

SPIRITUAL TRANSCENDENCE AND ANDROGYNY
WITHIN SWEDISH AND FINNISH TRANSNATIONAL SYMBOLISM

Birte Bruchmüller

Spiritual transcendence and androgyny
within Swedish and Finnish transnational Symbolism

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1. Introduction

The depiction of the human body in the moment of an enhanced spiritual or religious state or an introspective mode was one central topic within the European Symbolist art movement at the end of the nineteenth century. Besides the archetype of the *femme fatale* as an oversexualized and spiritually unable body as another prominent Symbolist visual trope, the spiritually immersed human body and first and foremost the spiritually refined male body were extensively displayed within Symbolism in a wide range of different subject matters such as within portraiture or within biblical, allegorical, classical mythological or historical accounts.¹ At the same time that Symbolism revolved around exploring the immaterial, metaphysical and spiritual beyond the physical world, Symbolism was also based upon the notion of spiritual transcendence as something merely male-connoted. Thereby, one important vehicle for expressing and attaining spiritual male transcendence was the idea of an androgynous mental state and an androgynous feminised appearance of the male human body, based upon neo-platonic and theosophical sources that Symbolism drew on. Thus, the androgynous powerful state as a tool for accessing contact with a higher immaterial world was within Symbolist circles exclusively connoted with the male body and mind and was thereby also most often regarded to be attained through male asexuality as within the art programme of the Symbolist *Rose+Croix*-order and its salons.² This Symbolist notion of the male-defined spiritual transcendence functions as a crucial starting point for this project, at the same time

¹ See for instance: Patricia Mathews, *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art*, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill. 1999, p. 86ff; Michelle Facos, “Contested Gender”, in: *Symbolist Art in Context*, Berkeley 2009, p. 115ff.

² Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999, p. 90.

that the project also is interested in extensions and revisions of this Symbolist concept and, in others words, the exploration of the female spiritually enhanced body as well as physical and spiritual love as another means of attaining a powerful androgynous state besides the asexual mode.

The central importance of the depiction of the human body and its immaterial, spiritual and also androgynous qualities had, on the contrary, little to do with the so-called evocative landscape as the dominating Nordic subject matter at the turn of the twentieth century, which within respective Swedish and Finnish art history has been most often associated with a Symbolist expression and which at the same time rarely included the display of a human being.³ Swedish and Finnish late nineteenth-century art generally revolved around National Romanticist themes and topics such as Finnish or Swedish nature, culture and history. Whereas the idea of Symbolism as a variety of the Swedish or Finnish respective National Romanticist art predominated throughout the twentieth-century and predominates still today, the European Symbolist art movement was, due to its interest in the human being's immateriality and spirituality and its exploration of general, ideal and fanciful subject matters of a literary, mythological, religious or visionary kind, not concerned with national subject matters and purposes, as I argue. Although the Symbolist movement emerged in the Parisian art circles in the late 1880s and early 1890s, it had participants from all over Europe, for example from Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Poland, the Baltic States, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium and England, who actively contributed to the Symbolist visual language, which is why I regard this movement as a transnational artistic phenomenon.⁴ A wide

³ See for instance: Tomas Björk, "Det besjälade landskapet. Nationalromantik & symbolism i svenskt sekelskiftesmåleri", in: Daniel Prytz, Karin Sidén & Anna Meister (eds.), *Symbolism & Dekadens*, Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Stockholm 2015, p. 39; or Daniel Prytz, "Särpräglad svensk symbolistisk konst. Ett urval ca. 1890–1920", in: Daniel Prytz, Karin Sidén & Anna Meister (eds.), *Symbolism & Dekadens*, Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Stockholm 2015, p. 103.

⁴ The Italian painters Gaetano Previati and Luigi Bonazza, the Swiss painters Ferdinand Hodler and Carlos Schwabe, the Austrian painter Gustav Klimt, the Belgian painters Jean Delville or Fernand Khnopff, the German painter Ludwig von Hofmann and Max Klinger, the Polish painter Edward Okuń and the Pre-Raphaelite painters from the second generation Edward Burne-Jones, William Waterhouse or Simeon Solomon can be mentioned as participants in a transnational Symbolist movement.

range of international artists were, for instance, represented at the Symbolist *Salons de la Rose+Croix* in Paris in 1892, which served as an important starting point for a transnational Symbolist movement.⁵

Artists such as the Swedish graphic artist Tyra Kleen (1874–1951), the Swedish painter Olof Sager-Nelson (1868–1896) and the Finnish painters Beda Stjernschantz (1867–1910), Ellen Thesleff (1869–1954) and Magnus Enckell (1870–1925) all developed diverse subject matters during their different Parisian sojourns in the 1890s and onwards, which revolved around the spiritually enhanced human body and which drew upon theosophical and neo-platonic sources, which is why they will be studied as active and important contributors to the Symbolist transnational movement in this project. In addition to these five selected artists, there can also be mentioned the Danish painter Mogens Ballin, the Norwegian graphic artist Olaf Lange and the Swedish painters Pelle Swedlund and Ivan Aguéli, who with their diverse explorations of religious, mythological themes as well as eternal and abstract landscapes also are to be regarded as contributors to transnational Symbolism, as I understand it. The art of these Nordic artists, which I examine as contributions to the transnational and European-wide Symbolist movement, is, within Swedish and Finnish art history, either presented as exceptional in relation to the dominating national artistic expressions or overlooked from art history writing. Since Nordic art history throughout the twentieth century was written and is still today to a high degree written alongside national borders and since national biases dominated Nordic art historiography at large, Nordic late nineteenth-century art, which does not deal with

⁵ The Swiss artists Carlos Schwabe, Ferdinand Holder, Félix Vallotton, The Belgian painters Jean Delville, Fernand Khnopff and Georg Minne, The Dutch-Indonesian painter Jan Toorop, The Spanish painter Rogelio de Egusquiza, the German sculptor Auguste Niederhausen-Rodo, the Danish artist Arild Rosenkrantz, the Finnish sculptor Ville Vallgren, the Italian painter Gaetano Previati as well as many French painters like Alexandre Séon and Alphonse Osbert exhibited amongst others at *the Salon de la Rose+Croix* in 1892; Joséphin Péladan, *Catalogue du Salon de la Rose+Croix: Geste Esthétique* [1892], Galerie Durand-Ruel, *INHA* Paris 1892, accessed on the 12th of April 2021; Mary Slavkin, *Dynamics and Divisions at the Salons of The Rose+Croix: Statistics, Aesthetic Theories, Practices, and Subjects*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, The City University of New York, New York 2014, pp. 299–304.

national natural, cultural or historical themes like the Symbolist works by the selected five Swedish and Finnish artists, has not been paid much attention to.⁶

So has it been assumed within Swedish art history that Swedish late nineteenth-century art was not influenced by the Parisian Symbolist occult *Rose+Croix*-order as, for instance, asserted by Georg Nordensvan in 1928.⁷ Although the importance of this Symbolist circle for the art of Sager-Nelson has been recently paid more regard to, as by Daniel Prytz in 2015,⁸ the contact between Swedish artists like Sager-Nelson, Tyra Kleen and Ivan Aguéli and the *Salons de la Rose+Croix*, which were held between 1892 and 1897, and their Symbolist and androgynous art programme is to a large degree unexplored. With regard to the artistic development of not only Kleen and Sager-Nelson but also that of Enckell, Stjernschantz and Thesleff, *the Salons de la Rose+Croix* and their art programme was, I argue, in different ways a relevant point of origin for the emergence of their depiction of the spiritually enhanced human body. Against this backdrop, this project sets out to examine the five selected Swedish and Finnish artists' participation in the transnational Symbolist movement, which revolved around the spiritually refined human body and for which the *Rose+Croix*-order was an important artist circle.

⁶ Those national biases have within recent research been stressed as a historiographical problem. See for instance: "Summary: The Myth of Return: Scandinavian Artists in France 1889–1908", in: Vibeke Röstorp, *Le mythe du retour. Les artistes scandinaves en France de 1889 à 1908*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Stockholm University, Stockholms universitets förlag, Stockholm 2013; Vibeke Röstorp, "The Third Culture Artists: Scandinavians in Paris", in: Charlotte Ashby, Grace Brockington, Daniel Laqua & Sarah Victoria Turner (eds.), *Imagined Cosmopolis. Internationalism & Cultural Exchange, 1870–1920s*, Peter Lang, Oxford, 2019, pp. 165–183; Alexandra Herlitz, *Greiz-sur-Loing revisited: the international artists' colony in a different light*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Göteborgs universitet, Makadam, Gothenburg 2013; Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, *Colour Asceticism and Synthetist Colour. Colour Concepts in turn-of-the-20th-century Finnish and European Art*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, University of Helsinki 2012.

⁷ While closely associating the Parisian late nineteenth-century art with symbolism, mysticism, occultism, and movements such as the *Rose+Croix*, Nordensvan describes the Swedish art from the 1890s as independent, and characterised by its protest against a so-called internationalism: Georg Nordensvan, *Svensk konst och svenska konstnärer i nittonde århundradet, del 2, Från Karl XV till sekelslutet*, Bonnier, Stockholm 1928, p. 335f.

⁸ Daniel Prytz, Stockholm 2015, pp. 101–123.

1.1. Aim and Research Questions

This Doctoral thesis aims to examine a group of Swedish and Finnish artists as participants in and contributors to a transnational Symbolist movement. By positioning the selected artists and their art within a European transnational Symbolist art movement, this study aims to explore their active role within the movement. By revolving around the exploration of the spiritually enhanced body and mind within portraiture, motifs from Greco-Roman literature and history and interpersonal intimate encounters, the aim of this research is to study how the examined artworks by the selected Swedish and Finnish artists can be understood thematically, theoretically, aesthetically, and stylistically as active contributions to the transnational Symbolist movement. It aims also to place the studied works of art in relation to the socio-historical context of the *fin-de-siècle* and its cultural and social notions.

It aims thereby to explore the interrelations between the fifteen selected artworks by the five Swedish and Finnish artists and, primarily, the Parisian *Rose+Croix*-order and their salons as an important circle for the emergence of a transnational Symbolist movement, but also their interrelationship with other important theoretical and aesthetic sources for a transnational Symbolist visual language. Particular focus will be laid on the performance of gender and sexuality within the selected works as well as on the role of transgressions of gender binary norms.

In this sense, it sheds light on a relatively unexplored and important Symbolist strand in contrast to a Swedish or Finnish National Romanticist art as a variety of Symbolism at the turn of the twentieth century. By studying a group of Symbolist Swedish and Finnish artists and their exploration of the human body's spiritual and immaterial state, this project seeks at the same time to both stress nationally independent Symbolist expressions as not that exceptional as assumed within art history and to include excluded Symbolist artists within Swedish and Finnish art history. In this way this project intends to contribute to a more appropriate inclusion of the selected internationally based Swedish and Finnish artists within not only Nordic art history but also within the overall European art history

on Symbolism and, in other words, constitutes a crucial historiographical revision.

Since this Doctoral thesis is concerned with a Symbolist visual language that circulated throughout Europe in the late nineteenth century, this study takes into account a European-wide perspective as a spatial framework, in which cultural and artistic expressions crossed and breached national borders rather than considering national borders as an obstacle for cultural and artistic ideas.⁹ Thereby, it is an innovative complement to national Nordic art history writings.

- How did the selected artists contribute to the transnational Symbolist movement?
- What themes connected to the Symbolist movement do the artists deal with?
- How are androgynous Symbolist theories and aesthetic ideals expressed in their art?
- How is gender performed and negotiated in the artworks?
- How do the artworks relate to the cultural-historical context of their time?

1.2. Material and selection criteria

Material

A total of fifteen artworks in different techniques and of diverse subject matters by Enckell, Sager-Nelson, Thesleff, Stjærnschantz and Kleen have been selected as objects of research that revolve around the topic of the human body or several human bodies in the moment of a spiritual immersion through either a contemplation in solitude or during an intimate interpersonal encounter. During the process of selecting the works which were to be

⁹ See for instance: Grace Brockington & Sarah Victoria Turner: “Introduction: Art and Culture Beyond the Nation”, in: Charlotte Ashby, Grace Brockington, Daniel Laqua & Sarah Victoria Turner (eds.), *Imagined Cosmopolis. Internationalism and Cultural Exchange, 1870–1920s*, Peter Lang, Oxford 2019.

examined, three different subject matters could be distinguished by myself, namely portraiture, classical Greco-Roman mythological, historical or literary themes as well as intimate interpersonal encounters, which generated the structure of the three analyses chapters along these thematical categories.

Thus, seven portrait paintings by Enckell, Sager-Nelson, Thesleff, and Stjernschantz that enhance the sitter's intangible and spiritual features rather than the mundane and material, are included in the first analysis chapter. Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* (1894), oil on canvas; Thesleff's *Self-Portrait* (1894–95), lead pencil and sepia on paper and her *Thyra Elisabeth* (1892), oil on canvas; Sager-Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* (1890s), oil on canvas, and his *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* (1895), oil on canvas; as well as Stjernschantz's *Self-Portrait* (1892), oil on canvas, and her *Aphorism* (1895), oil on canvas, are explored in this chapter as expressions of both male and female spirituality. Moreover, both Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895), gouache, chalk and pencil on paper; Enckell's oil on canvas *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897), Stjernschantz's oil on canvas *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897), and Kleen's lithograph *Écho et Narcisse* (1903), will be studied in the second analysis chapter, which deals with classical Greco-Roman myths, legends and Arcadia. In addition to this, three works by Kleen that draw upon the Decadent literature of Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire and represent scenes of heterosexual couples and their intimate closeness, namely her lithographs *Sed Non Satiati* (1902); *La Chevelure* (1905); and *Nevermore* (undated) will be examined together with Enckell's display of a homosocial group of naked male adolescents in his oil on canvas *Youth* (1897) in the last analysis chapter as depictions of intimate and sexually desirable interpersonal encounters.

In this way both the thematic structure of the three analyses chapters and the selected artworks themselves represent literary, mythological and classical historical subject matters and portraits beyond the mundane and material, which were central within the transnational Symbolist movement. At the same time that the analyses chapters are structured thematically, they also offer opportunities for applying one of the two models of attaining an androgynous powerful mental state, that I present later in depth, through either pre-sexuality/asexuality or spiritual loving union.

Hence, the analyses chapters also examine how Symbolist theory on the

recreation of the primordial androgyne is at play, which was mainly informed by neo-platonic thinking but also theosophy. Whereas the works that are included in the portrait chapter and the chapter on the classical Greco-Roman literary and historical themes will be studied as possible expressions of the pre-sexual or asexual model of recreating the powerful androgyne, the fifth chapter on intimate interpersonal encounters will, on the contrary, be studied in relation to the second model, that is, spiritually loving unions. This androgynous Symbolist theory will be further explained in the third chapter.

Furthermore, both published and unpublished archival material from the artists' private or public estate records, such as letters, correspondence, diary entries, sketches, photographs and notes on art, artists, literature etc., functions as a crucial primary source. A wide scope of material on Ellen Thesleff in the archive of *The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland*, on Beda Stjernschantz in both the archive of *The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland* and the *Ateneum Research Library* and on Magnus Enckell in the manuscript collection of *The National Library of Finland* in Helsinki was thoroughly and comprehensively studied. In addition to this, sketches of studied art, sketches as part of the production process, other works of art by Thesleff and Enckell, as well as copies or sketches of other artworks made by Enckell, that are included in Ateneum's collection and accessed through Ateneum's digital museum collection, are also part of my visual source material. Although no concrete artist estate of Sager-Nelson exists, both published and unpublished letters at *The National Library of Sweden* in Stockholm to, amongst others, Pontus Fürstenberg and Albert L. Johannes Engström, written by Sager-Nelson, were examined. In addition to this, his published letter correspondences were studied as well in Ragnar Hoppe's contribution from 1935, Axel Gauffin's from 1945 and Ulf Torell's from 2004.¹⁰

A rich number of letters, diary entries, sketches and other material in Tyra Kleen's private artist estate exist at Valinge gård in Sweden, which has

¹⁰ Ragnar Hoppe, *Olof Sager-Nelson och hans brev till Albert Engström*, Örebro 1935; Axel Gauffin, *Olof Sager-Nelson*, Sveriges allmänna konstfören., Stockholm 1945; Ulf Torell, *Målaren Olof Sager-Nelson och mecenaten Pontus Fürstenberg: breven berättar*, Warne, Sävedalen 2004.

been accessible since 2001. Kleen bequeathed her estate to the *Riddarhuset* (*The House of Nobility*) with the stipulation that it should not be opened until fifty years after her death, which was reached in 2001. Unfortunately, Tyra Kleen's private artist estate was still not accessible to me. Since the very beginning of this project, that is autumn 2017, Kleen's private artist estate remained closed due to an ongoing inventory project, conducted by the custodian, Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin.¹¹ This is why the archival material on Kleen is relatively little compared to the empirical material about the other selected artists and restricted to a transcript version of her diaries from the years between 1895 and 1903 that I received from Gullstrand Hermelin. Nevertheless, some of Kleen's letters to, amongst others, Ellen Key could be found at *The National Library of Sweden*, where 20 lithographs by Kleen, such as the prints *Sed Non Satiati* (1902) and *La Chevelure* (1905), were also studied.¹² Further published visual works by Kleen were accessed online in the digitised Swedish *Ord och Bild*-journals, such as the illustrations for Mons Lie's *The Death's Warning* (1901). Newspaper articles written by Kleen, like her "Symbolism för Alla", published in *Aftonbladet* on the 24th of September 1910, or about Kleen, such as Elin Wägner's interview with Kleen, published in *IDUN* on the 21st of February 1909, as well as Kleen's own fictitious writing like her *Psykesaga* (1902) were also gathered and employed in the analyses. In addition, since Kleen was well-acquainted with the art of the German graphic artist Max Klinger but no source-material exists—to my knowledge—which gives testimony to their direct contact, Klinger's estate in the *German Artists Archive* at the *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* was contacted as well. However, no material on Tyra Kleen could be found.¹³ It was at *The National Library of Sweden* where two letters from Beda Stjerschantz to the Swedish author

¹¹ In spring, summer and autumn 2020, the custodian Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin also justified the closed artist estate with the ongoing Covid-19-pandemic as an additional reason beside the inventory project; see e-mail contact with Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin from the 26th of May 2020 and the 11th of November 2020.

¹² Beda Stjerschantz to Selma Lagerlöf, signum L 1:1 & Ellen Platen's folder with 20 lithographs by Kleen, KoB Portfölj 8:1–20, The National Library of Sweden.

¹³ See the email contact with Annegret Jungnickel, City Archive Naumburg, 1st of March 2019 & Agnes Harder, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 4th of March 2019.

Selma Lagerlöf could be identified that, together with the letter at *The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland* from Lagerlöf to Stjernschantz, made it possible to reconstruct the correspondence.

In addition, my archival research also took me to France to *the Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA)* and to Italy to the *Circolo Scandinavo*, the *Bibliotheca Hertziana's Art Historical Research Library* and the *American Academy in Rome's Library* in Rome. Non-digitised material on the *Salons de la Rose+Croix*, for example the salon catalogue from 1897, and Péladan's art theory such as his *De l'Androgyné. Théorie plastique* (1910), located at the *INHA*, was used for outlining this Symbolist group's artistic programme and exhibition history. Symbolist manifestos like those of Maurice Denis and Albert Aurier were accessible online through, amongst others, the *BnF Gallica*, that is the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France's* digital library.

Official and administrative documents such as the registration protocols or meeting protocols at the archive of the *Circolo Scandinavo*, that is the *Scandinavian Artists' Association* in Rome, served as one input to map the social network of Tyra Kleen in Rome.

Moreover, previous Nordic art history contributions about the late nineteenth century function as the empirical material, upon which I based the review of the dominant patterns and stances of Nordic Symbolism that will be given in the third foundational chapter on Symbolism.

Criteria for the selection of artists and artworks & limitations

One overall criterion for this project from the very beginning was the interest in studying a group of Nordic individualist Symbolist artists, who through their exploration of literary, classical mythological, religious or visionary topics positioned themselves within the European Symbolist movement instead of contributing to the prevailing National Romanticism and national-building processes through their art.

Thereby, as different examples of unexplored Symbolist Swedish accounts beyond national subject matters who either are excluded from art history or assumed to be exceptional cases of Swedish Symbolism, both the graphic artist Tyra Kleen and the painter Olof Sager-Nelson constituted the first selected artists. For both of them Paris functioned as an important place of

residence throughout their artistic apprenticeship in the 1890s during which they came in contact with the Symbolist *Rose+Croix*-order and their salons, which they visited in either 1897 or 1894. Although their art at the turn of the twentieth-century was, both in terms of the applied technique and subject matter, relatively different, their artistic production was centred around the depiction of the human body. Both the depiction of human body and contact with the Symbolist Parisian *Rose+Croix*-circle became the premise for the purpose of selecting further Nordic artists, to which the Finnish painters and companions Magnus Enckell, Ellen Thesleff and Beda Stjernschantz were soon added. All of these last-mentioned Finnish painters came in contact with the *Rose+Croix*-order and its first salon in spring 1892 during their Parisian sojourns between 1891 and 1892, simultaneous to their production of portraiture or nude male full-body depictions. Thus, the contact and artistic exchange with the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* served as a crucial selection criterion.¹⁴ Thereby, Magnus Enckell and Olof Sager-Nelson's acquaintance with each other and companionship during Enckell's second and Sager-Nelson's first Parisian residence in 1893 and 1894, and with whom Ellen Thesleff also consorted during her second Parisian sojourn, constitutes another social interlinkage between the selected artists.

Moreover, other commonalities within this group of the selected Swedish and Finnish artists could soon be worked out as well. By being born in the late 1860s or early 1870s, all of the five artists belonged to the younger generation of Symbolist Nordic artists who emerged and established themselves as artists throughout the 1890s in a widely internationally based production context. This artist generation has, within Swedish art history, for example by Vibeke Röstorp in 2013, been regarded as the so-called intermediate generation, which was not given much room in art history writing. Furthermore, besides their acquaintance with the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* and their continued artistic apprenticeship at diverse private

¹⁴ The sculptor Ville Vallgren is another Finnish artist involved in the *Rose+Croix*-order who exhibited at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in 1892, 1893 and 1897; see for instance: Mary Slavkin, New York 2014, p. 304. However, he will be not taken into consideration in this study due to the difficulty of comparing not only his technique, type of media, but also his motifs with the selected visual material.

art academies like Académie Julian or Académie Colarossi, their different Parisian residencies also involved their study of modern art at the diverse salons like the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* and of ancient and classical art at, for instance, the Louvre.

Throughout these five artists' Parisian sojourns, an increased interest in classical art and, in particular, Italian medieval and Renaissance painting evolved, which was closely tied to the soon to come Italian sojourns of Tyra Kleen in Rome and later of Enckell, Thesleff and Stjernschantz in Florence. Although Sager-Nelson did not travel to Italy before he died of tuberculosis in Algeria in 1896, he still planned to visit Italy and declared several Italian Renaissance painters like Botticelli, Vinci, Michelangelo as his sources of references. Therefore, Italian classical art as a general source of reference, which was sparked throughout their Parisian sojourns, can be considered another commonality amongst these five selected artists.

In addition to the selected artists' similar places of residences and similar contact with Parisian Symbolist circles, the art production of the selected artists did, at the turn of the twentieth-century, explore, in different ways, human bodies and minds in an enhanced spiritual state in the guise of Greco-Roman historical and mythological, biblical, literary subject matter or portraiture. So, for example, the mythological motif of Narcissus was visually explored by Enckell, Stjernschantz, Kleen and Thesleff. In this sense their art production, which developed throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, dealt thematically in different ways with the visual language of a transnational Symbolist art in general and of the *Rose+Croix*-order in particular, at the same time that they also shared an interest in theosophical and neo-platonic theories, which were closely tied to the *Rose+Croix*-order and its art programme and androgynous theory.

Thus, the commonality of the exploration of the spiritually enhanced human body across diverse subject matters and possible theosophical and neo-platonic theoretical sources of references became another premise for narrowing down my objects of research, which resulted in the selection of the fifteen above-mentioned works of art and in the thematically structured analyses mentioned above. Although this does not apply to the total number of examined works, the exploration of the subject of the spiritual im-

mersion of the human body or several human bodies also implies in many of the selected art objects an androgynous appearance of the depicted female or male body, which is why that the Symbolist idea of the androgynous powerful mental or even both physical and mental state functions as another common feature of the selected works of art.

Since no Danish or Norwegian visual artist could be detected by myself who both visually explored the human body with its spiritual qualities and can be linked to this androgynous theoretical and aesthetic ideas and their theosophical and neo-platonic sources, closely tied to the *Rose+Croix*-order and their art programme, the group of selected artists is only comprised of Swedish and Finnish artists.¹⁵

Nevertheless, this group of Enckell, Stjernschantz, Thesleff, Sager-Nelson and Kleen is constructed and is, when it comes to different other matters of criteria, made up of heterogeneous and composite components.¹⁶ In that sense, I problematise the difficulty of qualitative selection processes and of putting together a group of Nordic artists on the basis of their possible visual exploration of transnational Symbolist themes. Hence, I acknowledge at the same time the limitations of my qualitative choice of artists and artworks.

Furthermore, this project does not study the total oeuvre of these five selected artists at the turn of the twentieth-century, nor does it aim to make statements or conclusions regarding the overall production of the selected artists around 1900.¹⁷ In this way, this project also acknowledges the fact

¹⁵ Other Nordic Symbolist artists, who were internationally based and who came in contact with the Parisian Symbolist art world throughout the 1890s, besides the aforementioned Finnish sculptor Ville Vallgren, were; the Danish painter Mogens Ballin, who dealt mostly with syntheist landscape paintings without focusing on the display of human figures; the Danish painter Arild Rosencrantz, who also exhibited at the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* in 1892, 1893 and 1894; and the Norwegian graphic artist Olaf Lange, who visited the *Rose+Croix*-salon in 1897. Neither Rosencrantz nor Lange explored androgynous human bodies and minds.

¹⁶ As it is often the case with the choice of a qualitative method, I—as the researcher—do not only acquire my selected data, but also create and construct the data independently while in the process of acquisition. See for instance: Bente Gullveig Alver & Ørjar Øyen, *Etik och praktik i forskarens vardag*, Studentlitteratur, Lund 1998, p. 119.

¹⁷ All of the selected visual artists and especially Thesleff and Stjernschantz have for instance painted landscape paintings of a naturalist or post-impressionist style during the

that the selected artists' production around 1900 was quite dynamic, heterogeneous, diverse and complex. Furthermore, the qualitative selection is not intended to be complete.

1.3. Theory and methods

The transnational Symbolist movement and its methodological and theoretical framework

A horizontal global art history

This project deals with a stance within the Symbolist artistic late nineteenth-century movement, which I regard and acknowledge as a transnational artist community due to the international scope of its artists' network and the contribution to a Symbolist visual language by a wide range of international artists, in which I include the examined Swedish and Finnish artists.

This project is, in terms of its conception of the Symbolist transnational movement and its aim of highlighting the role of Swedish and Finnish artists in this movement, informed by Piotr Piotrowski's theoretical idea of a horizontal global art history, which emanates from plural, heterogenic and open relationships between different places in Europe, its different centres and peripheries without spatial hierarchies and, at the same time, puts particular emphasis on the role of European peripheries within European art history.¹⁸ With a critical art geography as its methodological approach, a horizontal global art history—or in the case of this project a European art

1890s that were relatively clearly fixed in time and place. Stjerschantz also provides an example of a realistic motif with her *Glassblowers* (1894).

¹⁸ See for instance: Beáta Hock, "Introduction—Globalizing East European Art Histories. The Legacy of Piotr Piotrowski and a Conference", in: Beáta Hock & Anu Allas (eds.), *Globalizing East European Art Histories. Past and Present*, Routledge, London 2018, pp. 1–22.; Piotr Piotrowski, "East European Peripheries Facing Post-Colonial Theory", Article Issue #12, 2014: <https://nonsite.org/east-european-art-peripheries-facing-post-colonial-theory/>, accessed on the 18th of April 2022; Piotr Piotrowski, "Towards a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde", in: Sascha Bru (ed.), *Europa! Europa?: The Avant-garde, Modernism, and the Fate of a Continent*, Walter de Gruyter, New York 2009, pp. 49–58.

history—considers all sorts of artistic exchange as relational, mutual and reciprocal instead of a one-sided communication from the centres to the peripheries, which is a crucial point of origin for this study.¹⁹

In Piotrowski's articles from 2014 and 2009, he argues for a critical art geography as a suitable framework for bringing the European peripheries within global art history more aptly into scope. Whereas post-colonial theoretical frameworks are often limited to the idea of considering artists as forced into exile or in a diaspora identity and into a creation of a culture "in between", a critical art geographical goes beyond those limitations and leaves room for acknowledging artists, who practiced their career abroad, like artists from European peripheries such as Sweden or Finland, as participants in a cosmopolitan community within a modern and universal art milieu and a creation of new international modern art.²⁰ Thereby, Piotrowski stresses the distinctiveness of visual art from language-mediated cultural expressions, and the participation in modern culture through visual art with a particular potential of an 'international style' or allegedly universal visual expressions, on which this project's study of a visual Symbolist art network also is based.²¹ It is within this sort of cosmopolitan Symbolist community that this project positions the selected Swedish and Finnish artists and so makes use of a critical art geographical framework. Furthermore, as Piotr Piotrowski puts it, the notion of an artist's desire to be in the centre of the new artistic world, in Paris, as was the case with the selected Swedish and Finnish artists, does not collide with a critical investigation of centre-periphery-interlinkages and the undertaking of better integrating artists from European peripheries within art history; Swedish and Finnish art expressions within a European art history go via Europe, not against it, similar to the way Piotrowski puts it in relation to making East European art global.²² Hence, although Paris functions as an important place for the emergence of this transnational Symbolist movement

¹⁹ Beáta Hock, "Managing Trans/Nationality", in: Beáta Hock & Anu Allas (eds.), London 2018, p. 44; Piotr Piotrowski, New York 2009, pp. 50.

²⁰ Piotr Piotrowski, 2014, p. 1; Piotr Piotrowski, New York 2009, p. 5f.

²¹ Piotr Piotrowski, 2014, p. 1.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 1f.

with circles like the *Rose+Croix*-order or *Les Nabis*, it is still a cosmopolitan community, whose international participants contributed to a circulation and flow of Symbolist universal aesthetics across national spatial unions within Europe in the late nineteenth century.

Moreover, instead of referring to the Symbolist movement as a cosmopolitan community, I will designate this international artists' network as a transnational Symbolist movement, since too many politically problematic connotations are associated with this term. Although the term "cosmopolitan" gained currency in the age of Enlightenment and was connoted positively, the term applied to Jews in an age of nationalism as a way to denounce those whose cultural and political endeavours fell outside the nation.²³ This also further enhances the transnational idea of a mutual communication amongst a range of international European artists as participants of such an international Symbolist art movement and takes into account dynamic linkages, flows and circulations of aesthetic, literary and philosophical aspects without limiting the directions of communication and without constructing spatial hierarchies between for instance England, Scandinavia, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy.

Transnational approaches towards historiography and canon

By making use of the term "transnational", this project draws in this way upon the methodological employment of a transnational spatial framework as an alternative and important supplement to a national spatial unit in historical analysis and comparisons as it is described and conducted in the anthology *Making Nordic Historiography. Connections, Tensions, and Methodology, 1850–1970* from 2017. As an anthology within the academic discipline of history, it points out the need to overcome a so-called methodological nationalism within Nordic historiography as the tendency of naturalising the nation-state through equating the nation-state with the social unit of society and through defining them as "closed containers of historical development" as well as the tendency of overlooking or even excluding linkages, flows and identities that supersede or cross other spatial units or dynam-

²³ See for instance: Grace Brockington & Sarah Victoria Turner, Oxford 2019, p. 19.

ics within them.²⁴ Instead of taking nation-states with their contemporary borders as ‘national’ units for granted, a shift to an empirical transnationalism is proposed in this contribution that, at the same time, also points out the idea of the national as something fluid, non-fixed, relational and historically changing. In this way, cultural transfers, interacting processes and border-crossing circulation of cultural products are focused on.

By focusing on the international operation of art and culture in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the art historical anthology *Imagined Cosmopolis. Internationalism and Cultural Exchange, 1870s-1920s* from 2019 also applies a transnational methodological framework, which largely benefits the project of “writing women into the history of arts” since women artists often remained unrecognised by national institutions, as Grace Brockington and Sarah Victoria Turner stress in the Introduction.²⁵ Thus, based on the above-mentioned recent contributions to alternative historiographical approaches, this project and its examination of Swedish and Finnish contributions to a transnational Symbolist art movement also deploys a transnational methodological framework for the purpose of focusing both on border-crossing flows and interacting processes of the Symbolist aesthetics, and on women artists’ contributions to Symbolist transnationalism.

As both the historical anthology *Making Nordic Historiography* and the art historical anthology *Imagined Cosmopolis* point out as a relevant point of origin, ideological and methodological components are often mixed when it comes to historiographical processes and practices as was the case with the national biases which were at play for the undertaking of constructing and establishing an autonomous, distinct and national Swedish

²⁴ The term ‘methodological nationalism’ evolved within sociology and anthropology during the 1970s through the use of, among others, Anthony Giddens in his *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* from 1973, and A. D. Smith in his *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* from 1979; see: Pertti Haapala, Marja Jalava & Simon Larsson, “Introduction. Nordic historiography: from methodological nationalism to empirical transnationalism”, in: *Making Nordic Historiography. Connections, Tensions, and Methodology, 1850–1970*, Berghahn Books, New York 2017, p. 5.

²⁵ Grace Brockington & Sarah Victoria Turner, Oxford 2019, p. 6.

or Finnish art canon, by which Nordic art history is still today largely affected of.

A determining factor in the process of writing art history or the process of canonisation as such are ideological criteria and, thus, the cultural and historical narrative that art history is supposed to convey. Thereby, it is an artwork's accordance with or capability to go hand in hand with a constructed art historical narrative that is more determinant of an artwork's inclusion in the canon than the (aesthetical) attributes of the work itself as the philosopher Anita Silvers demonstrates.²⁶ This implies at the same time that a specific work of art must concur with an already established image of a certain period in order to become included in the canon, as the history of ideas scholar Mikaela Lundahl demonstrates.²⁷ In this way, it becomes apparent that the process of writing art history is affected by the needs and ideals of each specific time and by the opinions and special interests of the individual historian who writes history and the scientific community to which he or she belongs.²⁸ Norms and values control questions of what is appropriate to canonise and into which narrative perspective the included works of art will be embedded, which is why practices and principles of inclusion and exclusion are inherent of power structures, hegemony and interests of a specific time and a specific society. In that sense, historiographical and canonisation processes are, by far, not as self-evident, fixed and pre-existent as often assumed.

Against this background, a transnational approach in this project will make room for alternatives to historiographical national biases and their ideological and methodological components. At the same time that this methodological and theoretical transnational approach does not deny the shaping and the construction of the art historical past into a certain historical narrative, which is underpinned by ideological criteria, this narra-

²⁶ Anita Silvers, "The Story of Art Is The Test of Time", in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, no. 49 1991, p. 222.

²⁷ Mikaela Lundahl, "Kanon och demokrati", in: Katarina Leppänen & Mikaela Lundahl (eds.), *Kanon ifrågasatt. Kanoniseringsprocesser och makten över vetandet*, Hedemora 2009, p. 26.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

tive still responds to and brings to the fore fruitful perspectives on reciprocal and mutual artistic exchange and the connections and interactions within diverse international participants within the Symbolist transnational movement, in which I include the selected Swedish and Finnish artists.

Art historical hermeneutics

This project is in general a qualitative comparative study between Symbolist visual expressions made by the selected Swedish and Finnish artists and those from the other parts of Europe. For the purpose of exploring the selected Swedish and Finnish artists' participation in a transnational Symbolist movement, an object- and archive-based method is applied in order to ascertain possible visual, textual and theoretical sources of references.

This study is mainly based upon Oskar Bätschmann's art historical hermeneutic method, theory and praxis, which implies the reading of the selected artworks as aesthetic objects per se and not as biographical documents of the specific artists.²⁹ In this sense, the project distances itself from drawing conclusions about an artist's psychology-biography based on made analyses of the artist's work of art from inside the work, at the same time that it questions the possibility of making statements about an artist's intention with a particular work.³⁰ Instead, the examination of the selected artworks takes the available visual and textual material about the artists' work process, the commentary of the artist's own work—if available—and visual and textual sources of references of the studied work into account through iconographic analyses, iconological examinations and analyses of the genre and style in order to approach hermeneutic conjectures of meaning, that is, well founded-speculations as Bätschmann himself puts it, in relation to the research questions and aims.³¹ Thereby, the applied art historical hermeneutic approach focuses both on the work of

²⁹ Oskar Bätschmann, *Einführung in die kunstgeschichtliche Hermeneutik. Die Auslegung von Bildern*, 5th edition, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 2001; Oskar Bätschmann, "A Guide to Interpretation: Art Historical Hermeneutics, in: Claire Farago & Robert Zwijnenberg (eds.), *Compelling Visuality: The Work of Art In and Out of History*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2003, pp. 179–206.

³⁰ Oskar Bätschmann, Darmstadt 2001, s. 111ff.

³¹ Oskar Bätschmann, Minneapolis 2003, p. 195f.

art itself—its form and content—and the explanation of its contemporary socio-historical context: two distinguished concerns that, however, must be linked up with each other.³² The last-mentioned part of iconology is thereby used as a logical basis and as an integrative part of the interpretation for reconstructing the work's historical and social context.³³ This means that aspects of the cultural, social, medical or juridical late nineteenth-century background such as late nineteenth-century body ideals or gender normative expectations or notions of the male-connoted creative subject will be linked to the works' examination of form and content such as, for instance, the depiction of human figures or stylistic and technical aspects. Thereby, the problem of a certain unbreachable historical distance of the selected artworks is at the same time also acknowledged.³⁴

Moreover, particular focus will be laid on iconographical analyses in the fourth chapter on Greco-Roman mythological, historical and literary motifs but also in the fifth chapter with regard to Kleen's graphic prints and their references to French Decadent literature and in the third chapter regarding, amongst others, the pictorial tradition of the figure of Madonna as one important part in Bättschmann's art historical hermeneutical interpretation.³⁵ Thereby, both the works of art's possible linkage to a textual source as well as other visual depictions of this type of textual source and its conventions will be paid regard to in order to put the studied works of art in relation to a certain motif and its visual and textual sources of references and, thus, iconographical traditions.

