brought forward an expression of enhanced national feelings. Denmark and Brandes were no longer the center of the literary critical impulse. Heidenstam, like Hansson, was of the opinion that realist or naturalist aesthetics were a foreign element brought into Swedish letters. It follows that Heidenstam's polemic included a call for a Swedish national literature. In Sweden, where a stronger aristocratic tradition existed, this decentering of the source of literary impulses led, in Heidenstam's view, to an association of Swedishness with the emergence of a re-created aesthetic nobility. Heidenstam placed his hope for a re-emergent literary nobility in the exceptional indi-

⁷ HEIDENSTAM: 1944, 20. My translation.

⁸ Heidenstam won the prize near the end of his long career in 1916.

vidual. He utilized Strindberg in this discourse as both an example and as a warning.

Curiously and despite Heidenstam's protestations, elements of the original paradigms for a realist aesthetic were retained in his theory of an »idealist« literature. Both Brandes' vitalist notion of the writing subject and the perspectival qualities of Bang's theory of realism strongly inflect Heidenstam's conception of the »new« literary imperative of Swedish letters. These aspects remain essential in a discourse that hinges on the notion of an authentic literature, a literature born from the seeds of what its propagators saw as the »failure« of Scandinavian realism. For Heidenstam, this »new« literature was distinguished by the aristocratic qualities that reflect the »best« of the nation.

Heidenstam wrote *Renässans* in August of 1889 during the tail end of a period of close contact with Strindberg. The height of their friendship was in the mid-1880's and Heidenstam was an instrumental figure in Strindberg's turn away from his socialist past. However, by the time of the writing of this pamphlet, their relationship had cooled considerably. Strindberg had written to Heidenstam about Nietzsche, but there is no evidence that the philosopher's work played any role in the latter's production. This provides additional credence for the claim that the name Nietzsche was utilized in a pre-existing discourse and did not initiate a new discourse by the force of his influence. An analysis of Heidenstam's text allows us to understand this discourse without the intellectual interference that the pedigree of a name like Nietzsche engenders.

Despite the absence of a »Nietzschean« *influence*, Heidenstam forwarded an argument that depended on a hypostatic notion of taste. Like the Nietzsche of *Beyond Good and Evil*, he equated »bad« taste with a lack of discernment that comes from the juxtapositions of high and low culture within modern public culture.⁹ Heidenstam argued for the revi-

9 See for example NIETZSCHE: KSA 5, 1993 and its translation by NORMAN: 2002. Aphorism 224, »Der historische Sinn« (The Historical Sense) can be found on pp. 157–160 (114–116 in the English). See also Aphorism 244 in the same text found on pp. 184–186 (134–137 in the English), especially »Will man die ›deutsche Seele‹ ad oculus demonstrieren, so sehe man nur in den deutschen Geschmack, in deutsche Künste und Sitten hinein: welche bäurische Gleichgültigkeit gegen ›Geschmack! Wie steht da das Edelste und Gemeinste neben einander! Wie unordentlich und reich ist dieser ganze Seelen-Haushalt!« (If you want a demonstration of the German soul *ad oculos*, just look at German taste German arts and customs: what a boorish indifference to »taste!« How the noble stands right next to the most base! How disorderly and rich this whole psychic

talization of an aristocratic sense of style and individuation. *Unknowningly* demonstrating that the anti-realist discourse was a rather pregnant environment for the Nietzsche reception, Heidenstam's *Renässans* contained many of the motifs that would be associated with a Nietzschean *influence* in Scandinavian letters: vitalism, an opposition between health and exhaustion, perspectivalism, and a call for a modern aristocratic literature. However, it has already been demonstrated that these elements were already part of the Scandinavian literary debate and Heidenstam's work was a derivative of a tendency that already existed in the letters of the North.

This discussion of vitality in literary production dates back to Brandes' early theories of realism and belongs to the set of qualities of Scandinavian realist discourse that set the table for the Nietzsche reception and the anti-realist discourse. For Brandes, the creation of a vital literature was a particular challenge for Scandinavian modernists challenged by reactionary social formations. The problem of modernity remained for Heidenstam despite his change in emphasis. Brandes' question of how one could represent reality and embrace change had transmuted into a question of how one could claim to be authentic without a stable foundation. Though Heidenstam was to invert the Brandesian parameters of what was a »living« and what was a »dead« literature, he nonetheless opened his polemic by stating »Så väl inom litteraturen som inom de bildande konsterna äger endast en skola sundhet och livskraft så länge hon hyser hopp att i *sin* riktning kunna utföra något, som ännu är ogjort.« (In literature as well as in the plastic arts, a school has health and life force only so long as it carries the hope that its course can lead to the accomplishment of something yet to be done.)¹⁰

For Heidenstam, the state of a literary movement's health is determined by the power it has to contribute something new. Vitality clearly emerges as an aspect of authentically modern literature for Heidenstam; generated by the uniqueness of expression, and the ability to say the previously unsaid, or more specifically, to say things in a way that they have not been said before. He argued that the source of inimitable literature

economy really is!) 186 (136 in the English). Nietzsche is more nuanced than Heidenstam, seeing »bad taste« in its form as the juxtaposition of high and low culture as a historical condition that one could not rise above and that was of some use intellectually. Nietzsche, of course, associates »good taste« with nobility as does Heidenstam.

10 HEIDENSTAM: 1944, II. My translation.

resides within the creating subject, whose taste and thirst for the joy of life imbues the artwork with life force. Once again, the notion of an authentic literature was being tied to the qualities of the individual artist.

However Heidenstam attacked Brandes' notion that a living literature derived its life-force from its contact with socially relevant issues, Heidenstam's notion of artistic vitality revolved around notions of an isolated self-centeredness, the development of an individual's taste, and the expression of the aristocratic aspects of his personality through the originality of his work.¹¹ It is clear that Heidenstam's individual is not the politically empowered author-citizen conceived by Brandes, but rather one who is able to look away from the problems of the society in which he lives.¹²

Heidenstam's conception of the need for individuality was so strong and his rebellion against the notion of imitation was so radical, that he denied the authenticity of mimetic acts on two levels. First, his notion of the artist as an individual creator excluded the author as an adherent of a stylistic school. Heidenstam declares: »En skola blir med tiden ett vilsledande, urvattnat porträtt av mästeren.« (With the passing of time, a school becomes a misleading, watered down portrait of the master.)¹³ On the level of form, Heidenstam rejected traditional principles of the literary school in a rather interesting way. The vital artist does not perfect an exemplary form; he realizes that »litteraturen inom den närmaste framtiden blir sammansatt av de mest heterogena element« (literature in the nearest future will become a blend of the most heterogeneous elements).¹⁴ Agreeing with Bang's premise that realism reflects the modern condition, but placing a negative valence on this shared understanding, Heidenstam argued that the modern author has the ability to create an inimitable literature only by utilizing a mixed style determined by his own sense of taste and after his own pleasure, thereby escaping the imperatives of his environment. He rejects the importance of the mimetic illusion of a realist aesthetic and he denigrates the principle of a mimetic adherence to a tradition of artistic production. Heidenstam claimed that the reproduc-

¹¹ Heidenstam polemically attached the notion of originality to the »aristocrat.« This rhetorical move was designed as a criticism of mass society.

¹² This is certainly not an apolitical gesture, but rather a typical case of politics by omission.

¹³ HEIDENSTAM: 1944, 27–28. My translation.

¹⁴ Ibid. My translation. Is this a post-modern gesture?

tion of social conditions in art destroys the quality of that art, and that any attempt to emulate the form of the »master« creates a mere shadow of the original. Heidenstam was not, however, proposing an anarchistic view of artistic production in which the individual creates principles of content and form *ex nihilo*; he borrowed Brandes' notion of the free individual and disengaged this individual from a social realm which he then denigrated. His argument was based on an essentialist notion of an aristocratic privilege, and on the constructs of taste and refinement. The weakness of his argument lies in the absence of a legitimization of these principles; he extolled the aristocratic while denying the value of following a tradition. He called for an art that expresses the essential qualities of an ennobled personality through an exclusion of those aspects of human intercourse that can only be commonly experienced. He was calling for a delimited sense of commonality with an aesthetic vanguard. These aesthetes, while not quite Brandes' *aristocratic radicals*, were, at least in Heidenstam's mind, aristocratic.

If in *Realisme og Realister*,« Herman Bang pushed the possibility of a literary positivism to an absurd extent by claiming that the creative subject can suspend value judgment through the use of a style that accurately reflects the fragmentary nature of perception, Heidenstam agreed that perspective was an imperative but rejected the possibility of a value-free aesthetic. He called for a return to a species of aesthetic values that he believed to be self-legitimizing: the principles of uniqueness, pleasure, wit and beauty. If Bang located realism in the everyday experience of the individual expressed through the deferred modality of memory, Heidenstam revolted against realism by claiming that it is the quality of an experience that determines its value as the raw material of literary creation. In other words, Heidenstam rejected Bang's call for a modern literature that reflects the human relations of a society in a value-free manner. Instead, he called for a creative renewal, which would remain true to the values of egotism and the »joy of life«. Heidenstam's ideal author did not concern himself with the problems of everyday life. He believed that after almost two decades of literary production dominated by a realist aesthetic:

Tiden törstar efter glädje ... Vår tid har blickat alltför djupt in i naturens hemskaste kaninkällrar och har dessutom på det rent sociala området blottat ett alltför stort svalg mellan ideal och verklighet, för att icke de känsligaste och mest begåvade författare i förstone skulle gripas av svärmod och förtvivlan.