In this sense, this project is informed by Bättschmann's art historical hermeneutics and its components analysis, creative abduction and validation as the various stages of the interpretation process, which do not need to be addressed in a particular order.³⁶ Thereby, particular regard is paid to the so-called creative abduction through establishing relationships between the artwork's various objects and elements and formulating a hypothe-

³² Oskar Bättschmann, Minneapolis 2003, p. 180f.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

³⁴ See for instance: Oskar Bättschmann, Darmstadt 2001, p. 79f.

³⁵ Oskar Bättschmann, Minneapolis 2003, p. 186ff.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 185f.

sis about their interrelation as the method of ascertaining conjectures of meaning, based on many facts but not facts alone.³⁷ At the same time, the validation as the process of sealing the argument by ascertaining if the conjecture of meaning is compatible with everything that is available to take into consideration like the artist's biography, the artist's social network, the artist's statements or acquaintance with literature, philosophy etc. will be carried out as much as possible.

For the purpose of avoiding anachronistic observations, assumptions or conclusions, the project benefits from Michael Baxandall's concept of 'the period eye' as a complementary hermeneutic and operational tool for carrying out the analyses.³⁸ Although Baxandall applies his method to Florentine fifteenth-century Renaissance art, his methodological framework of 'the period eye' can be extended to other time and spatial frames. As a concept that assumes that a work of art is more than an aesthetic expression, 'the period eye' highlights a sum of the contemporary social, religious, commercial conventions that the understanding of an artwork must include, which is a methodological perspective that my project takes regards to. The creation of a Symbolist androgynous theory and aesthetic ideal must in this sense be understood within the context of a clear bourgeois gender-binary social structure, the *fin-de-siècle* culture and the idea of a degenerated society as well as in the context of philosophical sources of the *Rose+Croix*-order. This will be applied to the evaluation of the displayed bodies as androgynous in their time and how this relates to gender binary late nineteenth-century normative expectations as will be further explained in the following. In addition to this, Symbolist androgynous ideas will also be related to classical mythology, historicism and spiritual and theosophical ideas within a *fin-de-siècle* culture.

Moreover, this project makes use of the methods of ekphrasis that Jas Elsner argues for, that is, in-depth descriptions of art objects as a key act in the analyses to enable the proper unfolding of the content's meaning.³⁹

³⁷ See for instance: Oskar Bätschmann, Minneapolis 2003, p. 198ff.

³⁸ Michael Baxandall: *Die Wirklichkeit der Bilder. Wahrheit und Erfahrung im Italien der Renaissance*, Berlin 1999 [1972], p. 60ff., p. 220.

³⁹ Thereby, it draws upon the methodical combination of art historical hermeneutics and

This descriptive basis should not be underestimated in the general art historical method of translating the visual and the sensual nature of a work of art into a linguistic formulation as a precondition for providing a discursive argumentation.⁴⁰

Archival method

I have used two different strategies considering my data collection in the above-mentioned archives and libraries. The collection of the comprehensive material in direct relation to Kleen, Sager-Nelson, Stjerschantz, Thesleff and Enckell was, on the one hand, kept as open-minded as possible, but was, on the other hand, also directed by the interest in collecting information on the artists' international periods, their social networks and, last but not least, their artistic, literary, and philosophical sources of references such as the art that they have been seen at exhibitions, salons, in museums etc. It sometimes included the investigation of different archives in order to put letter correspondences together as in the aforementioned case of Stjerschantz's correspondence with Selma Lagerlöf in 1895, whereby I accessed Stjerschantz's letters, on the one hand, in the folder of Selma Lagerlöf's archival material at *The National Library of Sweden* and Lagerlöf's reply, on the other hand, at the Stjerschantz's estate record at *The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland*. Moreover, I benefited from my good acquaintance with, amongst others, *fin-de-siècle* art and Italian quattrocento painting, which was needed for identifying visual archival material such as sketches or copies of other works of art etc., for example in the case of Thesleff's sketches of a number of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings at the Louvre, Enckell's sketch of Michelangelo's *Day Sculpture* at the Medici Chapel in Florence or Thesleff's untitled graphic work at *The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland* and its remarkable similarity to Eugène Car-

the ekphrastic description, that is also applied by Carina Rech in her art historical Doctoral thesis on Nordic women painters' negotiation of their professional identity in painting during the 1880s; Carina Rech, *Becoming Artists. Self-Portraits, Friendship Images and Studio Scenes by Nordic Women Painters in the 1880s*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, University of Stockholm, Makadam, Gothenburg 2021, pp. 47–49.

⁴⁰ See for instance: Jas Elsner, "Art History as Ekphrasis", in: *Art History* 33, no. 1 (210), p. 12.

rière's *The Theater of Belleville* from 1895. Furthermore, the catalogues of the *Salons de la Rose+Croix*, accessed online or at the *INHA*, and the list of the exhibited artists and works functioned as an important source for relating the examined artworks to the art that was displayed at this salon. This applies also to the catalogues of the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* and the *Salon des Champs-Élysées*. In this sense, I gathered diverse empirical material in several archives, libraries, digital museum collections etc.

A different strategy was required for my purpose of attempting to identify if there is information on Tyra Kleen in Rome's libraries and archives. Since searches for 'Tyra Kleen' in the *URBIS catalogue*, that is the Library Network of libraries and archives in Rome, did not suggest any unknown material on or previous research contribution to Kleen, I started to look systematically for Italian exhibitions on Symbolism and/or Art Nouveau, hoping to eventually touch upon a hint that might take me further. Through these systematic searches in several online library catalogues and the examination of physical exhibition catalogues on site, I managed to detect one exhibition catalogue from 2017, in which Kleen's art appeared amongst the exhibited works, at the *Bibliotheca Hertziana Research Library*, namely *La vergine e la femme fatale—l'eterno femminino nell'immaginario grafico del Simbolismo e dell'Art Nouveau* (2017).⁴¹ Thanks to a summary of Kleen's biography in this catalogue, further Italian exhibition catalogues with the art of Kleen were also traceable, which again referred to other exhibition catalogues that I succeeded in tracing back either at the *Bibliotheca Hertziana* or at the *American Academy in Rome's Library*.⁴² Hence, I could identify ten Italian exhibitions in total between 1901 and 2017 with the representation of Kleen's art that are not acknowledged in previous research on Kleen. In addition to this, exhibition critiques and Italian articles on Kleen's art could also be identified.

⁴¹ Emanuele Bardazzi (ed.), *La vergine e la femme fatale—l'eterno femminino nell'immaginario grafico del Simbolismo e dell'Art Nouveau* [Galleria La Soffitta, Sesto Fiorentino], Edizioni Polistampa, Florence 2017, p. 191.

⁴² "Biografie degli autori in mostra", in: Emanuele Bardazzi (ed.), *La vergine e la femme fatale—l'eterno femminino nell'immaginario grafico del Simbolismo e dell'Art Nouveau* [Galleria La Soffitta, Sesto Fiorentino], Edizioni Polistampa, Florence 2017, p. 219.

Comparative analyses

One concrete method of conducting my analyses is comparative image analyses. Based on stylistic, technical, compositional and thematic aspects as well as other visual representations of, for instance, the gender performance of a portrayed person or a mythological figure, I make use of comparable works of art, photographs etc. in order to argue for how the studied artworks relate to the transnational Symbolist movement and the Symbolist idea of androgynous gendered bodies.

Translation of archival material

Furthermore, since this study revolves around the exploration of Swedish and Finnish artists within a European-wide Symbolist artist network and their transnational Symbolist visual language, the complete archival material etc. that is quoted in this project has been translated from Swedish into English for the sake of enabling an international reader circle to delve into the empirical material. This also implied, in some cases, French translations, since, for instance, Thesleff often used the French language or a mix of diverse languages in her letters or entries into her notebook, or Danish translations with regard to quoted notes made by Stjernschantz. The empirical material has been translated by myself, whereby the translations are closely orientated to the original language.⁴³ However, I cannot fully guarantee that my translated quotations, both stylistically and content-wise, are always correct, since some words or expressions had plural meanings and since Swedish, French, Danish and English are not my mother language. Both the translated version and the original language of the quotations will be presented. Some letter quotations are, in fact, nonsensical even in Swedish or do have an odd grammar, whereby these peculiarities have been deliberately retained in the translations. However, I will not provide translations of Swedish poems such as Enckell's poem on Antinous since this turned out to be too complicated to translate.

⁴³ Thank you, Keeley Lindkvist, for excellently assisting me with those translations.

Androgynous gendered bodies—androgyny as a stylisation of the body

This project stems from the comprehension of androgyny as both a subversive strategy of transgressing gender binary norms and a utopian category of biological sex as the point of departure for an androgynous neo-platonic theory. This last-mentioned androgynous theory as the source for the Symbolist idea of an androgynous ideal mental state will be further explained in the second chapter, since it fits better into the explanation of a transnational Symbolist programme than into this methodical and theoretical subchapter. Besides this mental idea of androgyny as a central part of the three analyses chapters, the visual representation of androgynous bodies in the selected artworks as another central part of the analyses chapters stems from the concept of androgyny as a subversive strategy of acting and performing one's gender.

Thereby, this project's comprehension of androgyny as a gender binary transgressive strategy rests upon Judith Butler's performative theory of gender constitution, that was first demonstrated in 1988 in her essay "Performative Acts & Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory". By mainly drawing from the phenomenological theory of acts and its assumption of the constitution of social reality through social agents and their constituting acts of language, gestures and all manner of symbolic signs, Butler considers the identity of gender as something that is instituted through the *stylisation of the body* and, in other words, a series of acts which are repeatedly and continuously 'done' through time.⁴⁴ Instead of being a stable, substantial or essential identity category, gender is, in this way, understood by Butler as a performative accomplishment and constructed identity, which gives the illusion of an abiding gendered self, even though such an 'interior gendered self' is non-existent.⁴⁵ This kind of sustained and repeated corporeal strategy of 'doing' gender is at the same time both conditioned and circumscribed by cultural and historical conventions. In that sense, it is not only the way one acts one's body that is

⁴⁴ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts & Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", in: *Theatre Journal*, Dec., 1988, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 524.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 525.

culturally constructed according to conventions, but also the way of perceiving a body culturally.⁴⁶

As a gender strategy that undermines gender binary normative expectations through means of masculinisation of the 'female' or 'feminine' or feminisation of the 'male' or the 'masculine', androgynous stylisations of the body destabilise the cultivation of bodies into discrete sexes with 'natural' appearances. In that sense, the constitution of a performative androgynous strategy accords with a modality of gender that cannot be assimilated into the "pre-existing categories that regulate gender reality".⁴⁷ Hence, the performative construction of an androgynous gender strategy contests expected gender identities rather than reinforcing them since these androgynous gender acts conceal, destabilise or at least complicate the perception of sex as "the discrete and factic datum of primary sexual characteristics",⁴⁸ upon which those expectations are based. Thus, the displays of androgynous strategies in the artworks, with which I deal either contradict the stylisation of the body against the 'illusion' of the reality of gender or generally blur the illusion of an essential masculine- or feminine-gendered body. These androgynous visual displays negotiate in this way a late nineteenth-century cultural and painterly interest in the construction of gender-ambivalent displayed identities, parallel to and subordinated to a strict heterosexual and bourgeois gender binary system. Hence, as a gender strategy that transgresses gender binary normative expectations, a clarification of contemporary gender norms that were in force at the turn of the twentieth century is required in order to define androgynous stylisations of bodies as non-normative gender performances, which will be provided in the following. In this sense, Michael Baxandall's above-mentioned concept of 'the period eye' will be applied to androgynous gender strategies around 1900 in order to circumvent anachronistic perceptions and assessments of visual representations of androgynous bodily performances. This forms the basis for dealing with the display of androgynous human bodies in the analyses chapters.

⁴⁶ Judith Butler, 1988, p. 523f.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 528.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 528.

During a time of a strict gender binary system, the representation of the body as an expression of social norms was, at the turn of the twentieth century, throughout Europe expected to testify to sexual difference. This involved the expectation of a dramatically different appearance of modern men and modern women in order to maintain the social order and its visible distinctions.⁴⁹ In late nineteenth-century France for instance, clothing's function as being a clear gender indicator was of greater normative importance than clothing's indicator of class and position, which made transgressions of gendered dress norms more subversive than the crossing of class boundaries.⁵⁰ Norms of masculinity and femininity were closely tied to the central cultural ideal of the bourgeois family with the husband and the wife as one another's opposites and the importance of progeny and, in other words, reproductive sex.⁵¹

The nineteenth-century bourgeois married man was obliged to fulfil his responsibilities to the institution of the family through ultra-virile masculinity, which amongst other things was expressed through his appearance, including the emphasis of his secondary sexual characteristics, besides his duty of procreation. This is why bachelors as well as male homosexuals, or 'invertis' as they were called in nineteenth-century France, were denounced as betraying the destiny of bourgeois society and were considered to be immoral, deviant or even 'perverted'. Although disrupting masculine contemporary norms, the male homosexual and the bachelor did not automatically represent androgynous strategies since their sexual orientation and attitude towards procreation was not necessarily performed as an androgynous stylisation of the body. Through physical features such as rough skin, that was textured and covered with either trimmed, waxed and

⁴⁹ See for instance: Tamar Garb, "Introduction", in: *Bodies of Modernity. Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France*, Thames & Hudson, London 1998, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Tamar Garb, "Chapter Three: James Tissot's 'Parisienne' and the Making of the Modern Woman", in: *Bodies of Modernity. Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France*, Thames & Hudson, London 1998, p. 82.

⁵¹ See for instance: Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*, Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1993, p. 99; or Tamar Garb, "Chapter One: Gustave Caillebotte's Male Figures: Masculinity, Muscularity and Modernity", in: *Bodies of Modernity, Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France*, Thames & Hudson, London 1998, p. 33f.

shaved hair, and round and swollen muscles, the nineteenth-century man reinforced notions of masculinity.⁵² In addition to this, for the bourgeois and upper class late nineteenth-century man, dark, non-colourful and, in this way, uniform costume was obligatory. So was, for instance, the three-piece-suit, which was only relieved by a white shirt, an elaborate neck-tie and pale gloves, worn by men on most occasions.⁵³ In contrast to this, male clothing with flamboyant colour, material and exaggerated shape and cut collided with the contemporary male mainstream fashion. In particular within artistic, literary and intellectual circles throughout the nineteenth century, the male artist's alternative fashion differed from the black male sartorial uniformity. The question of alternative artistic fashion, also called antifashion, became an important integrated field of artistic expression at the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ The French Romantic writer Théophile Gautier's flamboyant red waistcoat, that he wore during the 1830s, or the Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde's fashioning as a 'dandy' with velvet breeches and silk stockings in the late nineteenth century, are examples of alternative artistic fashioning. However, the diverse modes of alternative artistic fashion were, generally, mostly concerned with rejecting official fashion and its mercantile logic and emphasising artistic individuality and invention.⁵⁵ In that sense, male artists' alternative fashion in the late nineteenth century challenged the male bourgeois ideal and ultra-virile masculinity, but was not necessarily an androgynous subversive strategy. The male artist's way of setting himself apart from the male bourgeois ideal through appearance and behaviour was closely tied to the Romantic concept of the male creative genius, that established itself in the early nineteenth century. This gender biased concept of the genius praised, in fact, 'feminine' qualities in male creators such as intuition, emotion, sensibility, and imagination as stereotypically 'feminine' characteristics, but

⁵² Tamar Garb, London 1998, p. 11.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵⁴ Radu Stern, *Against Fashion. Clothing as Art, 1850–1930*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2004, p. 3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

excluded females *per se* from the idea of creativity and genius.⁵⁶ Thereby, the male genius' transcendence of being merely 'masculine' through his endowment with 'feminine' qualities was a notion that was gender transgressive, but still highly appreciated since the 'femininity' of the male genius proved his cultural superiority and buttressed his male position through creativity as assumed to be similar to male procreativity, as Christine Battersby demonstrates.⁵⁷ This mental notion of the male creative artist with feminine characteristics could also manifest itself physically and visually. Through an effeminate style of dress, postures, gestures, behaviour etc., the male artist—like the dandy for instance—was often not only a symptom of an extravagant appearance but also of cross-dressing and feminine behaviour.⁵⁸ Hence, although male artists' effeminate stylisations of the body were, in comparison to the strong moral and social denunciation of the female artist's masculinisation, socially accepted and advocated within artistic circles, they still collided to such a degree with masculine bourgeois norms that they can be considered to be an androgynous strategy.

Feminine nineteenth-century norms were, like masculine ones, largely based upon the social and cultural ideal of the bourgeois family. As the anchor of bourgeois domesticity, the female's traditional sexual role was restricted to the spatial domain of the private or the home, the family as well as to reproduction, whereas the male's traditional role implied the spa-

⁵⁶ See for instance: Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius. Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, Women's Press, London 1989, p. 3, p. 103. It is beyond this Doctoral thesis' scope to give a thorough background on the emergence of the concept of the creative genius and its male-coded meaning.

⁵⁷ Christine Battersby, London 1989, p. 3. Furthermore, Abigail Solomon-Godeau's *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* from 1997 also dwells on ideal masculinity within Neoclassicist art as an 'elastic' notion in terms of its integration of conventional feminine features and attributes and, thus, a 'feminised masculinity', besides a 'masculinised masculinity', as a surrogate for sexual difference in a time of increasingly masculinized public, cultural, and political spheres; Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation*, Thames & Hudson, London 1997, p. 8f., p. 89.

⁵⁸ The extravagant appearance of the 'dandy' included garments like tight-lacing, and padded trousers that gave him a feminine appearance, to which his use of cosmetics also contributed, see for instance: Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality*, Holmes & Meier, New York 1986, p. 122.

tial domain of the public, work and production.⁵⁹ While being excluded from participation in practical and public life, the middle-class (married) woman around the mid-century was regarded to be not capable of invention, creation, and meaningful, creative activity and was expected to be the mere mute and self-submissive extension of her husband, animated by the meaningful agency of Man.⁶⁰ Furthermore, refinement, decorum and gentility was connoted with late nineteenth-century femininity. In that sense, the role of the woman artist and her self-assertion and creativity was *per se* colliding with social feminine norms of female appearance and behaviour and can be considered as gender transgressive, which will be further looked at in the third chapter regarding the women artists' self-portraiture.⁶¹

Moreover, the modern middle-class woman functioned in contemporary European culture as a product of commerce, embellishment and artifice. As armatures for the display of the most recent mainstream fashion, the modern woman was expected to act and stage her femininity through an elaborate style of dress with fine fabrics, extravagant colours and texture as well as a made-up face.⁶² At the end of the nineteenth century, a tight-fitting and refined dress with back fullness through the use of the so-called bustle, which outlined both the bust and the shape of the thighs, represented the latest modern female fashion.⁶³ Furthermore, a minute waistline, a jewelled bodice, an unblemished complexion as well as an outrageous hairstyle, pinned up and adorned, were other features that affirmed notions of femininity.⁶⁴ Although the refinement of the female face through make-up was considered to be necessary for the female's role as an alluring social spectacle, make-up was still, to a certain degree con-

⁵⁹ See for instance: Debora L. Silverman, "The 'New Woman', Feminism and the Decorative Arts in the Fin-de-Siècle France", in: Lynn Avery Hunt (ed.), *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1991, p. 149f.

⁶⁰ Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of feminine evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*, Oxford University Press, New York 1986, p. 13ff.; Tamar Garb, *The Painted Face. Portraits of Women in France, 1814-1914*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2007, p. 2.

⁶¹ See for instance: Marsha Meskimon, *The Art of Reflection. Women Artists' Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century*, Scarlet, London 1996, p. 8.

⁶² Tamar Garb, New Haven 2007, p. 2.

⁶³ Aileen Ribeiro, New York 1986, p. 134.

⁶⁴ Tamar Garb, London 1998, p. 11.

troversial and was supposed to be decently worn by the modest and honourable married woman. Since nineteenth-century normative femininity was largely defined through female physical staging *à la mode* and modest and compliant social station, divergent or even vulgar or perverse stylisations of the female body were gender transgressive acts. These domestic and passive normative notions of femininity were challenged around the turn of the twentieth century when the middle-class woman began to enter higher education and professional careers. By disrupting the male and female division of bourgeois life, the so-called ‘New Woman’—as the designation for the working and emancipated woman who began to agitate for female suffrage—contributed to shifts in the traditional female role. Thus, her emergence and role in the public, which also included her exercise of sporting activities like bicycling, was in the late nineteenth century as transgressive to feminine norms as her style of dress, which was based on a masculine style like the ‘tailor made’, that is, a jacket and a skirt based on the male suit, often worn with a blouse with a starched collar and a tie, or a trousered form of dress for cycling.⁶⁵ The ‘New Woman’s’ entrance into the public sphere including her dining, smoking, cycling and working in public, and her cross-dressing fashion can, thus, be regarded as an androgynous subversive strategy. Thereby, women artists and their entrance into both the educational art and the professional art world were, through their collision with feminine nineteenth century internal properties that did not recognise their creation or invention, not only gender transgressive but also very equal to the type of the ‘New Woman’. However, they did not at the same time necessarily make use of an androgynous subversive strategy when not cross-dressing or performing their stylisation of the body as masculinised.

The androgynous strategy of undermining late nineteenth-century gender binary normative identity through the masculine stylisation of the female body or the feminine stylisation of the male body will be especially employed in the third chapter, which revolves around portrait painting,

⁶⁵ See for instance: Aileen Ribeiro, New York 1986, p. 143.

and also in the fourth chapter on Greco-Roman historical and literary themes.

Art historical and comparative literary approaches

Since the Symbolist movement that I deal with was characterised by dissolving and merging the boundaries of art genres, this project also benefits from my expertise as a scholar of both comparative literature and art history. This Symbolist artistic feature of exploring literary themes becomes apparent in the fourth chapter about Greco-Roman themes and the fifth chapter concerning intimate interpersonal encounters. In the fifth chapter not only literary sources of references in Kleen's graphic artworks are at play, but also the interplay of textual and visual features themselves.

1.4. Previous research

Previous research on Symbolism is a broad, complex and extensively explored field. Whereas many contributions, on the one hand, primarily put emphasis on either French, Belgian, German, Swiss or Austrian Symbolist artists, many of the most recent contributions highlight, on the other hand, a wide range of Symbolist works from different countries thematically, including Symbolist accounts by Nordic artists or other artists from European peripheral areas and their Symbolist accounts. By emanating from a European-wide Symbolist art movement and the participation of a wide range of international artists in this movement, these contributions to an international Symbolist art movement constitute crucial points of origin for this study. There can, for instance, be mentioned contributions such as the research-based exhibition catalogues *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe* and *Der Kampf der Geschlechter: Der neue Mythos in der Kunst, 1850–1930* from 1995 and Rodolphe Rapetti's *Dreams of Nature. Symbolism from Van Gogh to Kandinsky* from 2010 as well as Rodolphe Rapetti's compendium *Symbolism* from 2005 and Michelle Facos' *Symbolist Art in Context* from 2009, which all focus on shared Symbolist subject matters and approaches

across national or regional spatial boundaries.⁶⁶ This also applies to Dorothy M. Kosinski's *Orpheus in Nineteenth-Century Symbolism* from 1989.⁶⁷ Similar to the idea of a European-wide Symbolist art movement, this study and its examination of Swedish and Finnish participation in a transnational Symbolist artistic expression is also an important contribution to putting more emphasis on the European peripheries in the Symbolist international artist network.

The importance of androgyny for the *fin-de-siècle* culture in general, and Symbolism in particular, is generally relatively unexplored, not only considering Nordic Symbolism. This has, amongst other aspects, to do with the relatively scarce research that has been made concerning the *Rose+Croix* salons and their artistic programme, in which androgynous neo-platonic and theosophical ideas were a central aspect. This makes this study on spiritually enhanced human bodies and the androgynous body and mind within the art of a group of Swedish and Finnish artists a relevant contribution to paying a broader foundation for the importance of androgyny for the Symbolist movement.

Patricia Mathews' comprehensive study *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art* from 1999 on gendered bodies within the so-called ideal Symbolist French art and the gender of artistic identity and practice within Symbolist *fin-de-siècle* circles is—to my knowledge—one of the first contributions which unfolds the overall importance of androgyny for the Symbolist theme of spiritual transcendence within Symbol-

⁶⁶ *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe [The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from the 8th of June to the 15th of October 1995]*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal 1995; Barbara Eschenburg & Helmut Friedel (eds.), *Der Kampf der Geschlechter: der neue Mythos in der Kunst 1850–1930 [Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich from the 8th of March to the 7th of May 1995]*, DuMont, Köln 1995; Rodolphe Rapetti, *Dreams of Nature. Symbolism from Van Gogh to Kandinsky [The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam from the 24th of February to the 17th of June 2012, the National Galleries of Scotland from the 14th of July to the 14th of October 2012 and the Finnish National Gallery from the 16th of November 2012 to the 17th of February 2013]*, Mercatorfonds, Brussels 2010; Rodolphe Rapetti, *Symbolism*, Flammarion, Paris 2005; Michelle Facos, *Symbolist Art in Context*, University of California Press, Berkeley 2009.

⁶⁷ Dorothy M. Kosinski, *Orpheus in Nineteenth-Century Symbolism*, UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, Mich. 1989.

ist art and for the Symbolist concept of the creative male genius.⁶⁸ At the same time, the Finnish art historian Salme Sarajas-Korte had already paid great attention, in her Doctoral thesis on Finnish Symbolism first published in 1966 and supplemented, revised and translated into Swedish in 1981, to the androgynous Symbolist ideal and its impact on, first and foremost, the art of Enckell but also that of Stjernerantz.⁶⁹ For this reason, both Sarajas-Korte's revised Doctoral thesis from 1981 and Mathew's contributions are highly relevant for my undertaking.

In addition, the research-based exhibition catalogue *Androgynous. Longing for perfection* from 1986, in which Francine-Claire Legrand's article on androgyny and Symbolism, Hans Biedermann's on androgyny and Symbolism and Ralph Tegtmeier's on the androgyne within *fin-de-siècle* literature are included, is also a crucial point of origin for this project.⁷⁰ I also include, in addition to these most important previous research contributions and as relevant points of departure, both A. J. L. Busst's article "The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century" from 1967 and Catriona MacLeod's revised Doctoral thesis *Embodying Ambiguity. Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* from 1998 as thorough theoretical demonstrations of the recreation of an androgynous paradisiac state and its neo-platonic sources.⁷¹ Moreover, Bram Dijkstra's *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of feminine evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* from 1986 is also important since the decadent *fin-de-siècle* culture and the ideal of male androgyny are carefully embedded into the socio-historical contempo-

⁶⁸ Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999.

⁶⁹ Salme Sarajas-Korte, *Suomen varhaisymbolismi ja sen lähteet: Tutkielma Suomen maa-laustaiteesta 1891–1895*, Otava, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Helsinki 1966; Salme Sarajas-Korte, *Vid symbolismens källor: den tidiga symbolismen i Finland 1890–1895*, Jakobstads tr. och tidnings AB, Jakobstad 1981.

⁷⁰ The catalogue was published in conjunction with the exhibition with the same title, which was held in 1986 and 1987 at the *Neuer Berliner Kunstverein* in Berlin; Ursula Prinz (ed.), *Androgyn: Sehnsucht nach Vollkommenheit: 17. November 1986 bis 4. Januar 1987*, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Dietrich Reimer, Berlin 1986.

⁷¹ A. J. L. Busst, "The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century", in: Ian Fletcher (ed.), *Romantic Mythologies*, Routledge, London 1967; Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1998.

rary context and the dominance of misogynist tendencies and the battle of gender.⁷² Amongst the many typical Symbolist visual tropes, which are explained by Michelle Facos in her above-mentioned contribution *Symbolist Art in Context* from 2009, the androgyne is also included, by which this project is also informed.⁷³

Although the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* and, first and foremost, the two first ones in 1892 and 1893 were well-visited exhibitions that dominated the Parisian art world and attracted large media attention, research on the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* between 1892 and 1897 and their art programmes, which I regard as a relevant circle for the emergence of a transnational Symbolism, is generally scarce. This applies also to the interrelations between this salon and the selected Swedish and Finnish artists. The first museum presentations of this Parisian Symbolist salon took place as recently as 2017 until 2018, and its research-based exhibition catalogue, and Vivien Greene's article in particular, is a crucial foundational contribution to the exploration of the salon's aesthetical and art theoretical ideas, their sources of reference and the works of art shown.⁷⁴ The total number of exhibited works is still unknown today.

Although at least two Doctoral theses have been written about the Rosicrucian salons, no comprehensive research exists to my knowledge on the salon's androgynous art programme, which this project will both explain in the second chapter in relation to a transnational Symbolist movement and further apply in the analyses chapters. Nevertheless, Robert Pincus-Witten's Doctoral thesis *Occult symbolism in France: Joséphin Peladan and the Salons de la Rose-Croix*, published in 1976, provides a good overview of the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* as exhibition events as such and their manifestos and rules, which this study draws upon.⁷⁵ Furthermore, his contribution

⁷² Bram Dijkstra, New York 1986.

⁷³ Michelle Facos, Berkeley 2009.

⁷⁴ The exhibition was shown both at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York between June and October 2017, and the Guggenheim Collection in Venice between October 2017 and January 2018; Vivien Greene: *Mystical symbolism: the Salon de la Rose Croix in Paris, 1892–1897*, Guggenheim Museum Publications, New York, New York, 2017 [2017].

⁷⁵ Robert Pincus-Witten, *Occult symbolism in France: Joséphin Peladan and the Salons de la Rose-Croix*, Garland, New York 1976.

also includes the first corrected survey of the artists and artworks which were on display, based on preserved salon catalogues and Léonce de Larmandie's historical account of the *Rose+Croix* from 1903, with an incorrect and incomplete list of exhibited artists,⁷⁶ which was subsequently followed up by Mary Slavkin in 2014. As a quantitative mapping of the represented artists and artworks, based on statistical analyses of both salon catalogues and salon reviews, and how the displayed art accorded with Péladan's artistic guidelines, Mary Slavkin's Doctoral thesis *Dynamics and Divisions at the Salons of The Rose+Croix: Statistics, Aesthetic Theories, Practices, and Subjects* is also an important point of origin for this study.⁷⁷

As the heyday of National Romanticism, Swedish and Finnish art from the turn of the twentieth century has generally received large attention within previous research. Whereas Swedish and Finnish National Romanticist expressions have been comprehensively studied as a Nordic variety of Symbolism, the Symbolist art of Swedish and Finnish artists who explored general and individualist Symbolist subject matters instead of Swedish or Finnish national themes is relatively unexplored. However, the recently held exhibitions *Anywhere Out of the World. Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries* and *Symbolism and Decadence*, which both took place in 2015–2016 and the respective research-based exhibition catalogues both paid attention to Nordic Symbolist artists who emerged throughout the 1890s with individualist approaches and cosmopolitan subject matters, and acknowledged the need to further explore and better include those often internationally based Nordic artists and their international subject matters within art history.⁷⁸ By highlighting, amongst others, the art of the Swed-

⁷⁶ Léonce de Larmandie, *L'entr'acte idéal, histoire de la Rose+Croix: notes de psychologie contemporaine*, Bibliothèque Charcornac, Paris 1903; <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5531010q/f8.item.texteImage>, accessed on the 14th March 2021.

⁷⁷ Mary Slavkin, New York 2014.

⁷⁸ Johan Sjöström (ed.), *Anywhere out of the world: Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries*, Gothenburg Museum of Art, Gothenburg 2015; Daniel Prytz, Karin Sidén & Anna Meister (eds.), *Symbolism & dekadens*, Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Stockholm 2015. With regard to Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde's exhibition, it is first and foremost Daniel Prytz' catalogue article "Särpräglad svensk symbolistisk konst. Ett urval ca. 1890–1920", which this project emanates from.

ish painters Olof Sager-Nelson, Pelle Swedlund, Tyra Kleen, Ivar Arosenius and Ivan Aguéli and the Finnish artists Beda Stjernschantz, Ellen Thesleff, Magnus Enckell and Agnes de Frumerie as cosmopolitan Symbolist expressions and positioning their art within overall European art, these exhibitions' catalogues are crucial points of departure for this study of Swedish and Finnish artists in relation to a transnational Symbolist movement. As with these exhibition catalogues, this study is an important contribution to further explore and include international Symbolist Swedish and Finnish accounts within art history.

Moreover, this study's examination of mainly internationally based Swedish and Finnish artists and their positioning within an overall European art is also informed by recently-made Swedish and Finnish art historical research contributions that deal with the participation of Nordic artists in an international art context. Both Vibeke Röstorp's Doctoral thesis from 2013 on Swedish and Norwegian artists in Paris during the 1890s and Alexandra Herlitz' Doctoral thesis from 2013 on the international dynamics of the French art colony Grez-sur-Loing not only highlight international dynamics but are also revising historiographical misconceptions within Swedish art history, which were based on a nationally biased view, which is why they are especially important.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Carina Rech's Doctoral thesis from 2021 on Nordic women painters' international careers and networks in the 1880s as well as Salme Sarajas-Korte's revised and translated Doctoral thesis from 1891 on Finnish Symbolism in relation to an international European and French art context, Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff's Doctoral thesis from 2012 on colour concepts within Finnish late nineteenth-century art and its international influence and Marja Lahelma's Doctoral thesis from 2014 on questions of subjectivity and selfhood within the art of Nordic Symbolist artists in relation to an international Symbolism are also important points of origins for this study's integration of Swedish and Finnish artists in an international art history context.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Vibeke Röstorp, Stockholm 2013; Alexandra Herlitz, Gothenburg 2013.

⁸⁰ Carina Rech, Gothenburg 2021; Salme Sarajas-Korte, *Vid symbolismens källor: den tidiga symbolismen i Finland 1890–1895*, Jakobstads tr. och tidnings AB, Jakobstad 1981; Anna Maria von Bonsdorff, *Colour Ascetism and Synthetist Colour. Colour Concepts in turn-of-*

Tyra Kleen's art from the turn of the twentieth-century has recently begun to be explored and exhibited in the Swedish art context, but had already earlier on been displayed at Italian art exhibitions. In contrast to the representation of Kleen's art in Swedish exhibitions from 2015 and onwards as in Prins Eugen Waldemarsudde's *Symbolism och Dekadens* in 2015/2016 or the Gothenburg Museum of Art's *Anywhere Out of the World. Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries* in 2015/2016,⁸¹ her graphic art was not only frequently displayed in Italy in the early 1900s during her sojourn in Rome, but also from the 1980s and onwards as, for instance, at the Villa Strohl-Fern in Rome in 1983 or at a recent exhibition on graphic Symbolism and Art Nouveau in Florence in 2017.⁸² Hence, while it is presumed within the Swedish context that her art was forgotten after her death, this is not

the-20th-century Finnish and European Art, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Helsinki 2012; Marja Lahelma,, *Ideal and Disintegration. Dynamics of the Self and Art at the Fin-de-Siècle*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, University of Helsinki, Helsinki 2014.

⁸¹ The following Swedish exhibitions featured Kleen's art: Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde's *Symbolism och Dekadens* in 2015/2016, the Gothenburg Museum of Art's *Anywhere Out of the World. Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries* in 2015/2016, the Museum of Östergötland's *Två konstnärskap i vår tids ljus* in 2016, Thielska Galleriet's *Tyra Kleen (1874–1951). Konstnär, vagabond, äventyrare* from 2018, Millesgården's *Måleri och andlighet: Hilma af Klint, Tyra Kleen, Lucie Lagerbielke* from 2019/2020, Gothenburg Museum of Art's *Art Nouveau. Från Larssons till Zappa* in 2020; the Museum of Norrköping's *Rebeller & Mademoiseller – Toll, Kleen, Rudbeck* in 2021/2022.

⁸² Archive studies, which I conducted in Rome at the *Bibliotheca Hertziana's Research Library* and the *AAR Library* in 2020, showed that Kleen's art was represented in the following Italian exhibitions after her death: "Gli artisti di Villa Strohl-Fern tra Simbolismo e Novecento, Galleria Arco Farnese" in Rome in 1983, "Estasi, incubi, visioni: Il simbolismo esoterico di Tyra Kleen" in Florence in 1998, "Repertorio di pittori e incisori italiani in esposizione nazionali" in Rome in 2001, "Artisti a Villa Strohl-Fern. Luogo d'arte e di incontri a Roma tra il 1880 e il 1956" in Rome in 2012 as well as "La Vergine e La Femme Fatale. L'eterno femminile nell'immaginario grafico del simbolismo e dell'art nouveau" in Florence in 2017. It is more than possible, that more Italian exhibitions featured her art. The following exhibitions with the display of Kleen's art during her lifetime could be ascertained by myself as the following: the "Mostra degli Amatori e Cultori de Belle Arti" in 1901 in Rome; the "L'esposizione Internazionale di Bianco e Nero" in 1902 in Rome, where Kleen displayed so many artworks, namely 11, than no other Scandinavian artist; the "Esposizione Amatori e Cultori di Belle Arti" in 1906 in Rome; the "Mostra Nazionale di Belle Arti" in 1906 in Milano and the "Esposizione Internazionale di Belle Arti LXXVIII" in 1908 in Rome; <http://dlib.biblhertz.it/KatE-ROM106-1908-2#page/10/mode/2up>.

exactly the case within the Italian art context, in which she remained quite represented throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Moreover, although both the Swedish art historians Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf and Patrik Steorn paid attention to a small number of Kleen's graphic prints in their respective Doctoral theses from 1974 and 2006,⁸³ in-depth research on Kleen's graphic Symbolist art has just recently begun to be conducted from the 2010s and onwards by amongst others Patrik Steorn, Karin Ström Lehander, Niclas Franzén and Per Faxneld. Thereby, both the anthology *Tyra Kleen* from 2016 and Ström Lehander's Masters dissertation from 2018 are important point of origins for this study with regard to the life of Kleen.⁸⁴ In addition to this, this project also draws on both Steorn's contributions from 2010 and 2015 and the religious study scholar Per Faxneld's from 2020 and 2021, which put Kleen's depiction of the human body in relation to current late nineteenth-century theosophical and androgynous theories.⁸⁵

The relatively small oeuvre of the Swedish male painter Olof Sager-Nelson has not been paid much attention to within previous research. Al-

⁸³ Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Sagan i nordisk sekelskifteskunst: en motivhistorisk och ideologisk undersökning*, Beckman, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Stockholm University, Stockholm 1974; Patrik Steorn, *Nakna män: maskulinitet och kreativitet i svensk bildkultur 1900–1915*, Norstedts akademiska förlag, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Stockholm University, 2006, Stockholm 2006.