(The times thirst after joy ... Our contemporaries have gazed all too deeply into nature's terrible rabbit holes and as in addition have opened far too great a gulf between the ideal and reality in the purely social realm. It follows that the most sensitive and the most gifted authors would be seized by melancholy and despair.)¹⁵

This indicates Heidenstam's rejection of mimesis on the level of content. He rejected realism because of his view that everyday life was but lead in the wings of creation. As a result of this judgment, Heidenstam once again broached the issue of an opposition between the ideal and *reality* once again. However, in *Renässans* the weight had shifted. Idealism, formerly the favorite stalking horse of the realists became the favored term. Heidenstam's ideal, however, did not have the eternal characteristics of Platonic form nor was it a shared value; he defined it merely as an attempt by the individual to transcend the conditions of daily life in order to create.¹⁶ For Heidenstam did not reject Bang's reflection theory outright. He agreed that the bulk of the literature of his time truly reflected the state of his society. However, rather than valorize this reflection, Heidenstam claimed in the name of health that literature must look away from social conditions.¹⁷

It is here that Heidenstam's critique of naturalism found its moorings in an aristocratic elitism. He claimed that »naturalism« reflects the contemporary fascination with rooting out the workings of human nature. However, this spirit of inquiry has resulted in the fixation of the creative gaze upon the »colorless« depths of human misery and despair. Heidenstam's diagnosis reads: Literature is suffering from the spirit of the times; it is enervated and joyless. He contended that Brandes' living literature

¹⁵ Ibid., 21. My translation.

¹⁶ Heidenstam's conception of idealism was not a product of a nostalgic longing for a time when there was a shared consensus based on ethical formulations. It was more of an aesthetic principle whose distinguishing characteristic was the right to selfishness. For an interesting commentary, see (1944), 20–21 in *Renässans* for a discussion of altruism. It is there that Heidenstam's modernism is most apparent, as he flatly denies the possibility of recapturing the past and illustrates how the concept has changed with the passage of time.

¹⁷ This reflects the polemical nature of Heidenstam's *Renässans*. Martin Jay has reminded me that Zola connected the notions of health and vitality to »naturalism«. I would like to add that Georg Brandes did this as well, by means of his notion of realism as »living literature«. Heidenstam used his attack on »naturalism« as a springboard for his own agenda. His criticism of »naturalism« is by no means an accurate portrayal of the movement. He simply inverts Brandes' notion of health through engagement.

has been desiccated through its contact with the impulses of democratic politics and the mass-market economy. His logic: if every moment of happiness is an egotistical moment that excludes considering those masses who suffer, then the demand of the times for happiness requires that the artist disengage from the issues of the day. Heidenstam called for the artist to distance himself from compassion, to separate himself from the values of a society that equates one human being with another. The realist/naturalist practice of addressing mass social issues was, Heidenstam argued, a constituent factor in creating a common set of aesthetic responses.

Man kunna parodiera naturalismen på följande sätt. Naturalismen är en arbetskarl i blus – Leve jämlikheten! ropar han. Det är en orättvisa att ödet begåva några med snillets privilegium och icke alla. Vi avsätter ödet. Vi besluta, att kvickheten, inbillningskraft, skönhetssinne och alla sådant där aristokratiskt djävulstyg är tecken på talangslöshet.

(One could parody naturalism in the following manner. Naturalism is a worker in a blouse – Long live equality! he cries. It is unfair that destiny gives some the gift of a genius' privilege and does not give it to everyone. We dethrone destiny. We conclude that wit, the power of imagination, the sense for beauty, and all aristocratic deviltry are the sign of a lack of talent.)¹⁸

Heidenstam justified his notion of egotism aesthetically and employed naturalism as an example of what can happen to art when it comes too near to the masses. First, he stated that literary engagement with society has only served to thrust the best of authors into a state of lifeless depression. Next, he posited that contemporary democratic values have destroyed any aesthetic sense. Heidenstam's polemic equated naturalism with »leveling,« and he critiqued the effect that demands of the mass market had on the quality of literary production. In his parody of the literary climate, he represented naturalism as a worker who decried the very qualities that Heidenstam valorized: wit, imagination, and a sense of the beautiful. He condemned the market for its tendency to demand self-replication and its perpetuation of mediocrity. He delineated how this »mediocrity« occurs on two levels and again connected a set of aesthetic deficits to his critique of mimetic principles. For Heidenstam, both the imitation of social conditions and the attempt to extend the work of the »master« through an appropriation of a formal aesthetic innovation that

¹⁸ Ibid., 23. My translation.

had succeeded in getting the acclaim of the public lead to a loss of literary vitality.

Unlike the Brandes of the 1870's, who understood realism to be in opposition to the prevailing order, Heidenstam connected realism to what he claimed were the prevailing social conditions and to the dominance of the market place. He justified his predilection for idealism with the claim that realism already dominated society in the form of »den fete, materialistiske penningkungen« (the fat, materialistic money king).¹⁹ This species of material realism results in a society that judges an individual by his income. As an effect, exceptional authors »som leva i små land, där deras ekonomiska ställning blir ytterst tryckt och där den tid, som behandla människor efter hennes inkomst, bemöter dem med intolerans och öppet ringaktning« (who live in a small country, where their economic position is pressing to the extreme, and in these times that treat people according to their income, these authors are met with intolerance and open contempt).²⁰ Heidenstam argued that these conditions resulted in the relegation of art to work and subsequently the subordination of artistry to craftsmanship. Heidenstam wrote: »Författarna böra akta sig, att icke deras produktion nedsjunker till hantverksmässig, själlöst efterbildande, till ett skriftställer, som förtjänar öknamnet: skomakarerealism.« (Authors ought to be careful that their production does not sink to the level of soulless imitation, to craftsmanship, to a type of authorship that has earned the nickname, shoemaker realism).²¹ Heidenstam saw the realistic impulse as tied to and denigrated by market forces. He used the character »Herr Fotografman«²² to illustrate what he saw as the market-driven will to replication, criticizing the economic conditions of literary production for what he regarded to be the lack of variety in contemporary letters. For Heidenstam, the pressures of living off one's pen, which created this desire to copy exactly, also had created

19 Ibid., 25. My translation. An interesting statement on Heidenstam's part when one considers that even the initial thrust of modern Scandinavian realism was quite critical of the social conditions that accompanied the economic ascendancy of the bourgeoisie and the dominance of money in the economy as a whole.

20 Ibid., 21. My translation.

21 Ibid., 25. My translation.

22 Ibid., 24. »Mister Photographer.«

the loyalty of authors to an anachronism, namely the literary school.²³ The »realism« of a literary culture driven by economics had created the impetus for authors to reflect the very society that suffocated their ability to create original work. In this way, Heidenstam's critique of realism functioned as an attack on the bourgeoisie and their dominance in the public sphere.

At this point in his argument, Heidenstam's reconfiguration of the debate between the idealist and realists derives from his understanding of bourgeois society as the material base for realist production. If both Brandes and Bang criticized idealism, albeit with a different definition of the term, Heidenstam called for a return to idealism as a countermovement to the dominance of the realism of the market place. True to his claim that the literature of the future will be composed in a mixture of styles, he recognized that even »det naturalistiska framställningsättet är ju dessutom aldrig kunnat befria sig från all idealisering« (the naturalistic mode of representation certainly could never free itself completely from all idealization).²⁴ For Heidenstam, *Idealism* and *Realism* are not mutually exclusive terms. Literature is not a matter of either ideality or reality, but a matter of the *proper* mixture of both elements.

It is here that Heidenstam's polemic revealed itself in its true light. He saw all literary form, including naturalism, as a site of both realistic and idealist impulses. His argument that an author should look away from the suffering of the masses was not a call for a flight from *reality* towards the romantic ether of a previous generation. Heidenstam was not overtly nostalgic,²⁵ and the reader is left wondering about the principles that would guide the author whom Heidenstam exhorts to rise above the me-

23 Actually the situation was not quite as anachronistic as Heidenstam imagined – his critique points to a future where the »brand name« crept into mass produced literature. Think only of the JT Leroy controversy in the US, where the books of said author were marketed through the compelling biography of a person who probably did not write the books and may not even exist. See the »Arts and Leisure« section of *The New York Times* on August 23, 2007.

24 HEIDENSTAM: 1944, 26. My translation.

25 Heidenstam's lack of nostalgia is evident in the following citation: »Utveckling är tidens lösen, också på det rent estetiska området. Vi måste gå vidare, gå beständigt framåt och aldrig betvivla, att det som nu anses fullgott kan ersättas av något ännu bättre.« Ibid., 33. My translation: »Development is the solution of time, as well in the purely aesthetic realm. We must go further, go steadfastly forward, never doubting that what is considered to be perfected can be replaced by something even better.«

diocrity of a literature tied to the mass market. This wondering leads to a question: if taste determines the proper balance between idealist and realist elements in Heidenstam's conception of *renässans* literature, what is the foundation for his notion of taste if a mimetic adherence to tradition is a denigrated concept in his polemic?

Smaken är ett hjul, som går runt och plötslig lyfter i dagen den sida, som nyss vändes mot marken. I vår tid, som utmärker sig för nervös brådska, tycks detta hjul snurra ännu fortare än tillföre.

(Taste is a wheel that spins round and suddenly lifts that side to the light, which was most recently turned to the ground. In our time, which has distinguished itself by its nervous haste, it seems that this wheel spins even faster than before.)²⁶

Heidenstam's claims a historically cyclical conception of taste. Its relativity is further compounded by a cult of the new and by his belief that the findings of the natural sciences are the intellectual property of all nations. He cited the example of Darwinism, which he characterized as »alla civiliserade folks gemensamma tillhörighet. Den förblir ett vetenskapligt faktum i Ryssland likaväl som i Frankrike« (the possession of all civilized people. It remains a scientific fact in Russia just as in France).²⁷ Heidenstam's program was not nearly as radical as Hansson's, who saw the need for a complete break with what he saw as foreign, materialist thinking. His views on the progression of scientific thought have more of a family resemblance to Brandes' understanding of the trajectory of the Enlightenment.

However, the complications that arise when we try to make sense of Heidenstam's seemingly foundationless argument are lessened when we realize that the object of his polemic was a matter of form and not content. For it follows that if the progression of human understanding was common intellectual capital and that every instance of creation utilized a mixture of *Realism* and *Idealism*, then the content of a work of literary art did not determine its quality. In a world of common facts, it is interpretation and inflection that distinguish. For Heidenstam, it was form that allows the individual artist to escape from the demands of the public and to avoid the *danger* of having his work reflect the daily life of his society. The vitality of a piece of literature emerges when the author

²⁶ Ibid., 13. My translation.

²⁷ Ibid., 34. My translation.

forms his work in a way that does not reflect the historical environment in which he lives.²⁸

According to Heidenstam, form was the area of individuation, and individuality is the means by which an author can transcend the imperatives of his era's fascination with an environment that only suppresses his creativity: »Självständighet är emellertid mer att söka i framställningssättet än i innehållet.« (Self reliance is, however, found more in the manner of representation than in the content.)²⁹ Yet Heidenstam's conservatism is so evident that even his conception of self reliance and uniqueness was relegated to a perspectival imprint: »All andlig självständighet är ju relativ, alldenstund den huvudsakligen endast kan yttra sig i ett omgestaltande, ett kombinerande, ett utvecklande av något redan befintlig.« (All spiritual independence (autonomy) is certainly relative, in as much as it chiefly can only express itself in a transforming, a combining, and a developing of something already existing.)³⁰ Despite all of his posturing on the subject of autonomy, Heidenstam still needed to find a ground upon which his program and its emphasis on the »new« could stand in order to avoid falling into the abyss of the infinite regress of absolute relativity and re-packaging. He found this piece of ground underneath his own feet, on his native soil.

Vad Sverige angår, få vi emellertid säga, att någon naturalistisk skola utbildats inte därstädes. Många, ja, de flesta yngre författarna ansluta sig till den naturalistiska riktningen, men någon verklig skola ha de icke förenat sig till. Naturalismens framställningssätt torde över huvud taget alldeles icke passa för svenskt lynne.

(Concerning Sweden, allow us to say, that a naturalist school in a real sense has hardly been formed. Many, yes, mostly young authors have traveled with the naturalist current, but they have not united into an actual school. Naturalism's mode of representation does not at all seem to fit the Swedish temperament.)³¹

28 As if this were possible. Heidenstam's mistake emerges when we realize that his idea of history hypostatically monochromatic.

29 HEIDENSTAM: 1944, 54. My translation.

30 Ibid., 29. My translation.

31 Ibid. My translation. Strindberg's reaction to Heidenstam's nationalism is interesting to note in this context. In a letter dated October 9, 1889, he wrote: »Det synes mig som om Sverige med dess atmosfär hade lagt sig tungt öfver dig. Jag har känt det och har endast genom att isolera mig och i böcker (utländska) umgås med förstklassiga andar hållit mig oppe.« (It seems to me that the Swedish atmosphere has laid itself

Like Hansson, Heidenstam regarded naturalism to be a foreign germ on Swedish soil. However, in contrast to Hansson, he did not regard Sweden to be part of a larger German nation. While he certainly distinguished between native and foreign elements he did not romanticize or essentialize this distinction. For Heidenstam, there was an international commonality of intellectual and social movement, but each nation gave this common content an individual form. Individuality was expressed by the balance of common content and distinctive form, a relationship that he likened to a marriage: »Av alla naturstridiga äktenskap, som den moderna litteraturen skildrat, skulle intet bliva mer ohållbart än ett äktenskap mellan naturalismen och svenska linnet.« (Of all of the unnatural marriages that modern literature has depicted, none would be more untenable than the marriage between naturalism and Swedish temperament.)³²

Moreover, Heidenstam's notion of national character also factored in historical change. After a description of the character of Swedish poets past, he added: »Emellertid är vårt lynne en gång sådant, och det skall näpperligen lyckas oss att göra om det. Vi få alltså taga hänsyn till vårt lynne sådant det nu är, då vi försöka att leta oss till vilket framställningssätt, som lämpar sig bäst för oss.« (However, our temperament is simply such and it will hardly succeed to try and change it. We must therefore consider how our temperament is now when we attempt to find which manner of representation is best suited to us.)³³ Working within the paradox of a nationalist modernity dependent upon a creation of its own attributes, Heidenstam proposed a construction of national character in the present that comes about only through an observation of one's fellow countrymen not in order to master the formal parameters of a school, but in order to see »åt vilket håll hans eget och hans landsmäns lynne pekar och vart samtidens strömningar styra sin kosa« (in which direction his own temperament and his countrymen's point and where our contemporary currents steer their course).³⁴ However, remembering

heavily upon you. I have felt that and have only held myself up through isolation and through books (foreign) and thereby keeping the company of first class spirits.) My translation. STRINDBERG was responding to Heidenstam's manuscript of »Renaissance.« The letter can be found in STRINDBERG: 1961, 377. Collected as letter 1894.

32 HEIDENSTAM: 1944, 29. My translation.

33 Ibid., 31. My translation.

34 Ibid. My translation.

Heidenstam's admonition against taking heed of the masses, it is plain to see that he was calling for a brotherhood of aesthetic aristocrats, a counter-movement to Brandes' »good-Europeans,« the men of the modern breakthrough.

However, as we have seen, the construction of a national literature based on an aristocratic distance from the marketplace and on a particularly Swedish sense of form needed exemplars.

Ingen av vår inhemska författare är i så högt grad påverkats av naturalism som **August Strindberg**, men ingen har heller så subjektiv omstöpt den efter sin egen temperament. Någon naturalist, i strängaste mening har han heller aldrig blivit. Utan gensägelse speglar hans författarskap svensk lynne, men detta framträder långt mindre fram i t. ex. verklighets skildringen *Hemsöborna* än i andra arbeten, där renässansdraget lyser fram eller där infall och kvickheter stänka åt alla sidor som gnistor från ett smältstycke under hammaren.

(None of our native authors has been influenced by naturalism to the extent of **August Strindberg**, but neither has anyone so subjectively molded it after his own temperament. He has never been a naturalist in the strictest sense. Without doubt, his authorship mirrors Swedish disposition, but that emerges much less in, for example, the reality tale *The People of Hemsö* than in other works, where the renaissance strain shines forth or where fancy and wit are splashed on all sides like sparks from a piece of smelt iron under the hammer.)³⁵

For Heidenstam, Strindberg, who had suffered as much as any Swedish author from the vicissitudes of the market, was the prime example of how national temperament could function as a prism through which a foreign influence could be refracted. He attributed the *aristocratic* qualities of wit and imagination to Strindberg and compares his composition to the forging of a piece of steel, thereby emphasizing the form-giving power of temperament. Strindberg was depicted as the most subjective of form-givers, a designation reminiscent of Hansson's economy of the ideal poet. It is important to remember that the mark of the individual in Heidenstam's program was impressed upon his writing by the ability to give subjective form to the raw material of commonly held content. In this way it seemed that Strindberg becomes »Strindberg,« a metaphor, his name a substitute for the form giving power that is the mark of individuation in the Swedish literary aristocrat. However, it is not that simple, for the question of how the example Strindberg became the trope »Strindberg« remains unanswered.

35 Ibid. My boldfacing, my translation.

Heidenstam's »Strindberg« defies naturalism despite himself. There are two key phrases in our citation. The first is that no Swedish author has been as influenced by naturalism as Strindberg, but no one has recreated it so fully in his own image. The second is an implicit criticism of the novel, *Hemsöborna* (*The People of Hemsö*). These two statements are keys to understanding how »Strindberg« functioned as a trope in Heidenstam's anti-realist discourse. An exploration of how this process of changing Strindberg to »Strindberg« works will allow us the opportunity to amplify our previous claim that the anti-realist discourse had three characteristics: that it was a polemic rather than a debate about actual differences, that it was a generational revolt, and that the notion of authenticity was a linchpin in the discourse.

Our entry into this discussion is Heidenstam's implicit criticism of Strindberg's 1887 novel *Hemsöborna*³⁶ for having less of the aristocratic aesthetic qualities, and a series of letters written by Strindberg about *Renässans*. One letter in particular inform us of Strindberg's reaction to Heidenstam's essay, and Heidenstam's choice of an object of criticism opens up our understanding of how Strindberg functioned as a trope in this discourse rather than merely an example.

Heidenstam's use of this novel as a negative example is quite extraordinary in the context of our inquiry. It illustrates both the complexity of the Nietzsche reception in the particularities of Scandinavian literary environment and ties together the strands of our discussion of Strindberg's significance as a trope in the anti-realist discourse.

The excursus at the end of the first chapter concluded with an explanation of how Strindberg could consider his naturalism compatible with his reading of Nietzsche. This explanation hinged on an elaboration of Strindberg's conception of »greater naturalism« as developed in his essay *Om modernt drama och modern teater* published earlier in the same year as Heidenstam's *Renässans*. In this essay, Strindberg defined »greater naturalism« as the depiction of the psychological struggles that lie beneath everyday life. The naturalist, according to Strindberg, enjoys these struggles and does not look away. But Strindberg was careful to distinguish between *photographic* realism and his own method.³⁷ Strind-

³⁶ *The People of Hemsö*.

³⁷ See STRINDBERG: 1912, 289: »Om modernt drama och modern teater.« Two statements on this page are of interest here. The first reads: »Detta är det objektiva, som är så

berg also made a distinction between the literature of the *small*, who created a literature that used realism to uphold a conventional view of *reality*, and the literature of the *great*, who employed naturalism to explore their own lives. Strindberg read Heidenstam's essay unsympathetically less because of the latter's criticism of his novel than because he felt that Heidenstam had stolen his ideas and had reduced them. In a letter to Ola Hansson dated November 9, 1889, he wrote:

Men kleptomaniern Heidenstam, som griper hela kakan som vi bakat, och helsas som Renässansmannen, oaktad jag skrivit *Lifsglädjen*, *Giftas* 1, *Hemsöborna* och *Modernt drama* der jag afsäger dualismen som De Smås lilla konst för att predika naturalismen som den Stora Konsten, dit jag räknar *Fröken Julie* och *Creditorer*.