⁸⁴ Karin Ström Lehander, "I Tyra Kleens fotspår. En studie över konstnärens tid i Rom och Paris 1892–1908", Masters dissertation in Art History, Uppsala University, Uppsala 2018; Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin, Niclas Franzén, Karin Ström Lehander & Elisabet Lind, *Tyra Kleen*, 1. uppl., Linderoths tryckeri, Björkvik 2016.

⁸⁵ Patrik Steorn, "Bilderna som ett arkiv över dold mening. Konst och andlighet hos Tyra Kleen", in: Tomas Björk, Vendela Grundell & Maud Roberts, *Det åskådliga och det bottenlösa: tankar om konst och humaniora tillägnade Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf*, Konstvetenskapliga institutionen, Stockholm University, Stockholm 2010, pp. 178–184; Patrik Steorn, "With a feeling for transgressions. Androgyny and art at the turn of the 20th Century", in: Johan Sjöström (ed.), *Anywhere out of the world: Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries*, Gothenburg Museum of Art, Gothenburg 2015, pp. 61–71; Per Faxneld, *Det ockulta sekelskiftet. Esoteriska strömningar i Hilma af Klints tid*, Volante, Stockholm 2020; Per Faxneld, "Mirages and visions in the air". Tyra Kleen and the paradoxes of esoteric art", *Approaching Religion*, Vol. 11 No. 1 (2021): Seekers of the Spiritual Art and Higher Wisdom: Encounters between Art and Esotericism, Åbo 2021, <https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.98199>.

though a great amount of his letter correspondences with, among others, Pontus Fürstenberg, Albert Engström and Johan Ericson has been published by Ragnar Hoppe in 1935, Axel Gauffin in 1945 and Ulf Torell in 2004,⁸⁶ his portrait painting from his Parisian period between 1893 and 1895 and city landscapes from his sojourns in Bruges in 1894 and 1895 are only scarcely explored. His Symbolist portraits and landscapes during his Parisian-Belgian period have recently begun to be studied in-depth by Niclas Franzén in 2013 and 2015 as well as in conjunction with the exhibition *Anywhere out of the world: Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries*, which took place both at the Gothenburg Museum of Art and at the Prins Eugen Waldemarsudde in Stockholm in 2015 and 2016.⁸⁷ By embedding Sager-Nelson's Symbolist art in the broader international *fin-de-siècle* artistic and cultural context, the exhibition catalogue constitutes a crucial point of departure for this study, in particular regarding Patrik Steorn's contribution on androgynous and theosophical ideas in Sager-Nelson's, Kleen's and Stjerschantz's art.⁸⁸

Due to the fact that I do not speak Finnish, I have unfortunately not been able to personally study a number of previous research contributions on Enckell's, Stjerschantz's and Thesleff's art, for instance, Asta Kihlman's Doctoral thesis from 2018 on gender aspects in the art of Beda Stjerschantz, Sigrid af Forselles and Ellen Thesleff,⁸⁹ Juha-Heikki Tihinen's Doctoral thesis on representations of masculinity and femininity in Magnus Enckell's

⁸⁶ Ragnar Hoppe, Örebro 1935; Axel Gauffin, Stockholm, 1945; Ulf Torell, Sävedalen 2004.

⁸⁷ Niclas Franzén, *Olof Sager-Nelson's relation to the symbolist movement in Belgium*, Masters dissertation in Art History, Linköping University, Linköping 2013; Niclas Franzén, "Bortom verklighetens utmarker: Symbolismens teori och metafysik ur ett svenskt perspektiv", *Konstvetaren* 2014, 2015, pp. 20–35; Johan Sjöström (ed.), *Anywhere out of the world: Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries*, Gothenburg Museum of Art, Gothenburg 2015.

⁸⁸ Patrik Steorn, Gothenburg 2015, pp. 61–71.

⁸⁹ Asta Kihlman, *Kolme tutkielmaa sukupuolesta. Identiteettipolitiikka Beda Stjerschantzin, Sigrid af Forsellesin ja Ellen Thesleffin taiteessa*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, University of Turku, Turku 2018, <https://www.utupub.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/146219/AnnalesC457Kihlman.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, accessed on the 14th of September 2021.

art from 2008⁹⁰ or Harri Kalha's contribution on Enckell from 2005.⁹¹ Besides Salme Sarajas-Korte's comprehensive contribution from 1981, which first and foremost examines Enckell's but also Thesleff's and Stjernschantz's Symbolist art in relation to an occult Symbolist strand in general and the *Rose+Croix*-order in particular,⁹² research on Symbolist works by Enckell, Stjernschantz and Thesleff in relation to the spiritually refined body and mind and theosophical and neo-platonic ideas is relatively scarce.

Although Magnus Enckell's late nineteenth-century art is well acknowledged within art history as a rare case of international Symbolism and has often been exhibited, as recently at the Finnish National Gallery in 2020–2021 that showed a retrospective of his total oeuvre,⁹³ his figure painting and mythological motifs have attracted relatively little scrutiny. Besides Sarajas-Korte's above-mentioned contribution from 1981 as one of the first and scarce attempts to comprehend Enckell's display of young male half-naked or naked bodies during the 1890s as an androgynous Symbolist ideal, Riikka Stewen's article on Enckell's mythological themes and Juha-Heikki Tihinen's article on covetable male figures in Enckell's art from the turn of the twentieth century, which are both included in the exhibition catalogue *Magnus Enckell. 1870–1925* from 2000, as well as Riikka Stewen's article from 2000, all explore Enckell's Symbolist art in relation to esoteric or androgynous ideas, which is why they constitute a relevant point of departure for this study.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff's earlier-mentioned Doctoral thesis on colour concepts in the turn of

⁹⁰ Juha-Heikki Tihinen, *Halun häilyvät rajat: Magnus Enckellin teosten maskuliinisuksien ja feminiinisyksien representaatioista ja itsen luomisesta*, Taidehistorian seura, Doctoral thesis in Art History, University of Helsinki, Helsinki 2008.

⁹¹ Harri Kalha, *Tapaus Magnus Enckell*, Helsinki 2005 (Historiallisia tutkimuksia, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Bd. 227).

⁹² Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981.

⁹³ <https://ateneum.fi/en/exhibitions/magnus-enckell/>, accessed on the 14th March 2021.

⁹⁴ Riikka Stewen, "Circles of Love: The Mythologies of Magnus Enckell", in: *Magnus Enckell (1870–1925)*, Helsinki 2000, pp. 114–121; Juha-Heikki Tihinen, "Thinly Veiled Desire—Magnus Enckell's Portrayal of Men", in: *Magnus Enckell. 1870–1925*, Helsinki 2000, pp. 124–130; Riikka Stewen, "Orpheus as an Artist: Magnus Enckell and Péladan's Salon *Rose+Croix*", in: Nina Kokkinen & Lotta Nylund (eds.) *Spiritual Treasures: Esotericism in the Finnish Art World 1890–1950*, Parvus, Helsinki 2020, pp. 68–76.

the twentieth-century Finnish and European art and her way of examining the importance of stylistic means for Enckell's Symbolist subject matters is also an important point of origin for this study.⁹⁵

Although comprehensive contributions to the exploration of Ellen Thesleff's biography have recently been made as in Hanna-Reetta Schreck's monograph on Thesleff from 2019 or Lena Holger's catalogue for the exhibition about Thesleff at Sven-Harrys Konstmuseum from 2016⁹⁶ and although Thesleff's Symbolist and Expressionist art was recently relatively often displayed as at the Helsinki Art Museum in 2019–2020,⁹⁷ Thesleff's female Symbolist portraits and self-portraits are rather excluded from art history and have only recently begun to be studied in depth. Nevertheless, those primary biographical contributions are important points of origin for this project, inclusive of the earlier publications by Leonard Bäcksbacka from 1955 and The Finnish National Gallery's exhibition catalogue *Ellen Thesleff* from 1998, which accompanied the retrospective on Thesleff.⁹⁸ Furthermore, together with Sarajas-Korte's revised and translated Doctoral thesis from 1981, Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff's and Marja Lahelma's respective Doctoral theses from 2012 and 2014, as well as Lahelma's article from 2015, represent the first and few exhaustive studies on Thesleff's portraits, self-portraits, colour concepts, and sources of references by which this project is informed.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012.

⁹⁶ Hanna-Reetta Schreck, *Jag målar som en gud: Ellen Thesleffs liv och konst*, Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, Helsinki 2019; Lena Holger, *Ellen Thesleff*, Edition Ordkonst, Lidingö 2016.

⁹⁷ *Ellen Thesleff—I Paint like a God*, Helsinki Art Museum (HAM), 26.4.2019–26.01.2020; <https://www.hamhelsinki.fi/en/exhibition/ellen-thesleff/>, accessed on the 14th of March.

⁹⁸ Leonard Bäcksbacka, *Ellen Thesleff*, Konstsalongens förlag, Helsinki 1955; *Ellen Thesleff [Ateneum Art Museum, Helsingfors, 27.2.-24.5.1998, Tammerfors konstmuseum, Tammerfors 13.6.-13.9.1998]*, Museipedagogiska enheten, Helsinki 1998.

⁹⁹ Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012; Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014; Marja Lahelma, "The Open-ended Artwork and the Symbolist Self", in: Michelle Facos & Thor J. Mednick (eds.), *The Symbolist Roots of Modern Art*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London 2017 [2015].

Moreover, Beda Stjernschantz's Symbolist art with a wide range of subject matters such as portrait painting and landscape painting, and classical and biblical motifs is quite unexplored, but has recently received more attention. Besides Sarajas-Korte's contribution from 1981, it is first and foremost the exhibition catalogue *Beda Stjernschantz 1867–1910: Bakom gallergrinden* from 2014, which accompanied the first solo exhibition on Stjernschantz with the same title at the Amos Anderson Art Museum, that this project is largely informed by.¹⁰⁰ Thereby, amongst others, both Asta Kihlman's article on gender issues in Beda Stjernschantz's *Self-Portrait* from 1892 and Marja Lahelma's article on Stjernschantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* from 1897 are important points of origins for the study of these two works when it comes to her self-fashioning as an androgynous powerful female creative artist or an androgynous paradisiac origin of humankind.¹⁰¹ In addition to this, Itha O'Neill's comprehensive biographical account on Stjernschantz is another article in this same catalogue that this project is also informed by.¹⁰²

1.5. Outline

Before the thematically structured analysis is given, this study provides, in the second chapter, a foundational background on both the dominant Swedish and Finnish Symbolist accounts, based on a previously accomplished art-historical review, and the transnational Symbolist movement. The transnational Symbolist movement will be embedded in its socio-his-

¹⁰⁰ In conjunction with the exhibition at Amos Anderson Art Museum in 2014, the research network *The Birch and the Star* arranged a one day-seminar on Beda Stjernschantz. However, no published outcome is known to me.

¹⁰¹ Asta Kihlman, "Genusproblematiken i Beda Stjernschantz Självporträtt", in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), *Beda Stjernschantz 1867–1910: Ristikkoportin Takana = Bakom Gallergrinden*, Helsinki 2014, pp. 83–90; Marja Lahelma, "Tiden, evigheten och tillvarons mysterier i Beda Stjernschantz verk *Pastoral (Primavera, 1897)*", in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), *Beda Stjernschantz 1867–1910: Ristikkoportin Takana = Bakom Gallergrinden*, Helsinki 2014, pp. 136–158.

¹⁰² Itha O'Neill, "Bakom gallergrinden", in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), *Beda Stjernschantz 1867–1910: Ristikkoportin Takana = Bakom Gallergrinden*, Helsinki 2014, pp. 11–82.

torical context and its general art programme will be explained by presenting important art theoretical and aesthetic approaches of manifestos, which were relevant to a transnational Symbolist stance. Afterwards, the background and art programme of the *Rose+Croix*-order will be given, as an important circle for a transnational Symbolism, as well as the way in which the phenomenon of androgyny was deployed within Symbolism. It is within this last-mentioned subchapter of the second chapter, that Symbolist theory on the primordial androgyne and its neo-platonic and theological sources, will be further explained.

This is followed by the three analyses chapters, which are divided into the third chapter about portraits beyond the mundane as expressions of spiritual transcendence, the fourth chapter about motifs from classical Greco-Roman literary and historical themes and the fifth chapter about intimate interpersonal encounters.

This study closes with summarising conclusions as a result of this extensive research. In addition, it provides a tabular overview of the studied artists and their places of residence, artistic apprenticeships, exhibition visits, acquaintance with works etc., in the Appendix I as an additional source regarding selected biographical information about the artists, as well as the integration of those facts in the analyses chapters. Furthermore, the sum of the art history contributions, upon which the review of the dominant Swedish and Finnish Symbolist accounts is based in the second chapter, is attached in the Appendix II.

2. The Symbolist movement—manifestos, aesthetics and art theory

As the foundational chapter for the upcoming analyses, this chapter deals both with giving an overview over the dominant accounts of Symbolist art within the Swedish and Finnish art history and with demonstrating the art programme and theories of a transnational Symbolist movement. After giving a background of the socio-historical context, against which the Symbolist movement arose in the early 1890s, important artistic principles and strategies will be outlined with the help of relevant manifestos. In addition, the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* as an international Symbolist circle, which largely contributed to the emergence of a transnational Symbolist movement, will be further examined. The chapter concludes with a description of an androgynous beauty ideal and androgynous theory within Symbolism.

2.1. Swedish and Finnish Symbolism

This overview of the dominant subject matters, works and artists of Swedish and Finnish Symbolism is based upon a review of Symbolist accounts in Swedish and Finnish art history writings and their historiographical narratives conducted as part of this research project.¹⁰³ It is informed by

¹⁰³ The review comprised the reading of 48 art history contributions, which were structured alongside national borders: 28 contributions to Swedish art history from Georg Nordensvan's account of the Swedish art in *De bildande konsternas historia under 19:de århundradet* from 1900 to Lena Johannesson's *Konst och visuell kultur i Sverige* from 2007, and 20 contributions to Finnish art history from Nordensvahn's account of the Finnish art

recent art historiographical research on Nordic art at the turn of the twentieth century, which critically examines national biases, and will also touch upon the selected five artists and to what degree they are included or excluded from Swedish or Finnish Symbolist art history.

To begin with, my historiographical survey had shown that the terms 'symbolism', 'symbolist' etc. were more established from the 1940s and onwards, whereas terms like 'soulful', 'suggestive' and 'emotionally charged' landscape portrayals, evocative painting, 'new romanticism' and the so-called 'fantasy art' were more commonly deployed before the 1940s for referring to artistic expressions that were associated with Symbolist art, which is why all of these terms have been taken into consideration in outlining the narratives of Symbolist art together with the subject matters, the style, as well as the artists, associated with Symbolism.

Swedish and Finnish Symbolism as a National Romanticist expression

The narratives of Nordic Symbolism in general and Swedish as well as Finnish Symbolism in particular in the studied art history writings are closely tied to the presentation of the decade of the 1890s and the turn of the twentieth century as a national period with a National Romanticist art.

The few art historians who contributed to writing Swedish and Finnish art history in the early 1900s mainly promoted and supported nationally-minded artists and their national art, and in this way participated in the

in *De bildande konsternas historia under 19:de århundradet* from 1900, to Stephan Kojala's *Nordic Dawn: Modernism's Awakening in Finland 1890–1920* from 2005. A list of the studied contributions in chronological order is attached as a separate appendix to this study in the Appendix II.

I have mainly studied art historical overview works from the period of around 1900 until today, which are structured alongside national art history writings. Since not as many overview works regarding Finnish art history in comparison to those regarding Swedish art history could be found by myself, I included both Salme Sarajas-Korte's translated, revised and supplemented Doctoral thesis *Vid Symbolismens källor* on Finnish symbolism from 1981, Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff's Doctoral thesis from 2012 on interrelations between Finnish and European late nineteenth-century art, and some few exhibition catalogues on Finnish late nineteenth-century art like *Finsk malerkunst: Finsk malerkunst: Nasjonalgalleriet 26. mars-26. mai* from 1980 (National Gallery in Oslo) or the above-mentioned catalogue from 2005 in this survey.

historiographical project of constructing and establishing a distinct, autonomous and national Swedish and Finnish respectively modern art canon.

When it comes to Swedish art history of the 1880s and 1890s, it was mainly written from the perspective of the so-called *Artists' Union* (*Konstnärsförbundet*) and its nationally-minded artists or even by nationally-minded artists who were themselves affiliated to this artist circle.¹⁰⁴ Since many earlier internationally based artists from the *Artists' Union* moved back to Sweden in the late 1880s, this historiographical perspective involved first and foremost the representation of the late 1870s and 1880s as a period of internationalism and the 1890s as the decade of nationalism, linked together through the so-called 'myth of the return' of Swedish and Norwegian artists.

However, this representation of the 1890s as a national art period, which set off through the return of Swedish and Norwegian artists, has recently been critically examined and proven to be a nationally-biased factoid. Vibeke Röstorp demonstrates in her Doctoral thesis from 2013 that the total sum of Norwegian and Swedish artists in Paris during the 1890s and early 1900s increased rather than declined and shows, at the same time, that those artists who were internationally based during the 1890s—to which first and foremost younger emerging artists from the so-called intermediate artist generation belonged—remained especially absent in Swedish and Norwegian art history.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ See for instance: Georg Nordensvan, *De bildande konsternas historia under 19:de århundradet*, Hugo Gebers förlag, Stockholm 1900; Georg Nordensvan, *Sveriges konst. Från 1700-talets slut till 1900-talets början i dess hufvuddrag*, Aktiebolaget Ljus, Stockholm 1904; Axel L. Romdahl, "Vår målarkonst från 1890-talets början och till nu", in: Axel L. Romdahl & Johnny Roosval (eds.), *Svensk konsthistoria*, Aktiebolaget Ljus, Stockholm 1913; Sixten Strömbom, *Konstnärsförbundets historia, del 1: Till och med 1890*, Bonnier, Stockholm 1945; Sixten Strömbom, *Konstnärsförbundets historia, del 2: Nationalromantik och radikalism: 1891–1920*, Stockholm 1965. The members of the *Artists' Union* Richard Bergh and Georg Pauli also contributed to a Swedish national art canon; see: Georg Pauli's books *I vår ungdom* (1925), *Pariserpojkarne* (1926), *Opponenterna* (1927), and Bergh's art theoretical essays "Om överdrifternas nödvändighet i konsten" (1886), "Karl Nordström och det moderna stämmingslandskapet" (1897) and "Svenskt Konstnärskynne" (1899).

¹⁰⁵ "Summary: The Myth of Return: Scandinavian Artists in France 1889–1908", in: Vibeke Röstorp, Stockholm 2013, p. 407ff.

In the light of this national bias and the dominance of the *Artists' Union* and its members within Swedish art history at the turn of the twentieth century, it is not surprising that the art which was produced by members of the *Artists' Union*, such as the exploration of Swedish nature, rural people, culture or history by Richard Bergh, Ernst Josephson, Karl Nordström, Georg Pauli and Eugène Jansson, is mostly associated with Symbolist art. Thereby, it is first and foremost the so-called evocative landscape (*stämninglandskapet*), which was developed and extensively produced by members of the *Artists' Union* members and designated as the most distinct Symbolist expression. This subject matter will be further explained below. In this way, National Romanticism and Symbolism are often used as synonyms or as terms that are highly intertwined with each other within Swedish art history.

Furthermore, the dominance of the *Artists' Union* has been problematised in a few art history contributions, as in Bo Lindwall's and Nils Gösta Sandblad's from 1972 and in Birgit Rausing's from 2001.¹⁰⁶ In addition to this, international stylistic influence, nationally independent subject matters and internationally based artists like for instance Sager-Nelson's art have been paid regard to in both Bo Lindwall's and Sven Alfons' contribution from 1944 and in Sandblad's contribution from 1972.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the overall concept of the 1890s as a national Swedish art period with National Romanticist subject matters produced by nationally-minded artists based in Sweden, is still widely prevalent today at the expense of those artists who pursued their careers abroad and who did not pursue a nationally-minded art.

¹⁰⁶ Bo Lindwall, "Nordiskt friluftsmåleri", in: Bo Lindwall & Nils Gösta Sandblad (eds.), *Bildkonsten i Norden, del 3, Nordiskt friluftsmåleri*, Prisma, Stockholm 1972, p. 147ff.; Nils Gösta Sandblad, "Nordiskt sekelskifte", in: Bo Lindwall & Nils Gösta Sandblad (eds.), *Bildkonsten i Norden, del 3, Nordiskt friluftsmåleri*, Prisma, Stockholm 1972, p. 187ff.; Birgit Rausing, "Måleriet", in: Jan Torsten Ahlstrand (ed.), *Signums svenska konsthistoria [Bd 11] Konsten 1890-1915*, Signum, Lund 2001, p. 206ff.

¹⁰⁷ Sven Alfons & Bo Lindwall, "Inledning. V. Symbolismen och den nationella romantiken 1890-1908", in: Sven Alfons & Bo Lindwall, *Svensk konstkrönika under 100 år*, Natur och Kultur, Stockholm 1944, p. XXV-XXXI; Nils Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 187ff.

Moreover, the decade of the 1890s is also presented within Finnish art history as a national period with a National Romanticist art, during which Finnish nature, people and the Finnish national epic *Kalevala* were artistic subject matters. In 1951, Aune Lindström equated the Finnish art of the 1890s with a National Romanticist art in a similar way to Kai Laitinen's 1971 demonstration of the 1890s as the period of a uniform National Romanticist Finnish artistic expression. This is also mirrored in John Boulton Smith's contribution from 1985 and his assumption of the exploration of Finnish people and landscape as a common viewpoint for Finnish artists during the 1890s.¹⁰⁸ Besides the suggestive and stylised landscape painting of Finnish nature by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Eero Järnefelt and Pekka Halonen, it is also displayed in the Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, which is associated with both an expression of National Romanticism and Symbolism within Finnish art history.¹⁰⁹

Although a national period with a National Romanticist artistic production is the dominant pattern, both internationally based artists and the influence of international styles are quite well acknowledged. In Laurin's accounts from 1926 and 1929, in Andrenius' from 1951, as well as in those of Lindwall and Sandblad from 1972, internationally based artists from different artist generations such as Ville Vallgren, Magnus Enckell and Albert Edelfelt are paid regard to, at the same time that Gallen-Kallela's art with Finnish subject matters is regarded as employing an international decorative style.¹¹⁰ In addition to this, Salme Sarajas-Korte's account from 1971 as well as the exhibition catalogue on Finnish art from 1980 and Markku

¹⁰⁸ Aune Lindström's account of Finland, in: Isa Andrenius, *Det nya måleriet i Norden*, Finlands Rundradio, Helsinki 1951, p. 123ff.; Kai Laitinen, "Sekelskiftets Finland", in: Ulf Abel (ed.), *Finskt 1900*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm 1971, p. 7; John Boulton Smith, *The Golden Age of Finnish Art: Art Nouveau and the National Spirit*, 2., rev. ed., Otava, Helsinki, 1985, p. 11, p. 61.

¹⁰⁹ See for instance: Kai Laitinen, Stockholm 1971, p. 7f.; Nils Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 193; John Boulton Smith, Helsinki, 1985, p. 11, p. 62ff.; Markku Valkonen, *Finnish Art over the Centuries*, Otava publ., Helsinki 1992, p. 72.

¹¹⁰ Carl Gustaf Laurin, *Nordisk konst, del 4: Sveriges och Finlands konst från 1880 till 1926*, Norstedt, Stockholm 1926, p. 489; Carl Gustaf Laurin, *Konsthistoria D. 3 Sveriges, Norges, Danmarks och Finlands konst, Jubileumsupplaga*, Norstedts, Stockholm 1929, p. 336.

Valkonen's account from 1992 pay attention to artists like Magnus Enckell and Ellen Thesleff and their universal subject matters, who were not serving any national means, at the same time that Valkonen's contribution regards the art of Enckell, Thesleff and Stjernschantz as the most distinct Finnish Symbolist artistic expressions in contrast to the other studied accounts.¹¹¹ At the same time that Finnish art history leaves room for Finnish artists' international scope of residence, it is the young generation of artists, which emerged during the 1890s, that is mainly associated with Finnish Symbolism.¹¹² However, the younger Finnish Symbolists are still, to a dominating degree, regarded as the executors of a national art with national themes, first and foremost Finnish landscape, whereby Enckell's and Thesleff's Symbolist art with universal subject matters is considered as quite exceptional.

Although Finnish art history accounts demonstrate the 1890s as a period of individualist artistic endeavours from different artists' generations with a certain degree of international stylistic influence, the turn of the twentieth century is still framed within Finnish art history first and foremost as the sum of expressions of a national Finnish art with the reflection of Finnish nature, history, culture and a Finnish production context. The fact that Finnish art history has been written with the means of constructing a national Finnish art canon at the expense of international influence and perspectives, which today are still scarcely included, is for instance also emphasised by Anna Maria von Bonsdorff in her Doctoral thesis from 2012.¹¹³

Against this backdrop, it can be concluded that a National Romantic art is stressed as a Swedish and Finnish variety of Symbolism. At least Swedish and Finnish Symbolism are highly intertwined with National Ro-

¹¹¹ Salme Sarajas-Korte, "Sekelslutet i Finlands Bildkonst", in: Ulf Abel (ed.), *Finskt 1900*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm 1971, p. 15; Olli Valkonen and Leena Lindqvist (eds.), *Finsk malerkunst: Nasjonalgalleriet 26. mars-26. mai 1980*, Oslo 1980, p. 15f.; Markku Valkonen, Helsinki 1992, p. 78ff.

¹¹² See for instance: Nils Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 187; Salme Sarajas-Korte, Stockholm 1971, p. 17f.

¹¹³ Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012, p. 181.

manticist means. In the following, a closer look at the artists, the styles, and the subject matters that are associated with Finnish and Swedish Symbolism will be given.

The evocative Swedish and Finnish landscape as a Nordic variety of Symbolism

The evocative landscape, not only as the prevalent Swedish and Finnish subject matter, but as a general Nordic prevalent late nineteenth-century subject matter as, for instance, Isa Andrenius claims in 1951,¹¹⁴ was first of all ascribed to be a Symbolist and at the same time National Romanticist expression. By displaying a specific Nordic vegetation in a suggestive and stylised way and with stylistic means such as three-dimensional simplifications, the application of clear and contrasting colours and the decorative stylisation of surfaces, the evocative Nordic landscape emphasised an increased subjective, emotional and spiritual quality and a National Romanticist mood at the same time.¹¹⁵ As a vehicle of the specific Swedish and Finnish nature, the evocative landscape also often captured long light summer nights, dark winter nights as well as either dusk or dawn scenes, whereby often not a single human figure was included in a suggestive landscape scene.¹¹⁶

To the frequently-mentioned painters of the evocative landscape belong the Swedish painters Prince Eugen, Eugène Jansson and Richard Bergh as well the Finnish painters Väino Blomstedt, Akseli Gallen-Kallela and Pekka Halonen. The two first-mentioned Swedish painters are especially often recognised as being the most distinctive mood painters with a certain capability of capturing the soul and spirit of the displayed nature and of conveying nature's lyrical and ideal qualities.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Isa Andrenius, Helsinki 1951, p. 62.

¹¹⁵ See for instance: Richard Bergh, "Karl Nordström och det moderna stämningsskicket", in: *Ord & Bild*, nr. 6, Stockholm 1897, pp. 97–112.

¹¹⁶ See for instance: Daniel Prytz, Stockholm 2015, p. 103.

¹¹⁷ See for instance: C. G. Laurin, Stockholm 1929, p. 137f.; Andreas Lindblom, *Sveriges konsthistoria: Från forntid till nutid, del 3, Från Gustav III till våra dagar*, Nordisk Rotogravyr, Stockholm 1946, p. 884; Henrik Cornell, *Den svenska konstens historia 2 Under 1800-talet*, Bonnier, Stockholm 1946, p. 236f.; Lena Johannesson, *Konst och visuell kultur i Sverige 1810–2000*, Signum, Stockholm 2007, p. 82.

The Swedish painter Prince Eugen's evocative landscapes are represented as the most distinct expressions of this genre.¹¹⁸ Although he was not an official member of the *Artists' Union*, he was closely affiliated to this circle. In particular his *The Forest* (1892) as well as his *The Cloud* (1895) are regarded as Symbolist expressions.¹¹⁹ In a similar way to Prince Eugen, the *Artists' Union* member Eugène Jansson and his display of Stockholm's city landscapes in a dusk or dawn setting like his *Dawn over Riddarfjärden* (1899) or *Nocturne* (1901) are often characterised as evocative landscapes and Symbolist expressions which, through the concentration of the billowing lines, simultaneously also conform to one of Sweden's most clear expressions of Art Nouveau.¹²⁰ In addition to this, the Swedish painter and member of the *Artists' Union* Richard Bergh's *Nordic Summer Evening* (1899–1900) is also described as a clear expression of both Swedishness by Laurin in 1900 and a National Romanticist atmosphere by Nordensvan in 1904, making it to one of the most distinct Swedish Symbolist national expressions. As not only a painter but even art theorist, he also contributed to the formulation of the evocative landscape as a vehicle for Swedish national means.¹²¹ In addition to that, the decorative and synthetist landscapes of Swedish coasts and agricultural land by both Nils Kreuger and Karl Nordström, who were both members of the *Artists' Union*, are also designated as distinct examples of the evocative landscape and the Swedish national case¹²² and, in that sense, a typical Swedish variety of Symbolism. Even Otto Hesselbom's panorama landscapes from Dalsland painted from a high view-

¹¹⁸ See for instance: Carl Gustaf Laurin, Stockholm 1929, p. 137; Andreas Lindblom, Stockholm 1946, p. 884.

¹¹⁹ See for instance: Axel L. Romdahl, "Svensk målarkonst från 1890-talets början och till nu", in: Axel L. Romdahl & Johnny Roosval (eds.), *Svensk konsthistoria*, Aktiebolaget Ljus, Stockholm 1913, p. 525; Birgit Rausing, in: Jan Torsten Ahlstrand, Lund 2001, p. 249ff.

¹²⁰ Interestingly, due to financial reasons, Eugène Jansson while a member of the *Artists' Union* never left for French destinations like Paris or Grez-sur-Loing, and continuously captured dusk, dawn, or night scenes in Stockholm's city part Södermalm.

¹²¹ See for instance: Richard Bergh's "Om överdrifternas nödvändighet i konsten" (1886), "Karl Nordström och det moderna stämningsskapet" (1897), "Svenskt Konstnärskynne" (1899), "Den nationella konsten" (1902).

¹²² Georg Nordensvahn, Stockholm 1904, p. 78.

point like his *Our Land* (1903) are repeatedly associated with the evocative landscape.

When it comes to Finnish art history, it is both the modern decorative and synthetist style and the natural themes of Väinö Blomstedt and Akseli Gallen-Kallela, artists who belonged to the young generation, that are most often stressed as distinct examples of the evocative landscape and, thus, a Finnish variety of Symbolism. Blomstedt's and Gallen-Kallela's panorama perspective of lake and forest landscapes or coast landscapes from a heightened point of view like Blomstedt's *Sunset* (1898) or *Lake in the Wilderness* (1895) and Gallen-Kallela's *Lake View* (1901) or *Lake Keitele* (1905) are often designated as the epitome of Finnish nature and spirit. Both the thematic focus on the evening or morning sky and the water surface, as well as the stylistic means of Gallen-Kallela's cloissonist, stylised, ornamental treatment of the surface and Gallen-Kallela's great simplification and near abstraction are emphasised as evocative and lyrical impressions within the studied art historical accounts.¹²³ Due to their clear decorative and ornamental treatment of surfaces, Gallen-Kallela and Blomstedt are also ascribed to be Art Nouveau proponents besides their designation as Symbolist artists.¹²⁴ In addition to this, Pekka Halonen's decorative and ornamental Finnish winter landscapes are also associated with the evocative landscape as the Finnish variety of Symbolism, also belonging to the young artists' generation.

Fantasy art—literary and fairy tale themes

Besides the evocative landscape as the dominating subject matter, it is the so-called theme of Fantasy art that also is designated as a Nordic Symbolist late nineteenth-century feature. By comprising the exploration of both Nordic fairy tales, epics, folk ballades and Norse mythology like the trolls, fairies and other fantasy creatures in the art of the Swedish painters John Bauer and Ivar Arosenius, the Finnish painter Hugo Simberg or the Norwegian painters Gerhard Munthe and Theodor Kittelsen, this thematic category could be regarded as a Symbolist and National Romanticist expression

¹²³ Carl Gustaf Laurin, Stockholm 1926, p. 468.

¹²⁴ See for instance: Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 244f., p. 248.

of nation-building processes. It is first and foremost Akseli Gallen-Kallela as the painter of the Finnish National epic *Kaleva* as in his *Aino Myth, Triptych* (1891), *Lemminkäinen's Mother* (1897), *The Defense of the Sampo* (1896) and *Kullervo Cursing* (1899), who is designated as the most distinct proponent of this category. The painting *Strömkarlen* (1884) by the Swedish painter and member of the *Artists' Union* Ernst Josephson is stressed as one of the very first typical expressions of a Nordic fanciful, soulful and new Romanticist art by Nordensvan in 1904 and as either a precursor for Symbolist Swedish art by Lindwall (1972) and Johannesson (2007) or as one of the most distinct Symbolist Swedish expressions according to Cornell (1946) or to Rausing (2001).¹²⁵ In addition to this, the Swedish painter J.A.G. Acke's *The Forest Temple* (1901) is also classified as one of the most distinct Symbolist works of art by Johannesson (2007) and Laurin (1926). Both the paintings *The Knight and the Maiden* (1897) and *Vision. Scene from Visby* (1894) by Richard Bergh are also regarded to be fanciful and Symbolist expressions.

The younger Symbolist generation with nationally independent themes

One of the few art history writings that deals in an elaborate way with the younger generation of Finnish, Swedish and Danish and Norwegian Symbolist artists is Nils Gösta Sandblad's contribution from 1972. Sandblad's contribution "Nordiskt sekelskifte" includes the in-depth subchapter 'The great individualists' of Nordic artists who emerged and established themselves with their art during the 1890s and onwards, which emphasises those artists' individualist artistic expression, but also makes a distinction between young Nordic Symbolist artists with national themes like Akseli Gallen-Kallela and Väino Blomstedt¹²⁶ and those with nationally independent themes of a more general kind, which were often characterised by melancholic and pessimistic atmospheres.¹²⁷ By highlighting the

¹²⁵ Georg Nordensvan, Stockholm 1904, p. 76; Bo Lindwall, Stockholm 1972, p. 166; Lena Johannesson, Stockholm 2007, p. 84; Henrik Cornell, Stockholm 1946, p. 277; Birgit Rausing, "Måleriet", in: Jan Torsten Ahlstrand, Lund 2001, p. 242.

¹²⁶ Nils Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 232ff.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185ff.

preoccupation with national themes and pursuits as being rather unusual and the exploration of pure, ideal, and mystical Symbolist motifs as usual amongst this young generation of individualist artists, as well as emphasizing these artists' international sojourns, his contribution as the most comprehensive inclusion of the young Symbolist generation with nationally independent themes within art history is an important starting point for this project.¹²⁸

This applies also to the way Magnus Enckell, Olof Sager-Nelson, Beda Stjernschantz and Ellen Thesleff are dealt with as Symbolists for whom Sâr Péladan and his Rosicrucian Parisian order and salon had a great impact. This is an aspect which has rarely been thoroughly explored in other art history accounts, except for Sarajas-Korte's contribution from 1981 on Finnish Symbolism.¹²⁹ Enckell is designated by Sandblad as one of the most distinct Nordic examples of the Decadent Parisian Symbolism, similar to the art of *Les Nabis*. Sager-Nelson is also regarded as a clear case of a Decadent Symbolist inspired by Odilon Redon, Eugène Carrière and Péladan. Stjernschantz and Thesleff are—even though less definitely—also associated with the Parisian Decadent Symbolism of the 1890s.¹³⁰

This survey has shown that not all artists studied in this project are excluded from art history. Magnus Enckell's portrait painting and figure painting of nude boys and youths from the turn of the twentieth century is, in fact, both well included and well associated with Finnish Symbolism as in, for instance, Laurin's contributions from the 1920s, in Wilmann's from 1950, in Markku Valkonen's from 1992 or in the recent exhibition catalogue *Nordic Dawn: Modernism's Awakening in Finland 1890–1920* from 2005.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Nils Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 185ff., 240ff.

¹²⁹ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981.

¹³⁰ Nils Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 227ff.

¹³¹ Carl Gustaf Laurin, Stockholm 1926, p. 489f; Carl Gustaf Laurin, *Konsthistoria. Jubileum-supplaga, del 3, Sveriges, Norges, Danmarks och Finlands konst*, Stockholm 1929, p. 337f.; Preben Wilmann (ed.), *Nordisk målarkonst: det moderna måleriets genombrott*, Stockholm 1950, p. 25f.; Aune Lindström's account of Finland, in: Isa Andrenius, Helsinki 1951, p. 124; John Boulton Smith, Helsinki 1985, p. 71; Bengt von Bonsdorff (ed.), *Suomalaista 1800-luvun taidetta: Gösta Serlachiuksen taidesäätiön kokoelmista = Finsländsk 1800-tal-skunst: Ur Gösta Serlachius konststiftelses samlingar: Amos Andersonin taidemuseo 13.1.–13.3.1994*, Amos Andersons konstmuseum, Helsinki 1994, p. 52; Markku Valkonen, Hel-

Nevertheless, his international Parisian-influenced Symbolism is considered as a rare and exceptional case within Finnish art history, which is at odds with the predominant National Symbolism.¹³² Olof Sager-Nelson's portrait painting from his Parisian-Belgian period is also relatively well included within Swedish art history from the early 1900s until today as something soulful, dreamy and mystical¹³³ but is, at the same time, also consistently classified as lying outside of the prevalent Swedish National Romanticist art and national production context,¹³⁴ which is why he has been denominated as an 'oddball' ('särling'), as the Swedish painter Ivan Aguéli is also called.¹³⁵

Moreover, although Ellen Thesleff's Symbolist portrait and figure painting is to a small extent included in Finnish art history contributions from the 1980s and 1990s and also paid regard to in exhibition catalogues from the 1970s and onwards, as in the recent *Nordic Dawn: Modernism's Awakening in Finland 1890–1920* from 2005, her portrait and figure painting is still excluded rather than included.¹³⁶ Beda Stjernschantz's diverse subject matters—her portrait painting, landscape painting and classical mythological motifs—are not only paid regard to in Sandblad's above-mentioned contribution from 1972, but also to a small extent in John Boulton Smith's from 1985, in Markku Valkonen from 1992 and in the above-mentioned

sinki 1992, p. 79f.; Timo Huusko, Riitta Ojanperä & Soili Sinisalo, "Tracing the Sources", in: Stephan Kojala (ed.), Prestel, Munich 2005, p. 58f.; Leena Ahtola-Moorhouse & Timo Huusko, "The Landscape of the Mind", in: Stephan Kojala (ed.), Munich 2005, p. 68ff.