(But the kleptomaniac Heidenstam, who has grabbed the entire cake that we baked, and is greeted as the Renaissance man, regardless that I had written *The Joy of Life*, *Getting Married* 1, *The People of Hemsö*, and *On Modern Drama and Modern Theater*, where I renounce dualism as the art of the small in order to preach naturalism as great art. I count *Miss Julie* and *The Creditors* in this number.)³⁸

Strindberg regarded *The People of Hemsö* to be in anticipation of Heidenstam's *Renässans*. For Strindberg, naturalism was an elastic concept, and he recognized that the narrowness of Heidenstam's use of the term was of polemical import. He also shared Heidenstam's notion that innovation was a hallmark of individuality and that individuality was authenticity, therefore he claimed to have anticipated Heidenstam. This claim was not unique; it would be echoed by a similar statement that Strindberg would make with regards to Nietzsche. In our next chapter, we will discuss Strindberg's 1894 essay, *Mitt förhållande till Nietzsche* (*My Relationship to Nietzsche*), where he cites the very same novel *The People of Hemsö*, as a piece of evidence in a proof that he had anticipated the

älskat av dem som sakna subjekt, av de temperamentslösa, själlösa som de borde kallas.« The second: »Detta är fotografi, som tar med allt, till och med dammkornet på kamerans glas; detta är realismen, en arbetsmetod upphöjd till konst ...« My translations. »It is the objective that is so loved by those who lack a subject, by the temperamentless, the soulless as they ought to be called.« and »This is photography, which captures everything, even the speck of dust on the camera's lens, this is realism, a working method glorified as an art form ...« Thus, it is with some justification that Strindberg felt that his position was misrepresented by Heidenstam who by failing to acknowledge Strindberg's earlier statements on the limits of an »objective« realism had, in Strindberg's mind, appropriated his ideas. See also LAMM: 1963, 232–235 for a precise explanation of the events.

38 STRINDBERG: 1938, 66 . My boldfacing and translation.

philosopher.³⁹ In this essay, Strindberg cited a number of his works and concluded his list: »och romanen *Hemsöborna* försöksvis intagit den ståndpunkt som numera betecknas såsom Nietzsches« (and the novel *The People of Hemsö* experimentally took the perspective that nowadays is attributed to Nietzsche).⁴⁰ While it is not unusual that an author who is concerned about his own authenticity claims to have anticipated another's work, it is of considerable interest that the same text that was criticized by Heidenstam was used by Strindberg to claim primacy in both an anti-realist polemic and »Nietzscheanism«. In other words, Strindberg conflated the two discourses in his own understanding of his intellectual environment.

This issue will be addressed in much greater detail in the next chapter. For our purposes here, it is important to note that Heidenstam had little interest in Strindberg's own thoughts about his development as a naturalist. He was much more interested in creating a »Strindberg« who would serve as an example of both the best of Swedish letters and as a warning about the use of naturalist techniques. This explains why Heidenstam's definition of naturalism was much narrower than Strindberg's own understanding of the term. Heidenstam was not unaware of Strindberg's position,⁴¹ and just as he used Brandes' opposition between a living and dead literature to declare naturalism to be post mortem, he used an aspect of Strindberg's authorship, his »naturalism« to create his »Strindberg«. For despite Strindberg's understanding of the naturalist imperative, and his radicalization of it to the extreme where he declared that one could only depict one's own life in a »naturalist« sense,⁴² Heidenstam used *The People of Hemsö* as an example for the purpose of showing how even the *most Swedish* of authors could be negatively influenced to his detriment by foreign principles. While I wish to avoid speculations about Heidenstam's intentions, it is clear that his text was much more of a bid for primacy, than an actual statement on new ideas. For if Strindberg were merely employed as an example, then he can rightfully claim to have anticipated Heidenstam, even by the latter's own logic, but if

39 August Strindberg, *Mitt förhållande till Nietzsche*, first published in *En Bok om Strindberg* and collected in STRINDBERG: 1918, 323–324.

40 Ibid., 323. My translation.

41 The two were frequent correspondents, Heidenstam had several of Strindberg's manuscripts in possession, and he certainly read his work. They were literary intimates.

42 See my first excursus, which starts on page 50.

Strindberg were the trope »Strindberg,« then he was merely a function of the individualizing effect of form-giving and served in Heidenstam's polemic as an example of the theory of form-giving in praxis as part of a bid for authentic individuality through the act of appropriation. In other words, Heidenstam gave Strindberg a new form, »Strindberg,« in order to individualize himself further. Heidenstam argument is not aristocratic at all; it is once again the paradox of the bourgeois uncanny: one sees oneself as an individual through identification with a generalized image that is collective; in this case, Heidenstam chooses the image of the individual ennobled by his revolt against the masses.

It follows that »Strindberg« functioned as a metonym, a representation of Heidenstam's argument by virtue of a substitution of part for the whole in *reductio*. The use of this name represented the possibility of an aristocratic literature and the danger of falling prey to a fascination with the masses. Like Brandes' trope of the aristocratic radical, Heidenstam's »Strindberg« was self-reflexive, pointing back to Heidenstam as a newer and *healthier* force in Swedish letters who was able to see the mistakes of the previous generation of authors. In this sense, »Strindberg« did not function as an exemplar, but as a justification for the authenticity of Heidenstam's own production, acting as a trope representing continuity and the possibility of renewal despite the lack of any real foundation in the argument presented in *Renässans*.

Interlude: Two Norwegian Voices: Arne Garborg and Knut Hamsun

Up to now, our discussion about the Nietzsche reception and the anti-realist discourse has revolved around the categories of authenticity, appropriation, and origination. We have established that a concern with authenticity was a commonality in the work of the writers we have treated thus far, and when employed as a connotation of a trope, authenticity functioned self-reflexively despite its various ideological nuances. The notion of appropriation was given both a positive and negative valence. While it was given a negative connotation in Hansson's polemic against Brandes, it also enjoyed a positive valence when connected to the notion of creative form giving. This form-giving process was attached to notions of national character, inwardness or »personality«. The category of origin carries the most variable meaning, but a commonality in the

work of Brandes, Hansson, and Heidenstam becomes evident when we consider that all three men posited twin trajectories of thought that acted upon each other in the Scandinavian cultural environment. All three men had in some way discussed the overcoming of cultural duality, but their use of the concept of origins was largely underdeveloped. Instead, in rather circular argumentation, they relied upon the notion of authenticity to represent the individual who was in himself an originator, a »personality«. This is the metaphysical aspect of each of these men's thought delineated by the terms: the *aristocratic radical*, the *pan-Germanic prophet*, and the *Swedish aristocratic author* in turn. I suggested that perhaps a better formulation would read *the bourgeois uncanny*. I also concluded that this reliance on the notion of personality was a strong misreading of Nietzsche, one in which the doer was *hinzugedichtet* into the deed. Strindberg would not make this mistake. Instead he would highlight the fictionality of this process, the poeticization of the self.

At this point, our argument would be well served by a glimpse at one specific aspect of the status of truth in the anti-realist discourse. It is not my intention to discuss the philosophical ramifications of the relationship of any truth claim to authenticity, but rather to illustrate the movement in the locus of the truth claim in the specific discourse under discussion. The reason for this decision is twofold. First, the purpose of our inquiry at this stage is to delineate the superficial commonality in the anti-realist discourse that provides the receptive environment for Nietzsche. A claim that the trajectory of thought upon which »Nietzsche« was grafted in Scandinavia was concerned with a secularization of any claim to truth is particularly demonstrated by the anti-realist discourse, where even the notion of a commonly held social agreement is questioned. This is certainly evident in both Hansson's and Heidenstam's attempts to construct two different notions of the authentic artist. Second, our claim that the seeds of this discourse germinated within the aporia of the discourse of Scandinavian modern realism finds additional substantiation when we recall that the status of truth within this discourse was dependent on either an agonistic model in Brandes' case or a retrospective, perspectival model in Bang's theory of realism. Hansson's valorization of Nietzsche and denigration of Brandes were dependent on an argument that credited the »Germanic« with creative interiority. In addition, Heidenstam's polemic derived its »foundation« from a similar position: here, »Swedishness« was a construction of a form-giving power which arose from a re-

shaping of common European elements through a process of individuation that came from a form-giving interiority. In Hansson's case, we have an agonistic and perspectival model; in Heidenstam's paradigm of »Renässans« literature, we have the call for a constructed national perspective that integrated foreign elements under a model of subsumption. In either case, whether it is Hansson's notion of a deferred experience of truth, or Heidenstam's conception of a constructed truth, the truth is based on interpretation and the validity of this interpretation is determined on the level of authenticity. Authenticity here is defined as the claim of possessing the quality of either having primacy of voice for a group of individuals or having the quality of being an exemplary individual. In Heidenstam's case, the authentic writer was exemplary of a notion of »Swedishness« predicated upon a rather vague construction of national temperament. The concept of authenticity was mutable in the anti-realist discourse, however. The commonality of usage resides on the level of the conflation of »personality« and text.

The anti-realist discourse had an antecedent in Strindberg's notion of a naturalism that is delimited by self-observation, and found its own truth claim weakened by its dependence on a model of authorship based on an individual perspective legitimized by authenticity. The discourse of authenticity utilized representative examples through the office of self-reflexive tropes, which were in the form of proper names. These proper names functioned as predicates that authenticated the enunciator in a self-reflexive fashion. This is the surface of the »Nietzschean« element in Scandinavian literature. The deeper structure of this trajectory can be found in the *genealogy of self*. The *genealogy of self* is dependent on the internalization of a weakened truth claim, and a claim of authenticity that is dependent on constructed elements. Therefore, it is fitting that we illustrate how the commonality of a weakened truth claim functioned within the anti-realist discourse before we address this issue in Strindberg and Nietzsche's authorships.

In order to illustrate how this trajectory, the discourse of anti-realism, represented both an internalization and a vitalization of the notion of truth, we now turn to the example of two Norwegian writers, Arne Garborg and Knut Hamsun. Garborg provides us with some insight into the movement of the location of truth in the work of the Scandinavian writers who would be associated with *Nietzscheanism* and Hamsun's essay on Strindberg gives us a compelling example of a contemporary concep-

tion of the Swede's status as an interpreter, and internalizer, of his intellectual environment. We will begin with Garborg.

The Norwegian novelist, poet, and playwright, Arne Garborg translated Ola Hansson's Nietzsche essay in 1890. Garborg was quite a prolific essay writer as well and two of his pieces are of particular interest for our exploration of the development away from dominant naturalist tendency in the avant-garde in the latter part of the century. Both *Naturalismen – Fremskridt eller Forfald?* (1882) and *Den idealistiske Reaktion – Nyidealismen* (1890)⁴³ provide us with an interesting perspective on the changing status of an artist's truth claim in the second wave of the Scandinavian modern breakthrough. Let us begin with Garborg's position on the status of a naturalist truth claim:

Digtningen kann ikke løse problemet, og det gjør naturalismen heller ikke fordring på; men den kan og skal gjennom levende billeder holde sandheden således frem for os, at vi tvinges til at tænke.

(Literature cannot solve the problem, and naturalism does not lay claim to that; but it can and will hold the truth in front of us through presenting us with living images and in such a manner so that we are forced to think.)⁴⁴

In *Naturalismen – Fremskridt eller Forfald*, Garborg created an interlocutor, »Prof. Dietrichson« and placed the stereotypical objections to naturalism (or Brandesian realism) on his lips.⁴⁵ Garborg objected to the good Professor's postulations that authors should not represent political interests and they should stand above the fray.⁴⁶ Garborg disagreed and regarded naturalist aesthetics to be part a progression as it represented the literature that stood in »levende forhold til åndsretningen i sin tid« (vital relationship to the spiritual trajectory of its time).⁴⁷ This position was not unique and suffice it to say that Garborg's perspective on natural-

43 GARBORG: 1998. *Naturalism – progress or decline?* is found on pp. 172–179, *The idealistic reaction – New idealism* is found on pp. 271–284.

44 Ibid., 176. My translation.

45 Though »Prof. Dietrichson« represented the »old guard« and not the »young turks« of the anti-realist revolt, his objections were, for the most part, similar to Heidenstam's: fascination with the »low,« with ugliness, involvement in politics, the poet should be above the strife of the masses etc. Garborg's work certainly reveals that while Heidenstam was an aristocrat, he was not an *aristocratic radical*.

46 GARBORG: 1998, 179. »den virkelige digter ikke bør være partimand, men stå udenfor stemmen.« My translation reads: »the real poet ought not to be a man of the party, but stand outside the crowd.«

47 Ibid., 173. My translation.

ism in this essay is not particularly original. However, his emphasis helps us to understand how the naturalistic truth claim was legitimated by an argument that associated social engagement with progressive literature. Strangely enough the road to truth traveled through fiction.

As queer as this might seem, it can be explained when we realize that Garborg, like many other of his contemporary Scandinavian naturalists, exhibited a keen interest in the scientific method and its relationship to art. He argued that the naturalist employed the methodology of the natural sciences basing his depictions on empirical observation. However, for Garborg, the naturalist is first and foremost an artist, and as such he particularizes his findings through the use of images.⁴⁸ Therefore the goal of the naturalist is not to be objective, but to be as objective *as possible*.⁴⁹ Accordingly, truth in naturalist literature is re-presented in »living images« that act as a catalyst for thought; it can only be represented as the after-image of an observation. It is contingent upon perspective and the collective recognition of this perspective as a particular aspect of a particular »living reality«. Naturalism, for Garborg, was the speculative depiction of life with a truth claim that is contingent upon the validity of the perspective of the observer. This paradox of the truth of fiction was determined by the confluence of several relationships: the relationship of writing to its time, the relationship of the observer to the phenomena, and the relationship of the image produced from this observation to the mind of the reader. This model is very similar in deed to Brandes' model of a living literature. It differed in that it did not stress the antagonism of competing perspectives.

Garborg was to change his position on this issue, but his perspective maintained one theoretical consistency. By 1890, Garborg considered himself to be living in a time when »[d]en forandrede kunstopfatning har naturligvis sin sidste grund i en forandret livsanskuelse. Den positivistiske filosofi behersker ikke længe det moderne sind; vi lever i hypnotismens og

48 Ibid., 177. »Den naturalistiske methodes »videnskabelighed« består blot i, at digteren, gående ud fra almindelig videnskabelig grundsætningen bygger sin skildring på *iagttagelser*, videnskabelig nøgtern – objektiv – i sin skildring. Han bygger på iagttagelse, men skildrer billeder, – han er og bliver kunstner.« (The naturalistic method's »scientificness« consists only in that the poet, working from common scientific principles, builds his depiction on observations, scientifically sober – objective – in his depiction. He builds on observation, but depicts images, – he is and remains an artist.) My translation.

49 Ibid., 175.

spiritismens alder.« ([t]he changed conception of art naturally has its utmost basis in a change in the way life is understood. The positivist philosophy no longer rules over modern sensibility; we live in the age of hypnotism and spiritualism.)⁵⁰ Art still had a direct relationship to its age and intellectual climate, but Garborg understood the atmosphere to have rarefied dramatically in eight years.⁵¹ A writer no longer represented his observation in the form of living images that were representations of an observed collective »reality«: »[i] udtrykkene, ikke ›virkeligheden‹ blev kunstværkets gjenstand« ([i]n impressions, not ›reality‹ became the artwork's object).⁵²

Garborg's truth claim had commuted and was no longer contained in a living image of an actuality; it now resided in the perception of the artist as he observed an actuality. The notion of truth became self-reflexive, as it was not dependent on the mutual recognition of an image, but on an artist's sense of the authenticity of his own impressions. When we compare the language that Garborg used to describe his sense of the »object« of the artwork, this movement becomes even more apparent. In 1882, Garborg posited that the artist *built his depiction upon observation*, »iagttagelser« in Norwegian; literally, »a taking in the act«. For Garborg, in 1890, *the act of observing itself became the object of observation*. The realist emphasis on *what* became the impressionist fascination with *how*.

Ned med skolerne altså! Skrive, ikke for at være naturalist eller klassicist, men for at være sand, – det er opgaven. Om man skildre indtryk fra den indre eller ydre virkelighed, om man elsker at gjenfremstille eller at »skabe,« at tegne eller at fantasere, – hvis man stræber at nå sit eget ideal, at fyldestgøre sine fordringer til sig selv, så er man sand, det er den eneste regel som kan gives

(So down with the schools! Write, not to be a naturalist or a classicist, but to be true, – that is the task. If one depicts impressions from the inner or outer reality, if one loves to represent or to »create,« to sketch or to imagine, – if one strives to reach his ideal, to fulfill the demands he places on himself, then one is true. This is the only rule that can be given.)⁵³

50 GARBORG: 1998, 274, *Den idealistiske Reaktion – Ny-idealismen*. My translation.

51 Like many of his contemporaries, Garborg understood modern history to be an accelerated process. His notion of taste can be likened to Heidenstam's wheel, and that wheel turned faster and faster as time passed.

52 GARBORG: 1998, 272, *Den idealistiske Reaktion – Ny-idealismen*. My translation.

53 *Ibid.*, 282. My translation.

For Garborg in 1890, the only rule worth following is to be true to the demands that allow you to reach your own ideal as an artist. It is here that he shared Heidenstam's two-fold revolt against mimetic principles. The truth of the living image was no longer at issue; the emphasis had shifted to the possibility of being *true to yourself*. This shift in weight lifted the onus of having to be an imitator of either an aesthetic school or the world outside of yourself. Garborg went even so far as to dispute Heidenstam's notion of taste as a ground for an aesthetic theory. »Man disputerar ikke med en smagsretning; den er en kjendsgjærning og ingen teori. Den former sine teorier, når den allerede er der.« (One doesn't argue about a type of taste, it is a fact and not a theory. It forms its theories, when it is already there.)⁵⁴ For the Garborg of 1890, theory was an after-image that came after the facticity of taste, which is now elevated to ontological status.

This rejection of mimetic principles led to a dissolution of the trinity of relationships that had determined Garborg's notion of the truth of the living image in his naturalist phase. Of the three only one remained unchanged, that of the relation of writing to its time. The relationship of the observer to the phenomena observed had slipped to a relationship of the observer to the act of observation. The relationship of the image produced to the reader had lost its importance, being replaced by the artist's self-reflexivity, by the notion of being *true to oneself*.

Garborg's solipsism, the circular argument that the only discernible truth is to be true to oneself was a rhetorical device. The key to understanding this strategy and its implications comes when we consider the use of Nietzsche as a trope in this essay and the relationship of »Nietzsche« to Garborg's »norsk-norske efterskrift«.⁵⁵

I Tyskland er Fr. Nietzsche med sin forgudelse af den store individualitet og sin foragt for masserne en beslægtet fremtoning. Her i Norge har ny-idealismen endnu ingen representant. Men den kan få. Jordbunden er forberedt. Jeg tror, vi alle tænker mer eller mindre impressionistisk.

(In Germany, Fr. Nietzsche, with his deification of the great individualist and contempt for the masses, is a related phenomenon. Here in Norway, new ideal-

54 Ibid., 279. My translation.

55 Ibid., 282–285. »The very Norwegian Postscript.«

ism has no representative, as yet. But we can have one. The soil is prepared. I believe, that we all think more or less impressionistic.)⁵⁶

Though this was the only reference to Nietzsche in the essay, this passage acts as a semantic portal for the postscript, which functions as a key to Garborg's critique of naturalism, which he claimed acted as a barrier to the artist achieving the type of authentic relationship to his art that is called for in this essay. First, let us note that Garborg did not use Nietzsche as an exemplar for a revitalization of Norwegian literature. »Nietzsche« was merely mentioned as the representative of a related literary movement in Germany. The key is that »Nietzsche« was named as the representation of a literary movement based on individualism and *impressionistic thinking*, which for Garborg meant an emphasis on the only truth an author could represent, the authenticity of his own perspective. Garborg considered authors like »Nietzsche« to be as yet nonexistent in Norway despite the tenor of the times.