¹³² See for instance: Salme Sarajas-Korte, "Sekelslutet i Finlands Bildkonst", in: Ulf Abel (ed.), Stockholm 1971, p. 15f.; Olli Valkonen & Leena Lindqvist, Oslo 1980, p. 20.

¹³³ Georg Nordensvan, Stockholm 1904, p. 82f; Carl Gustaf Laurin, Stockholm 1926, pp. 185–189; Carl Gustaf Laurin, Stockholm 1929, p. 149; Sven Alfons & Bo Lindwall, Stockholm 1944, p. XXX.

¹³⁴ Sven Sandström & Elisabeth Lidén (eds.), *Konsten i Sverige. 1900-talets bildkonst*, AWE/Geber, Lund 1975, p. 107; Isa Andrenius, Helsinki 1951, p. 88.

¹³⁵ See for instance: Birgit Rausing, in: Jan Torsten Ahlstrand, Lund 2001, p. 203.

¹³⁶ Ulf Abel, Stockholm 1971, pp. 42–45; Olli Valkonen and Leena Lindqvist, Oslo 1980, p. 15f., p. 51ff.; John Boulton Smith, Helsinki 1985, p. 65ff.; Markku Valkonen, Helsinki 1992, p. 81; Leena Ahtola-Moorhouse & Timo Huusko, "The Landscape of the Mind", in: Stephan Kojala, Munich 2005, p. 68ff.

exhibition catalogue from 2005.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, her art is excluded rather than included. Moreover, Tyra Kleen's graphic art is the clearest case of being excluded. Besides a short comment on Tyra Kleen as the illustrator of Olive Schreiner's *Dreams* (1897) in Bo Lindwall's and Sven Alfons' contribution from 1944 and a short note on her art's similarity to the art of the German graphic artist Max Klinger in Gösta Lilja and Johnny Roosval's Swedish artists lexicon from 1957, her art has not been acknowledged within Swedish art history.¹³⁸

Thus, while Magnus Enckell and Olof Sager-Nelson's nationally independent Symbolist art are included as exceptional expressions within Finnish and Swedish art history respectively, the nationally independent Symbolist art of Ellen Thesleff, Beda Stjernerantz and Tyra Kleen is excluded from art history.

Against the backdrop of this survey of art historical dominant accounts regarding Symbolism, this project studies the art of Enckell, Stjernerantz, Thesleff, Sager-Nelson and Kleen, which started to develop from the early 1890s and onwards, as Symbolist artists of the young generation with nationally independent themes.¹³⁹ In contrast to the expression of a national culture and the evocative landscape painting without a human figure that Symbolism was, and is, mostly associated with in Nordic art histories, this project explores the selected Finnish and Swedish artists in relation to a Symbolist strand, which, I argue, emerged in Paris in the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s as a transnational movement, and which made both the display of the human body and its spiritual transcendence a central

¹³⁷ Gösta Sandblad, Stockholm 1972, p. 233; John Boulton Smith, Helsinki 1985, p. 69; Markku Valkonen, Helsinki 1992, p. 81f.; Leena Ahtola-Moorhouse & Timo Huusko, "The Landscape of the Mind", in: Stephan Koja, Munich 2005, p. 70.

¹³⁸ Sven Alfons & Bo Lindwall, "Bildkrönika. År 1897", in: Sven Alfons & Bo Lindwall, Stockholm 1944; Gösta Lilja & Johnny Roosval (eds.), *Svenskt konstnärslexikon: tiotusen svenska konstnärers liv och verk, del 3, Hahn-Lunderberg*, Allhem, Malmö 1957, pp. 378–97.

¹³⁹ Since the expression of the intermediate generation is rather only applicable to the Swedish art context of the 1890s and the early 1900s, the term 'the young generation' of Symbolist artists is instead employed in this project, similar to the way in which Gösta Sandblad uses it in his contribution from 1972.

artistic goal. This Symbolist stance will be contextualised below after the socio-historical background has been given.

2.2. The *fin de siècle's* socio-historical background— Symbolism and modernity

The literary and artistic Symbolist movement spanned the late 1880s to approximately 1910. As a *fin de siècle* phenomenon, the Symbolist movement evolved during a time of cultural and spiritual crisis.

Positivist sciences and materialism underwent huge progress and became dominant as never before in the second half of the nineteenth century. Scientific contributions and discoveries came thick and fast in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century, while new scientific fields like evolution theory, sexology and psychology established themselves. Many of these scientific discoveries or standpoints broke completely from earlier assumed knowledge, ideas, and points of view, which contributed to tensions, anxieties, disillusionment, and uncertainties.¹⁴⁰

According to Sigmund Freud, the founder of one of the new scientific fields at the turn of the twentieth century himself (namely psychoanalysis), human self-perception, or human narcissism as he called it, had undergone three different kinds of humiliations by the late nineteenth century. Firstly, since Copernicus, geo-centrism was abandoned, and the human being was no longer the centre of the universe. In this way, the human being underwent a cosmological humiliation. Secondly, following Darwin's research contributions, humankind was no longer the pride of creation, but was a coincidental product of evolution, which constituted a biological humiliation. Thirdly, after Freud's discovery of the unconscious, a human being was not the 'master in his own house', which constituted a psychological

¹⁴⁰ See for instance: Evelyn Benesch, Michel Draguet, Dominique Maréchal & Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber (eds.), *Der Kuss der Sphinx: Symbolismus in Belgien: [anlässlich der Ausstellung "Der Kuss der Sphinx. Symbolismus in Belgien", BA-CA Kunstforum, Wien, 16. Oktober 2007 bis 3. Februar 2008]*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2007, p. 13ff.

humiliation.¹⁴¹ To this sort of summary of the crisis of the human being, demonstrated by Freud, can also be added the aspect of secularisation and its effects on humankind in the nineteenth century, something that is, for instance, echoed in Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* from 1885.

Moreover, scientific new fields such as Darwinism, sexology and psychoanalysis claimed to be able to prove women's mental and intellectual inferiority to men.¹⁴² Contributions by Carl Vogt (e.g. *Lectures on Man*, 1864), Charles Darwin (e.g. *The Origin of Species*, 1859, and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 1871), P. J. Möbius (*On the Physiological debility of Woman*, 1898) or Sigmund Freud can be mentioned in relation to making the female deviant to and even degenerate compared to men. The female body became an object of pathology that diagnosed many women's behaviour as hysterical. Through the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot's study of hysteria as an exclusively female disease and symptom of female incapability of (sexual) self-restraint at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, as well as through the above-mentioned scientific contributions, the biased assumption of female mental and bodily inferiority or even female degeneration established itself and was widespread at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁴³ In that sense, science contributed to the creation of the woman type of 'the fallen woman'. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, female emancipation and women's entrance in public, higher education and working life commenced at the turn of the twentieth century, which led to stressed gender relationships in the socio-historical context.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Sigmund Freud's "Une difficulté de la psychanalyse", Paris 1952 [1917], pp. 141ff., quoted in: Jean Clair, "Lost Paradise", in: *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe [The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from June 8 to October 15, 1995]*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal 1995, p. 21.

¹⁴² Bram Dijkstra, New York 1986, p. 182ff.

¹⁴³ Charcot's public Tuesday Lessons, that were held between 1866 and 1893, became a popular spectacle and were visited by international artists, writers, intellectuals etc. In relation to Symbolism and hysteria. See for instance: Rodolphe Rapetti, "From Anguish to Ecstasy: Symbolism and the study of Hysteria", in: *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe [The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from June 8 to October 15, 1995]*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal 1995, p. 224ff.

¹⁴⁴ Debora L. Silverman, Baltimore 1991, p. 148ff.

Hence, the development of Symbolism occurred against the backdrop of evolution theory, psychoanalysis, and secularisation as well as against the backdrop of industrialisation and urbanisation as features of modernity. Even though a withdrawal from and rejection of modernity and its industrial, urban, and ‘civilised’ features was a common ground within Symbolism, the development of the Symbolist movement was still to a certain degree affected by scientific, technological and industrial progress.

At the same time as nineteenth-century scientific breakthroughs such as the discovery of microbes, germs and other biological realities, the technique of X-rays or the psychological study of the ‘unknown’ subconscious claimed to have made visible other realities that earlier had been considered ‘invisible’ or non-existent, the Symbolist movement also focused on everything beyond the ‘tangible’ or ‘perceivable’ and on alluding to the invisible through the visible.¹⁴⁵ While the discovery of invisible realities in scientific fields was paid special attention to, so also was an artistic and intellectual movement developed during the 1880s and 1890s that believed in the existence of a world beyond the physical world and of a higher truth. This concept became the main theoretical concept of the Symbolist movement.

By withdrawing from the idea of the depiction of the contemporary modern world as the major artistic goal, the Symbolist movement was also strongly affected by the establishment of the wide use of photography, and its superiority in terms of capturing the physical world and its objective qualities. The technique of photography underwent major improvements and refinements throughout the whole nineteenth century (as in those made by Daguerre, Nadar and William Henry Fox Talbot). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the use of cameras and the circulation of photographs increased widely.¹⁴⁶ Photographs were increasingly used by late nineteenth-century painters as a resource in the process of realising a painting and certain objects. While the new technique of photography with

¹⁴⁵ See for instance: Sharon L. Hirsh, *Symbolism and Modern Urban Society*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2004, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Hugh Honour & John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, Rev. 7. ed., Laurence King, London 2009, p. 660. However, the vast majority of the persons portrayed with the technique of daguerrotype were the middle classes in Europe and “North America”.

its suitability for the documentation of certain points of time and space began to be widespread and widely used, current painterly approaches also began to pursue other purposes than realistic representations of specific visual appearances. This became especially apparent within Post-Impressionism's many artistic currents with an anti-naturalistic style, as in the Synthetist style of, for instance, Paul Gauguin or Émile Bernard, which was characteristic of the application of unnatural colours as well as of flat and simplified lines and forms.

A sentiment of doubts, anxieties, and pessimism towards the creation of a modern disenchanted world evolved which began to permeate and prevail several artistic, literary, and philosophical circles in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. In late nineteenth-century France, there flourished the assumption of the decline or degeneration of current society and culture within movements such as the Decadent Movement and the Symbolist movement.¹⁴⁷ This degenerated cultural climate, characteristic of the *fin de siècle*, was echoed in many literary and art theoretical contributions such as in Péladan's novel *Le Vice Suprême* (1884),¹⁴⁸ his *Manifesto de la Salon de la Rose+Croix* (1892), in Albert Aurier's *Les symbolistes* (1892),¹⁴⁹ and even in Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* from 1857. Within the Decadent literary Movement, a fascination for everything that was unnatural or degenerated was employed, as in sexual perversity, nervous illness, disease, or crime.¹⁵⁰ Society, which was regarded as diseased by Decadent and Symbolist proponents, could only be cured through the return to tradition and origin by artistic means as, for instance, Joséphin Péladan expressed in *Le Vice suprême* (1884).¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Sometimes it is also summarised as a waning culture, as done by Guy Cogeval: Guy Cogeval, "I. The Waning of Culture", in: *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe [The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from June 8 to October 15, 1995]*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal 1995, p. 24.

¹⁴⁸ *Le Vice Suprême* (1884) is the first part of a total 19 parts of the cycle *La Décadence latine (Éthopée)*, that Péladan produced between 1884 and 1906.

¹⁴⁹ Albert Aurier, "Les symbolistes", in: *Revue encyclopédique 2* (April 1, 1892), p. 474–86.

¹⁵⁰ Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1997, p. 3.

¹⁵¹ Michel Draguet, "Brüssel – Drehscheibe des Symbolismus in Europa", in: Evelyn Benesch, Michel Draguet, Dominique Maréchal & Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber (eds.), *Der*

As a symptom of this sort of spiritual and cultural crisis, Symbolism positioned itself against positivism and materialism.¹⁵² Whereas Symbolism was contra positivism and materialism, earlier transcendental mystical truths like alchemy, theosophy and occultism as non-objective, subject-centred approaches were largely advocated.¹⁵³ As a substitute to modern positivist sciences and Christian-Jewish classical religion, these alternative transcendental mystical approaches were applied by Symbolist artists, attempting to both prevent the degeneration of society and to improve society and culture.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, not only were these creative methodical alternative approaches a reaction towards the modern ‘disenchanted’ world, but also the motifs themselves that were explored within Symbolism. While Symbolism visually explored pre-industrial, pre-urban and pre-civilised subject matters rather than the industrial, urban contemporary reality,¹⁵⁵ a revival of religious themes also appeared within the Symbolist movement. The religious revival within Symbolism also involved the artist’s religious conviction itself. Christian devotion is the topic of artworks that were made within the Pont-Aven School, the secret society of *Les Nabis*—meaning ‘the Prophets’ in Hebrew, or the Rosicrucian order and its salons between 1892

Kuss der Sphinx: Symbolismus in Belgien: [anlässlich der Ausstellung “Der Kuss der Sphinx. Symbolismus in Belgien”, BA-CA Kunstforum, Wien, 16. Oktober 2007 bis 3. Februar 2008], Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2007, p. 18.

¹⁵² However, Rapetti demonstrates in his article from 1995 that the Symbolist circles in fact were not as oppositional to scientific positivism as they themselves often claimed to be, in particular as regards to the employment of an iconography based upon the study of hysteria in female depictions that can be especially linked to artists that exhibited at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*; Rodolphe Rapetti, “From Anguish to Ecstasy. Symbolism and the Study of Hysteria”, in: *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe [The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from June 8 to October 15, 1995]*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal 1995, p. 224ff.

¹⁵³ Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999, p. 93f.

¹⁵⁴ See for instance: Albert Aurier, “Les symbolistes”, in: *Revue encyclopédique 2* (April 1, 1892), p. 474–86, in which Aurier argues for the rise of Symbolist artists as a sign of the eminent fall of positivism and the change of civilisation.

¹⁵⁵ Jean Clair, “Lost Paradise”, in: *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe [The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from June 8 to October 15, 1995]*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal 1995, p. 23. There exist some exceptions like the artworks of Felicien Rops, which often reflect urban scenes; see: Sharon L. Hirsh, New York 2004, p. 1f.

and 1897. Within French *fin-de-siècle* art, it was especially a Catholic revival that became apparent.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, although a sceptical and pessimistic attitude towards modernity prevailed within Symbolism, the movement in itself cannot generally be considered as anti-modern or reactionary.

2.3. Transnational Symbolism.

Manifestos, art theories and approaches

While this chapter commenced with an overview of Nordic Symbolism, followed by a contextualisation of the socio-historical background against which the Symbolist movement arose, the Symbolist movement itself, which circulated throughout Europe, will be focused on in the following. Moréas', Denis' and Aurier's manifestos, art theoretical approaches and a particular mindset that became characteristic for Symbolism will be examined in depth.

To explain and specify Symbolism is a complicated and imprecise enterprise since the movement did not conform to a homogenous school, but rather to an umbrella term of various kind of styles and techniques that were only loosely united through a broad range of subject matters that re-appeared within the Symbolist movement such as mythological, religious or literary themes.¹⁵⁷ Thereby, the borders of avantgarde art and academic art became blurred within Symbolism.¹⁵⁸ At Symbolist exhibitions mythological paintings were often displayed, reminiscent of nineteenth-century (French) academic history painting as, for instance, the French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau's style and motifs, together with Impressionist, Pointillist and Post-Impressionist styles.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the fact that the

¹⁵⁶ See for instance: Ellis Hanson, Cambridge, Mass. 1997.

¹⁵⁷ Vivien Greene, New York 2017, p. 15.

¹⁵⁸ Michel Draguet, "Brüssel – Drehscheibe des Symbolismus in Europa", in: Evelyn Bensch, Michel Draguet, Dominique Maréchal & Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber (eds.), Ostfildern 2007 p. 13.

¹⁵⁹ See for example: *The Salon de la Rose+Croix* in 1892, where the pointillist Alphonse Osbert exhibited one artwork at the same time that Edmond Aman-Jean's art with its post-impressionist influence and Alexandre Séon's and Maurice Chabas' art with their

expressions ‘Symbolist’ and ‘Symbolism’ were widely deployed at the turn of the twentieth century—almost like catch-all-terms—makes it also more complicated to outline the aesthetic and art theoretical cornerstones of the Symbolist movement.

Several different movements are considered to belong to Symbolism such as Synthetism, the Pont-Aven School, *Les Nabis*, the Rosicrucian order and salons inaugurated by Joséphin Péladan, the group and exhibition venue of Les XX in Brussels, the Secessionists in Munich and Vienna etc. Hence, even though art theory contributions that are closely linked to Symbolism first appeared in Parisian periodicals such as Jean Moréas’ “Le symbolisme”, published in September 1886 in *Le Figaro*, Maurice Denis’ “Définition du néo-traditionnisme”, published in August 1890 in *Art et Critique* or Albert Aurier’s “Le symbolisme en peinture: Paul Gauguin”, published in March 1891 in *Mercure de France*, Symbolism as an aesthetic and philosophical phenomenon was widespread throughout Europe at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁶⁰

The visual artists who are most commonly regarded as predecessors to the Symbolist art movement are the French painters Gustave Moreau, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and Odilon Redon as well as the second-gen-

classical, ancient motifs and post-impressionist colour application were displayed together with Edgar Maxence’s art and its features of academic history painting; Mary Slavkin, New York 2014, p. 299ff.

¹⁶⁰ The exhibition “Młoda Polska. Polish Fin de Siècle Art”, 27th of October 2018–17th March 2019 at the Gothenburg Museum of Art paid attention to Polish symbolism; Baltic symbolism was explored in the exhibition “Wild Souls. Symbolism in the Baltic States”, 10th of April 2018–15th of July 2018, at the Musée d’Orsay and Musée de l’Orangerie; the exhibitions “Anywhere out of the world. Olof Sager-Nelson and his Contemporaries”, 19th of September 2015–24th of January, 2016 at the Gothenburg Museum of Art, and “Decadence & Symbolism”, 19th of September 2015–24th of January 2016 at Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde dealt with Nordic Symbolism. Many exhibitions have been made concerning Belgian Symbolism. One of the most recent ones was the exhibition “Decadence and Dark Dreams. Belgian Symbolism” at the Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin, 18th of September 2020–17th of January 2021. The exhibition “Myths and Mysterries. Symbolism and Swiss Artists”, 25th of April–18th of August 2013 at the Kunstmuseum Bern & 14th of September 2013–12th of January 2014 at the Museo Cantonale d’Arte et Museo d’Arte, Lugano, dealt with Swiss Symbolism. Those given examples of exhibitions dealing with local or regional European currents of Symbolism are not intended to provide a comprehensive representation of regional or local symbolism.

eration Pre-Raphaelite Edward Burne-Jones. In particular, Puvis de Chavannes's art and Gustave Moreau's art were declared to conform to the two idioms that were pursued within Symbolism.¹⁶¹ Whereas Puvis de Chavannes's art with his muted colours, flattened forms, and religious or profane motifs stood for one Symbolist prototypical principle, Gustave Moreau's art with his fantastic and mythological elements, his overwrought, jewelled surfaces and chiaroscuro stood for the other.

"The intangible through the tangible" — the Symbolist mindset

Symbolist works of art are characterised by a liberate treatment of formal aspects such as style and technique. On the contrary to this formal 'freedom', the conveyance or rather allusion to something invisible, intangible, or metaphysical was the determinate factor of a Symbolist approach and expression. Rather than a style, Symbolism can be regarded as a particular mindset which was based on the overall notion of seeking to express the invisible through the visible.

The principle of clothing an 'idea' with a sensory form was proclaimed for the first time by the Decadent writer Jean Moréas in 1886 in relation to Symbolist poetry. On the 18th of September 1886, the Greek poet, Jean Moréas, published the article "Le symbolisme" in the literary supplement of the French daily morning newspaper *Le Figaro*.¹⁶² The form was considered to be a mere means and, thus, secondary and subjective instead of an end in itself. While an innovative, archetypal, and complex style (of language) was demanded by Moréas, he also expressed his disesteem towards art with an objective and naturalist point of departure. Soon the expression of the 'idea' became the main Symbolist goal and was brought up in other Symbolist pictorial manifestos such as in Albert Aurier's of 1891.

¹⁶¹ See for instance: Vivien Greene, New York 2017, p. 16.

¹⁶² Jean Moréas was the pen name of Ioannes Papadiamantopoulos, a Greek native of the Greek Peloponnese, who lived in Paris since the 1870s until he died in 1910. It was *Le Figaro* itself, the newspaper which had the highest circulation of any daily in Paris, that prompted Moréas as one of the most prominent Decadent writers to formulate "the fundamental principles of the new manifestation of art" — as it is mentioned in the introduction of the article; Jean Moréas, "Le Symbolisme", in: *Le Figaro* (September 18, 1886).

Hence, by being based upon the notion of exploring the intangible through the tangible, the purpose of a Symbolist work was to suggest something other than what was actually represented. While no truthful rendering of the mundane world was pursued, the transcendence of the physical world was a major approach in order to mediate notions such as dreams, fantasies, visions etc. By overcoming the materiality of the physical world, the artwork sought to transport both the artist and the viewer beyond what could be perceived with the naked eye.¹⁶³ However, the aesthetic principles of the evocative, open-ended and allusive quality of the work of art, which were advocated by the Symbolists,¹⁶⁴ make it also difficult to provide a clear-cut definition.

The artist's mind—subjectivity, imagination and emotionality

The principle of expressing the intangible through the tangible also focused particularly on the individual artmaker's subjectivity as an important source for creativity, stemming from the Romantic conception of the creative genius.¹⁶⁵ This is a central argument in Maurice Denis' "Définition du néo-traditionnisme", which was published as two different pieces in August 1890 in the weekly journal *Art et Critique*.¹⁶⁶ In 1890, Denis was a member of *Les Nabis*, a secret society of young artists at the Académie Julian, which was inaugurated in 1888.¹⁶⁷ While stressing the modern artist's impossibility of imitating nature and of an objective sensory approach, the

¹⁶³ Patrik Steorn, Gothenburg 2015, p. 61.

¹⁶⁴ See for instance: Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, Doctoral thesis, p. 26f.

¹⁶⁵ Michel Draguet, "Brüssel – Drehscheibe des Symbolismus in Europa", in: Evelyn Benesch, Michel Draguet, Dominique Maréchal & Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber (eds.), *Ostfildern* 2007, p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ As Denis himself states in those texts, he was not yet 20 years of age and had been a pupil at the École des Beaux-Arts since July since 1888. As a note to art (Notes d'art), "Définition du néo-traditionnisme" was published in the section of Fine Arts on the 23rd of August as well as on the 30th of August in 1890; <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1269657z.item> & <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1269656j>, accessed on the 6th of August 2021.

¹⁶⁷ Richard & Belinda Thomson, "Maurice Denis's 'Définition Du Néo-traditionnisme' and Anti-naturalism (1890)", *The Burlington Magazine* 154, no. 1309 (April 2012), p. 264, accessed on the 4th of August 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23232563>.

importance of the artist's emotionality, imagination and interpretation of the sensation are highlighted as crucial means for the new art. Denis designates this as Neo-Traditionalism, which is very similar to the way Albert Aurier argues in his pictorial manifesto of 1891.¹⁶⁸ This is also why Denis distinguishes the present art from photography. Similar to the way in which the impact of photography was mentioned above in the development of modern art, a painting—affected by the painter's mind—cannot accord to a realistic imitation of nature, whereas photography fulfils such a realistic purpose, as Denis puts it.¹⁶⁹

Denis compares the art he wants to establish with the art of archaic and classical periods. According to Denis, what constitutes great art is the transformation of sensation, to which the art of “the Hindus, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the art of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance”—praised for its decorative quality by Denis—as well as the new art with the focus on the artist's mind and soul conform. Thus, the favoured style of Neo-Traditionalist art comprised a decorative style similar to an archaic and naïve style. Even though the designation Symbolism does not appear in Denis' text, his demonstration of subjectivity, emotionality, and imagination in the production of modern art as well as the paradox of creating a new modern art through the means of archaic, primitive and classical art were crucial cornerstones for a transnational Symbolist visual language.

The artist's capability of accessing the world of ideas and a higher truth

Besides Symbolism's conveyance of the intangible through the tangible, for which the artist's mind and soul was necessary, the creative subject's peculiarity in being capable of going beyond the physical world and accessing the world of ideas, a higher truth or even higher levels of cosmologies was another crucial Symbolist theoretical cornerstone.

¹⁶⁸ See: “Définition du néo-traditionnisme”, XIV). This is why Aurier also is critical toward the meaning of the term ‘impressionism’ as Denis also appeared to be.

¹⁶⁹ Albert Aurier, “Le symbolisme en peinture: Paul Gauguin”, in: *Mercur de France* (March 1, 1891), p. 155–165.

This is focused on in “Le symbolism en peinture: Paul Gauguin” about Paul Gauguin and painterly Symbolism, written by the French art critic, Albert Aurier, which was published on the 1st of March 1891 in the French monthly journal *Mercure du France*.¹⁷⁰ Aurier dwells on Paul Gauguin’s painting *Vision After the Sermon* (1888), and, simultaneously, outlines the first visual theory of Symbolism. Even though Aurier’s visual theory draws upon the art of the Synthetist painter Paul Gauguin, the theoretical notions made by Aurier in this text are of general relevance for Symbolist theory. Aurier summarises the art that is about to break through, taking a stand against naturalism, to be *ideist*—as the expression of the idea; *symbolist*—as the expressed idea by means of a formal envelope; *synthetic*—since the forms or signs are conveyed in a general comprehensible mode; *subjective*—since the depicted object is not an object but a sign of an idea perceived by the subject; and (as a consequence) *decorative*—like archaic and Classical art.¹⁷¹

In addition, Aurier declares the artist’s ability to undergo an initiation as the presupposition for this new art. Hence, like a seer or clairvoyant, the Symbolist artist—as Gauguin was for Aurier—was able to make contact with the world of ideas, the heavens, and hell.¹⁷² As the ‘ideist’, the artist of this new art functions as the clairvoyance of the “inner eye of man”, opposed to the realist art tendency of ignoring it.¹⁷³

By deriving from Baudelaire’s poem *Correspondences*, from Emanuel Swedenborg’s system of correspondences and even from Neoplatonic thinking and the connection between matter and ideas, Aurier’s reasoning assumes the ability to decode ideas behind outer appearances as a precondition to expressing those ideas with signs and, hence, to be an ‘ideist’

¹⁷⁰ Albert Aurier, “Le symbolism en peinture: Paul Gauguin”, in: *Mercure du France* (March 1, 1891), p. 155–165.

¹⁷¹ Henri Dorra (ed.), *Symbolist Art Theories: A Critical Anthology*, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley 1994, p. 200f.

¹⁷² As the expression of ideas, ‘ideist art’ is proclaimed to be purer and more elevated, whereas realism as the representation of the perceived outer aspects of matter is deemed as impersonal and banal, like photography; *Ibid.*, p. 197f.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* With reference to Swedenborg.

artist. To decode ideas and to encipher them into a system of signs as the creative artist is a major precondition for 'ideist' art. Hence, the Symbolist artwork as the mediator of the idea or ideas is characterised by simplification, synthesis, and selection regarding line, form, and colour.

This assumption of the artist's unique capacity for accessing the world of ideas and a world of higher truth and mediating between the tangible and intangible became a general philosophical cornerstone of Symbolism.

Civilisation criticism

Aurier's advocacy of primitive art was closely related to a civilisation critique and a Western perception of the wild savage. According to Aurier, art had a major role in the recreation of the lost stability of Western civilisation, characterised by decadence and the forgotten ability of any initial revelation. On the contrary, the savage had those transcendental abilities¹⁷⁴ hence, primitive painting was the true painting.¹⁷⁵ Thus, he considered the new 'ideist' art as the true and absolute art to function as a return to a more primitive, simpler way of signifying 'ideas', in particular primordial 'ideas'.¹⁷⁶ 'Ideist' art also involved the 'ideist' artist soul to be of primitive quality, as was the case with Gauguin.

2.4. The *Salons de la Rose+Croix*

In the following, special attention will be paid to the Rosicrucian order and its salons between 1892 and 1897. Since the five chosen Swedish and Finnish visual artists all visited at least one of the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* in Paris and produced artworks that relate in different ways to the art theories and beauty ideals of the Rosicrucian circle, a background about this order's foundation and its art programme will be given. Even though the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* attracted a great number of visitors throughout the 1890s

¹⁷⁴ The terms 'the savage' and 'the primitive being' are used as synonyms by Aurier, see: Henri Dorra, Berkeley 1994, p. 202.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 201.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

and were consistently written about in the press, research is scarce about them, not only when it comes to Nordic art history contributions. Hence, the presentation of the art programme and the art theoretical point of origins of the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, which is made below, constitutes not only a basis for the discussions in the upcoming analyses chapters but is also in itself an important contribution to the further exploration of this artistic circle.

2.4.1. Background of the *Rose+Croix* brotherhood and the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* 1892–1897

After the demise of the official Salon in 1890, a variety of alternative salons arose in Paris throughout the 1890s. Besides the *Société des Artistes Français* and their *Salon des Champs-Élysées* and the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars*, founded by the secessionist group of the *Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts* and members like Puvis de Chavannes, Rodin and Meissonier, there existed other alternative exhibition venues like the *Salon des Indépendants* from 1884, the *Peintre Impressioniste & Symbolistes* between 1891–1897, the *Exhibition Des Arts de la Femme* and also the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* between 1892 and 1897.

The *Salons de la Rose+Croix* were part of the fraternal secret society *L'Ordre de la Rose+Croix du Temple et du Graal*, that the French writer and art critic Joséphin Péladan founded in 1890 after he withdrew from the *L'Ordre Cabbalistique de la Rose+Croix*, which in its turn was inaugurated by him and the poet and occultist Stansislav de Guaita in 1888.¹⁷⁷ With the inauguration of these orders, a clear spiritual connection to the original Rosicrucian order, a seventeenth-century German fraternal order that claimed to possess unknown esoteric knowledge handed down from ancient times, was highlighted.¹⁷⁸ By consecrating his own secret society, Péladan sought

¹⁷⁷ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 83.

¹⁷⁸ The seventeenth-century Rosicrucian order drew on the enigmatic writing *Fama frater-nitatis* (*The Fame of the Brotherhood*), in which the life of the so-called Christian Rosenkreuz—who is said to have lived 1378–1484 and who travelled as a Christian mystic throughout the Middle East in search for spiritual insights—is described. However, this character is fictitious and so is the order's legend of origin. See for instance: Per Faxneld, Stockholm 2020, p. 43f.

to put emphasis on a Catholic renewal instead of a cabalistic orientation that de Guaita's aimed at in the *Ordre Cabbalistique de la Rose Croix*.¹⁷⁹

As Péladan stated, the idea of arranging the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* arose after having seen a performance of Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* in Bayreuth in 1888.¹⁸⁰ Wagner's music and Péladan's perception of Wagner as a creative musical genius able to compose music that functions as a mediator to an occult truth was fundamental to the formation of the *Rose+Croix*-order, even though Wagner was non-religious. The use of the acronym "R + C" which Péladan widely used can also be understood as a tribute to the "PRB"—the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

Péladan's idea was to create a Catholic social movement as well as an exhibition venue with a focus on idealist Catholic art with occultist tendencies.¹⁸¹ The revival of esoteric and occult religions functioned as one of Péladan's group's ideological cornerstones, including Rosicrucianism and theosophy.¹⁸² Theosophy was considered, like alchemy, as a part of the esoteric field, that throughout the nineteenth century developed further into what has been mostly known as occultism.¹⁸³ This esoteric development or 'mutation' was dominated by syncretism and an amalga-

¹⁷⁹ For the sake of clarity and brevity, the terms the *Rose+Croix*-order or the *Salon/s de la Rose+Croix* will be used throughout this Doctoral thesis when referring to Péladan's brotherhood or their salons.

¹⁸⁰ Joséphin Péladan, *Le théâtre complet de Wagner: Les XI opéras scène par scène avec notes biographiques et critiques*, Chamuel, Paris 1894, in: Vivien Greene, 2017, p. 29.

¹⁸¹ Mary Slavkin, New York 2014, p. 2. As Slavkin shows, the Catholic focus is problematic since Péladan's actually merged Catholicism with Rosicrucianism, and other substitutes to traditional religions, p. 11.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁸³ The Sorbonne Professor of Esoterism Antoine Faivre's definition of esoterism from the 1990s is based upon four central and recurring characteristics, namely *correspondences* (everything in the universe is linked), *living nature* (a view of all living things in the cosmos as permeated by a kind of invisible inner 'fire of life'), *fantasy and mediating intermediary* (mystics make use of rituals, concealed signs, symbols and communication with the spirit for the means of attaining the world beyond the physical world) and *transmutation* (spiritual refinement as a main purpose of esoteric practice). In addition to that, esoterism was also characterised by *concordance* (all religions have a secret, inner core) as well as the idea of *transfer* of esoteric knowledge through long chains of initiation from master to disciple. The aspect of secret knowledge as especially important for esoterism: Per Faxneld, Stockholm 2020, p. 17ff.

mation with enlightenment philosophy, secularity, and natural sciences; ‘theosophy’ and ‘esoterism’ will be used as synonyms in this project, but I will mostly make use of the terms ‘esoteric’ and ‘occult’ in relation to the Symbolist *Rose+Croix*-aesthetics, since these are mainly used by Péladan himself. Furthermore, the attainment of transcendental mystical truth was aimed for by Péladan and not objective truth as was the case with positivists’ sciences which had a tremendous growth in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁴

Péladan, as the founder of this group, developed the aesthetic doctrines and principles related to this network on his own, attempting to keep control over the group’s art theoretical standpoints, praising idealism, Catholicism, and occultism to improve society. One aspect of Symbolism, civilisation criticism, was not only apparent in Aurier’s above-mentioned Symbolist manifesto but was even the driving force for the foundation of Péladan’s order. Thereby, the degeneration of Western culture often was called, by himself, ‘latine decadence’ (*la décadence latine*). By denouncing the loss of the intimate relationship between art and God in contemporary culture, Péladan demanded the re-establishment of this close relationship between art and religion to circumvent the degeneration of late nineteenth-century art caused by secular, positivist and materialistic tendencies.¹⁸⁵ His Catholic aestheticism implied that only religious art could be regarded as great art and that within art history only Catholic works of art could be called masterpieces.¹⁸⁶ According to Péladan, these requirements were more than met by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and his art, which is why Péladan praised him as one of the very few contemporary painters fit to be a role model for the salons and their aesthetic programme.

The total of six *Salons de la Rose+Croix* were multimedia-based spectacles with not only visual contributions (paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints), but musical, theatrical as well as literary ones performed at the

¹⁸⁴ Vivien Greene, New York 2017, p. 15.

¹⁸⁵ Joséphin Péladan, “Le Matérialisme dans l’art”, in: *Le Foyer, Journal de Famille*, no. 300 (August), Paris 1881, pp. 177–179, in: Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 31f.

¹⁸⁶ This is presented by Joséphin Péladan as two ‘incontestable propositions’ in “Le Matérialisme dans l’art”, in: Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 32.

Soirées de la Rose+Croix. The first two salons were widely visited and written about, even though also often ridiculed, while interest in the later salons decreased.¹⁸⁷ In the manifesto, the importance of the *Soirées de la Rose+Croix* alongside the salon is stressed as a relevant supplement to the painterly and sculptural display of works of arts. At these soirées, the performance of musical pieces such as those by Bach, Porpora, Beethoven, Wagner or the group's composer Erik Satie and literary pieces such a recitation of *Parsifal* had been focused on.¹⁸⁸

Besides the annual catalogues of the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* between 1892 and 1897, also named *Geste Esthétique*, that amongst other items included a list of the exhibited artists,¹⁸⁹ Péladan published several other writings of a more aesthetic and art theoretical kind such as his *Manifesto de la Rose+Croix* and his *Salon de la Rose-Croix, Règle et Monitoire*, both from 1891,¹⁹⁰ or his *L'art idéaliste et mystique: doctrine de l'ordre et du salon annuel des Rose+Croix* from 1894.¹⁹¹

Since Péladan laid the basis for the fundamental aesthetic and ideological standpoints of the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* in these three last-mentioned writings, these publications will be given particular attention in the following. Because it was not possible to access the rules from 1891 directly and also because of language convenience, Pincus-Witten's English translation of Péladan's manifesto and the rules of the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* from 1975 will be used in addition.

¹⁸⁷ Vivien Greene, New York 2017, p. 17, p. 39.

¹⁸⁸ Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 208.

¹⁸⁹ With the exception of the catalogue du *Salon de la Rose+Croix* from 1895, all catalogues were available to access and study via *BnF Gallica*, or during my visit at the *Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA)* in April 2021. The catalogue from 1891 even includes illustrations of the exhibited art.

¹⁹⁰ Joséphin Péladan, *Manifesto de la Rose+Croix*, in: *Le Figaro*, September 2, 1891; <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k281603k>, accessed on the 9th of August 2021; Joséphin Péladan, *Salon de la Rose-Croix, Règle et Monitoire*, Dentu, Paris 1891, in: Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, pp. 211–216.

¹⁹¹ Joséphin Péladan, *L'art idéaliste et mystique: doctrine de l'ordre et du salon annuel des Rose+Croix*, Chamuel, Paris 1894: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k81589t/f2.item>, accessed on the 6th of August 2021.

However, one difficulty in determining key themes, subjects, and styles of Péladan's circle is the small number of artworks that can actually be identified as having been displayed at the salons, whereas a large part remain unidentified.¹⁹² In addition, Péladan's aesthetic pronouncements are not always coherent and sometimes even contradictory, which also makes it difficult to give a summary.

2.4.2. The aesthetic programme of *Les Salons de la Rose-Croix*

The first *Salon de la Rose+Croix* opened on the 10th of March at the Durand-Ruel Gallery.¹⁹³ It was accompanied by a Solemn Mass of the Holy Ghost at the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois.¹⁹⁴ Before the first salon opened, Péladan had already published, on the 2nd of September 1891, his manifesto of the *Rose+Croix* on page one of *Le Figaro*, in which he announces the order's complete aestheticisation.¹⁹⁵

Péladan's aesthetic and art theoretical standpoints are not presented straightforwardly but rather kept in riddles, which also contributes to the manifesto's polemic, vague, artificial, and metaphoric style of language. At the same time, by concealing rather than revealing artistic approaches and principles, Péladan's manifesto goes hand in hand with the esoteric inheritance of the Rosicrucian order and the notion of making knowledge only accessible to the 'initiates'.

While the creation of beauty and the ideality of an artwork are outlined as the only aesthetic requirements of the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, Péladan also points out the Salon's independence from a particular school, a certain technique and style.¹⁹⁶ However, only the use of historically-based methods was favoured by Péladan, while modern stylistic developments like Naturalism Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, *pleinair* or the aca-

¹⁹² See: Mary Slavkin, New York 2014, p. 4.

¹⁹³ According to the Manifesto, cited in Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 208.

¹⁹⁴ According to the rule 27, cited in Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 215.

¹⁹⁵ Joséphin Péladan, *Manifesto de la Rose+Croix*, in: *Le Figaro*, September 2, 1891; <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2816o3k>, accessed on the 9th of August 2021.

¹⁹⁶ Robert Pincus-Witten, *Occult symbolism in France: Joséphin Peladan and the Salons de la Rose-Croix*, Garland, New York, 1976, p. 207f.

demic art were rejected by him.¹⁹⁷ In practice, when taking into consideration which works of art had been displayed at the salon of 1892, a heterogeneous conglomeration of Pointillist, Italian quattrocento and other styles and techniques were represented. Whereas eighty artists such as Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave-Bouveret, Odilon Redon and Gustave Moreau had been invited to the first salon in 1892, far fewer artists had exhibited their art according to Slavkin.¹⁹⁸ To those who were represented in the first salon belonged, amongst others, Émile Bernard, Ferdinand Hodler, Félix Vallotton, Emile-Antoine Bourdelle, Edmond Aman-Jean, Ferdinand Khnopff, and Jan Toorop as well as the sculptor Jean-Auguste Dampit.¹⁹⁹

Furthermore, the aesthetic principle of the ‘ideal’ is brought up again in the *Salon de la Rose-Croix, Règle et Monitoire* (1891). With the help of ‘tradition’ as the base and ‘beauty’ as the means, the restoration of the cult of the ‘ideal’ is presented as the main aesthetic goal, as the first rule.²⁰⁰

The accepted subject matters were legends, mysticism and myths, allegories, dreams and literary narratives as well as “the expressive head if it is noble or the nude study if it is beautiful”, whereas “contemporary, rustic or military representation; flowers, animals, genre treated like history-painting, and portraiture like landscape” were repudiated, as was stated in the manifesto of the *Rose+Croix*.²⁰¹ In the *Salon de la Rose-Croix, Règle et Monitoire*, the sixth rule gives greater clarification about the appreciated subject matters; prioritising ‘the nude made sublime’ (in the style of Coreggio, Primaticcio or the expressive head in the manner of Leonardo and of Michelangelo), allegory in the style of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Catholic dogma, and the interpretation of theogonies.²⁰² Moreover, rule number four summarises the subject matters which were not accepted, to which belonged—besides the already above-mentioned rejected subject matters—patriotic painting; all representations of contemporary, public

¹⁹⁷ Mary Slavkin, New York 2014, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 299ff.

¹⁹⁹ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 84.

²⁰⁰ Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 211.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 208.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 212.

or private life; all landscapes except those in the manner of Poussin; all humorous things; orientalism; still life; as well as portraits.²⁰³ Nevertheless, portraiture was still welcomed as long as the costume was not dateable and as long it achieved style. This appeared to be an important exception considering the many portraits in total that were exhibited at the different *Salons de la Rose+Croix*. Portraits like Félix Vallotton's woodcuts of Paul Verlaine, Charles Baudelaire and Richard Wagner in the salon of 1892,²⁰⁴ Alexandre Séon's portrait of Sâr Péladan, displayed in 1892, Marcellin Desboutin's *Portrait of Sâr Mérodack Joséphin Péladan*, that was displayed in 1893, or Jean Delville's *Portrait of the Grand Master of the Rosicrucians in Choir Dress*, that was displayed in 1895, presented male creative subjects that were proclaimed to be expressive heads by Péladan himself, including first and foremost his own persona and his staging as a priest or magician.

Added as a mere *post scriptum* in the rules but stated in the manifesto itself, is stressed the exclusion at the salon of works by women artists, "Following Magical Law, no work by a woman will ever be exhibited or executed by the Order".²⁰⁵ This exclusion was based upon the denial of women artists' creativity and their capability of artistic insights by Péladan and his salon, which for both Tyra Kleen and Beda Stjernschantz was a reason to be critical about their visits at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*. The Symbolist creative artist was solely male-coded at the same time that Symbolist ideology, such as Péladan's perception, only believed in the male artist's contact with the divine and the sacred,²⁰⁶ which is why the male creative genius exclusively had the potential of searching for the transcendent absolute. Kleen expressed critique about Péladan's ideology in her "Symbolism för alla", published in the Swedish daily newspaper *Aftonbladet* on the 24th of

²⁰³ Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 211f.

²⁰⁴ Vivien Greene, New York 2017, p. 106f.

²⁰⁵ Joséphin Péladan, *Salon de la Rose-Croix: règles et monitoire*, Paris 1892, p. 14.

²⁰⁶ See for instance: Joséphin Péladan, *L'art idéaliste et mystique: doctrine de l'ordre et du salon annuel des Rose+Croix*, Chamuel, Paris 1894, pp. 17–22; <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k81589t/f99.double>, accessed on the 10th of August 2021; or Joséphin Péladan, *Catalogue du Salon de la Rose+Croix: Geste Esthétique* [1892], Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris 1892, pp. 7–11.

September 1910.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the works of art by the selected Swedish and Finnish women and men artists—made during or after their Parisian sojourns—relate strongly to the aesthetics of the *Salons de la Rose+Croix*: this aspect will be examined in depth in the analyses.

Rule fifteen outlined the salon's international orientation: "For the Order of the Rose+Croix the word 'foreign' has no meaning. This Salon assumes an international character in the highest degree."²⁰⁸ However, French artists held sway among the exhibiting artists, but Belgian, Danish (Baron Arild Rosenkrantz), Finnish (Ville Vallgren), Dutch, Italian, Swiss, British, and US-American artists, amongst others, also exhibited. This proclamation of the international orientation of the R+C was not further specified but corresponded largely with the exhibited works of art that were possible for me to access and their reflection of transnational and transhistorical themes.

Against this backdrop, it can be concluded that an eternal beauty ideal was central for Péladan and his Salon and order as well as the re-establishment of a close relationship between art and religion. By regarding classical art to be of a lasting and most valuable quality and his assumption that no artistic innovation could be achieved anymore,²⁰⁹ Péladan's aesthetic programme drew largely on late medieval and Renaissance art and especially on the Italian Quattrocento.

Through the preference for biblical and ancient profane motifs, Péladan developed an aesthetic programme that not only sought to employ elements of primitive, ancient, and classical art but that also sought to revive the art of the past. Moreover, the rejection of the representation of the mundane as a primary painterly purpose also implied that categories of place and time became quite uncertain within the Symbolist visual language. In this way, the Symbolist pictorial mode of transcending reality also involved liberation from, if not to say the rejection of, 'the present'. As the Swedish

²⁰⁷ Tyra Kleen, "Symbolism för alla", in: *Aftonbladet*, 24.09.1910, Stockholm 1910, p. 7.

²⁰⁸ Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 214.

²⁰⁹ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 44.

artist and art critic Georg Pauli, for example, concluded in 1896, French Symbolism in general, and the Rosicrucian order in particular, is therefore often described to be timeless and placeless.²¹⁰ The vague indication of place and time is what appears to be a fruitful tool to distinguish Symbolism from other Post-Impressionistic styles.

2.5. Androgyny within Symbolism

During a time of the dominance of a strict gender binary system, overall misogynist tendencies and increasingly tensed gender relationships due to, amongst other factors, the emergence of the ‘New Woman’, a system of thought emerged within late nineteenth-century literature and art that sought to break with gender binary models. It was not only the phenomenon of homosexuality—a term that had only recently been coined and used in a medical and juridical context—that attracted attention within sciences as, for instance, the German physician and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld and his *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (1903) exemplifies. A preoccupation with the phenomenon of androgyny and the androgyne made itself manifest as a general field of interest, which transgressed social, physical, and cultural conditions and limitations of the real world. It was within Symbolist artistic circles in particular that aspects of androgyny became central aesthetic and art theoretical ideas.

In the following, the androgynous Symbolist aesthetics and theories will be presented in relation to Symbolist art in general and the *Salons de la Rose+Croix* in particular. With the help of primary and secondary sources, the figure of the male androgyne within Symbolist art, religious and mythological accounts of androgyny and pre-sexuality as well as Péladan’s androgynous aesthetic theory will be dealt with.

²¹⁰ Georg Pauli, “Om Symbolism. Ett föredrag i sällskapet “Gnistan”, 1896”, in: Georg Pauli, *Konstnärslif och om Konst. Föredrag och Uppsatser, Gammalt och Nytt*, Albert Bonnier, Stockholm 1913, placeless: p. 181 & timeless: p. 170. Pauli’s lecture on French symbolism was held at the Artist Association ‘Gnistan’ in Stockholm in 1896 but was first published in 1913.

2.5.1. The ephemeral, asexual androgyne and the Symbolist spiritual hierarchy
The tendency to depict either oversexualised bodies or asexual and spiritual bodies dominated within Symbolist art.²¹¹ Three main visual tropes can be identified which were prevalent within the pictorial Symbolist language at the *fin-de-siècle*. Regarding representations of the female body, there prevailed the extremes of either the grotesquely sexualised *femme fatale*, who only had power in her body, or the *asexual, innocuous, passive and purist woman*, who was spiritual but without any agency, as polarised representations of women in relation to their sexuality. Thus, Symbolist female representations, which were almost exclusively made by male artists and were, therefore, male projections of the female, drew mainly on the polarisation of women's sexuality as either an unreasonable degree of sexuality or as a complete absence of sexuality. Thereby, a discrepancy arose between female Symbolist reflections within the art and the socio-historical context characterised by the emergence of the 'New Woman'. Whereas male projections of oversexualised or asexual women figures were highly reflected within Symbolism, the 'New Woman'—who stood for women's entry into work, the public and education—was not reflected.²¹²

As a counterweight to the two female types of the *femme fatale* and *asexual, innocuous, passive and purist woman*, there existed as the third characteristic trope: the *ephemeral, asexual androgyne*, who was asexual but homoerotic. At the same time that spiritual transcendence was equated with the male in Symbolist circles in general and, in particular, in Péladan's circle, whereas the female was excluded from experiencing spirituality, the androgyne was regarded as the vehicle for male spiritual transcendence. Even though the androgyne was still linked to sexuality, this trope epitomised rather a repressed sexuality that was closest to asexuality.²¹³ By dividing the self from sexuality and women, the androgyne could reach a high level of spirituality. However, while being desirable but not desiring him-

²¹¹ See for instance: Michelle Facos, Berkeley 2009, p. 115ff; Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999, p. 86; Werner Hofmann, *Das irdische Paradies: Kunst im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, Munich 1960; Bram Dijkstra, New York 1986; Vivien Greene, New York 2017.

²¹² See for instance: Debora L. Silverman, Baltimore 1991.

²¹³ Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999, p. 113.

self, the androgyne at the same time expressed homoerotic tensions. Homoeroticism in Symbolist aesthetics served in this way to further distance male sexuality from that of women.²¹⁴ In this way, the androgyne was the representation of the ideal male body which embodied male spiritual transcendence, elevated from the material and the mundane. The androgyne and its expression of the asexual and spiritually refined body was placed at the top of the Symbolist hierarchy, based upon the potential of spiritual access and refinement, and, thus, clearly distinctive from the female visual tropes. Since the *pure and innocuous woman* and her abstinence of sexuality could reach restricted spirituality but did not have agency in the spiritual realm, she was placed below the ephemeral androgyne in this spiritual hierarchy. The *femme fatale*, guided by her bodily basic instincts and unable to reach spirituality, was placed at the bottom of this hierarchy. Thus, female representations were defined in this way by their excess or lack of sexuality, whereas the male androgynous representations signified the disembodied, transcendent, spiritual ideal.

2.5.2. Androgynous origins and utopian endings:

The androgynous ideal human state

Within several primitive or religious cosmologies, such as Plato's primordial myth on the origin of humankind or the Judeo-Christian religion, the primordial androgynous state epitomises the ideal state of totality and oneness in a kind of Paradise before the Fall: "Both in Genesis and in Aristophanes' account, sexual division is regarded as the punishment for the Fall."²¹⁵ Plato's myth about the primordial androgyne before the Fall links in the same way that the intersexual Adam, that is, before the separation from Eve, the androgyne to a paradisiac asexual state, whereas the emergence of sexuality, desire and love is directly linked to the Fall, the Original Sin and the Expulsion from Paradise in Genesis. In the following, Plato's myth of the primordial androgyne, upon which the Symbolist art theory

²¹⁴ Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999, p. 111f. As Mathews states, the lines between the androgyne's asexuality or homoeroticism are quite blurred.

²¹⁵ Kari Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville 1992, p. 18.

mainly drew, will be further explained in order to clarify the idea of androgyny as a paradisiac ideal origin of humankind.

In Plato's *Symposium*, considered to have been composed around 385–380 B.C.E., an account of six eulogies about love, originally held at a dinner party, is presented by a man called Apollodorus to an unnamed companion.²¹⁶ Amongst others, those of Phaidros, Agathon, the tragic playwright, as well as Socrates' eulogies dedicated to Eros, the god of love and desire, are recounted.²¹⁷ It is the speech which the comic playwright Aristophanes gives that brings up the myth of the primordial union of mankind and its fragmentation.

According to Aristophanes, in ancient times, human beings were spherical creatures of three different sexes and belonged to a fundamentally undifferentiated and pre-sexual phase of human nature.²¹⁸ As one component of the primitive unity of the universe, they were merged with nature and the whole cosmos. Male-male, female-female and a sex that was half male and female (male-female) existed. They were equipped with two sets of faces, arms, hands, legs and feet etc. as well as genitals, making a complete circle with their backs and sides.²¹⁹ The male sex was originally the offspring of the sun, the female originally the offspring of the earth and the male-female was originally the offspring of the moon.²²⁰ These spherical dual-sexed creatures had "terrible strength and power, as well as grand ambitions, and they attacked the gods."²²¹ Because of their greed for divine power, the gods resolved to split them into two halves. In a quest to achieve human completion, that got forever lost, "each creature was doomed to seek its lost half"²²² in

²¹⁶ William S. Cobe, *The Symposium and the Phaedrus: Plato's erotic dialogues*, Albany 1993, p. 11.

²¹⁷ Besides the six eulogies dedicated to Eros, at the end, Alcibiades praises Socrates in his speech; *Ibid.*, p. 11ff.

²¹⁸ Catriona MacLeod, Detroit 1998, p. 11f.

²¹⁹ "The Symposium", 189e, in: William S. Cobe, Albany 1993, p. 29.

²²⁰ Ursula Prinz, "Einführung", in: Ursula Prinz (ed.), *Androgyn: Sehnsucht nach Vollkommenheit: 17. November 1986 bis 4. Januar 1987*, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Dietrich Reimer, Berlin 1986, p. 9.

²²¹ "The Symposium", 190b, in: William S. Cobe, Albany 1993, p. 29.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

the second stage of human history after the divine interference. This leaves the humankind today in “a perpetual quest for our lost halves.”²²³ The collapse into men and women as sexual beings after the divine punishment was when an externalised sexuality amongst human beings evolved.

In this way, Aristophanes’ powerful cultural narrative is both about the primordial loss and about the origin of human sexuality. Love, according to Aristophanes, derives from this sort of loss. This urge for completion could be achieved through either homosexual or heterosexual union. However, the actual reunion and reintegration into the dual-sexed primordial human being was unobtainable, so, as MacLeod states, only supplemental love relationships as substitutes for unobtainable wholeness were possible.²²⁴

In Aristophanes’ speech, the third sex of ancient human nature, that is, the human being which is composed of being half-male and half-female, is the androgynous type in both form and name.²²⁵ The androgynous sex is the only sex which no longer exists after the evolvement of sexuality. In other words, the androgyne belonged exclusively to the primordial human order and is an ideal condition that is gone forever, which made it an appropriate metaphor for the longing for a past and ideal condition. However, it was rather the overall idea of the androgynous ideal human origin— independent from the type—than merely the androgynous type of the spherical creature that was adopted within Symbolist theory. This is also the way the primordial androgyne will be referred to in this project.

By incorporating ambiguity, oneness and totality at the same time, the figure of the androgyne was appealing for the Symbolist groups concerning its primitive beginning as the original human condition and utopian ending as the end of human progress or, in other words, procreation. Thus, while Symbolist theory drew on Plato’s myth about the ideal androgynous origin as well as religious cosmologies about the origin of humankind, Symbolist theory also simultaneously employed the theosophical theory of

²²³ Catriona MacLeod, Detroit 1998, p. 12.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12

²²⁵ “The Symposium”, 189e, in: William S. Cobe, Albany 1993, p. 29. It is a term that is based on the Greek words for man and woman, namely *androgynon*.

the human being as a fundamental “genderless consciousness centre that had been adapted to earthly conditions”²²⁶

Thus, a return to a state of genderlessness was thought to be attained through the pursuit of a state of balanced development between “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics, that was sought to be embodied both physically and mentally. In this way, the Symbolist androgynous idea was also closely related to Decadent aesthetics at the *fin-de-siècle* with the notion of the neutered being as the highest development; “a being in whom high and low, masculine and feminine are inseparable.”²²⁷

Hence, based on neo-Platonic and theosophical thoughts, the notion of androgyny was in general deployed within Symbolism in two different ways. Firstly, an androgynous appearance and, thus, a sexually ambiguous figure served as an applied beauty ideal, as, for instance, was the case in the aesthetics of Péladan, that will be focused on later in this chapter. This was often related to transcending reality and—at least for Péladan—the purpose of replacing what had been considered to correspond to the decay of society with a new concept of a new (utopian) society through art.²²⁸

Although the androgynous Symbolist beauty ideal was not necessarily only limited to artistic expression but also affected artists’ appearance and fashioning within Symbolist circles, it still did not imply the biological intersexual state. Nevertheless, more practical aspects appear to have contributed to the ideal of the sexually ambiguous figure as well. Taking into consideration the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones’ practice of painting his figures, male sitters had been used for painting female figures with only the adjustment of facial expression etc. and *vice versa* due to practical economic reasons.²²⁹

²²⁶ Patrik Steorn, Gothenburg 2015, p. 64.

²²⁷ Barbara Spackman, *Decadent Genealogies: The Rhetoric of Sickness from Baudelaire to D’Annunzio*, Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca 1989, p. 22.

²²⁸ See for instance: Ben Fisher, “From Sphinx to Pisa: Reconciling Two Faces of Péladan”, in: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 102, No. 1 (Jan., 2007), p. 76.

²²⁹ Alison Smith, Lecture “Edward Burne-Jones – Prerafaelit, estet och symbolist”, held at Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Stockholm, 16.10.2019.

Secondly, androgyny within Symbolism was also widely linked to the restoration of the primordial androgyne on a spiritual and mental level. As, for instance, Catriona MacLeod and Ralph Tegtmeier demonstrate, the restoration of the primordial androgyne and, thus, the ideal human condition was imagined to be aspired to in two different ways.²³⁰ It was the idea of the infantile state of pre-sexuality and indeterminacy that constituted the first way or the first model of achieving the recreation of the androgynous mental state. By being similar to the dual-sexed primordial human condition and, in this way, to self-sufficiency and a state without (sexual) desire, childhood's asexuality or rather pre-sexuality or virginity was one model of approaching the androgynous state. The prepubertal infantile state epitomised the androgyne.

Besides the ideal of the pre-sexual infantile state, it was sexual union that was the other means and, in other words, the second model for pursuing an androgynous state and a reunion of the lost totality. Rather than physical sexual union, it was spiritual sexual union and spiritual love, that was considered to be the key to the androgynous spiritual state.²³¹ By uniting two souls into two genderless or androgynous states, love and its expression through sexual union was considered to overcome disruption and the polarities.

This recreation of the primordial androgyne with its two different models could—like the androgynous beauty ideal—be expressed both within art and by the male artist and his feminised appearance. Hence, this sort of distinction between an androgynous appearance as an aesthetic ideal and an androgynous attitude of mind as a theoretical concept was often intermingled.

²³⁰ Catriona MacLeod, *Detroit* 1998, p. 84; Ralph Tegtmeier, "Zur Gestalt des Androgynen in der Literatur des Fin de siècle", in: Ursula Prinz, *Berlin* 1986, p. 115f.

²³¹ Francine-Claire Legrand, "Das Androgyne und der Symbolismus", in: Ursula Prinz, *Berlin* 1986, p. 78.

2.5.3. Péladan's aesthetic theory on the androgyne

In addition to the ideal, Catholic and esoteric artistic programme of Péladan's Rosicrucian order and salon, as presented above, Péladan developed in other writings a complex aesthetic theory of the androgyne. Since Péladan was a prolific Decadent novelist before and during the periods when he arranged the *Salons de la Rose+Croix*, many ideas concerning the figure and meaning of the androgyne are included in his fictional writing. Examples include his novels *Le Vice Suprême* (1884), *L'Androgyne* (1891) and *La Gynandre* (1892) that are included in his novel cycle *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)* about a society's moral decay.²³² Péladan's novel *L'Androgyne* is about the androgynous adolescent mythic figure, Samas Oelohil Ghuibor, who remains sexually innocent and at the same time undergoes spiritual development. Detached from passion and equipped with spiritual transcendence, the figure of Samas approaches the finality and absolute-ness of the primordial androgyne by conforming to the aforementioned first model of virginity.²³³ Alexandre Séon's illustration, made as a flyleaf for the book, and its depiction of Samas' head with a deliberately blurred gender attribution hovering above a rough shore also reflects the aesthetic ideal of the androgyne as well as the ideal of the third gender, as defined below.

Furthermore, Péladan also expounded his androgynous aesthetic theory in his more concrete art theoretical essays such as in *L'Artiste* (December 1883) and *De L'Androgyne: théorie plastique* (1910). In *L'Artiste*, he proclaims the ideal synthesis of the masculine and feminine and, thus, the androgynous human body as the single theme for statuary in particular, but he also applied this to painting: "Statuary has but one theme, the human body, under its double form of masculine and feminine. All synthesis is a ternary. What then is the plastic result of man and woman: the androgyne... I pro-

²³² According to Fisher, Péladan wrote around 80 volumes and about 100 articles; Ben Fisher 2007, p. 74.

²³³ Joséphin Péladan, *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)*, vol. 8, *L'Androgyne* (1891), p. 9; "O sexe initial, sexe définitif, absolu de l'amour, absolu de la forme, sexe qui nies les sexe, sexe d'éternité! Los à toi, Androgyne."

posed this aesthetic theory: the androgyne is the plastic idea.”²³⁴ Thereby, Péladan’s theory was influenced by Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s neo classicistic theory about Greek sculpture and his admiration of the ideal form of indeterminate sexuality that hermaphrodite Greek sculptures incarnated and that were, according to Winckelmann, in this sense epitomising a united and exalted utopian beauty.²³⁵

Moreover, Péladan’s aesthetic theory was also based upon the pessimistic perception of the decline of a decadent society, typical for the *fin-de-siècle* as was mentioned in 2.4., and upon a disillusion, dissatisfaction and withdrawal from reality into the mind.²³⁶ His androgynous theory emanated from the assumption that true (sexual) satisfaction can be only enjoyed in one’s mind and that (sexual) desire can only be satisfied by art.²³⁷ Thus, Péladan’s trope of the androgyne symbolised physical sexual abstinence and in this way even isolation, self-sufficiency, and loneliness.

The ideal of the third gender

The Swedish painter and art mediator, Georg Pauli, held a lecture “On Symbolism” in the Swedish Art Association *Gnistan* in 1896 in Stockholm. This lecture, which had also been published in Pauli’s *Konstnärslif och om konst* in 1913, was itself mainly based upon Péladan’s lecture “The ideal and mystical art”, which Péladan gave in Paris in Spring 1892, and the presented ideal of the third gender.²³⁸ Since a primary source of Péladan’s lecture was impossible to directly access, Georg Pauli’s account will be mainly used for outlining the ideal of the third gender. In addition to this, Péladan’s *De L’Androgyne. Théorie plastique* (1910), accessed at the *INHA*, will be used as a complementary primary source.

²³⁴ Quoted in: Michelle Facos, Berkeley 2009, p. 231.

²³⁵ See for instance: Catriona MacLeod, Detroit 1998, p. 25ff.

²³⁶ A. J. L. Busst, London 1967, p. 40.

²³⁷ See for instance: Joséphin Péladan, *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)*, vol. 8, *L’Androgyne* (1891).

²³⁸ Georg Pauli, Stockholm 1913, p. 178.

Based on Pauli's account of Péladan's "The ideal and mystical art", Péladan presented not only the rules and the manifesto of the first *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, but also 'the highest ideal of art' for his Symbolist salons. It is both the idea of 'the third gender'—what literally is called 'the third sex' by Pauli—and the revival of Italian Renaissance art that were the two main principles for Péladan's purpose of breaking with the contemporary view of beauty and contemporary social gender binaries, according to Pauli.

While the depiction of the human body was the highest ideal in Péladan's artistic programme, art was expected to invent and to create.²³⁹ Hence, what art should create is the so-called third gender.²⁴⁰ As Pauli shows, Péladan's demonstration of the ideal of the 'the third gender' involves the depiction of young bodies with a sexually ambiguous appearance or a deliberately blurred gender attributes. Péladan's formulation of the 'third gender' refers first and foremost to the fascination with adolescence as the liminal state between childhood and adulthood and 'the male' and 'the female'. Even though Péladan in his *De L'Androgyne. Théorie plastique* (1910) declares the ages between thirteen and twenty as being of general androgynous potential, it is the depiction of thirteen- and fourteen-year-old adolescents, an age which Péladan considers to be particularly spiritual, emblematic and mysterious, that constitutes the highest art ideal.²⁴¹ Being proclaimed as the third gender, the male prepubertal adolescent functioned as an emblem for divinity, spiritual transcendence and contact with the cosmos or to a higher truth. Hence, Péladan's concept of the third gender combined the general *fin-de-siècle* fascination for youth with androgyny that the prepubertal and, thus, sexually innocent, male adolescent epitomised.

This ideal of the third gender is also demonstrated in Péladan's *L'Androgyne* (1891) as the supreme third mode.²⁴² However, Péladan's idea of the third gender did not refer to the anatomy of the female and male body and the biological state of the intersex but served as a mythical ideal figure in the

²³⁹ Georg Pauli, Stockholm 1913, p. 174.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

²⁴¹ Joséphin Péladan, *De L'Androgyne. Théorie plastique*, Paris 2010 [1910], p. 34, p. 40f.

²⁴² Joséphin Péladan, *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)*, vol. 8, *L'Androgyne* (1891), p. 5.

visual arts. In *L'Androgyne*, Péladan additionally explains his vision of the third gender as an asexual figure without desire, but as desirable for someone else: "A young man with long hair and almost desirable, that desire has not yet touched."²⁴³ Hence, Péladan's definition of the androgyne was specifically asexual, only existing in a virgin state right before sexual awakening, at the same time that he equated the third gender with the *ephebos*.²⁴⁴ However, whereas the virginal adolescent male embodied the ideal of the third gender, the androgynous female was considered to be anormal and perverted, as Péladan stated in *The Gynander* (1892), the ninth volume of *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)*, as well as in his *De L'Androgyne. Théorie plastique* (1910).²⁴⁵ It was the male body which was the primary tool with which to transcend the physical world, whereas the female in Péladan's aesthetic theory could not unify bodily and spiritual union and was excluded from the possibility of a spiritual refinement.

Moreover, the representation of the third gender as the highest art ideal in Péladan's aesthetic theory rests upon the depiction of the human body in the Italian High Renaissance. Androgynous displays in Renaissance art flourished in general, which in some way returned in late nineteenth-century Symbolist art.²⁴⁶ For Péladan and his Rosicrucian order it was Leonardo da Vinci's art in general, and his *St John the Baptist* (1513–1516) (fig. 34) in particular, which was associated with ideal beauty and the highest Symbolist aesthetic ideal, as Pauli demonstrates. This was mostly related to Péladan's understanding of Leonardo da Vinci's *St John the Baptist* as a mystical and esoteric artwork due to the figure of the saint's unspecific reference to time and place and, specifically, unrealistic rendering of age and gender. In this way, Péladan projected his transcendental mystical theories on this figure; the young St John the Baptist's androgynous beauty conveyed an enciphered mystical and esoteric message that only the initiated could

²⁴³ Joséphin Péladan, *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)*, vol. 8, *L'Androgyne* (1891), p. 165.

²⁴⁴ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 154.

²⁴⁵ Joséphin Péladan, Paris 2010 [1910], p. 46f. & Joséphin Péladan, *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)*, vol. 9, *La Gynandre* (1892).

²⁴⁶ As Lutz S. Malke states High Renaissance, Mannerism and late nineteenth century-art have been the heydays of androgynous representations in art; Lutz S. Malke, "Weibmann und Mannweib in der Kunst der Renaissance", in: Ursula Prinz, Berlin 1986, p. 38ff.

understand.²⁴⁷ As, according to Péladan at least, the highest masterpiece of all times, the rendering of St John the Baptist functioned as an archetype for his ‘third gender.’²⁴⁸ The fact that the figure of St John the Baptist was often intermingled with the wine god Bacchus, who himself was linked to androgyny in antiquity, and the actual display of Leonardo’s *St John the Baptist* next to a depiction of Bacchus at the Louvre,²⁴⁹ also contributed to the mystical attribution of this Renaissance painting. As, for example, the art historian Karin Orchard argues, da Vinci’s *St John the Baptist* is itself a conception of the Christian virtue of St John while embodying at the same time Dionysiac pagan attributes.²⁵⁰ This amalgamation of these two figures is also distinctly apparent in da Vinci’s *Bacchus*, 1510–1515 (fig. 35), which formerly depicted St John the Baptist, but had been revised to Bacchus in the seventeenth century. In this way, Leonardo da Vinci’s *St John the Baptist* can even be understood as vaguely referring to the Dionysiac cult about approaching the divine.²⁵¹ The convention of an androgynous depiction of Christ within art history, as with St John the Baptist, is also closely related to these figure’s elevated and divine status, which is something on which Péladan grounded his aesthetic preferences. As the ideal of da Vinci’s *St John the Baptist* shows, a blurred gender appearance is intermingled with timeless and placeless preferences. Interestingly, even Sigmund Freud’s writing on the origin of homosexuality refers to da Vinci’s androgynous figures as a point of departure.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ The *Rose+Croix*-order swore also by the name of Leonardo to look for the ideal beauty: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 152ff.

²⁴⁸ Georg Pauli, Stockholm 1913, p. 176.

²⁴⁹ See: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 152. These figures stood for a close connection between antique paganism and Christianity and have been during the Renaissance regarded by Ficino, amongst others, to embody a mystical message of the Messiah as the absolute human being.

²⁵⁰ Karin Orchard, *Annäherung der Geschlechter. Androgynie in der Kunst des Cinquecento*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, University of Hamburg, Münster 1988, p. 73ff.

²⁵¹ The amalgamation of the figure of St John the Baptist and Bacchus suggests the Dionysiac mystery thought of the cult of wine as a means to overcome the everyday and to approach the divine. See for instance: Karin Orchard, Münster 1988, p. 69.

²⁵² Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and A Memory of His Childhood* (1910), cited in: Patrik Steorn, Gothenburg 2015, p. 68.

Displayed at the Louvre and included in the collection of the Louvre since the early 1800s, da Vinci's painting *St John the Baptist* was accessible for Péladan and a French audience and, hence, a perfect example of the depiction of the sexually ambiguous body that Péladan's aesthetic and theoretical art programme drew upon.

3. Portraits beyond the mundane. Expressions of spiritual transcendence

This chapter deals with portraits from the 1890s by Magnus Enckell, Olof Sager-Nelson, Ellen Thesleff and Beda Stjernerantz as well as self-portraits by Thesleff and Stjernerantz which in diverse ways emphasise the portrayed persons' spiritual or creative abundance and, at the same, time decrease their linkage to the physical world. The first two subchapters revolve around the discussion of how the selected portraits thematically, stylistically and technically deemphasise the contact of the represented bodies with the physical world and enhance their spiritual being. Since either the mode of an elusive materiality and corporeality or the mode of a historicised staging of creativity and spirituality is at play in the selected portraits, as I argue, two different subchapters have been chosen—structured by these two different modes—for presenting the selected portraits' emphasis on the spiritual and immaterial dimension. In this way the first two subchapters deal with the stylisations of the figures' bodies, their fashioning as either deemphasising the sartorial and material or historicising their style of dress and the expression of the figures' internal properties of spirituality, creativity, intuition etc. and, in other words, their spiritually active bodies. Thereby, the theoretical concept of the stylisation of the body as a performative act and corporeal strategy of 'doing' gender and an androgynous stylisation of the body as a subversive strategy of undermining gender binary norms, as explained in the first chapter, will be made use of in the analyses for either assessing the displayed upper bodies or heads as according with late nineteenth-century gender normative conventions or transgressing those conventions. Furthermore, the following two subchapters deal with and elaborate on the expression of a spiritually refined state in

the seven selected portraits in relation to Symbolist concepts of male ingenuity, creativity and spiritual refinement and its theosophical and neo-platonic sources. This is followed by a conclusion.

Among the seven selected portraits, there are two male figures and five female figures. The majority of the female portraits are closely tied to the chapter's interest in paying special attention to extensions and revisions of Symbolist notions on spiritual transcendence as something exclusively male-connoted, the Symbolist creative subject and his spiritual inspiration as exclusively male-gendered and an androgynous body and/or mind as an exclusively male feature and source of refinement.

3.1. The elusive materiality and corporeality

In the following, Magnus Enckell's oil on canvas *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* from 1894, Olof Sager-Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* from the 1890s as well as Ellen Thesleff's oil on canvas *Thyra Elisabeth* from 1892 and her *Self-Portrait* from 1894 and 1895, which is a pencil and sepia ink drawing, will be examined sequentially as diverse expressions of making the material and corporeal elusive or intangible.

Male androgyny and introspection

Magnus Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* from 1894 (fig. 1) displays a pale and illuminated male head with closed eyes and a calm facial expression in a three-quarter view against a plain black background. Although being a half-length portrait, this portrait only emphasises the head of the sitter Bruno Aspelin; whereas the soft and delicate facial traits are accurately rendered, the clothed body underneath the head is a mere allusion and stylisation.

This portrait was produced in the early months of 1894 when both Enckell and Aspelin were in Paris.²⁵³ They were part of the same artist com-

²⁵³ Aspelin spent his longer Parisian sojourn in the early 1890s engaged in the study of drawing and sculpturing; See: Frans J. Huss (ed.), "Bruno Aspelin", in: *Svensk Musiktidning*, 1905 (05.05.1905), no. 9, Stockholm 1905, p. 65.



Fig. 1. Magnus Enckell, *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* (1894).
Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

panion network during Enckell's second Parisian period between September 1893 and June 1894, which comprised not only Aspelin and Enckell but also Olof Sager-Nelson, Ellen Thesleff, Sigrid af Forselles and her French life companion, the sculptor Madeleine Jouvray. Enckell's portrait of Bruno Aspelin is an example of the several portraits that were produced within this circle of artist companions.²⁵⁴ Other examples are Madeleine Jouvray and Enckell's practice of sitting for each other and Ellen Thesleff and Magnus Enckell's sketching of each other at the end of 1893.²⁵⁵

During or between Enckell's two Parisian periods (1891–1892 and 1893–1894) he produced both a series of full-body depictions of pre-adolescent and adolescent naked or nude male bodies—to which his *Nude Boy*, *Two Boys* and *Reclining Boy* from 1892 and his *The Awakening* from 1894 belonged—and several portraits like his *Head (Bruno Aspelin)*, his *Self-Portrait* from 1891 (fig. 2) and his portraits of the French sculptor Madeleine Jouvray from 1893 and 1894. Thereby, his *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* represents the portrait that transcends most clearly the mundane and material and makes the display of the introspective male head an androgynous strategy, thus, relating the portrait to transnational Symbolist aesthetic and theoretical ideas. His Parisian sojourns in the early 1890s were spent on his own art production, his artistic apprenticeship at the private Académie Julian, where he was taught by Jules Lefebvre, Benjamin Constant and Doucet, and his studying of both Symbolist and classical art as well as theosophy as during his visit to the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in spring 1892.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ Aspelin's letter to Stjernschantz in February 1894 not only indicates Aspelin's regular contact with Enckell in Paris but mentions also the ongoing production process of Enckell's portrait, for which Aspelin sat; Bruno Aspelin to Beda Stjernschantz, Paris, 28th of February 1894, BS2_140711PK004, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.

Thesleff's letter to Stjernschantz from November of 1893 also testifies Aspelin as a companion with whom she herself and Enckell both consorted with frequently; Ellen Thesleff to Beda Stjernschantz, Paris, 8th of November 1893, SLSA 1368, folder 2, accessed on the 13th of August 2018.

²⁵⁵ Mentioned by Ellen Thesleff in a letter to her sister Gerda Thesleff written on the 1st of November 1893/allhelgondagen, Paris, SLSA 958, folder 8a. Painting each other seems to have become a frequent everyday activity, at least for a while, in the same way that working in the studio was to Thesleff.

²⁵⁶ See for instance: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 62ff.



Fig. 2. Magnus Enckell, *Self-Portrait* (1891).
Tampere Art Museum.