Let us turn now to the »norsk-norske efterskrift« keeping another thought in mind: Garborg translated Hansson's Nietzsche essay and in this essay, Nietzsche is the ocean. Garborg's essay was largely in response to Heidenstam and Oskar Levertin's *Pepitas Bröllop*, a brochure that was a continuation of Heidenstam's polemic in *Renässans*. Garborg opened his postscript by admitting that he read this brochure in despair, for he realized that in Norway there never was any naturalist literature in a proper sense, and that the critics who opposed naturalism, the very same critics who he represented in the figure of »Prof. Dietrichson« in 1882, had only benefited from Heidenstam's critique.⁵⁷ The problem in Norway, according to Garborg, was not naturalism, but the distance between theory and praxis. The imperative is to experience »[i]kke på anden hånd, ikke teoretisk, men praktisk, og selv« ([n]ot second hand,

⁵⁶ Ibid., 274. My translation.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 283. »Vi har ingen naturalistisk litteratur. Vi har bare nogle spredt begyndelser. Og det virker næsten løjerligt at læse de stærke udfald mod den naturalistiske skolekritik; det er nemlig den, vi plages mest af. Vi ligger og puffes med den gamle førnaturalistiske efterliggerkritik – som allerede har begyndt at tage *Pepitas Bryllup* til indtægt forresten – det er vor situation.« (We have no naturalist literature. We have only some diffuse beginnings. And it seems nearly silly to read these strong objections to the naturalist school, it is namely this that we are plagued most by. We struggle with the old, archaic, pre-naturalist critique, that already has begun to take »Pepitas Bröllop« to its credit by the way. That is our situation.) My translation.

not theoretically, but practically, and for yourself).⁵⁸ When we think of his earlier statements about representation, his postulation of the *living* image being fiction's truth has now been transformed to the authenticity of the already *lived* image as represented in literary art.

Garborg saw the ability to represent this authentic image as being dependent on experimentation and risk. He summed up his critique of Norwegian literature with an equivalent to the phrase, »nothing ventured, nothing gained.«⁵⁹ He argued that this reluctance to take chances resulted in the formation of a barrier, »a sea-wall« that isolated his fellow Norwegians⁶⁰ For Garborg, the real problem with Norwegian letters was not the debate between the naturalists and the new idealists, but the barrier that prevented authors from swimming in a sea of praxis. For it is beyond the breakwater that authentic literature is created:

Der ude går havet frit og stort i tårnhøje bølger, og menneskene svømmer og anspænder sine kræfter, når toppene og slænges ned i dalene; men kraftige svømmere blir de, og rigt og stærkt blir deres liv. Vi har bygget vor molo og vover os sjelden udenfor den, kommer aldrig til toppen af nogen bølge og aldrig til bunden af nogen dal, undgår de store yderligheder, skumples bare lidt hidt og didt af de brudte bølgers efterslag; vor lykke er, at vi har havt disse store urbegavelse; men der kommer en tid, da vi vil ønske, at moloen havde været pokker i vold.

(Out there the ocean is free and great in tower-high waves, and the people swim and tax their powers, reach the tops and are thrown down into the valleys; but they become powerful swimmers and their lives become rich and strong. We have built our breakwater and seldom risk ourselves outside of it, never coming to the top of a wave and never down to the bottom of a valley, avoiding the great extremities, jostled just a little here and there by the breaking of the great waves; our happiness is that we have had these great primeval talents; but there will come a time when we will wish that the breakwater had gone to the devil.)⁶¹

Garborg proposed a solution to this problem in his postscript. From his perspective, the breakwater enclosed the Norwegians in provincialism, kept them from merging with the great ocean and from experiencing its passions. Garborg took recourse to *dannelse* (Bildung) as remedy. The complexity of Garborg's rhetorical strategy and its place in the anti-realist

58 Ibid. My translation.

59 Ibid. »Vi har lidet vovet og lidet vundet.« My translation.

60 Ibid. My translation. »[d]et er den store molo,« literally, [i]t is our great breakwater.«

61 Ibid. My translation.

discourse becomes apparent when observing the particular tropes he employed. Like Hansson, he used the metaphor of the ocean to express a merger of self and text. Like Brandes, he called for an educational renewal that would bring larger European trends into local cultural life.⁶² In addition, he employed the Brandesian motifs of cultural deafness and sleep.⁶³ Garborg's solution to the gap between theory and praxis that he saw in his cultural environment entailed a simultaneous outward and inward glance. From Garborg's perspective, the artist whose only truth is contained within himself did not yet exist in Norway. The ground was prepared, but the insular environment had yet to allow for the type of exposure to the outside world that could produce a new literature. The metaphor of the breakwater had a double significance: it prevented those behind it from swimming in the great ocean and it kept those from beyond from entering. Seen in the light of the postscript of this essay, »Fr. Nietzsche« takes on an added significance of representing that which lies beyond the breakwater, he represents the ocean. The proper name »Nietzsche« had become a stand-in for the predicate of a sentence that could read: the authentic literary artist of our times would be a local species of »Nietzsche«.

Garborg's turn from naturalism involved a movement from a belief that an artist could represent living images from observation that could be commonly recognized as real to an insistence on an authentic and self-reflexive literature. His conception of the truth of literature had shifted. He assumed a position of compromise in the anti-realist debate, a perspective which lay somewhere in between Brandes and Hansson. The salient aspect of his perspective is that Garborg pointed out the dependence of *inwardness* upon access to the outside world. Knut Hamsun's article *Lidt om Strindberg* developed this idea in a more radical form. It is here that we can find a contemporary account of how Strindberg proc-

62 Ibid. See the bottom of 283 and the top of 284 for Garborg's complaint about the provincialism of the Norwegian University.

63 Ibid., 284. »Men hvad kan det nytte at klage? Det er ingen som hører på det.« and 284, »... han vil, som jeg selv har gjort, henviser til vort stortings bekjendte liberalitet overfor videnskab, til vore små forhold, til den mange krav ... og så vil han snu sig om på andre sia og snorke videre.« My translations: What is the use of complaining? There is no one who listens to it.« and »he will, as I myself have done, point to our parliament's known liberalism towards science, to our relative smallness, to the many demands ... and then he will turn himself over to the other side and snore some more.«

essed his many intellectual influences and turned them inward. It is to this article that we now turn.

Knut Hamsun's Strindberg essay was published in its entirety in *En Bok om Strindberg* in 1894.⁶⁴ However, it had been previously published in two parts by the newspaper *Dagbladet* on the 10th and 11th of December in 1889. Though not an obvious part of the anti-realist discourse, Hamsun was a fierce critic of the preceding generation of authors, and as such, his essay allows us to explore a perspective on Strindberg written by a writer who was a member of the second generation of modernists.

Hamsun admired Strindberg greatly⁶⁵ and his essay is interesting more for its emphasis than for any other quality. Here, Hamsun shows great concern for both Strindberg's connection to the intellectual life of his times and the mercurial aspect of the Swede's authorship:

Blot tilnærmelsevis at følge Gangen i hans Udvikling er et enererende foretagende. Den store Fart, hvormed han har bevæget sig, Nervositeten, Ustadiheden i denne Bevægelse, paavirket af en og anden hovedkuls Omstændighed, afbrudt af desperate Sidespring, er fremmed for os i Norden. Hans Udvikling er overalt rig paa Belærelse og interessant at følge; han er et *ejendommeligt* menneskeligt Eksempel, en rød Klud, den nordiske Litteraturs uforudseede Tilfælde

(Merely to approximately follow the course of his development is a nerve-racking enterprise. The great speed with which he has moved, the nervousness, the instability in that movement, influenced by one upside down situation or the other, interrupted by desperate digressions, all this is foreign for us in the North. His development is everywhere richly instructive and interesting to follow; he is a *strange* human *exemplar*, a red flag, the unforeseeable case in Nordic literature.)⁶⁶

For Hamsun, the hallmark of Strindberg's authorship is its propensity for constant change and the breath of the erudition that it expresses. Strindberg's course of development appears random from the outside, consist-

64 HAMSUN: 1965, 14–33, *Lidt om Strindberg* (*A little about Strindberg*).

65 Ibid., 14: »Det er nu mindst fjerde Gang, jeg skriver om Strindberg. Jeg vender altid med Glæde tilbage til ham; han har sysselsat mig mer end nogen anden og lært mig mer end de fleste. For mig er han sit Lands, maaske sin Tids mærkeligste Forfatterskikkelse: et overlegent Talent, en Hjærne tilhest, ridende sine egne Veje og efterladende de fleste andre langt bag sig.« (This is now at least the fourth time I am writing about Strindberg. I always return to him gladly. He has occupied me more than anyone else and taught more than most. For me, he is his country's, perhaps his time's, most remarkable literary figure: a superior talent, a brain on horseback, riding his own path and leaving most others far behind.) My translation.

66 Ibid. My translation.

ing of sharp turns and reversals; he exudes a nervous energy that is both unforeseeable and unique. There is a twin movement to this development: »Han har undersøgt det meste og angrebet alt.« (He has investigated most things and attacked everything.)⁶⁷ Hamsun's »Strindberg« seeks (»undersøke«) the bottom of things and his grasp is violent, he attacks (»angribe«) by grasping on that which he goes under to seek. There is a paradox to Hamsun's description. »Strindberg's« way of approaching contains the seeds of his movement away from his object. This movement is the key to understanding the relationship between knowledge and change for Hamsun's »Strindberg«.

This process can be explained more concretely when we place Hamsun's Strindberg essay within a context. Hamsun wrote: »Strindberg er maaske ikke først og fremst en Tænker. Men en Observator er han. En Observator maa være lydhør, maa kunne iagttage med smaa Øjne og opfatte hurtig, og Strindberg har lyttet, seet og husket fortræffligt.« (Strindberg is perhaps not first and foremost a thinker. But he is an observer. An observer must be sharp eared, must be able to take things in with squinted eyes and take up things quickly, and Strindberg has listened, seen, and remembered remarkably.)⁶⁸ This leads to a question: what is observed by the observer in such rapid succession and at such a nervous pace? The answer can be found in another essay by Hamsun, *Fra det ubevidste Sjæleliv* (From the Unconscious Life of the Soul), written in 1890.⁶⁹ In this essay, Hamsun used the same adjective, »Lydhørhed« (sharp eared) to describe a particular type of observation.

Man har et gammelt Ord, som siger: Der er mangt skjult i Naturen. For vor Tids nervøse, undersøgende og lyttende Mennesker forbliver færre og færre af Naturens Hemmeligheder skjulte, en efter en bringes de frem til Observation eller Genkendelse. Hos flere og flere Folk, der lever et anstrængt Tankeliv, og dertil er ømtallige af Gemyt, opstaar den ofte sjælige Virksomheder af det underligste Slags. Det kan være aldeles uforklarlige Sandsetilstande: en stum, aarsagløs Henrykkelse; et Pust af psykisk Smærte; en Fornemmelse af at blive talt til fra det fjærne, fra Luften, fra Havet; en grusom, fin **Lydhørhed**, der bringer én til at lide endog af Suset fra anede Atomer; en pludselig, unaturlig Stirren ind i lukkede Riger, der slaaes op; Anelsen af en forestaaende Fare midt i en Sorgløs Stund[.]