Both the soft and delicate facial traits and the facial expression in Enckell's portrait of the head of Bruno Aspelin from 1894 are, I argue, feminised. This becomes especially apparent in comparison with other visual representations of Bruno Aspelin around 1900. I found two undated pencil drawings by the Finnish painter Albert Edelfelt in Ateneum's digital collection. The one entitled *The Artist Bruno Aspelin* (fig. 3) displays Aspelin's upper body dressed in a suit, a shirt and what seems to be a necktie while playing his lute.²⁵⁷ Both this drawing as well as a photograph of Aspelin

²⁵⁷ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/sv/object/413343>, accessed on the 25th of November 2021.



Fig. 3. Albert Edelfelt, *The Artist Bruno Aspelin* (undated). Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.



Fig. 4. Photograph of Bruno Aspelin (1870–1941), Finnish Artist and balladist (1900). SLSA 1270 Svenska Teaterns arkiv.

from 1900, depicting the full-length body of Aspelin in a seated position, playing a lute and with his head in profile, represent him in an official style of dress, according to the male mainstream fashion ideal, and as a musician/balladist as his profession (fig. 4).²⁵⁸ The photograph of Aspelin with his head in profile accentuates his jaw line, his nose, eyebrow ridge and high forehead and, thus, masculine facial traits. Edelfelt's above-mentioned drawing depicts Aspelin's head slightly turned to the left and emphasises in a similar way a rather bony, hard, deep, and masculine facial structure. At the same time, these two visual representations of Aspelin as a musician, playing his instrument, show him with a gentle and calm expression on his face. They point to the sensibility and intuition of the male artist, in other words characteristics that were considered to be stereotypically feminine

²⁵⁸ This is also supported by the fact that the mentioned photograph was used for professional and public occasions, as in the article on Bruno Aspelin in the journal *Svensk Musiktidning* in 1905.



Fig. 5. Albert Edelfelt, *Portrait of Bruno Aspelin* (undated).
Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

in the nineteenth century, and which the male creative subject was supposed to embrace as mentioned in the first chapter. In this way, his identity as the creative male musician is highlighted in the two images of Aspelin.

A similar calm, sensible and intuitive facial expression is also apparent in the other drawing by Edelfelt called *Portrait of Bruno Aspelin* (fig. 5).²⁵⁹ This one depicts, however, only Aspelin's head slightly turned to the right with half-closed eyes and is in terms of the pose and the angle remarkably similar to Enckell's oil on canvas. With regard to the fact that Edelfelt was Enckell's close artist companion from the older generation and kept close contact with the young Enckell during his international sojourns and also let Enckell work in his Parisian studio in 1893–1894, it is not unlikely that Enckell used the sketch by Edelfelt as a source of reference for the produc-

²⁵⁹ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/sv/object/435964>, accessed on the 25th of November 2021.

tion of his *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* or *vice versa*. While the facial expression in Edelfelt's drawing appears to be to some extent feminised, the facial traits are, on the other hand, clearly masculine—as is also the case with Edelfelt's other drawing as well as with the photograph of Aspelin from 1900 as a musician. Edelfelt's representation of Aspelin accentuates the bone structure of Aspelin's face and in particular the jaw line, which gives the face a hard, masculine, and deep structure with sharp contours. In contrast to this, Enckell's facial rendition is soft and delicate instead of focusing on the bony structure. The soft and smooth cheeks, the gently closed eyes with their rested eyebrows, and the slightly curved, delicately closed lips give the narrow face a feminine appearance. Enhanced through the three-quarter-profile and the tranquil and introspective facial expression, the elegant pose of the head also contributes to this and recalls internal properties such as sensitivity and tenderness that were—as mentioned above—connoted with feminine qualities in the nineteenth century.²⁶⁰ However, the short red-blond hair combed back still denotes a masculine identity. Thus, the feminine facial traits and feminine facial expression in combination with the absence of explicit signs of male artistic creativity or musical performance make this portrait a stronger gender transgressive stylisation of the body than the construction of the male artist with his 'feminine' qualities in the other above-mentioned visual representations of Bruno Aspelin, as I argue.

Furthermore, the allusion to a flamboyant and saturated red garment is a vague indicator for a male alternative fashion beyond the male nineteenth-century mainstream fashion ideal of black and white uniformity. The visible thick red brushstrokes, that allude to the clothed upper part of the body, recall a sartorial quality like a red velvet garment. This flamboyant quality reminds together with the feminine stylisation of the face of the effeminate dandy and his extravagant and feminine appearance and behaviour.²⁶¹ This makes the appearance to such a degree transgressive of masculine nineteenth-century norms that I understand it as an androgy-

²⁶⁰ Christine Battersby, London 1989, p. 3.

²⁶¹ Aileen Ribeiro, New York 1986, p. 122.

nous strategy. Enckell's depiction of the sitter Bruno Aspelin's head seems to be rather an expression of a general contemplative and introspective mood than of a representation of Aspelin's true likeness. This is supported through the lack of other markers of his identity such as his profession and the general absence of physical and material traces. Through the shut eyes and relaxed face, the displayed body appears to be withdrawn from the physical world and immersed into spiritual activity. The illuminated and carefully rendered forehead also contributes to the emphasis on an intellectual or mental activity.

Moreover, the head's illuminated pale skin itself looks almost transparent and reveals at least one blue vein, which travels across the forehead. This gives the portrait a certain elusive and incorporeal quality, to which the abstract stylisation of the clothed upper body also strongly contributes. A saturated red tone as the only colour has been roughly applied on the canvas with thick and visible red brushstrokes. These stylistic and technical means make the clothed body difficult to grasp. No clear outlines or directional lines are used to define the displayed clothed torso. At the same time, the red colour has not been thoroughly applied and thus makes the black background of the canvas partly shine through the clothed body, making the material and corporeal qualities elusive and immaterial. Although the head is, in fact, illuminated by a source of light coming from the left, no three-dimensionality and no effect of light and shadow can be discerned in the semi-transparent red surfaces. The thick and red brushstrokes, stretching diagonally upwards to the right and the left, are even more transparent and elusive than the rest of the clothed upper body, making it difficult to discern the displayed body contours. These transparent red brushstrokes also make this portrait reminiscent of late nineteenth-century photographic studies of motion such as Eadweard Muybridge's, although the head and body remain motionless. In addition to that, the employment of shades of beige and a red colour against the black background gives an intense effect, although only a reduced colour palette was used.²⁶² Throughout and

²⁶² The figure's portrayal in light beige colours and the strong red color may also insinuate the alchemical process of the amalgamation of 'white milk' as 'the male' substance and 'red blood' as 'the female' substance, that is needed for the formation of the 'philoso-

in-between Enckell's two Parisian periods in the early 1890s, different colour reduction concepts evolved that dominated his art production. One of the very first paintings that was characterised by a colour reduction was Enckell's above-mentioned *Self-Portrait* from 1891, which only made use of a sparse range of pale reddish, brown and grey colours. This small portrait served as the starting point of Enckell's ascetic, reduced palette.²⁶³ Its ascetic palette with its hazy atmosphere is reminiscent of the colour harmony of the French nineteenth-century painter Puvis de Chavannes, whose art Enckell studied thoroughly in Paris and whom he mentioned as an important source of reference. Enckell's visit to the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* in spring 1891, where, amongst others, Puvis de Chavannes's *L'Été* was exhibited, must have been one of several exhibition visits during which he became acquainted with Puvis de Chavannes's art.²⁶⁴ However, instead of an ascetic palette with pale earthy tones as in his *Self-Portrait* (1891) or his series of adolescent boys from 1892 to 1894, the colour reduction in his *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* (1894) consists of stronger and contrasting tones. Enckell's employment of a reduced colour palette with the combination of black, red, and light earthy tones in this portrait can be linked to his interest in classical art and, first and foremost, in Rembrandt's art.

The question of Enckell's use of a monochrome colour palette was brought up by Edelfelt in two letters written to Enckell that I found in the course of my research. Whereas Albert Edelfelt still advised Enckell in a letter from December 1891 to get rid of his monochrome colours—espe-

pher stone' as the primary goal within alchemy. This amalgamation of white and red as a sexual connotation of white sperm and red menstrual blood were also perceived to incorporate the symbol of the androgyne, that is the synthesis or dissolving of bipolarity. See for instance: Hans Biedermann, "Das Androgyne-Symbol in der Alchemie", in: Ursula Prinz, Berlin 1986, p. 61ff.

²⁶³ See for instance: Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012, p. 270ff.

²⁶⁴ Puvis de Chavannes's art was regularly displayed in Paris during the 1890s. Besides the display of, amongst others, his *L'Été* at the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* in 1891, his art was for instance also shown at the Durand-Ruel Gallery, where around 40 of his works were exhibited, as well as in 1892 at the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars*, where his *L'Hiver* was displayed. In addition to this, his mural paintings at the Sorbonne and the Pantheon were available for the public, which Enckell also likely made himself familiar with; Salme Sarajas-Karte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 76.

cially in Enckell's self-portrait that he evaluated to be too harsh and meagre²⁶⁵—Edelfelt encouraged Enckell, on the contrary, in his letter from the 24th of October 1893, to go on with his applied colour reduction. In this letter, written some months before Enckell painted his *Head (Bruno Aspelin)*, Edelfelt recommended Enckell to focus on or literally “fall completely in love with” paintings by the Italian quattrocento painter Masaccio and the Old Masters, Holbein, Rembrandt and Velazquez, which were characterised by two or three tones that shine as Edelfelt puts it.²⁶⁶ This stylistic means appears to have been deployed remarkably well by Enckell in his portrait from 1894.

The applied colour reduction with red, black, and beige hues is especially reminiscent of Rembrandt's colour concept, I argue, as he deployed it in his oil on canvas *The Return of the Prodigal Son* from 1669 or his oil on canvas *The Jewish Bride* (from c. 1665–1669). In this way, I argue, Enckell related and positioned his portrait to Rembrandt's colour palette, which received large attention in the late nineteenth century.²⁶⁷ During his Parisian periods in the early 1890s, Enckell studied, sketched and copied ancient and

²⁶⁵ Albert Edelfelt to Magnus Enckell, Helsinki 15.12.1891, Knut Magnus Enckell COLL. 471, The National Library of Finland, accessed on the 14th of August 2018: “Things sent here well drafted but a little too monotone, the self-portrait was best, be wary that you do not become too monotone in colour [...], there was a permeating red-violet tone which you should work to remove, you are a little harsh and meagre in colour and tone.” // “hitsända saker vältecknade men litet för entoniga, självporträttet var bäst, akta dig för att bli för entonig i färgen [...], det fanns en rödviolett genomgående ton som du bör arbeta bort, du är litet hård och mager i färg och farbtoner.”

²⁶⁶ Albert Edelfelt to Magnus Enckell, 24.10.1893, Knut Magnus Enckell COLL. 471, The National Library of Finland, accessed on the 14th of August 2018: “to not give a damn about anything, about all those theories, and [instead] fall completely in love with Masaccio's small canvasses, and Holbein's portrait of a man in red, and Rembrandt & Velasquez (two–three thrones which shine), the red in Rembrandt's ‘Susanna’ (= the richest to have yet been painted).” // “att ge fan i allt, i alla teorier o alldeles mycket älskar sig in i Masaccios små taflor som Holbeins karlporträtt i rött och Rembrandt & Velazquez (två–tre toner som lyser), det röda i Rembrandts Susanna (= det rikaste som ännu blivit målat)”.

²⁶⁷ See for instance: Alison McQueen, *The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt: Reinventing an Old Master in nineteenth-century France*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2003, p. 109ff.

classical art in, amongst others, the Louvre collection, which very likely also involved the art of the Old Master Rembrandt even though I did not find explicit hints about this in his estate records.

Against this backdrop, as an expression of a general introspective mood and through the androgynous appearance and internal properties of the male figure, I understand Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* from 1894 as an emblem of a young spiritually withdrawn male and possibly also of the so-called third gender, as it was explained in the second chapter. This will be further touched upon in the fourth subchapter about the spiritually withdrawn female and male body.

Female androgyny and spirituality

Olof Sager-Nelson's head-and-shoulders portrait *A Girl's Head II* (fig. 6) depicts a contemplative young female. She is portrayed in a slight rotation; while her shoulder and right hand—placed on her chest—are displayed in profile, her head—which dominates the pictorial space—is displayed in a three-quarter view. Her half-open eyes are directed towards her bottom left and make her gaze look unfocused as if staring into space. The portrayal of the young female emphasises her immersion into her own thoughts and immaterial being, to which the absence of accessories, material objects etc. as well as the stylistic means of a colour reduction and a blurry representation of her held-up hand and clothed upper body also contribute.

The overall display of the young female figure in Sager-Nelson's work is dominated by the deployed colour harmony of a small range of warm and earthy tones of brown, beige and green, that are shaded with one another. The dark brown to light brown hues of the girl's hair and her cloak are reiterated in the void background to the right, which is dominated by dark brown hues that are blended with light brown, orange, and green tones. Those light brown to orange tones are repeated in the background to the left of the female figure. Only the full red colour of the female's lips appears to be liberated from the principle of the overall colour harmony. Besides the displayed young female's red lips and black eyebrows that I understand as signs of a made-up face, I consider the different orange and pink hues on the cheeks in this sense as stylistic means and not as actual physical facial

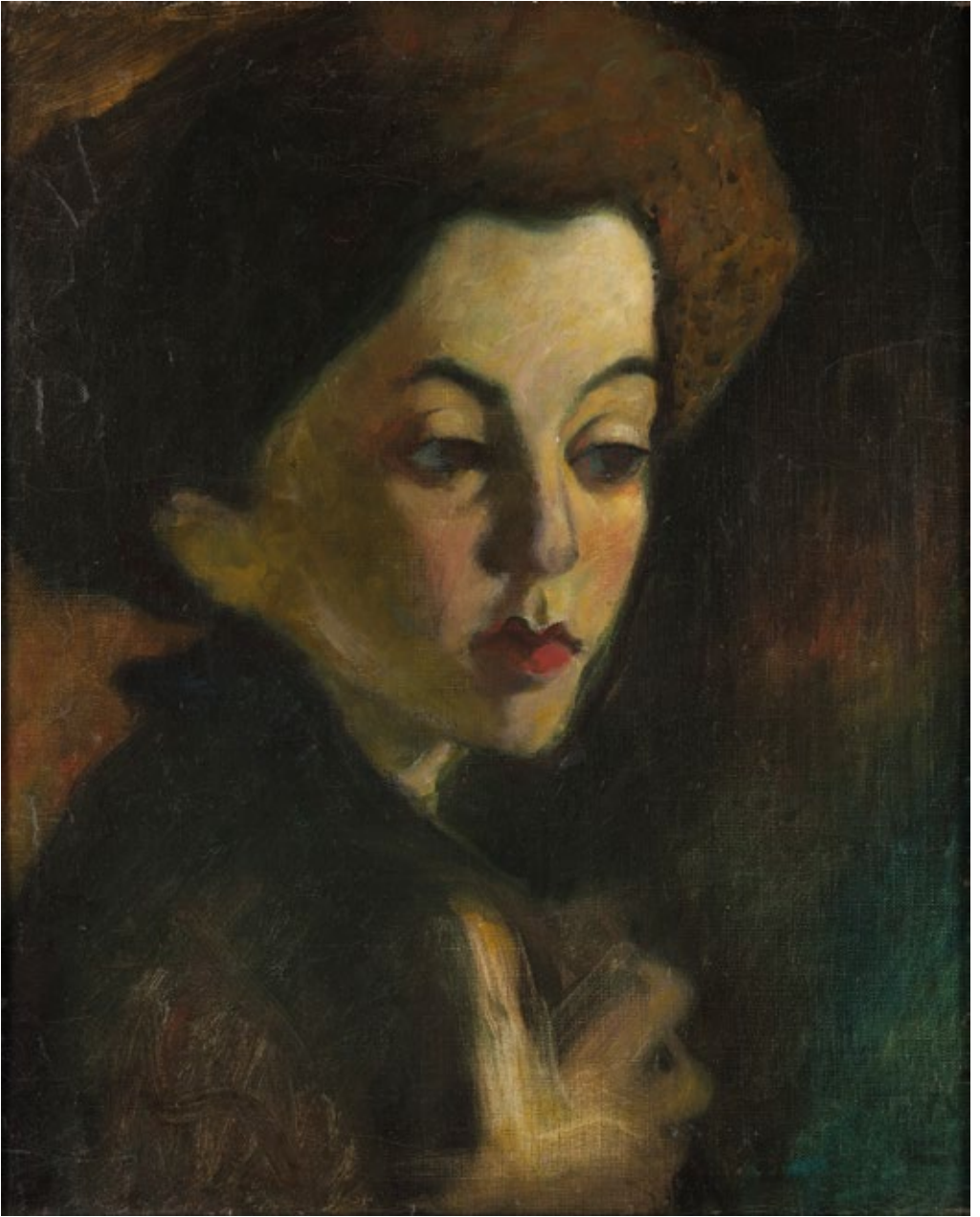


Fig. 6. Olof Sager-Nelson, *A Girl's Head II* (1890s).
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

traits, that serve the function of harmonising the warm and earthy tones with one another. Together with the unclear outlines and blurred surfaces of the visible raised right hand and the dark brown cloak that the female is dressed in, which does not reveal any sartorial details due to its simplified and stylised depiction, the portrayal of the introspective female makes the corporeal and material qualities elusive and, at the same time, enhances her spiritual, intangible and immaterial state. This is also increased through the source of light, that is cast on the female's forehead, which puts emphasis on her mental activity.

Although her facial representation with first and foremost her full red lips points to her made-up face, the overall staging of the portrayed young female upper body is unconventional and even transgressive of feminine late nineteenth-century refinement through fashion appearance and, thus, of a feminine stylisation of the body. Both the simple and monochrome dark cloak and the simple brown hair with its ambiguity of either being simply shortly worn or of being loosely gathered in an invisible bun make the female figure collide with an elaborate female normative late nineteenth-century style of dress, which was comprised of fine fabrics, extravagant colours and textures and carefully coiffed hair, often embellished with jewels, pins, laces etc.²⁶⁸ At the same time that the young female in Sager-Nelson's portrait does not correspond with the normative female late nineteenth-century role of embellishment and refinement, the stylised display of her head and the emphasis on her introspective, intellectual and spiritually active state make her appearance contribute to an androgynous strategy.

In addition, the pointed and bony face shape with the narrow chin and the high forehead, as well as the display of the voluminous, brown and either shortly cut or gathered hair, is remarkably similar to Sager-Nelson's depiction of the boy's face in his *The Foster Brothers* from 1894. This points to Sager-Nelson's stylisation of its depicted human figures independent of their gender, which at the same time also makes the female's pointed and bony face in *A Girl's Head II* look androgynous. The fact that this portrait

²⁶⁸ See for instance: Tamar Garb, New Haven 2007, p. 2.



Fig. 7. Olof Sager-Nelson, *A Girl's Head I* (undated). Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.



Fig. 8. Olof Sager-Nelson, *Foster Brothers* (1894). Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

by Sager-Nelson has earlier been given the title *Gosshuvud*, that is, *Boy's Head*, as Ulf Torell calls it in his contribution from 2004, also gives support to the difficult attribution of the figure's gender and, thus, to an androgynous appearance²⁶⁹ that is created through the stylisation of the figure's face. Moreover, in comparison with his *A Girl's Head I* (fig. 7), that Sager-Nelson must have made before the second version with the same topic, the emergence of his stylisation in the later made, and last-mentioned, portrait also becomes more obvious. Moreover, the stylisation of the female figure also makes it difficult to determine her age and social status, which is why I also consider this work as a portrait of the female's spiritual being instead of her material and tangible being in the physical world.

²⁶⁹ Ulf Torell, *Sävedalen* 2004, p. 99.

Although the exact year of the production of this portrait by Sager-Nelson remains unclear, it must have been realised during his Parisian-Belgian period between autumn 1893 and autumn 1895. In 1894, his production of his portrait paintings with a dark and colour-reduced palette emerged with paintings like his *Foster Brothers* (fig. 8) and *Portrait of Mme Hout* and with which he continued in 1895 as in his *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson*, before he became seriously ill with tuberculosis and died in Algeria in April 1896. At the beginning of his Parisian sojourn, he enrolled at both the Académie Julian,²⁷⁰ which was the private academy where Symbolist and neo-platonic theory had evolved some years earlier, and visited the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in spring 1894.²⁷¹ During his Parisian sojourn, Sager-Nelson consorted with both Magnus Enckell, Ellen Thesleff²⁷² and the Finnish painters Werner von Hausen and Väinö Blomstedt and, thus, relatively many Finnish artists, but also with French and Belgian artists and writers like Charles Grolleau and other members of the circle *La Plume* at the Café Soleil d'Or,²⁷³ that is, a magazine that supported Symbolist art. In 1892, when Sager-Nelson was based in Stockholm, the Parisian Symbolist artist circles in general, and Péladan's *Rose+Croix*-order in particular, had already sparked his desire for a longer sojourn in Paris. As part of a young artist group which revolved around the Swedish sculptor Knut Åkerberg in his studio in Stockholm and which kept close contact to the currently Parisian-based Swedish painter Ivan Aguéli, Sager-Nelson received insights into the Parisian art world and the Symbolist movement through Aguéli.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Olof Sager-Nelson to Johan Ericson, Paris, 6th of October 1893, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 174; Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 4th of December 1893, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 196.

²⁷¹ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert L. J. Engström, Paris, April 1894, nr. 130, KB Stockholm.

²⁷² Ellen Thesleff remembers and describes Sager-Nelson from his second Parisian period in this manner: "What I remember of him is an energetic figure and a pair of wise eyes." // "Vad jag minns av honom är en energisk gestalt och ett par kloka ögon."; Ellen Thesleff till unknown family member, 10.12.1915, SLSA 958, folder 8a.

²⁷³ Niclas Franzén, Linköping 2013, p. 25.

²⁷⁴ Before he left for Paris, Aguéli left photographs of Gauguin's and Van Gogh's paintings, as well as a transcription of Delacroix's diary in Åkerberg's studio. He continued to share photographs of current French artworks with this artist group when he was based in Paris again; Niclas Franzén, Linköping 2013, p. 22.

It was through the latter that Sager-Nelson was introduced to Péladan and his *Rose+Croix*-order.²⁷⁵ When Sager-Nelson received a three-year financing stipend from the Swedish patron of arts Pontus Fürstenberg in 1893, his desire for a longer Parisian period was finally made possible and he left for Paris in September 1893.²⁷⁶ However, neither Péladan's *Salon de la Rose+Croix* nor his training at the Académie Julian were particularly appreciated by Sager-Nelson and rather proved a disappointment to him. While he expressed his dislike of the Académie Julian's teaching circumstances during the painting from life classes in a letter to Johan Ericson from October 1893, which he considered to be too impersonal and crowded and in which he soon rarely participated,²⁷⁷ his interest for the *Rose+Croix*-order also soon diminished in spring 1894.²⁷⁸ In Sager-Nelson's letter to Pontus Fürstenberg from February 1894, he explains his disappointment in the *Rose+Croix*-order, expressing his dislike of the social dynamics of this Symbolist order and its members' unreflected obedience to its leading figure.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁵ Ulf Torell, *Sävedalen* 2004, p. 73.

²⁷⁶ Ragnar Hoppe, *Örebro* 1935, p. 8.

²⁷⁷ Olof Sager-Nelson to Johan Ericson, Paris, 6.10.1893, in: Axel Gauffin, *Stockholm 1945*, p. 174; Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 4.12.1893, in: Axel Gauffin, *Stockholm 1945*, p. 196: "I worked for a while at the A[c]ad[é]mie Julian, but could not stand it and I will explain it. Firstly, it is a torment for a free nature to stand in a pile of people and work with these unbearably disgusting theater models, and secondly, [...] it is a decadence of custom and filthy pigsty unto these young "artistic subjects" which destroys this work, which in my opinion should be undertaken with love and a humble feeling for art." // "Jag arbetade en tid på Akademie Julian, men stod inte ut med det och jag skall förklara det. För det första är det en plåga för en fri natur att stå i hög och arbeta efter dessa olidligt äckliga teatermodeller och för det andra är det en dekadens i seder och ett svineri på dessa unga "konstnär[s]ämn[e]n" som förstör detta arbete, som enligt min mening bör bedrivas med kärlek och en ödmjuk känsla för konst."

²⁷⁸ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert L. J. Engström, Paris, April 1894, nr. 130, KB Stockholm.

²⁷⁹ Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 20.02.1894, in: Axel Gauffin, *Stockholm 1945*, p. 200: "I have been studying the symbolists for some time now and have found such a transparent ignorance that is too naïve to be called a humbug. They are completely incapable of reflection and senselessly throw their enthusiasm at the first person who appears to be a leader. Namely, these people go about in masses—like sheep—and *that is just what I despise*. It was Csar Peladan, an unusually original and intelligent decadent writer, who took on this movement and organized Rose & Croix; but as the business turned out, he withdrew, and now the poor are without shepherd and without sense." // "Jag har nu en tid studerat symbolisterna och funnit en sådan genomskinlig okunnighet

Sager-Nelson's reluctance appeared to be directed at the lack of artistic originality and individualism that he experienced within this Symbolist circle, which he equated to a mass art movement, and to which the fixed artistic rules probably contributed. This thought recurs in another reflection by Sager-Nelson after he had visited the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in April 1894, which indicates his understanding of Symbolism as a mere individual Symbolist artistic expression which was incompatible with social groups and shared aesthetics as was the case within the *Rose+Croix*-order.²⁸⁰ In contrast to these rather disappointing experiences with the Parisian art world, Sager-Nelson appeared to appreciate the private teaching that he received from the French Symbolist painter, Edmond Aman-Jean, who was affiliated to and exhibited at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*.²⁸¹ Although no details of the production process of his *A Girl's Head II* from the 1890s are known to me, both Sager-Nelson's idea of symbolism as an individualist artistic expression, his way of not strictly following the artistic programme of the *Rose+Croix*-order, and the art of his teacher Aman-Jean as a source of reference played an important role in the production of *A Girl's Head II*, as I argue.

Aman-Jean's art in the 1890s was almost exclusively comprised of portraits of one or several female figures. In his three-quarter length portrait *Portrait of Thadée Caroline Jacque* from c. 1891–1892 for example, he depicts a contemplative and dreamy young female and employed a dark colour palette, that also is characterised by colour harmony. Although Sager-Nelson's

som är för naiv att kallas humbug. De äro alldeles utan förmåga af reflektion och kasta besinningslöst sin entusiasm på förste bäste som uppträder som ledare. Ty de gå i *massa desse* – som fären – och *det är just hvad jag afskyr*. Det var Csar Peladan, en ovanligt originell och intelligent dekadence-litteratör, som tog itu med denna rörelse o. organiserade *Rose & Croix*; men som affären gick, drog han sig och nu äro de stackarne utan herde och utan sans.”

²⁸⁰ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, 23.04.1894, Paris: signum Ep. E 17:25, nr. 130, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 22nd of February 2018: “The only true symbolism that exists is the one in ourselves and it expresses itself much much [sic!] nobler, [more] unbelievable than these gentlemen can.” // “Den enda sanna symbolism som existerar är den i oss sjelfa och den tar sig uttryck mycket mycket noblare, otrovärdigare än dessa herrar förmå.”

²⁸¹ Ulf Torell, Sävedalen 2004, p. 63.

A Girl's Head II is, in terms of the stylisation, simplification and androgynous appearance of the represented female figure, its composition and the deployed colours, still different to this work by Aman-Jean, both the subject matter of an introspective young female as well as the use of a limited range of dark hues harmonising with each other, are apparent in both portraits. Therefore, I regard the art of Sager-Nelson's teacher Aman-Jean as one important source of reference for Sager-Nelson's colour reduction and colour harmony as, for instance, he applied in his *A Girl's Head II*. Moreover, by depicting a female immaterial being with an androgynous appearance and, thus, extending Péladan's art programme, which exclusively revolved around male androgyny and spiritual refinement, Sager-Nelson's portrait represents an active contribution to the transnational Symbolist visual language: a liberated and individualist Symbolist approach, as I argue, based upon a reciprocal and relational artistic exchange within the international Symbolist artist network.

The minimal range of earthy tones, harmonised with each other, and the created effect of elusive sartorial and material qualities in Sager-Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* are also reminiscent of the French painter Eugène Carrière and his monochrome portraits of female figures, mother-child-portraits and his self-portraits in shades of light brown or grey. Although Sager-Nelson did not envelop his female figure in a soft and atmospheric haze, by which Carrière's portraits often are characterised and the reason why his imagery is often called *estompe*, I consider the function of Eugène Carrière's painterly style as a source of reference for *A Girl's Head II* still more than reasonable.²⁸² Sager-Nelson's employment of a brown colour harmony and the blurry representation of the female's upper body contributes strongly to the enhancement of the portrayed female's immaterial and spiritual state. In a similar way, Carrière's portrait painting was also closely associated with these aspects in the late nineteenth-century France, as in his self-portrait

²⁸² Both Sven Sandström and Ulf Torell link as well Sager-Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* to Eugène Carrière's painterly style; Sven Sandström & Elisabeth Lidén (eds.), *Konsten i Sverige, 1900-talets bildkonst*, AWE/Geber, Stockholm 1975, p. 113; Ulf Torell, *Sävedalen* 2004, p. 96.



Fig. 9. Eugène Carrière, *Self-Portrait* (c. 1893).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

from c. 1893 (fig. 9).²⁸³ Carrière's art was regularly displayed in the *fin-de-siècle* Paris as, for instance, at the Bousso and Valadon's Gallery close to the Académie Julian in spring 1891²⁸⁴ or at the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* in 1891 or 1892. Sager-Nelson probably became acquainted with Carrière's art through his contact with the Symbolist and neo-platonic circles at the Académie Julian, for which Carrière's portraiture was an important visual source of reference, or his contact with Ivan Aguéli.

²⁸³ Carrière's *estompe* and his 'monochromacy' as the extreme form of a colour ascetic palette were often referred to during the late nineteenth-century in France as a style and expression of the human soul, the immaterial, the dream and a dematerialization of the real. See for instance: Édouard Rod, "Les Salons de 1891", in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts: Courrier Européen de L'Art et de la Curiosité*, 1891/12, (January 1, 1891), p. 14ff., <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k203133p/fi6.item>, accessed on the 18th of February 2021; or Albert Aurier's article on Carrière from 1891; Albert Aurier, "Eugène Carrière", in: *Mercur de France* 2 (June 1891).

²⁸⁴ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 78.

Both regarding where Sager-Nelson exhibited his art during his lifetime and his own statements in his letter correspondences with, amongst others, Pontus Fürstenberg and Albert Engström, there is much to suggest that he identified himself with an international European artist network. While his submitted works to the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* were rejected in 1894 and 1895,²⁸⁵ Sager-Nelson displayed his art at other venues in Paris in 1894²⁸⁶ and 1895²⁸⁷ and also exhibited in Ghent in 1895 at the Belgian salon,²⁸⁸ in Brussels in 1896 at the *Cercle l'Artiste pour l'Art*²⁸⁹ and in Copenhagen in spring 1895.²⁹⁰ In comparison to the negative reviews that his art received when it was exhibited in Stockholm at the *Artists' Union Exhibition* in 1894 and 1895, his paintings were more appreciated by his contemporaries in France, Belgium and Denmark. Furthermore, he calls himself an “europé”

²⁸⁵ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, Paris, 12.4.1895, in: Ragnar Hoppe, Örebro 1935, p. 14: “Today I will go to the vernissage at the Champs de Mars store [the Salon du Champ-de-Mars] where I have been rejected for 2 years.” // “Idag skall jag gå på vernissage på Champs de Mars butiken [Salon du Champ-de-Mars] der jag är refuserad i 2 år.”

²⁸⁶ See: Sager-Nelson's letter to Albert L. Johannes Engström, Paris, 3.5.1894, nr. 132, signum Ep. E 17:25, The National Library of Sweden: “I will soon be exhibiting here in a small salon on Rue Pelletier with the Impressionists. It is claimed that I will strike huge blows here in time.” // “Jag ska snart exponera här i liten salong på Rue Pelletier hos impressionisterna. Man påstår att jag kommer att slå väldiga slag här med tiden.”

²⁸⁷ Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 21.3.1895, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 246: “So, I have participated in the exhibition of which I have spoken before. It is in the society St. Jean, where I became a member and was very well received and noticed even though I had so little to exhibit.” // “Så har jag deltagit uti den utställningen som jag talat om förut. Det är uti societé St. Jean der jag blifvit medlem och mycket väl mottagen och bemärkt ehuru jag hade så lite att exp.”

²⁸⁸ Olof Sager-Nelson to Alber L. Johannes Engström, Bruges, Monday 1895 (?), in: Ragnar Hoppe, Örebro 1935, p. 19: “I am currently exhibiting my own tableau at the Belgians' salon in Ghent. It is supposed to be a magnificent exhibition.” // “Jag exponerar för n. en rätt egen tableau på Belgarnes salon i Gent. Det lär vara en storartad utställning.”

²⁸⁹ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert L. Johannes Engström, Marseilles, januari 1896?, signum Ep. E 17:25, The National Library of Sweden: “I will be participate at a fine exhibition in Brussels in January (Cercle l'Artist pour l'Art).” // “Jag ska vara med på en fin utställning i Bryssel i januari (Cercle l'Artist pour l'Art).”

²⁹⁰ Sager-Nelson exhibited at ‘Kleist’ at *Martsudstillingen* in Copenhagen in spring 1895 together with other Swedish painters like Nils Kreuger or Carl Larsson and was the Swedish painter who received the most positive critics, especially for his *A Young Poet* (*Charles Grolleau*) (1894) in a review from *Politiken*; Ulf Torell, Sävedalen 2004, p. 148.

in a letter to his companions and painters Ivan Aguéli and Werner von Hausen from the 20th of February 1895²⁹¹ and almost brags about being fluent in French, German and English and his recently acknowledged language skills in Flemish and Dutch in a letter from the 3rd of August 1894 to his Swedish artist companion Albert Engström.²⁹² In another letter to Engström almost a year later, he also expresses that he would rather not consort with Swedish artists in Paris, that his French was as good as no other Swedish person's and that he planned to make himself into a Frenchman and a French artist.²⁹³ He also mentions his avoidance of Swedish company on other occasions as in a letter to Johan Ericson in autumn 1893.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ “[...] (—what do you want, I’m just European)” // “[...] (– vad vill du, jag är bara europé).”: Sager Nelson to Ivan Aguéli & Werner von Hausen, Paris, 20.02.1895; Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 244.

²⁹² Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert L. Engström, Amsterdam, 03.08.1894; signum Ep. E 17:25, nr. 138, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 22nd of February 2018: “I only spoke French [in Bruges] and learned Flemish, in Antwerp I spoke German and English and here exclusively Dutch—a language that I would completely master in three months.” // “[...] Jag talade endast franska [i Brygge] och lärde mig flämiska, i Antwerpen talade jag tyska och engelska och här uteslutande holländska – ett språk som jag på tre månader fullkomligt skulle behärska.

²⁹³ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert L. Engström, Paris, 07.05.1895, in: Ragnar Hoppe, *Olof Sager-Nelson och hans brev till Albert Engström*, Örebro 1935, p. 15: “When you come here, you can’t count on being together with Scandinavians so long as you continue to give a damn about me—who gets out of the way and of whom they are completely afraid, but who would never harm a lamb. [...] and so, I don’t know where things stand with dinner. I shall go to the gutter and poke around awhile, as I do not want to go to the Swedes.” // “När du kommer hit får du inte beräkna att vara tillsammans med skandinavlar så vida du inte vill ge tusan i mej – som går undan och som de äro rädda för men som inte biter lamm. [...] Och så vet jag inte hur det går med middan. Jag ska gå i rännsten och peta ett tag, ty jag vill inte gå till svenskarna.”; Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert L. Engström, Paris, Midsummer Day 1895, in: Ragnar Hoppe, Örebro 1935, p. 16: “[...] the “Swedish Arts” [sic.] can refrain from counting on me, I will make myself into a Frenchman and never return again. Can add that I speak the language as no Swedish person does—completely French in accent, and that I with a French name and naturalised shall garner myself a reputation and a playing field like none back home in the bloodsucker country.” // “[...] den “svenska konsten” [sic.] kan låta bli att räkna med mig, jag gör mig till fransman och kommer aldrig mer igen. Kan bifoga att jag talar språket som ingen svensk – absolute fransk accent, och att jag med ett franskt namn och naturaliserad skall skaffa mig en reputation och ett fält att slåss på som aldrig därhemma i luslandet.”

²⁹⁴ Olof Sager-Nelson to Johan Ericson, Paris, 6.10.1893, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 175: “There are many Swedes here, but I can’t stand them and meet no one more than

Both his international scope of exhibiting his art and his way of staging himself as a 'europé', fluent in plenty of languages and who rather consorts with French and international artist companions than with Swedish ones in Paris, are signs of his ambition to be positioned within an international artist movement. This he partly managed to achieve as his positive exhibition reviews, received in France, Belgium and Denmark, give testimony to. Together with his portrayal of a young female's spiritual and intangible state in his *A Girl's Head II* and the female's androgynous appearance, he explored a subject matter that was closely related to the transnational Symbolist movement and the *Rose+Croix*-order but that, I argue, can still be read as liberated from the *Rose+Croix*-order's artistic rules. This is why I regard this work by Sager-Nelson as an example of a relational and reciprocal artistic exchange between different European artistic centres and peripheries within the international Symbolist movement and as an active way of inscribing himself into the transnational Symbolist visual language.

The coexistence of female spirituality and sensuality

Ellen Thesleff's oil on canvas *Thyra Elisabeth* from 1892 (fig. 10) displays a young, seated female in a full-face view with shut eyes in a moment of relaxation, meditation or dream. It is painted with the mere use of earthy reddish hues and shows the main part of the young female's upper body against a monochrome light reddish-brown void background without being a clear head-and-shoulders portrait nor a half-length portrait. Through the alluded shape of a halo around the female's head in the void background, the young female is at the same time also connoted with the figure of Madonna. Hence, although the title explicitly addresses her younger sister as the depicted person, the high degree of stylisation and the deployed connotation of the Madonna make this portrait rather an abstract expression of female spirituality but also of sensuality, as I argue.

Ericson, my company is a Finn, a very nice and noble nature, which has had a good influence on me." // "Här är många svenskar, men jag kan inte med dem och träffar ingen mer än Ericson, mitt umgänge är en finne, en mycket fin och ädel natur, som haft ett gott inflytande på mig."



Fig. 10. Ellen Thesleff, *Thyra Elisabeth* (1892).
HAM Helsinki Art Museum.

While the female's head, which is slightly raised and tilted to the side, is framed by her long brown hair that falls on her shoulders, the bent left arm rests on the back of a chair and reveals the left hand. The left hand points downwards and appears to be so relaxed that the yellow dandelion-like flower, loosely placed in the female's hand, almost is about to slip out. Both the relaxed left hand and the relaxed facial expression with the shut eyes make the body look static and passive, and indicate a complete immersion into thoughts and spiritual activity.

Thesleff painted this portrait in Finland in the summer of 1892 after she had returned from her first Parisian sojourn.²⁹⁵ She spent the summer in the Finnish countryside in Murole at her family's summer residence, where many photographs of the twelve-year-old Thyra Thesleff in natural surroundings were also taken. One of those photographs depicts almost her complete body with loose hair, half-closed eyes and a casual light loose-fitting dress, standing in front of a birch forest (fig. 11). In comparison with Thesleff's oil on canvas *Thyra Elisabeth*, the photograph is similar with regard to Thyra Elisabeth's relaxed facial expression, hair and body pose, which is why I assume that the photograph served Ellen Thesleff as a compositional source. Nevertheless, Thesleff's depiction of the upper body of her younger sister, the idiosyncratic steep angle of the right shoulder and, in particular, the light grey dress, she is clothed in, is to such a degree stylised and simplified that her sister's likeness is not clearly expressed and thus, I would argue, not of importance. The deployed stylistic and technical means of the ascetic earthy red colour, the tonalism and treatment of the surface, which reminds of a fresco-technique, also contribute strongly to the figure's stylisation and to an abstract expression of female spirituality, as I understand it. This is also supported by the allusion to a halo, which relates the abstract and stylised staging of the young spiritually active female to a representation of a Madonna and internal properties of devotion, piety and religious spirituality. Even the gilded frame's curved upper part and its similarity to the shape of an altarpiece enhance the allusion to the figure of Madonna and its devotional spiritual qualities.

²⁹⁵ Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 88.



Fig. 11. Photograph of Thyra Thesleff in Murole, Finland (summer 1892), SLSA 959.

This is remarkably similar to Maurice Denis' neo-traditional manifesto from 1890, as cited in the second chapter, and its notion of creating a new modern art through the means of archaic, primitive and classical art. Thesleff's portrait with the two-dimensionally simple treatment of the surface goes hand in hand with Denis' claim of a creation of a modern art with the focus on the spiritual and its emphasis on decorative qualities similar to archaic and classic art. Maurice Denis' art and art theory was probably known to Thesleff. Perhaps, she even made the acquaintance with Maurice Denis himself: he corresponded with Enckell, with whom Thesleff had close contact during her Parisian years.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Denis Maurice to Magnus Enckell, undated, no place specified; The National Library of Finland, Knut Magnus Enckell COLL. 471.1., accessed on the 20th of August 2019.

To begin with, the portrait is completely dominated by a tonalism of the ascetic palette of earthy reddish hues, which are shaded to harmonise with one another and softened by white.²⁹⁷ This tonalism deemphasises the material and creates the impression of a hazy and dreamlike atmosphere. The blurred and softened lines in general and the unclear transition between the neck and the grey-white dress in particular make the materiality and corporeality especially elusive in this portrait. Form, light and shade have largely vanished at the same time as a linear treatment of the face and hair's outlines can be discerned. Whereas the face is relatively accurately painted, the clothed body appears to be the most simplified and stylised body part. In this way, the female figure's facial introspective expression and spirituality is stressed. The grey-white colour field, representing the light grey dress, is rendered without tactile details, three-dimensionality or the play of light and shadow, which makes the depiction of the dress tend to a mere allusion. The thin brushstrokes that are visible in the colour field of the dress but also in the face, as well as a certain transparency of the white surface, both highlight the painting's formal and medial qualities and point to the painting's non-illusionary way of portraying the female. In this sense, the applied stylistic and technical means increase the allusion to the female figure's intangible, spiritual and religious dimension.

Moreover, I consider the deployed tonalism with the blending of pastel-white colour as a palette and technique that draws upon a faded fresco painting in a way similar to Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's colour concept of the so-called *couleur crayeuse*.²⁹⁸ Puvis de Chavannes's *couleur crayeuse* designated a technique that aimed at the illusion of a fresco painting on plaster and that was especially created for monumental and decorative

²⁹⁷ My comprehension of tonality emanates from Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff's provided definition: "Tonality is based on the use of one unifying colour to tone the whole painting"; Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012, p. 62. For more information on Thesleff's tonalism as one of the two dominating colour techniques used in her production throughout the 1890s, see: Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012, p. 282ff.

²⁹⁸ Maurice Denis coined the term when calling Puvis de Chavannes's palette a *couleur crayeuse* in his critique of the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* in 1892.

art.²⁹⁹ Through the use of either pale grey or white as a unifying colour or the ‘mother tone’ in his easel or mural paintings, Puvis de Chavannes’s *couleur crayeuse* was a specific form of a colour harmony that was constituted of a dry, matte, pale grey, plaster-like palette. Thesleff’s deployed ascetic and harmonised palette recalls this sort of technique, as developed by Puvis de Chavannes during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Throughout Thesleff’s first Parisian sojourn between October 1891 and June 1892, during which she continued her artistic apprenticeship at the Académie Colarossi, Thesleff came in contact in different ways with Puvis de Chavannes’s mural and easel painting. Thesleff was strongly fascinated by Puvis de Chavannes’s art, which was frequently displayed in Paris during the 1890s. Beda Stjernschantz’s letter to her mother from the 18th of December 1891 reports, amongst other things, about her and Thesleff’s study of Puvis de Chavannes’s mural paintings at the Sorbonne and the Pantheon, namely Puvis de Chavannes’s *The Allegory of the Sorbonne* (1889) in the grand lecture hall of the new Sorbonne and *The Pastoral Life of Saint Geneviève* (1874–79) in the Pantheon, which left a great impression on them.³⁰⁰ Stjernschantz stresses Thesleff’s strong affinity for Puvis de Chavannes’s art by describing her as being completely in the grip of ‘Puvanisme Chavannisme’. Since Thesleff also visited the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* in spring 1892,³⁰¹ where Puvis de Chavannes’s easel painting *L’Hiver*, that employed such a *couleur crayeuse*, was displayed, this salon visit very likely served as

²⁹⁹ More information on Puvis de Chavannes’s *couleur crayeuse*, see: Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012, p. 62f., 132f.

³⁰⁰ Beda Stjernschantz to Alma Stjernschantz, Paris, 18.12.1891, BS2_140520PK00114, Ate-neum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018: “Yesterday we were at the old & new Sorbonne, adorable paintings; in particular the decorations of “Puvis de Chavannes” have struck, he also has a wall in the Pantheon, Anna and Ellen are so captivated and I declare that they are completely in the grip of Puvanisme Chavannisme.” // “Igår voro vi på gamla & nya Sorbonne, bedärande målningar; i synnerhet dekorationerna av “Puvis de Chavannes” har slagit an, han har även en vägg på Pantheon, Anna och Ellen äro så betagna och jag påstår att de äro angripna av Puvanisme Chavannisme.”

³⁰¹ Ellen Thesleff to Lilli Thesleff, Paris, 7th of May 1892, SL5A 958, folder 14, Helsinki, accessed on the 23th of August 2019.

another occasion of becoming familiar with his art and colour technique. This, I would suggest, makes it more than likely that Thesleff drew upon Puvis de Chavannes's *couleur crayeuse* and a faded fresco painting, which both highlights the portrayed female's spiritual and introspective mood and points at the same time back to a style of antique and Renaissance art.

Although the simplified and stylised clothed body of the female may be understood a sign of a material and sartorial unimportance, the allusion to a light-grey dress can still be read as a sign of the rational dress reform movement that emerged in the late nineteenth-century. Instead of according with nineteenth-century female mainstream fashion of a refined, embellished and restricted style of dress, the light-grey dress with its simple cut hangs loosely from the shoulders. Due to its simple and loose fit and cut, the dress vaguely refers to female rational dress, that advocated beige, light and thin fabrics as non-constrictive, healthy and hygienic alternatives to mainstream fashion. In times of industrialism, urbanism and a constantly shifting female artificial fashion, rational dress reformers advocated a style of dress that was more respectful to the 'natural' body and its silhouette and appearance³⁰² and that went hand in hand with the ideology of a more natural and healthy way of life that many dress reformers such as the German 'Lebensreformbewegung' ('Life Reform Movement') drew on.³⁰³

While the technique and palette as an imitation of a faded fresco painting is a reference to antique and classic art, the portrayal of the female figure itself and its analogy to the figure of Madonna recalls a popular nineteenth-century visual trope. This is closely tied to the fact that the female's display with long and loose hair without headgear and without the company of the infant Christ does not correspond to the traditional iconography of the devotional representation of the Madonna.

Within *fin-de-siècle* art, the motif of the passive and purist woman was a widely explored subject matter and corresponded most often to a male

³⁰² See for instance: Radu Stern, Cambridge, Mass. 2004, p. 7f.

³⁰³ See for instance: Per Dahlström, "The Larssons, Art Nouveau and the Alternative Movement", in: *Art Nouveau. Från Larssons till Zappa*, Gothenburg Museum of Art, Gothenburg 2020, p. 63ff.

projection and polarisation of a woman as asexual, innocuous and devotional, as explained in the second chapter. Indeed, this visual trope was often intermingled with a liberal and secularised representation of the figure of Madonna as in Julia Margaret Cameron's photograph *So now I think my time is near—I trust it is—I know, the blessed Music went that way my soul will have to go* from 1875 (fig. 12), which was part of the illustrations to Alfred Tennyson's poem "The May Queen". At the same time, the revival of religious art within French late nineteenth-century circles, such as within *Les Nabis* or the *Rose+Croix*-order, also explored the topic of the biblical figure of Madonna in its traditional context, for example in Carlos Schwabe's illustrations of the Virgin Mary for the *Composition pour l'Évangile de l'Enfance de N. S. J. C.* (undated)³⁰⁴ or Émile Bernand's oil on canvas *The Annunciation* (1890), which were both displayed at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in 1892,³⁰⁵ and which Thesleff had visited. Thus, the topic of the Madonna was a prevalent late nineteenth-century visual trope, a vehicle for male polarised projections of the female with an abstinent sexuality and accompanied by piety, as I understand it. Thesleff's portrait *Thyra Elisabeth* emanates from this popular nineteenth century trope, I argue, but at the same time alters its polarised asexual dimension. The depicted young female expresses not only a spiritual and religious contemplation, which is increased through her connotation with Madonna, but also a certain degree of sensuality, due to the combination of her full and long hair, that falls on her shoulders, her tilted and slightly raised head and her relaxed facial expression with the shut eyes. Thus, Thesleff's portrait gives room to a more complex and versatile female representation, in which female spirituality does not collide with female sensuality as was the case with the visual trope of the passive and purist woman. The representation of a sensualised Madonna was also explored by Edvard Munch from 1894 and onwards. His many depictions of the figure of Madonna, for exam-

³⁰⁴ Catulle Mendès, *Composition pour l'Évangile de l'Enfance de N. S. J. C.* (undated), Armand Collin & C, Paris; <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1525851j/f37.double>, accessed on the 30th of March 2022.

³⁰⁵ See: Joséphin Péladan, *Catalogue du Salon de la Rose+Croix: Geste Esthétique* [1892], Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris 1892, p. 20, 25, 39.



Fig. 12. Julia Margaret Cameron, *So now I think my time is near – I trust it is – I know, the blessed Music went that way my soul will have to go* (1875). The J. Paul Getty Museum.



Fig. 13. Edvard Munch, *Madonna* (1894). Munch Museum, Oslo.

ple his oil on canvas *Madonna* from 1894 (fig. 13), are not only sensualised but sexualised female representations and accord in this sense rather with the visual trope of the *femme fatale* in the guise of the figure of Madonna whose traditional purist and innocuous meaning is completely reversed. Although rather affirming male polarised projections of women, his series of Madonna is another example of the prevalence of this topic in the late nineteenth-century.

In the light of this, Thesleff's portrait of female spirituality and sensuality draws on and positions itself in relation to prevalent nineteenth-century polarised representations of women, which were widely explored within the transnational Symbolist movement, but allows the displayed female a broader range of spiritual and sensual agency and self-determination. In this sense, her portrayal accords also with a revision of the Symbolist no-

tion of spiritual transcendence as something exclusively male-connoted, which was particularly central within the *Rose+Croix*-order.

The female spiritually insightful and creative subject

Thesleff's *Self-Portrait* is a small pencil and sepia ink drawing on paper, which displays her in full-frontal view in a moment of inwardness, concentration, and inspiration, to which her intense and defocused gaze, directed at the beholder, points (fig. 14). It is, I contend, a staging of herself as a female spiritually active, insightful and creative subject. Even though not only her face but also her torso is partly depicted—without being a clear case of either a head-and-shoulders portrait or a half-length portrait, only her face is carefully rendered and, thus, emphasised in this drawing. Although Thesleff's gaze is directed towards the beholder, the beholder cannot meet her gaze as already stated by Lahelma in 2014.³⁰⁶ Her gaze as a sign of her immersion into introspective contemplation and a certain form of spiritual inspiration is also enhanced through the slightly open mouth and her relaxed but simultaneously concentrated facial expression. The expression of her refined consciousness and inspiration will be further elaborated in the following in relation to her staging as a female creative subject. Thesleff made this self-portrait in Helsinki in the autumn of 1894 as a pure pencil drawing after her first Italian sojourn between January and May in 1894 and added sepia ink to it during her second Italian period between autumn 1895 and summer 1896,³⁰⁷ as indicated by the two different signatures and dates, namely November 1894 and 4th of October 1895.

A weak source of light, coming from the top centre, casts its light frontally on the forehead, the eyes and the nose and makes the bright surface of Thesleff's carefully rendered face stand out against the dark and sketchily rendered medium-length hair or pinned-backed hair, the upper body and void grey background. In particular, her chin stands out against the dark area under the chin and the non-visible neck. Whereas the face through

³⁰⁶ Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 149.

³⁰⁷ Hanna-Rheetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 127f., p.130.; Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 150.



Fig. 14. Ellen Thesleff, *Self-Portrait* (1894–1895).
Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

the shady areas on the cheekbones, at the edges of the face, under the nose, the lower lip and under the eyes creates a sense of volume and three-dimensional depth, the rest of the upper body is displayed as a mere simplification without the use of form, light, shade, or a three-dimensional perspective and without traditional functions of line and colour. Although the play of light and shadow—a so-called *chiaroscuro*—dominates the representation of the face, the silvery grey pencil lead and the added dark brown sepia ink do not clearly contrast white and black against one another. They rather create a monochrome light grey-brown ascetic palette.³⁰⁸ In this sense this drawing reminds, both because of its monochrome light grey-brown colours and the remarkably precise depiction of Thesleff's face, of photographs, which were taken of her in the 1890s.

No heavy outlines are used in the depiction of the face, the hair nor the torso—except of the shoulders, which creates a certain blurriness and contributes to making her physical representation elusive. The hair, the clothed upper body as well as the void dark grey background are drawn with visible long, swirling and crisscrossing or curving lines. Contrastingly, the face is made with tiny, subtle, and blurring lines and shaded surfaces.

Thesleff had already deployed this technique of long and visible lines for the representation of her hair, clothed upper body and the background as well as the distinction of the bright and more carefully rendered face from the rest of the overall dark composition in her *Self-Portrait* from 1891, made with charcoal and crayons (fig. 15). This creates a certain unclear transition between her physical representation and the background. The applied technique of softly curving and intertwining pencil lines in her self-portrait from 1894 and 1895 gives the presented body no solidity and creates a certain hazy mood, in which the face is enveloped, and emphasises the immaterial, as I understand it.

Because of the blurry display of the face, this latter self-portrait of Thesleff has been linked by Lahelma to Leonardo da Vinci's technique of the soft *sfumato* and the creation of an enigmatic atmosphere and a sense of

³⁰⁸ For more information on Thesleff's colour technique of a brown, black and white palette, see: Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Helsinki 2012, p. 282ff.



Fig. 15. Ellen Thesleff, *Self-Portrait* (1891).
HAM Helsinki Art Museum.

mystery.³⁰⁹ Although made with pencil and sepia ink and, thus, constituting the use of alternative media, the deployment of the blurry lines and shaded surfaces in the representation of her face can still have drawn on Leonardo's oil painting technique of the *sfumato*, as I argue together with Lahelma. Thesleff's general engagement with Leonardo da Vinci's painting during her Parisian sojourns and her Italian sojourn in 1894, after which the first version of this self-portrait was made, and in particular her notes on da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*—as one of the most prominent examples of da Vinci's use of the technique of *sfumato*—in an undated sketchbook in her

³⁰⁹ Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 152ff.



Fig. 16. Ellen Thesleff, untitled (undated), SLSA 958.

estate records, make it possible that da Vinci's *sfumato* functioned as a stylistic source of reference.³¹⁰ The shady area of the edges of the cheekbones in Thesleff's self-portrait is similar to the creation of shade in the face of the *Mona Lisa*.

The soft grey-brown monochrome palette and the created hazy mood reminds also of Eugène Carrière's blurry and monochrome earthy imagery, which often was called *estompe*, as mentioned above. Carrière's painting as a source of reference for Thesleff becomes obvious when taking into consideration Thesleff's undated monochrome grey-and-black graphic work, which depicts a young audience in the gallery of a theatre, which I studied in her estate record (fig. 16). In terms of both the composition and subject

³¹⁰ "The Mona Lisa: She is not an image, she is a person.' In 1501, Mona Lisa's portrait is finished. He worked on it for 4 years." // "La Joconde: elle n'est pas une image, elle est une personne." 1501 är Mona Lisas porträtt färdigt. Han arbetade på det i 4 år."; SLSA 958, miscellaneous folder, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

matter itself as well as the stylistic means of the haziness and monochrome palette, I argue this is a direct reference to Eugène Carrière's *The Theatre of Belleville* of 1895. Carrière's monochrome and blurry imagery functions also as a source of reference for the creation of the elusive and immaterial mood in Thesleff's self-portrait from 1894 and 1895. In this sense, Thesleff's self-portrait also recalls the imagery of the international artistic movement of so-called pictorialist photography, which emerged in the late nineteenth-century with visual means like fuzziness, soft focus and brown and earthy tones, which largely drew upon Carrière's earthy and monochrome painting, and portraiture as one of the main subject matters.³¹¹ Thesleff's self-staging in her self-portrait regarding the softened monochrome grey-brown, the play of light and shadow that dominates the portrayed female's face and the chosen full-face view is similar to the British pictorialist photographer Julia Margaret Cameron's head-and-shoulders portrait *Julia Jackson* from 1867 (fig. 17). The fact that a photograph, which displays Ellen Thesleff together with her sisters Gerda and Thyra dressed as maenads at the family's summer residence in Murole around 1900, reminds of Cameron's group portrait *The Rosebud Garden of Girls* (1868) gives further support to Cameron's pictorialist photography and portrait tableaux as a point of reference for Thesleff's self-staging and its stylistic and compositional aspects. By constituting stylistic, compositional, and thematic points of reference, both Carrière's imagery, pictorialist photography in general, and Julia Margaret Cameron's photography in particular, contribute to positioning Thesleff's self-portraiture within a transnational *fin-de-siècle* artistic movement, I propose, in which the pictorial tradition of a portrait tableau was explored for the sake of expressing the sitter's elusive and immaterial quality. Thesleff's self-portrait functions thereby as an active participation in this transnational Symbolist movement, which had been developed on the basis of relational and mutual artistic exchange, as I argue.

³¹¹ See for instance: Alison Devine Nordström and David Wooters, "Crafting the Art of the Photograph", in: Alison Devine Nordström & J. Luca Ackerman (eds.), *TruthBeauty: Pictorialism and the Photograph as Art, 1845-1945*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver 2008, p. 34ff.



Fig. 17. Julia Margaret Cameron, *Julia Jackson* (1867).
The Art Institute of Chicago.

Although Thesleff's self-portrait from 1894 and 1895 only emphasises her face and her intense gaze and so reduces the importance of material and sartorial details, I consider the carefully rendered and delicate face nevertheless to clearly represent Thesleff's female likeness. Many self-portraits were made by Thesleff in diverse media and many photographs of her were taken during the 1890s. Whereby some of those visual representations are characterised by her stylisation of her body as an androgynous strategy, I contend that her self-staging in her drawing is a feminine gendered stylisation of her body in contrast to both Hanna-Reetta Schreck, who argues that the presented body neither appears to be female or male in this self-portrait,³¹² and Lahelma, who regards this self-portrait to be no portrait of a woman.³¹³

³¹² Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 103.

³¹³ Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 169.



Fig. 18. Photograph of Ellen Thesleff with short hair (early 1890's), SLSA 959.



Fig. 19. Photograph of Ellen Thesleff (early 1890's), SLSA 959.

Her facial traits are soft, gentle and delicate at the same time that her half-open sensual lips and her mid-length hair also enhance female features of her face, to which the shaded cheekbones and their way of highlighting the narrow shape of the face also contribute. Her relaxed and concentrated facial expression is sensitive, delicate and intuitive and through the introspective and defocused gaze, which does not meet the beholder, also less hard and stern than Thesleff's way of directing her gaze at the beholder in both a photograph of her from the early 1890s and the earlier mentioned charcoal and crayon self-portrait from 1891. In the photograph from the early 1890s, which depicts Thesleff with short hair as a head-and-shoulders portrait in full-face view (fig. 18), her strong and serious gaze meets the beholder from slightly above and in a challenging way, and thus expresses self-confidence, determination, boldness, and authority, as I argue, and, thus, an androgynous strategy, to which also her appearance as such contributes. Thesleff addresses the beholder with a similar stern, self-assertive

and challenging gaze coming from above, in her self-portrait from 1891, which I also consider as a self-staging of Thesleff that makes use of an androgynous strategy. In the light of this, the combination of Thesleff's facial expression and the defocused and introspective gaze in her self-portrait from 1894 and 1895 makes her appearance and staging more feminine. In addition to this, a self-photograph by Thesleff from the early 1890s, which illustrates her with short hair, a shirt and tie, as well as a focused and quite self-assertive gaze coming from above that is directed downwards (fig. 19), is another example of an androgynous stylisation of the body and, at the same time, a fashioning of the 'New Woman'. In comparison with those androgynous stylisations of her body, her self-portrait from 1894 and 1895 reveals a distinct feminine appearance.

Nevertheless, her gaze emphasises internal properties of a refined consciousness, creative inspiration and spiritual insightfulness of her female being, thus, an ongoing mental and creative activity, which collided with nineteenth-century normative ideas of the female without agency and creation, as explained in the first chapter. Thus, her representation is still gender transgressive, but not the appearance of her face itself.

In this way, this self-portrait from 1894 and 1895 is a noteworthy, bold manifestation of inscribing herself as an emerging woman artist in the male-gendered tradition of the artist's self-portraiture. To be a woman artist in the late nineteenth-century implied *per se* a collision with and a deviance from the male-connoted artist identity, especially when considering the Symbolist concept of the artist and his prophet- or seer-like qualities. For women artists, the production of a self-portrait involved the reconciliation of two sets of expectations that were diametrically opposed to each other, namely "the conflict between what society expected of women and what it expected of artists" as Frances Borzello states.³¹⁴ Because late nineteenth-century normative conventions of femininity were incompatible with bold inscriptions of agency, originality and artistic creation, which the genre of self-portrait required, strong self-portraits by late nine-

³¹⁴ Frances Borzello, "Introduction. The Presentation of the Self", in: Frances Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves. Women's Self-Portraits*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2016 [1998], p. 35.

teenth-century women artists—like Thesleff’s from 1894 and 1895—were in fact relatively scarce as, for instance, Tamar Garb states.³¹⁵ Since Thesleff’s staging of herself with an intuitive, contemplative and insightful gaze and its allusion to imagination and spiritual and creative inspiration employs a pictorial convention that was traditionally designed to self-fashion the privileged status of the male artist, her way of appropriating and re-interpreting elements of a decisively masculine portrait tradition can, I argue, be understood as an ‘emancipative appropriation’. This term was coined by the art historian Rachel Mader in 2009³¹⁶ and applied by Carina Rech in her Doctoral thesis on Nordic women artists’ self-fashioning and -promotion from 2021, by which my discussion on Thesleff’s gender transgressive self-staging is informed.³¹⁷ As Rech demonstrates, the ‘emancipative appropriation’ through the emulation of the male portrait tradition was not only a key strategy of nineteenth-century women artists of inscribing themselves into the male tradition of self-representation, but additionally caused frictions that contributed to challenging and reinventing the notion of the male artist.³¹⁸ I argue that such a subversive strategy of appropriation is apparent in Thesleff’s self-portrait both in terms of stylistic means and compositional and iconographical matters. Thesleff’s self-fashioning employs and reinterprets male self-portraits of ingenuity and intuition such as Eugène Carrière’s self-portraits such as his brown monochrome and blurry oil on canvas from c. 1893 (fig. 9) and its mere emphasis on the face with the introspective gaze, or Rembrandt’s many earthy monochrome manifestations of his artistic persona.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, Thesleff appropriates the

³¹⁵ Tamar Garb, New Haven 2007, p. 12f.

³¹⁶ Rachel Mader, *Beruf Künstlerin: Strategien, Konstruktionen und Kategorien am Beispiel Paris 1870–1900*, Frank & Timme, Berlin 2009, p. 117.

³¹⁷ Carina Rech, Gothenburg 2021, p. 65ff.

³¹⁸ Rech combines Mader’s concept of the ‘emancipative appropriation’ with David Mayernik’s notion of emulation as a key method of artistic education at both academic and private art academies, which involved the idea of an artistic development from imitation via emulation of, amongst others, the old masters to invention. See: David Mayernik, *The Challenge of Emulation in Art and Architecture: Between Imitation and Invention*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, Surrey 2013, p. 16.

³¹⁹ Her frequent studies or copying practice at the Louvre Museum also very likely involved her study of Rembrandt’s self-portraits at the Louvre Museum, like his *Self-Portrait Wear-*

general notion of the ingenious male artist rather than emulating a certain work or certain artist. Hence, whereas Lahelma regards this self-portrait to be no portrait of a woman, but rather an expression of general artistic creativity, in which aspects of gender and sexuality lose meaning,³²⁰ I consider Thesleff's self-portraiture as a self-staging of her creatively inspired and spiritually insightful female being not to be absent of femaleness. Since this self-portrait was exhibited at the *Finnish Art Society's* Spring exhibition in 1895 as a pure pencil drawing and exhibited again at the *Finnish Artists' Autumn Exhibition* in 1895 with added sepia, where it received positive reviews,³²¹ it can be regarded as a daring self-promoting strategy that caused frictions and thus challenged the notion of the male artist.

In conclusion, I consider Thesleff's way of emphasising her immaterial being and staging herself as a female artist in the middle of a spiritually insightful and creatively inspired moment as a subversive friction of appropriation of male-coded pictorial conventions, which questions the concept of the Symbolist artist as solely male-gendered. Through the means of emulating and appropriating male-gendered features of the male Symbolist artist's self-representation, this self-portrait is a self-fashioning of herself as a young and emerging female artist, who puts herself on the same level with the Symbolist ideal of the male creative subject as someone with a special ability of getting into contact with a higher truth and a refined spiritual transcendence. This will be further examined in the following subchapter on spiritual transcendence.

ing a Toque with an Architectural Background (1637), oil on oak panel, or his *Self-Portrait with Golden Chain* (1633), oil on oak panel.

³²⁰ Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 169.

³²¹ Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 130.

3.2. Historicised stagings of creativity and spirituality

In the following, Olof Sager-Nelson's *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* (1895) and Stjernerantz's *Self-Portrait* (1892) and *Aphorism* (1895) will be examined as portraits that stage the portrayed person with both a historicised fashion and a spiritually and/or creatively active mind.

The historicised staging of female insights into higher truth

Olof Sager Nelson's *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* from 1895 (fig. 20), I argue, stages the young Jeanne Eriksson, née Tramcourt, and French wife of the Swedish sculptor Christian Eriksson, as a historicised female in the moment of the reception of spiritual insights. Sager-Nelson produced this half-length portrait of the nineteen-year-old Jeanne Eriksson in a three-quarter view in Paris early in 1895, a few months after her 1894 marriage to the Swedish sculptor Christian Eriksson and only a month after she gave birth to their first child.³²² He started to work on this portrait on the 29th of January to which Christian Eriksson's letter to Pontus Fürstenberg gives testimony.³²³ Listed amongst Sager-Nelson's finalised paintings in a letter to Fürstenberg from the 24th of February 1895³²⁴ and being mentioned by Christian Eriksson again in a letter to Fürstenberg from the 28th of February 1895,³²⁵ the production process took only some weeks and involved only a few sittings.

While the scarce previous research on this portrait emphasises its similarity to female Renaissance portraiture, as did Ulf Torell with regard to the style of dress,³²⁶ I rather comprehend the portrait as symptomatic of

³²² Ulf Torell, *Sävedalen* 2004, p. 152.

³²³ Christian Eriksson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 29th of January 1895: "P.S.: Nelson began this morning with my wife's portrait. He was not well. I do not know if I should say this, but please do not pretend; since a few days he spits blood." // "P.S. Nelson började I dag på morgonen min hustrus porträtt. Han var ej rätt kry. Jag vet ej om jag bör säga detta, men var god låtsä ej derom; sedan ett par dagar spottar han blod."; Ulf Torell, *Sävedalen* 2004, p. 147.

³²⁴ Ulf Torell, *Sävedalen* 2004, p. 151.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*



Fig. 20. Olof Sager-Nelson, *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* (1895).
Thielska Galleriet.

nineteenth-century historicism and a nineteenth-century revival of the art of the Renaissance, which was a common and favoured thematic and stylistic approach within the transnational Symbolist movement in general and Pre-Raphaelite circles and *Rose+Croix*-order in particular.

During his Parisian-Belgian sojourn between 1893 and 1895, Sager-Nelson expressed in his correspondence with Pontus Fürstenberg and Albert Engström both his withdrawal from contemporary and modern art, as he did in February 1894³²⁷ and May 1894,³²⁸ and his particular fascination with the Italian Renaissance painters Michelangelo, Raphael and Botticelli,³²⁹ the Early Netherlandish painters Hans Memling, Jan van Scorel, and Dutch Golden Age painters Rembrandt and Frans Hals.³³⁰ His longer sojourns in the Belgian city of Bruges in the summer of 1894 and between August and September in 1895 were closely tied to his interest in those last-mentioned Early Netherlandish and Dutch Golden Age painters. However, none of these classical painters, that he himself declared to be of great importance for his artistic practice, can clearly be ascertained by myself as visual sources of references for this portrait of Jeanne Eriksson. Instead, Sager-Nelson's portrait can rather be linked to nineteenth-century painters like the Pre-Raphaelite painter Burne-Jones and the Belgian painter Fernand Khnopff, who explored historicised subject matters, or Aman-Jean and his colour concepts. This will be further discussed below.

Sager-Nelson displays the upper body of the seated Jeanne Eriksson in the corner of a wood-panelled interior slightly from the left. The narrow and elongated shape of her face is frontally lit by a weak source of light, which highlights her big brown eyes, the thin and delicate eyebrows, and the narrow and slightly tensed lips. The frontally lit face also emphasises the contrast between her pale face, her brown eyes, and her brown shoulder-length

³²⁷ Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 20.02.1894, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 200.

³²⁸ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, Paris, 3.05.1894, Signum Ep. E 17:25, nr. 132, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 22nd of February 2018.

³²⁹ Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 25.12.1893, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 198.

³³⁰ Sager-Nelson to Albert L. Johannes Engström, Amsterdam, 3.8.1894, nr. 138/signum Ep. E 17:25, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on 22nd of February 2018.

hair, which is pulled together at the neck. She is clothed in a high-necked dress with puffed sleeves. The dress is made of both a tight-fitting, thick, and dark blue velvet fabric around her shoulders, neck and bosom and of a beige, light and thin fabric which is loose-fitting and gathered at the upper arms and under the décolletage. Although her arms and torso are concealed rather than revealed by her dress, an upright, elegant and at the same time quite static body pose can still be discerned. A still and graceful appearance is also conveyed through the motionless and concentrated facial expression and, in particular, through the absent gaze, which is directed downwards towards something in front of her outside of the right picture frame. Jeanne Eriksson's over-sized brown eyes with their defocused gaze point to her staring into space and her absorption into the world of thoughts. She is depicted with her right hand, held up in front of her waist, and a strangely long and pointed little finger, which is elegantly strutted from the rest of the fingers. In combination with her static body posture and her introspective and concentrated facial expression, the idiosyncratic hand gesture of her right hand stages her body as spiritually withdrawn into a metaphysical world of a higher truth, with which she has contact, as I argue. This is also supported through the dark pink hues at the edges of her cheeks. Instead of being signs of the application of rouge and a made-up female face, these pink hues are, I argue, signs of her blushing due to her spiritual contemplation. Sager-Nelson stages her as a representation of female sensitivity and intuition and as a female with access to higher, hidden knowledge. Thus, instead of a mindless existence, she is portrayed in the moment of a certain spiritually explorative mood and with the access to spiritual refinement. In that sense, the portrayal of Jeanne Eriksson is not restricted to the mere role of an objectified decorative female, but gives her spiritually active body agency and autonomy, as I argue, which stands in contrast to a wide range of female late nineteenth-century portraits by, for instance, Dante Gabriel Rossetti which accord to projections of male sexual desire and phantasy.³³¹

³³¹ On the fetishised female as a negotiation of male sexuality in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's female portraits like his *Bocca Bacciata* (1859) or *Regina Cordium* (1866), see: Griselda Pollock, "Woman as sign: Psychoanalytic readings", in: Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*, [New ed.], Routledge, London 2003, p. 170ff.

At the same time, Sager-Nelson's exploration of a female spiritual refinement with its reference to the Renaissance is also an extended account of the exclusively male-defined capacity of access to spiritual insights, which dominated Symbolist theories such as the one of the *Rose+Croix*-order. This makes his female portrait an interesting, innovative and independent contribution to the Symbolist transnational movement's visual language and theory. This argument will be further explained in the following.

Moreover, with its puffed arms, the free fit, the loose folds, the draped thin grey fabric and the seemingly non-corseted body, the dress represents a so-called nineteenth-century artistic dress, rather than a Renaissance costume, that was worn by women within or associated with artistic circles from the 1870s onwards. Thus, it is an example of a form of nineteenth-century alternative female fashion, which rejected the female mainstream fashion ideal of stiff and heavily boned dresses and stiffened corsets, and drew upon a medieval or early Renaissance style of dress and, thus, a historicised style of dress.³³² It is beyond the scope of this research project to give an in-depth background to the emergence of the artistic dress within the British Aesthetic, Arts and Crafts movement and Pre-Raphaelite artist circles in the second half of the nineteenth-century as a reform of constantly changeable contemporary female fashion and its purpose of regaining the 'natural beauty' of women.³³³ However, at the same time that this particular style of dress in Sager-Nelson's portrait still makes Jeanne Eriksson's appearance placeable in the late nineteenth-century, it also contributes strongly, together with her placement against the wooden panel background and the stylisation of her appearance, to make her portrayal an allusion to Renaissance female portraiture, as I understand it.

Moreover, instead of giving a realistic account of her life as a mother and

³³² See for instance: Patricia A. Cunningham, "Chapter 4: Artistic Dress in England. Visions of Beauty and Health", in: Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming Women's Fashion, 1850–1920: Politics, Health, and Art*, Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio 2003, p. 114, p. 109ff.

³³³ For an in-depth-account of the emergence and development of the artistic dress, see for instance: Patricia A. Cunningham, "Chapter 4: Artistic Dress in England. Visions of Beauty and Health", in: Patricia A. Cunningham, Kent, Ohio, 2003; Radu Stern, Cambridge, Mass. 2004, p. 4ff.



Fig. 21. Henry Buergel Goodwin, *Jeanne de Tramcourt* (1875–1952), född i Frankrike, verksam i Sverige, skådespelare, modist, g.m. skulptören Christian Eriksson, sammanboende med Vilhelm, prins av Sverige (undated), NMGrh 5238. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

wife, both the appearance of Jeanne Eriksson and the deployed stylistic means make her portrayal a stylised and idealised staging of female sensitivity and a female spiritually explorative mood. At the same time that the narrow and elongated shape of her depicted face and her nose appear to be relatively liberated from the other visual representations of the young Jeanne Eriksson that were possible for me to access, for example, an undated photograph by the Swedish-German photographer Henry Buergel Goodwin that shows Jeanne Tramcourt in profile view (fig. 21), the display of her face with the pointy chin, the high forehead and the big and dark brown eyes is characteristic of Sager-Nelson's typical stylisation of his depicted human figures and, thus, quite similar to the female's face in his above-discussed *A Girls' Head II* or the boy's face in his *Foster Brothers* (1894).

The fact that Jean Eriksson's husband Christian Eriksson calls this portrait in the above-mentioned letter from the 28th of February to Pontus

Fürstenberg a “fleetingly painted portrait”³³⁴ can also be understood as an indicator of a free interpretation of the sitter Jeanne Eriksson’s likeness. The display of the raised right hand is, with the elongated and pointed shape of the little finger and the applied hues of beige and dark pink representing the hand’s skin colour, also a sign of a stylised representation of the sitter. Rather than representing a natural skin colour, these hues mirror the colour nuances of the beige fabric of the dress and, in this way, constitute a colour reduction which harmonises the bright earthy tones of the dress with the deployed hues of the hand. Even the hues in Jeanne Eriksson’s face mirrors these beige and pinks hues, although they are kept in brighter beige tones. Thus, those aspects of stylisation make it reasonable to consider this portrait as a more general expression of female spiritual contemplation.

In addition to this, the applied colour reduction and its feature of harmonising the bright grey hues with each other is also reminiscent of his teacher Edmond Aman-Jean’s art from the 1890s and his employment of a limited range of saturated, dark or earthy tones as in his *Portrait De Madame Besnard* (undated). Furthermore, in the previously-mentioned letter to Engström from the 3rd of May 1894, Sager-Nelson declared his painterly style to be an unmodern approach and technique, whereby he also brought up his use of colour:

At home, people think that I keep myself to a modern direction. That’s just the mistake because my technique is very different from all young painters and sky stormers. I have not yet seen anyone who understands that technology is a movement of the psychological understanding of human nature and that the colour of the developmental temperament I am currently in.³³⁵

³³⁴ “Unless the last session was unusually successful, my wife’s portrait is only fleetingly painted.” // “Såvida ej sista séancen varit ovanligt lycklig är min hustrus porträtt endast flyktigt målat.”; Ulf Torell, Sävedalen 2004, p. 152.