67 Ibid., 15. My translation.

68 Ibid., 18. My translation.

69 »Fra det ubevidste Sjæleliv« was published in *Samtiden* in 1890 and is also collected in HAMSUN: 1965, 33–44.

(People have an old saying: there is much that is hidden in nature. For our time's people, who are nervous, researching, and listening, fewer and fewer of nature's secrets remain hidden. One after the other is brought forward to observation or recognition. There is a strained intellectual life in more and more people, and they are thereby fragile of disposition, and in them there often occurs a strange type of activity of the soul. It can be an altogether inexplicable state of the senses: a mute, causeless rapture; a breath of psychic pain; a sensation of being addressed from afar, from the air, from the sea; a gruesome, fine, **sharp hearing**, which brings one to suffer even from the whisper from dimly perceived atoms; a sudden, unnatural gaze into closed realms, that are opened up; the perception of an imminent danger in the middle of a carefree moment [...])⁷⁰

For Hamsun, the sharp-eared observer was the one who perceived the »unconscious life of the soul«. His description of this observer in 1890 has quite a few parallels to his description of Strindberg's thinking process written just the year before. These parallels inform us about how Hamsun understood Strindberg's intellectual disposition. Hamsun saw a relationship between uncovering nature's secrets and an increasing sensitivity to the unconscious life of the mind. This suggests that the answer to our question resides in the simultaneous uncovering of external and internal secrets. Hamsun believed that an understanding of nature is the gateway to an increased sensitivity for the workings of the unconscious; the observer observes his own inner life as he observes. One has only to recall Hamsun's own early production, in particular *Sult (Hunger)* (1890), *Mysterier (Mysteries)* (1892) and *Pan* (1894) to observe a conflation between the emotional life of a radically subjective narrator and his environment. Once again, it would be one-sided to say that Hamsun was influenced by Strindberg. Instead he created a »Strindberg« crafted in the image of his own literary aspirations and the commonality of a movement away from the presuppositions of the preceding literary generation was a determining factor in the tropical nuance of the proper name. In any case, the perception of the secret realms of inner life required an observer whose mode of observation captured the mercurial and paradoxical sensations produced by the distance of observation and the proximity of experience. The movement produced by this process was sudden, violent and irrational. This process is remarkably close to Nietzsche's genealogical method with its oscillation between the pathos of distance and the

70 HAMSUN: 1965, 41. My emphasis and translation.

proximity of engagement.⁷¹ Without having Nietzsche in mind, Hamsun understood this method as his own and as Strindberg's.

In his Strindberg essay, Hamsun had expounded upon what he saw as Strindberg's hostility towards culture and his advocacy of a return to nature.⁷² I read Hamsun's use of the word »nature« to connote all that cannot be reduced by language, all that lies outside of human reason. In other words, *nature* was used by Hamsun as a term that represented the connection between the world outside and inside a human being.

The result of this relationship between the sharp-eared individual who senses his wordless inner depths is the sensation of being addressed from afar by that which lies deepest within. Hamsun described a state marked by the confluence of inner and outer nature, the originary state of a wordless union between self and non-self that has been read by others through the optic of the »Nietzschean« notion of the dionysian. For Hamsun, this state could justifiably be called the »Strindbergian«. For Hamsun, the name »Strindberg« becomes a metaphor that stands in for a literature that expresses a hostility to all that reduces the irrational to a rationalized social convention.

According to Hamsun, the literature produced in this hyper-sensitive state had a peculiar truth claim. Hamsun saw Strindberg's project as a radical reaction to the »untruth« that is culture. This is the context from which he understood Strindberg's aesthetic strategy. »Et landskabsmaleri kan aldrig opveje selve Landskabet, og en Venus af Sten aldrig en Kvinde av Kød og Blod. Hvad Digtningen angaar, saa blir Fremtidens Digtning ene og alene Referatet; ti kun i Referatet er der Sandhed, og kun sandheden er varig.« (A painting of a landscape can never capture the self same landscape, nor can a Venus of stone capture a woman of flesh and blood. Concerning letters, the literature of the future will therefore be only a summary account, for only in a summary account is there truth, and only truth has duration.)⁷³ The truth of art is located in an approximation, something that only approaches that which is *real*. This »truth« is, by its nature, a paradox, the sensation of the distance of what is near-

⁷¹ An explication of the genealogical method is the subject of the fifth chapter of this book.

⁷² See HAMSUN: 1965, 18, 19, 21, *Lidt om Strindberg*.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 18. My translation.

est to hand, and this is how Hamsun understood »Strindberg's« truth.⁷⁴ For him, the power and durability of Strindberg's appeal was contained within these paradoxes: »Selv Modstanderne af Strindbergs Grundanskuelse vil ofte nødsages til at give ham Ret i mange af hans uvrone Parodoxer. De hævdes med saa megen Kraft og Originalitet, at man rent uvilkaarlig føler sig slagen af deres Sandhed.« (Even the opponents of his basic premises will often be forced to admit that he is right in many of his paradoxes. They are asserted with so much power and originality that one feels involuntarily and completely struck by their truth.)⁷⁵

This is the uniqueness of Hamsun's contribution to the anti-realist discourse. His understanding of Strindberg's production as containing a »truth« expressed in palinodic and paradoxical terms leaves us with some insight into how Strindberg's production utilized a multiplicity of sometimes contradictory influences as raw material for the construction of an authorial subjectivity. We will return to this subject when we address the positing of dual origins in both Nietzsche and Strindberg's *genealogies of self*. Suffice it to say for the moment that Hamsun's reading of Strindberg ascribed a process of internalization and contradiction to the Swede's authorship. In this essay the Swede's production was characterized by the internalization of the weakened truth claim of the anti-realist discourse. The internal landscape becomes the site of antagonistic perspectives. For Hamsun: Strindberg »siger ikke, udtaler ikke sin Mening, han saa at sige *exploderer* den« (does not say, does not speak out his opinion, he *explodes* it so to speak).⁷⁶

This Nietzschean all too Nietzschean dictum is reminiscent of the philosopher's own statement: »Ich bin kein Mensch, ich bin Dynamit.« (I am not a man, I am dynamite.)⁷⁷ While it is impossible that Hamsun had this phrase in mind (*Ecce Homo* had yet to be published), his understanding of Strindberg's work underscores the easy associations that could be used to link the two men. The paradox of self-creation through

74 Nietzsche opens his preface to *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, (*On the Genealogy of Morals*) with the following line: »Wir sind uns unbekannt, wir Erkennenden, wir selbst uns selbst: das hat seinen guten Grund.« (We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers: and with good reason). NIETZSCHE: KSA 5, 1993, 248. For the English see DIETHE (tr.): 2007, 3.

75 HAMSUN: 1965, 19, »Lidt om Strindberg.« My translation.

76 Ibid., 32. My translation.

77 NIETZSCHE: KSA 6, 1988d, 365: *Ecce Homo*, »Warum ich ein Schicksal bin« (I).

self-destruction will be addressed at a later moment, however, the conflation of »Strindbergian« and »Nietzschean« motifs is telling. We will now turn back to the work of Ola Hansson and his contribution to the anti-realist discourse, where the merger between Strindberg and Nietzsche is even more apparent.

Strindberg as a Trope in Ola Hansson's Discourse: The Paradox of Continuity and Renewal

Zarathustra blir symbolen för den suveräne personlighet som han tidigare velat se hos Strindberg. I en uppsats från 1891 heter det om Zarathustra i överensstämmelse med den tidigare Strindberg-karakteristiken: »Han är icke av den grund tänkare, i vilka alla stjärna röra såsom i cykliska banor; när han blickar in i sig själv såsom i ett oerhört världsrum, finner han där vintergator, oregelbunda, förande in i hans tillvarons kaos och labyrint. Han är personligheten par préférence, blott och bart personlighet: värld, konst, vetenskap, moral; han står såsom tänkare i ett personligt förhållande till sina problem, så att han i dem ser sitt öde, sin nöd, men också sin bästa lika.«

(Zarathustra becomes the symbol for the sovereign personality that he previously wanted to see in Strindberg. In a paper from 1891, Zarathustra is described in agreement with the earlier Strindberg characteristics: »He is not at bottom a thinker in which all the stars move in cyclical paths; when he looks into himself as if in an unheard of world, he finds winter streets irregular, leading into his existence's chaos and labyrinth. He is the personality par préférence, purely and only personality: world, art, science, morality; he stands as a thinker in a personal relationship to his problems, so that he sees his fate in them, his need in them, and also his best likeness.«)⁷⁸

According to Ingvar Holm, Hansson first became enamored with August Strindberg during the latter's *Giftas* trial in 1884.⁷⁹ However, the two men did not enter into a correspondence until the fall of 1888 and met shortly thereafter. They were to remain friends until 1892 when their relationship fell apart due to a rather bitter dispute.⁸⁰ Very soon after the start of their correspondence, the subject of Nietzsche became a staple of both their

78 HOLM: 1957, 121. My translation. Note: The citation referred to by Holm is found in Hansson's posthumous writings on page 124.

79 HOLM: 1957, 196.

80 Ibid., 192: »Bekantskap mellan Strindberg och Ola Hansson började med svärmisk kult från den yngres sidan, den fortsatte som åtminstone tidvis oskyntad och ömsesidig vänskap och slutade med en krasch.« My translation. »The acquaintance-ship between Strindberg and Ola Hansson began with a romantic cult from the younger man's side [Hansson], it continued at least occasionally as an open and reciprocal friendship, and ended with a crash.«

meetings in Holte, Denmark and their letters. The contents of these letters will play a substantial role in our next chapter. Suffice it to say for the moment, that Strindberg was very much a part of the development of Hansson's »Nietzsche cult« and in a sense; the German replaced Strindberg on the highest rung of authenticity as this »cult« developed into an integral part of Hansson's pan-Germanic romanticism.

Hansson's perspective on Strindberg's relationship to Nietzsche's work shifted after *Nietzscheanismus in Skandinavien* in 1889, and this slight shift in his angle of vision was very much precipitated by the older man's protests. However, our purpose here is to clarify further a question raised in our previous discussion of Hansson's Nietzsche reception: within Hansson's bifurcated tropic of »tolkare« (interpreter) and »siare« (prophet), who were to be Nietzsche's interpreters in the North? Our initial response was that Hansson himself aspired to play this role on a pan-Germanic scale. However, let us recall his metaphor of Nietzsche as the ocean, and the work of the interpreter is like a wave, which forms at some distance from its source. Although Hansson never had any personal contact with the philosopher, he was aware that Strindberg had corresponded with Nietzsche, and this was added to the already high status that Strindberg enjoyed in Hansson's eyes. Because of these factors – Hansson's previous admiration for Strindberg, the latter's contact with Nietzsche, and the force of his personality – the name Strindberg would be turned into a trope in Hansson's discourse around Nietzsche.⁸¹ There are three aspects to this trope: Strindberg as the great personality, as a producer of subjective literature that formed a bridge between Hansson's conception of two antagonistic generations of Scandinavian authors, and as an interpreter of Nietzsche. We will treat each aspect in turn.

In the epigraph at the start of this section, Holm claims that Hansson's understanding of the figure of Zarathustra was derived from a previous understanding of Strindberg. Since a study of mutability of Ola Hansson's heroes is not within the parameters of our exploration, we will simply note that Holm sees a connection in Hansson's conception of the two men and thereby restrict ourselves to a notation of the characteristics of this figure. Zarathustra (Strindberg) is first and foremost a »personal-

⁸¹ Note: the connection between Hansson's discourse on Nietzsche and his anti-naturalist discourse has already been discussed. For all practical purposes, they are one and the same.

ity«. His thinking is not systematic, but rather an opening to an inner world created by the force of his own subjectivity. The conditions of his life are met with equanimity, and yet his mode of expression is dominated by pathos. As Hansson puts it:

Där låg i hela hans väsen, i hans stämmas tonfall, i hans mimik, i hans ätbörder, i allt, ett på samma gång behärskat och intensivt patos, vilket egendomligt harmonierade med ovädret utanför och vilket i min uppfattning vidgade sig och sammanslöt sig till det nationella temperamentet, den svenska folkindividualiteten.

(There lay in his entire being, in his voice's tone, in his expression, in his gestures, in everything, a pathos that was at the same time mastered and intensive, which strangely harmonized with the storm outside and which according to my understanding expanded itself and united itself with the national temperament, the Swedish folk individuality.)⁸²

Hansson's 1891 essay painted a dynamic picture of a Strindberg both passionate and controlled. The dominant figure in the description is the depiction of a pathos that both individualizes and engenders a merger with the environment. In Hansson's mind's eye, this pathos, an individual characteristic born of suffering, colors Strindberg's entire being, and plays a constituent part in an internal process that allows him to merge his individual temperament with the *national character* of the Swedish people. His inwardness is what leads him to this intersection of the individual and the collective.

Hansson's Strindberg, like his Zarathustra, was a personality par préférence. If Brandes, Hansson's trope of inauthenticity, was depicted as reflecting the conflicts in his environment, »Strindberg« harmonized his environment internally in order to project his own personality on the external world. If the source of this great personality's connection to the soul of his people is a pathos that creates equilibrium out of suffering without the loss of intensity, then how does Hansson's »Strindberg« create? Hansson's essay provides us with an answer. According to Hansson, despite the range of Strindberg's production which he listed as »historiska skådespel, dramatiska sagospel, psykologiska dramer, kulturhistoriska noveller, sociala noveller, polemiska noveller, en vidlyftig självbiografi, en utförlig svensk kulturhistoria, folklivsskildringar, dikter, satirer, essays, med mera« (historical dramas, dramatic fantasies,

82 HANSSON: 1921b, 66. First published in German as *Das junge Skandinavien*. (Dresden: E. Pierson, 1891). My translation.

psychological dramas, culture historical novellas, social stories, polemical stories, an extensive autobiography, an exhaustive Swedish cultural history, stories of folk life, poems, satires, essays, and more),⁸³ there is a common feature in all of his work. This commonality has its origin in Strindberg's personality, which leaves an unmistakable imprint («avtryck») in whatever he writes.⁸⁴

»Allt vad Strindberg äger, är förvärvat ur första hand: kunskaper, livserfaring, utveckling.« (All that Strindberg possesses, is acquired first hand: knowledge, life experience, development.)⁸⁵ Hansson's »Strindberg« uses that which is his and his alone by virtue of his individuality. His authorship is creative because that which he knows had a subjective base in an »original form« and his work is based on that which he experiences. In a sense, Hansson delimited a self-sustaining economy for his ideal poet: all that he writes comes from his own experience; and this experience is refracted through a subjectivity whose pathos is an individual extension of the folk. This pathos, in turn, is harmonized with an external world, which is created in its own image.⁸⁶ The world is subjectivized and the act of writing is merely a reaffirmation of the inner world of the authentic poet. He creates the world in his own image emanating out from pathos. »Och däri ligger grunden, varför varje Strindberg diktning har en doft av daggiga växtighet, medan så många andra böcker se ut som pressade blommor.« (And in this lies the basis of why every Strindberg work has the aroma of dewy vegetation while so many other books look like pressed flowers.)⁸⁷

Despite the fact that he emerged as an author during the first wave of the modern breakthrough and he considered himself a naturalist, Strindberg's writing was depicted by Hansson as living. For Hansson like for Heidenstam and for Hamsun Strindberg was not a dead naturalist despite

83 Ibid., 88. My translation.

84 Ibid. »Men så fullt utbildad var denna individualitet redan i sin ursprungliga form, att de avtryck, som var efterlämnad i alla dessa många diktverk, liknade varandra på ett hår.« My translation. »But this individuality was already so fully educated in his original form that those imprints, that were left in all these many poetical works, resembled each other to a tee.«

85 Ibid. My translation.

86 With these formulations, Hansson wonderfully describes his own creative work of the 1890s. See also ANDERSEN: 1992.

87 HANSSON: 1921b, 89. My translation.

his self-definition. The depiction of Strindberg as someone who made use of his own experience in his writing stands in sharp contrast to Hansson's depiction of Brandes' appropriation of foreign thought. It is important to keep this in mind, for our original inquiry was about who Hansson saw as an authentic interpreter of Nietzsche. Brandes, the initial interpreter, was deemed to be inauthentic on both racial and generational grounds. Hansson depicted this inauthenticity as deriving from Brandes' biological confliction, his being at the same time a Jew and a Dane. Strindberg, like Brandes, was depicted as being conflicted, but unlike Brandes, Hansson gave his »Strindberg« the qualities of *Innerlichkeit* and concreteness necessary to fit his ideological picture of a pan-Germanic author. Strindberg reconciled his disharmony harmoniously, for he carried the pathos necessary for the task.

As a result of these qualities, Strindberg was not subjected to the generational polemic delivered by Hansson. He saw the older man as »den mest utpräglade svensken inom hela det ›unga Sverige‹« (the most distinctive Swede within ›young Sweden‹),⁸⁸ Again the paradox of Hansson's racially driven reasoning emerges. Strindberg, who is »ensammare än någon annan man i Skandinavien« (more alone than any other man in Scandinavia),⁸⁹ is the most Swedish of all the Swedish authors. Hansson gives Strindberg's internalization of the conflicts in his environment the quality of a personal conflict. As a result of this reasoning, Hansson understood Strindberg's production to act as a bridge between the past and the future:

Den skönlitterära produktionen växer alltså i tre grener. *Det unga Sverige* i trängre mening målar med starkt personlig konst och med minutiös noggrannhet själslivets rörliga spel med dess ljus och skugga. De litterära koryféerna för den så kallade kvinnofrågan kämpa för *sin* sak i böcker och från scenen med mer energi än talang. August Strindbergs mäktiga ande ompänner bäggedera. Han är den förste och den störste.

(The literary production grows therefore in three branches. *Young Sweden*, in a more narrow sense, paints with strongly personal art and with minute exactitude the life of the soul's dynamic play of light and shadow. The literary troops for the so-called women's question struggle for their cause in books and from

88 Ibid., 91. My translation.

89 Ibid., 112. My translation.

the stage with more energy than talent. August Strindberg's powerful spirit spans both sides. Strindberg is the first and the greatest.)⁹⁰

Within the ideological paradox of a call for renewal along age-old racial lines, a representative individual is needed to keep the paradigm from bursting asunder. Any call for a cultural revitalization based on racial or cultural purity needs to construct a figure that represents both continuity with the essential values of the nation and the promise of a better future. The name Strindberg played that role in Hansson's discourse. Hansson saw Strindberg's production as encompassing the essential characteristics of a personality that instinctively was united with his concept of »Swedishness« in the context of the greater-German cultural nation. As such, Strindberg had a distinct role to play in Hansson's understanding of the role of the authentic poet. For the young ones »visar han hän mot den dunkel höljda framtid, vilken den store diktaren är kallad att fatta med sin aning« (he points towards the unrevealed future, which the great poet is called upon to grasp with his foresight).⁹¹ In Hansson's worldview, Strindberg would show the way to the future, and this future was determined by the current's return to the primordial ocean, Nietzsche.

For Hansson, the future of Scandinavian culture would be played out along pan-Germanic lines. This idea in all its complexity found its abbreviation in the name Nietzsche. The significance of Strindberg as metaphor here is telling on the level of a »logic« fueled by ideology. »Strindberg« as trope represented the essential modern Swedish writer for Hansson. In Hansson's anti-naturalist discourse, he was the figure who was able to integrate the conflicts of the age in a manner that reformed the agon of a conflicted social environment into a pathos that was both timeless and intrinsic to his blood. By fusing »Strindberg« to the philosopher, the Swede becomes part of a current flowing out from the great ocean that Hansson understood as »Nietzsche«.

We will leave the relationship between Hansson and Strindberg for the moment, only to return to it in greater detail in the next chapter. For Hansson's depiction of Strindberg's relationship to Nietzsche will have a telling effect on the scholarship on the encounter between the two. It is to this scholarship and its primary sources that we now turn.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 83: My translation.

⁹¹ Ibid. My translation.