³³⁵ “Därhemma tror man att jag håller mig till en modern riktning, Det är just misstaget ty min teknik är alldeles vildt skildt från alla unga målare och himlastormare. Jag har ännu inte sett någon som förstå att tekniken är bevande av det psykologiska förståndet af människors karakter och att färgen på det utvecklingstemperament jag för tillfället befinner mig uti.”: Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, Paris, 3.05.1894, Signum Ep. E 17:25, nr. 132, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 2nd of August 2018.

Although the meaning of his formulation of his applied technique as an expression of the psychology of human nature is difficult to comprehend, his way of regarding his deployed palette as a direct expression of his ‘temperament’ and of distinguishing it from contemporary art becomes more obvious. Nevertheless, in comparison with his *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* from 1895, the employed colour reduction of dominating brown and beige tones points rather to concepts of colour reduction that were made use of by late nineteenth-century painters, as, for instance, by Aman-Jean or Edward Burne-Jones than to a reference to the art of the past.

Sager-Nelson was himself both familiar with the Pre-Raphaelites in general—as a letter from April 1894 to Albert Engström proves³³⁶—and with the work of Burne-Jones in particular. During his sojourn in Bruges in the summer of 1894, he also visited Antwerp, where he had seen three artworks by Burne-Jones at the *Exposition Internationale d’Anvers*,³³⁷ which left such a great impact on him that he wanted to visit London.³³⁸ Although it has not been possible for me to ascertain which particular works were displayed by Burne-Jones at this exhibition, it appears likely that Sager-Nelson was acquainted with and drew upon Burne-Jones’ female portrait *Vespertina Quies* from 1893 (fig. 22). This portrait by Burne-Jones depicts an introspective young female in a three-quarter view and in a three-quarter length, who leans on a balustrade, and, thus, presents a pose derived from Italian Renaissance portraits. The overall portrait is, with the style of dress

³³⁶ “I’ll pass on to you a little about Parisian art: here there are many ideologies, a search the likes of which has never been, but also a decadence like never before: here we have pointillists, synthetic Cubists, impressionists, neo-impressionists, pre-Raphaelites, primitive symbolists, and more. The classifications disgust me. But sometimes one runs across an offshoot or an inkling, ingenious, great and beautiful.” // “Jag skall gifva dig lite om pariskonst: här äro det många riktningar, ett sökande som det nog aldrig har varit, men också en dekadens som aldrig förr: här äro pointillister, syntetiska, impressionister, neo-impressionister, preraffaelister, primitiva symbolister m. m. Klassiferingen äcklar mig. Men ibland råkar man ett utskott eller hugskott, genialt, stort o vackert.”: Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, Paris, April 1894, nr. 130, signum Ep. E 17:25, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 2nd of August 2018.

³³⁷ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, 3.8.1894, nr. 138, signum Ep. E 17:25, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 2nd of August 2018.

³³⁸ Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, 11th of July 1894, Bruges; Ulf Torell, *Sävedalen* 2004, p. 129.



Fig. 22. Edward Burne-Jones, *Vespertina Quies* (1893). Tate Britain.



Fig. 23. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Wheel of Fortune* (1875–1883). Musée d'Orsay.

and the architectural outdoor space that is revealed in the background, clearly inspired by Italian Renaissance portraits. Sager-Nelson's deployed angle of depiction and body pose in his portrait of Jeanne Eriksson is remarkably similar to Burne-Jones' composition, especially when it comes to the emphasis on Jeanne Eriksson's outstretched little finger and its resemblance to Burne-Jones' way of only making the little finger of the female's right hand visible as it leans on the balustrade and which is further emphasised through its embellishment with a silver ring. Hence, I argue that Sager-Nelson's way of referring to female Renaissance portraiture in

his *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* probably took inspiration from this particular work by Burne-Jones. In addition to this, Burne-Jones' applied colour reduction of blue and bright brown tones in his oil on canvas *The Wheel of Fortune* from 1875–1883 (fig. 23) is similar to Sager-Nelson employed palette, which makes it possible that this or even other paintings by Burne-Jones with a similar limited range of grey, blue and brown hues, like his *King Copethua and the Beggar Maid* from 1884, have functioned as other sources of references for Sager-Nelson's portrait. This shows that he did not withdraw from contemporary art as thoroughly as he himself often stated.

Besides Pre-Raphaelite art, the art of the Belgian painter Fernand Khnopff can be considered as another source of reference. Sager-Nelson must have become acquainted with Khnopff's art at, amongst other places, the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in spring 1894, which displayed the artworks *Des Feuilles de Pervenche*, *Etude*, and *Jalousie*. Although having been rather disappointed by his visit to this salon, as mentioned above, he calls two Belgian artists who exhibited at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, to be of "l'esprit nouveau" in his letter to Albert Engström from the 23rd April.³³⁹ When taking into account the few Belgian artists who were represented in 1894, it must have been very likely both Khnopff and Jean Delville who made a very positive impression on him.³⁴⁰

Although I could not find archival material that proves this, it is likely that Sager-Nelson became more familiar with Khnopff's art during his Belgian sojourns in Bruges and Antwerp in 1894. Khnopff's art from the 1890s dealt with female solitary figures which were depicted in antique or medieval interior settings like in his *I lock my door upon myself* from 1891

³³⁹ "Today I was at the Rose-Croix [Salon de la *Rose+Croix*]. It was sad, but not that satisfying and true melancholy, only decadence? But there were beautiful things from two Belgians/otherwise strong artists, who really gave an impression of "L'esprit nouveau." // "Jag var idag på Rose-Croix [salon de la *Rose+Croix*]. Det var triste men ingen sådan där nöjande och sann tristesse utan dekis? Men det finns granna saker utav två st. belgare/f.u. starka konstnärer som verkligen gjorde intrycket af "L'esprit nouveau": Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, Rue Vaugirard 30, 23.04.1894, nr. 130, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 2nd of August 2018.

³⁴⁰ *Catalogue du Salon de la Rose+Croix: Geste Esthétique* [1894], Paris 1894: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5469038v/f15>, accessed on the 5th of January 2022.

or *The Offering* from 1891. Thus, Khnopff's interior settings and their evocation of the Renaissance makes his art as a source of reference for Sager-Nelson possible. I propose that Burne-Jones's late nineteenth-century revival of female Renaissance portraits and colour reduction technique and Fernand Khnopff's historicised art as a point of reference for Sager-Nelson also emphasise the international mutual and relational artistic exchange between Belgian, English, French and Swedish artists within the transnational Symbolist movement that becomes apparent in Sager-Nelson's *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson*.

While the brown wood panelling in the background alludes to a Renaissance interior setting, the framing of Jeanne Eriksson against an ornamental and decorative background also points to late nineteenth-century painterly styles like Maurice Denis's idea of a modern and decorative art and Art Nouveau. The wood-panelled interior in the background of Sager-Nelson's portrait reminds of the settings of female Florentine Renaissance portraits. Female Florentine Renaissance portraits often framed and sealed the female figure in the corner of a clearly divided and closed-up architectural space like in corniches, niches etc. as in Filippo Lippi's *Portrait of a Man and Woman at a Casement* from c. 1440 (fig. 24), which was as a sign of female decorum, piety and propriety.³⁴¹ Although the wood-panelled interior in the background of Sager-Nelson's portrait might also draw directly on female Renaissance portraits, the female figure's spiritually explorative mood still makes this portrayal of Jeanne Eriksson not a direct imitation of Renaissance portraiture.

Moreover, the decorative pictorial space and staging of the graceful and contemplative young female figure recall both a stylistic means and a motif that were characteristic of the art of *Les Nabis*, with which Sager-Nelson must have come in contact through his enrolment at the Académie Julian

³⁴¹ See for instance: Patricia Simons, "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture", in: *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians*, nr. 25 (1988), 4–30, p. 5ff. As Patricia Simons demonstrates, although Florentine women portraits moved out from the restraining control of the profile format from the 1470s and onwards, they were still connoting female decorum, propriety, and chastity through use of, amongst other practices, the averting gaze.



Fig. 24. Filippo Lippi, *Portrait of a Man and a Woman at a Casement* (c. 1440).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

in Paris. In this way, it also incorporates Maurice Denis' notion of creating modern art through the employment of decorative elements, which drew on both the art of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance, but which also are a modern abstract expression, as is proclaimed by Denis in his manifest "Définition du néo-traditionnisme" of 1890. In addition to this, Jeanne Erikson's staging also correlates with the typical Art Nouveau feature of female figures set against a decorative and two-dimensional background.³⁴²

³⁴² Jan Thompson, "The Role of Woman in the Iconography of Art Nouveau", in: *Art Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Winter 1971–1972), p. 161. Gustav Klimt's *Frau Adele Bloch-Bauer* (1907) is brought up as an example of this representation of a typical art nouveau woman by Thompson.

Through the verticality of the oil on canvas and the ornamented wood-panelling's framing of the female's face, it also refers to Japanese art that Art Nouveau largely drew upon. Hence, the decorative wooden background makes the portrait both a decorative abstract modern staging and an allusion to Renaissance portraiture.

Against this backdrop, I consider Sager-Nelson's portrait to be an historicised and stylised staging of Jeanne Eriksson as a spiritually active female who is in contact with a higher immaterial truth. Thereby, I argue that Sager-Nelson's exploration of a spiritual female as an extension of the Symbolist idea of spiritual transcendence as being something exclusively male-connoted is to be understood as an independent and individualist Symbolist approach, liberated from Symbolist circles such as the *Rose+Croix* and its fixed artistic rules. While this portrait refers to the Renaissance both in terms of the style of dress and the interior background, it can still be identified as a typical nineteenth-century historicised expression. This portrait is closely tied to the depicted artistic dress as a phenomenon of the late nineteenth-century, the late nineteenth-century painters Edward Burne-Jones, Fernand Khnopff and Edmond Aman-Jean, whose art functioned as the main sources of references, as well as to the decorative wooden background, which recalls both a Renaissance setting and modern, decorative artistic styles at the same time. Through exploring a spiritual mood and a historicised staging at the same time, Sager-Nelson's portrait represents a typical topic of the transnational Symbolist movement, whose revival of the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was closely tied to their pursuit of evoking a particularly spiritual and religious mood as Péladan's staging as a priest in Jean Delville's *Portrait of the Grand Master of the Rosicrucian in Choir Dress, Joséphin Péladan* (1859) (fig. 33) exemplifies. In this way this portrait by Sager-Nelson can be perceived as a Swedish contribution which extends and revises Symbolist visual topics and theories, both as an expression of mutual and relational artistic exchange and as an example of crucial artistic participation from the European peripheries within the transnational Symbolist movement.

The fashioning of the idealised and historicised creative subject

Beda Stjernerantz's *Self-Portrait* from 1892 (fig. 25) is a half-length portrait, portraying her in a three-quarter view and with a bold and penetrating gaze which is fixed at the beholder. She directs her gaze at the beholder from above and has her mouth half-open, which makes her facial expression both determined and nonchalant. By fashioning herself in a wide black cloak, a big pastel-purple bow tie and short grey-beige hair and, thus, in both a masculine and historicised style of dress and with a gaze and facial expression which testify to her self-assertion and self-determination, I consider her self-staging as a subversive androgynous strategy and an 'emancipative appropriation' of the male artist's portrait tradition to which she clearly positions herself to in this self-portrait. It is not only the stylisation of her body but also the evoked internal properties of creativity and spiritual refinement that makes her self-staging such an 'emancipate appropriation.' Besides Asta Kihlman's studies of Stjernerantz's self-portrait in relation to the masculine field of art,³⁴³ previous research about this self-portrait is, to my knowledge scarce, particularly regarding her visit to the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in 1892 and the idea of the male-gendered Symbolist creative subject, which will be focused on in the following.

The 25-year-old Stjernerantz produced and signed this self-portrait in Finland in October 1892 shortly after she returned from her sojourn in France, which took place between autumn 1891 and August 1892.³⁴⁴ Based in Paris, she continued her artistic apprenticeship at the private academy Académie Colarossi together with her artist companion Thesleff, where she

³⁴³ Asta Kihlman, Helsinki 2014, pp. 83–90. See as well her Doctoral thesis with the English abstract "Three Studies of Gender. Identity Politics in the Art of Beda Stjernerantz, Sigrid af Forselles and Ellen Thesleff", University of Turku, Turku 2018.

³⁴⁴ Itha O'Neill, "Bakom Gallergrinden", Helsinki 2014, p. 29. At the end of October 1891, Gerda Thesleff writes to her sister Ellen Thesleff, who is already based in Paris, that Beda Stjernerantz is about to travel to Paris on Tuesday, which is why it can be assumed that Stjernerantz arrived in Paris in the early November of 1891. Gerda Thesleff to Ellen Thesleff, 29.10.1892: "I heard from Karin Åberg that Beda is going to Paris on Tuesday in the company of Vixström and fiancée and Ida Fladén." // "Jag hörde av Karin Åberg att Beda på tisdag beger sig till Paris i sällskap av Vixström med fastmö och Ida Fladén": SLSA 958, folder 8a, accessed on the 24th of August 2019.



Fig. 25. Beda Stjernschantz, *Self-Portrait* (October 1892).
Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

was taught by Gustave Courtois, Turvis Blanche, and Girardeau³⁴⁵ and which involved her frequent study of the collection at the Louvre as, for instance, during her sketch course,³⁴⁶ drawing and painting from the life model³⁴⁷ and anatomic lectures. She visited the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars*, the first *Exhibition Des Arts de la Femme* in 1892 and the *Salon des Champs-Élysées*³⁴⁸ and spent the summer of 1892 on the French countryside in Challeau—close to the Forest of Fontainebleau southeast of Paris.

In comparison with Stjernerchantz's way of staging herself in photographs, which were taken in the early 1890s, her appearance and the stylisation of her body looks different in her self-portrait from October 1892. Amongst the photographic representations of Stjernerchantz in her estate record at the Ateneum's Research Library, both a half-length portrait of Stjernerchantz in a three-quarter view from 1893 (fig. 26) and several photographs of Stjernerchantz with or without Thesleff from 1893 in Stjernerchantz's studio can be found. In two of these studio photographs, Stjernerchantz is staged either sitting or standing in front of an easel painting with a palette and brushes held in her hands and, thus, as a woman painter, to which a few of her unfinished paintings in the background, placed behind

³⁴⁵ See for instance: Beda Stjernerchantz to her mother Alma Stjernerchantz, Paris, 20th of November 1891; BS2_140520PK010_6, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.

³⁴⁶ In her letter to her mother Alma Stjernerchantz from the 27.12.1891, she explains visits she made to the Louvre Museum for three hours in the afternoon on an almost daily basis, BS2_140520PK00115, Ateneum Research Library. In addition to that, she mentions her sketch course at the Louvre in a letter to her mother from the 13th of February 1892 as finished, though she still frequently visited the Louvre Museum; BS2_140520PK00103, Ateneum Research Library. She made croquis of objects from, amongst others, the Egyptian and Assyrian sections of the Louvre; BS_paris_1892_005, Ateneum Research Library.

³⁴⁷ Stjernerchantz's and Thesleff's respective oil paintings of the same young male model, dressed in a historicized costume and sitting on a table, from a slightly different angle, is one evidence of Stjernerchantz' and Thesleff's attendance of drawing after the live-classes at the Académie Colarossi; Itha O'Neill, "Bakom gallergrinden", in: Itha O'Neill, Helsinki 2014, p. 20f.

³⁴⁸ Beda Stjernerchantz to Alma Stjernerchantz, Paris, 27th of March 1892, BS2_140521PK008_3 & BS2_140521PK008_4, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018; Beda Stjernerchantz to Alma Stjernerchantz, Paris, May 1892, BS2_140521PK00112_1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.



Fig. 26. Photograph of Beda Stjernschantz (1893), Ateneum Research Library, BS1, Original picture in private ownership.



Fig. 27. Photograph of Beda Stjernschantz in her studio (1893), Ateneum Research Library, BS1, Original picture in private ownership.

or next to her, also give support.³⁴⁹ Both the half-length portrait and the studio photographs of Stjernschantz (see for instance fig. 27) picture her in a style of dress that accords to the female mainstream fashion of corseted bodices and tight-fitting and restrictive dresses that are made out of elegant fabrics like silk and adorned with lace details or embroidered patterns. In contrast to that, Stjernschantz stages herself in her oil on canvas from Oc-

³⁴⁹ Besides Stjernschantz's oil on canvas *Girl's Head* (*Gerda Stjernschantz*), which she signed and, thus, finished in 1894, and a female portrait (date unknown), placed behind her, two unidentifiable and also seemingly unfinished oil on canvases, which depict rocky sea landscapes, are also placed next to her or behind her.

tober 1892 in a simple loose-fitting dark cloak, which instead of enhancing her feminine figure conceals her upper body. While feminine clothing and a feminine silhouette is not visible, this cloak can be understood as an artist's smock and, thus, as an enhancement of her artist identity. In addition to this, the depiction of her hair as a homogeneous field of tones of grey and beige in a stylised and straight manner also differs strongly from her curly, long and pinned-up feminine hairstyle in the photographic material. Her face in general, and her eyes and lips in particular, do not appear to be made-up and do not remind of the feminine *fin de siècle* ideal of the smoothed-over and unblemished face as a product of commerce, embellishment and artifice.³⁵⁰ Together with the depiction of her facial traits as relatively hard and angular, as in her nose and chin, her unfeminine style of dress and her nonchalant and self-assertive body pose, gaze and facial expression, her portrayal is to be understood as a performative act and corporeal strategy of dealing with gender, making use of an androgynous stylisation of her face and body, as I argue. Moreover, the only visible detail of the big pastel-purple bow tie, which is painted with blurred outlines and visible brushstrokes, is the only possible reference to contemporary female fashion of the 'New Woman' and her cross-dressing. Since a bow tie was, from the very beginning, included in sketches of Stjernerantz's head, that preceded the production of her *Self-Portrait*, this item's relevance for her self-fashioning appears to be central. Whereas the sheet dated the 14th of March 1892 in her sketchbook testifies that different angles of her head—turned to the right, the left or rendered in full-profile—as well as different depictions of her mouth and hair were tested, the bow tie is continuously included in all the sketches.³⁵¹ However, Stjernerantz's self-fashioning with this specific pastel-purple bow tie together with the wide black cloak and the smooth grey hair does not conform to the way 'the New Woman' combined the appropriated male fashion item of the tie with a blouse, a high and starched collar and a jacket as explained in the first chapter.³⁵² Instead of being characteristic of a contemporary female

³⁵⁰ Tamar Garb, New Haven 2007, p. 1ff.

³⁵¹ BS_paris_1892_014, BS1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

³⁵² See for instance: Aileen Ribeiro, New York 1986, p. 143. Or John Singer Sargent's oil

cross-dressing fashion and its androgynous potential or other feminine styles of neckcloths, Stjerschantz's way of combining that fashion item with the cloak and the idiosyncratic style of hair appears together with her determinate body pose and gaze to recall male artist self-representation from the past. Through emulating the male artist self-portraiture tradition and appropriating in that sense the role of the artist, I argue it can be regarded as an idealised and historicised artistic self-conception with an androgynous subversive strategy.

My discussion of Stjerschantz's self-portrait as an emulation of an artistic self-conception of the past is informed by Carina Rech's discussion on women's painterly interventions into the representation of the artist as already explained in relation to Thesleff's *Self-Portrait* from 1894–1895.³⁵³ Through both emulating but, at the same time, renegotiating elements of a masculine portrait tradition, the 'emancipative appropriation' of those pictorial conventions by women artists caused frictions that contributed to challenge and contest the notion of the male artist. It is the chosen composition, the style of dress, the pose, the facial expression, and the palette in Stjerschantz's self-portrait from 1892 that links her self-staging to the idea of the artist. Rather than employing one single and concrete reference to a painter, a self-portrait painting or a certain period of style, Stjerschantz made use of different vague references to the portrait tradition from the Old Masters in an eclectic way. In this sense, the creation of a historical staging as such in her emulation of the artistic self-representation appear to be more important than the direct imitation of a concrete historical fashion, as I understand it.

The portrait is reminiscent in terms of the deployed pastel colours and light earthy tones, the grey relatively short hair and the pastel-purple bow tie, of the palette and dress in male artist self-portraits from the eighteenth century. I consider the stylised grey-beige hair colour as a vague allusion to the eighteenth-century fashion convention of powdering the

painting *Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes* (1897), which depicts Mrs. Phelps Stokes in the so-called 'tailor made', that was typical for the 'New Woman' and her associated style of dress.

³⁵³ Carina Rech, Gothenburg 2021, p. 65ff.



Fig. 28. Thomas Gainsborough, *Self-Portrait* (1787).
Royal Academy of Arts, London.

hair.³⁵⁴ Together with the bow tie and its similarity to the different sorts of white neckcloths that were predominant male eighteenth-century fashion items and her employment of pastel colours in this self-portrait, Stjernschantz positions herself into the eighteenth-century artist self-fashioning tradition as exemplified by the British painter Thomas Gainsborough's *Self-Portrait* from 1787 (fig. 28) or the French painter Maurice Quentin de La Tour's *Self-Portrait* from 1750. Nevertheless, these possible adoptions of the male creative subject of the eighteenth century are vague emulations rather than concrete imitations. Furthermore, this three-quarter view of Stjernschantz's upper body with the emphasis of her right shoulder and her way of turning both her head and gaze to her right and downwards at

³⁵⁴ See for instance: Marcia R. Pointon, "Chapter 3: Adolescence, Sexuality and Colour in Portraiture: *Sir Thomas Lawrence*", in: Marcia R. Pointon, *Portrayal & the Search for Identity*, Reaktion Books, London 2013, p. 90ff.

the beholder, makes Stjernerantz's self-staging confident and self-assertive and points to internal properties of agency, authority, originality, and ingenuity. It is an emulation and appropriation of pictorial conventions of the male artist self-portraiture that were central in emphasising the male artist's creative, spiritually refined, and ingenious identity through the body pose, angle of depiction, gaze and facial expression and thus, compositional and iconographical means. This body pose and turn of the head are compositional means which are apparent in a large number of self-portraits of the Old Masters, as seen in self-portraiture by da Vinci, Bernini, Dürer and Rembrandt. This makes her self-portrait into a bodily claim of the role of the artist, as I understand it.

Moreover, Stjernerantz's *Self-Portrait* (1892) also bears resemblance to the fashioning of the Symbolist male artists and members of the *Rose+Croix*-order at the first *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in the spring of 1892, which Stjernerantz visited as stated in her letter to her mother from the 27th of March.³⁵⁵ She describes this salon as a "very interesting Symbolist exhibition" in contrast to her recent visit to the *Exhibition Des Arts de la Femme*, which she found disappointing,³⁵⁶ and her soon to come visit to the *Salon des Champs-Élysées*, which she found infinitely large and boring.³⁵⁷ At the same time that Stjernerantz summarises the exhibited art at the Rosicrucian salon as being both excellent, odd and incomprehensible, as aiming to exhibit a thought, as not welcoming portraits, landscapes animals or still life and as eliciting the visitors' ridiculous or profound and devotional response, she also gives room to the Rosicrucian member's style of dress.³⁵⁸ They are described with showing themselves in their "long violet hoods", adorned with lace frills, and by having long curly hair.³⁵⁹ Stjern-

³⁵⁵ Beda Stjernerantz to Alma Stjernerantz, Paris, 27.03.1892, BS2_140521PK008, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.

³⁵⁶ Beda Stjernerantz to Alma Stjernerantz, Paris, 27th of March 1892, BS2_140521PK008_3 & BS2_140521PK008_4, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.

³⁵⁷ Beda Stjernerantz to Alma Stjernerantz, Paris, May 1892, BS2_140521PK00112_1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.

³⁵⁸ Beda Stjernerantz to Alma Stjernerantz, Paris, 27.03.1892, BS2_140521PK008_3 & BS2_140521PK008_4, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.

³⁵⁹ "The members of the Order themselves walked around in long violet hoods with lace

schantz's way of paying particular regard to the Rosicrucian fashion must have also implied the staging of the Rosicrucian order's founder Joséphin Péladan in long and wide robes, with curly hair, a long beard and devotional poses, which were manifested in the exhibited art of the Salon of 1892 itself, its catalogue, in the Salon reviews and in publications by Péladan himself. One example of these visual stagings of the Rosicrucian creative male subject is Alexandre Séon's oil on canvas *The Sâr Joséphin Péladan* (1892) (fig. 29) which was displayed at the Salon of 1892 and thus very likely seen by Stjernerchantz.³⁶⁰ This almost full-length portrait stages Péladan in a wide purple robe against a void brown and with his frontally depicted body slightly turned to the right and his head, turned to the right, in profile. When comparing the fashioning of Péladan in this painting with Stjernerchantz's self-portrait a certain similarity can be discerned. Her self-staging is in terms of the deployment of a pastel-purple sartorial detail against an earthy void background and in terms of the composition and the style of dress similar to Séon's portrait of Péladan. Her wide black cloak in combination with the bow tie appears to be a way of loosely adopting the historicised artist fashion of the Rosicrucian order, which through a revival of a medieval and Renaissance style of dress also sought to revive the idea of the spiritually and creatively inspired.³⁶¹ Péladan's staging as an elegant and venerable Renaissance nobleman in the half-length portrait, which Marcellin Desboutin made in 1891 and which was displayed at the second Rosicrucian salon in 1893 (fig. 30), is another example of this historicised fashion and the evoked intuitive and spiritual capabilities. This will be further explained in the following subchapter which deals with expressions of spiritual transcendence. In this sense, in her self-portrait from 1892,

frills and long curls." // "Ordensmedlemmarna sjelfva gingo omkring i långa gredelina kåpor med spetskrås och långa lockar.": Beda Stjernerchantz to Alma Stjernerchantz, Paris 27.03.1892, BS2_140521PK008_4, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.

³⁶⁰ Moreover, a review of the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* published in *Le monde illustré*, on the 26th of March 1892, illustrates and caricatures also, amongst others, Séon's portrait of Péladan; Vivien Greene, New York 2017, p. 38.

³⁶¹ See for instance: Elizabeth Emery & Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the Past: the Medieval Revival in fin-de-siècle France*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2003, p. 37ff.



Fig. 29. Alexandre Séon, *The Sar Josephin Péladan* (1892). Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon.



Fig. 30. Marcellin Desboutin, *Portrait Josephin Péladan* (1891). Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Angers.

Stjernschantz positions herself in relation to both the present male Symbolist artist and his historicised artist fashion and to the imagined idea of the male artist of the past's spiritual abundance, thus, inscribing herself into the professional tradition of the artist. This makes this self-portrait an important Finnish contribution to the transnational Symbolist movement and its male portrait tradition.

When taking into account Stjernschantz's engagement in women questions and her critical thinking on women's position in society in general and women painters' position in particular, her subversive strategy of inscribing herself into the male artist self-portrait tradition becomes even more obvious. In the above-mentioned letter to her mother from the 27th of March 1892, she additionally writes: "I have been reading about women's position in life and society, but got enough. It's terribly sad to be a woman.

Only God knows if one anytime can come out, there are no encouraging examples.”³⁶² In the same letter and on the same page, Beda summarises her art production as often being interrupted and without great progress: “Sometimes, I do make progress, however, I can’t work straight.”³⁶³ Moreover, Stjernschantz expresses to her mother even a desire for a room of one’s own to be able “to execute independent work” and to dedicate herself to her own thoughts for her future residence in Finland. As these remarks indicate, Stjernschantz was deeply concerned with women painters’ condition and the existent obstacles of aspiring to become a woman painter that were not easy to overcome. This is also mirrored in her negative assessment and dislike of the art shown at the *Exhibition Des Arts de la Femme* in the same letter. Her critique is directed towards the woman artist’s lack of artistic tradition and of “having half of the population against her” and not towards the woman artist’s talent and potential.³⁶⁴ Furthermore, women’s general submissive position in the gender-binary nineteenth-century society was a topic that she was engaged in. Her taken notes of the attitude towards women, as included in Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–85), exemplify her engagement in women’s questions: “Man’s fortune is: I want, woman’s fortune is: he wants.”³⁶⁵

³⁶² “Jag har legat och läst om kvinnans ställning i livet och samhället, men fick nog, det är förfärligt uselt att vara kvinna. Gud vet om man någonsin kan komma fram, inte har man just några uppmuntrade exempel.”: Beda Stjernschantz to Alma Stjernschantz, Paris, 27.03.1892, BS2_140521PK008_1, Ateneum Research Library.

³⁶³ “Jag gör framsteg ibland, men så kan jag emellertid rakt inte arbeta.”: Beda Stjernschantz to Alma Stjernschantz, Paris, 27.03.1892, BS2_140521PK008_1, Ateneum Research Library.

³⁶⁴ “Another exhibition that made one entirely desolate was the Women’s [Exhibition] in the Industrial Palace, many and long halls full of rubbish. But there are still those who believe in the same talent and possibility to succeed for women as well as for men. That she has not gotten far as of yet is natural given that she lacks tradition and has half of humanity against her.” // “En annan utställning som gjorde en alldeles desolè var kvinnornas i Industripalatset, många och långa salar fulla med skräp. Men det finns ändå de som tro på samma begåvning och möjlighet att nå målet för kvinnor som för män. Att hon ej ännu kommit långt är ju ganska naturligt då hon saknar tradition och har halva menskligheten emot sig.”: Beda Stjernschantz to Alma Stjernschantz, Paris, 27.03.1892, BS2_140521PK008_4, Ateneum Research Library.

³⁶⁵ “Mannan fruktar kvinnan, då hon hatar; ty mannen är i botten af sin själ endast ond men kvinnan är låg. Hvem hatar kvinnan mest? – Sålunda talade jämnt till magneten: “jag hatar dig mest, emedan du drar, men icke är stark nog att draga till dig.” Mannens lycka heter:



Fig. 31. Beda Stjernschantz, *At the Easel, Self-Portrait* (20.6.1892).
Private collection.

Her identity as a nineteenth-century emerging woman painter is conveyed in her earlier self-portrait of the 20th of June 1892, called *At the Easel, Self-Portrait* (fig. 31), which is similar to a sketch. The earlier portrait, produced during her sojourn in Challeau in the French countryside,³⁶⁶ portrays Stjernschantz in a full-length portrait in a three-quarter view in front of an easel painting. She is dressed in a close-fitting pastel-blue painting overcoat that accords with contemporary female fashion features like the

jag vill. Kvinnans lycka heter: han vill. “Se i denna stund blev världen fullkomnad” – så tänker hvarje kvinna, då hon lyder af full kärlek. [...]”: Paris 1892, BS_paris_1892_053, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

³⁶⁶ Itha O’Neill, “Bakom Gallergrinden”, Helsinki 2014, p. 28.

exaggerated sleeves, a corseted bodice and what seems like a bustle, accentuated by a bow, while she wears a painting hat and holds painting brushes and a palette in her hands. Her fashion, which is not historicised, and her intimidated and insecure gaze represents a staging of herself that is very different compared to the bold and assertive self-manifestation with the bow-tie. In contrast to the later portrait, Stjernschantz's self-representation from the summer of 1892 appears as a clear case of a feminine stylisation of her body to rather illustrate the several difficulties or obstacles of a female artist and her aspiration of a bold and strong artistic identification. A further obstacle that seems to be addressed in this realistic and non-idealised self-portraiture is her dwarfism. In comparison, in her later self-portrait, those obstacles of balancing a female identity with an inventive and authentic artist identity are done away with through an 'emancipative appropriation' and androgynous stylisation of her body, as I understand it. Women's exclusion from exhibiting at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* as well as their general exclusion from qualifying as a creative Symbolist genius, as explained in the second chapter, appears to be one of those obstacles for a woman painter that Stjernschantz critically comments on and challenges in her self-portrait from October of 1892. By have been exhibited at the *Finnish Artists' Autumn Exhibition* in 1894, as Stjernschantz herself documented,³⁶⁷ Stjernschantz's inscription within the male artist's portrait tradition is also to be regarded as a self-promotive strategy.

Against this backdrop, through staging herself as androgynous and through making use of emulating and subversive acts of the male artist's self-fashioning, Stjernschantz appears to compel her appearance to conform to the traditional idea of the artist and the male-gendered idea of the creative genius that was prevalent within Symbolism. Rather than positioning herself as deviant, excluded or separated from the male-gendered artist identity of the past and present, she stages and promotes herself as a self-evident integral part of the dominant professional male art world. This attempt at negotiating a more visible position in the masculine field of art,

³⁶⁷ SLSA 1368, folder 5 and 6, accessed on the 13th of August 2018.

as Asta Kihlman puts it,³⁶⁸ caused frictions and is, in this sense, to be understood as a subversive intervention into the traditional idea of the artist in general and the Symbolist artistic genius and his spiritually refined state in particular. It is a bold contribution to attempting to establish the role of the female artist in the nineteenth-century male-gendered art world and an important participation in the transnational Symbolist movement from a marginal position.

Furthermore, early in 1895, Stjernschantz produced a half-length portrait of a young prepubertal male in full face-view, who directs his bold gaze at the beholder and forms his hands in an enigmatic hand gesture. Stjernschantz's thirteen-year-old brother Torsten Stjernschantz sat for the portrait with the title *Aphorism*, which was made in Finland where she was based between summer 1892 and summer 1895 (fig. 32).³⁶⁹ Due to financial restraints, Stjernschantz was not able to join her companions Thesleff and Enckell when they left for Paris for a second time in autumn 1893 and neither did she travel to Italy as both Thesleff and Enckell did in 1894.

Stjernschantz stages her younger brother in a wide white shirt and a wide black cloak, which both obscure and enlarge his body, and with short grey hair. While the black cloak and the grey hair and its treatment as a uniform surface—unusual for a young adolescent—recalls the fashioning of herself in her earlier self-portrait, the determinate eye contact with the beholder and an androgynous appearance reminds of her self-staging as well. However, whereas her self-representation from 1892 is to be understood as a subversive androgynous strategy and emancipative appropriation of the role of the artist through her masculinisation, the portrayed young male figure is, on the contrary, displayed with feminine features. In addition, the Cartesian aphorism “Cogito, ergo sum”, which can be translated with “I think, therefore I am”, is included in the painting's lower left corner together with the name of Descartes. In this way, the thinking subject is especially emphasised, to which the title and its reference to the included

³⁶⁸ Asta Kihlman, Helsinki 2014, p. 88.

³⁶⁹ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 223.



Fig. 32. Beda Stjernschantz, *Aphorism* (1895). Private collection.

aphorism also contribute. This gives reason to consider the full-face view staging of the androgynous young male as a mentally active subject, who through his relatively absent and at the same time profoundly insightful gaze and his enigmatic hand gesture is about to communicate secret or higher knowledge to the beholder.

While the wide black-and-white clothing, the young male is dressed in, does not contribute to making his appearance look androgynous, but historicised, the face and the hands are the features that are feminised. Whereas the portrait is characterised by a monochrome palette of black and white, the only colourful details can be discerned in the relaxed and concentrated face. The pale and perhaps also powdered face is contrasted with the lively pink hues on the cheeks and the dark red lips. While the pink cheeks are signs of an ongoing increased mental activity, the intense red lips and maybe also the powdered face are signs of a made-up face and, thus, of feminine refinement and artifice. The delicate hands with the white nails and the elegant movement of the hands into the specific hand gesture also increase the male figure's feminine appearance. Although the hardly placeable clothing suggests a male rather than a female identity, the bodily stylisation of the prepubertal young male is to a certain degree feminised. Rather than testifying to a sexual difference, the representation of the body transgresses and undermines late nineteenth-century gender binary normative expectations, which is why I argue an androgynous strategy operates.

The young male's style of dress is difficult to allocate as a specific fashion, with its sleeveless underlayer of white and its two apparently sleeveless layers of black, from which the figure's hands emerge, or alternatively one divided black layer that the arms are surrounded by. Rather than being identified with a concrete time of fashion or a specific purpose of clothing, the style appears strikingly ambiguous. However, it loosely accords with a historicising costume and in this way with creating a distance in time. Although a black robe with a white chemise worn underneath was also connoted with scholars and humanists' style of dress in the early modern period,³⁷⁰

³⁷⁰ See for instance: Keith Christiansen, Stefan Weppelmann & Patricia Lee Rubin (eds.), *The Renaissance Portrait: from Donatello to Bellini*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 2011, p. 150f., 330ff.; Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Faces: Van Eyck to Titian*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. 2008, p. 164f.

the combination of the loose black cloak and the loose white shirt is more reminiscent of the attire of clergymen and their ascetic life of spiritual and religious abundance. The stylised and simplified depiction of loose-fitting layers in colours, which are not real colours, recalls the eschewal of worldly matters with all its allurements and vices and an identification with a clerical life.³⁷¹ Thereby, an ascetic connotation is apparent both considering the subject and its allusion to clergymen as such, and using the colour reduced palette as a stylistic means. The absence of material details, props, or a spatial background with traits from the physical world also contributes to the creation of a spiritually increased mood in this portrait.

Moreover, the application of idiosyncratic white accents can be discerned in the face under and between the eyes and close to the forehead on the edges of the short grey hair. Instead of creating an illusionary reflection of light, these white stylistic details are rather enhancing the artificial representation of the male figure in this art object and highlight the sense of the portrait painting as an embodiment of an immaterial or spiritual mode. The relatively idiosyncratic grey hair colour as well as the androgynous appearance also point to an artificial and idealised bodily representation. The colour ascetism, the non-illusionary stylistic means, the reduction of traces of the physical world, the pale skin with signs of an increased mental activity, and also the Cartesian aphorism in this sense put forward virtually immaterial matters and the abundance of a spiritual activity.

While the black cloak alludes to the robe of clergymen, it can also be associated with a painter's smock and, thus, with a style of dress that suggests both spiritual as well as artistic creative activities. Therefore, I regard the portrayed young figure in Stjerschantz's *Aphorism* (1895) as an oscillation between a spiritually receptive and an artistically creative young boy with an idealised androgynous appearance. The notion of the artist as a spiritually receptive person similar to a priest was also a typical Symbolist perception of the creative artist. This amalgamation of a creative artist with a clergyman is also reminiscent of Sar Péladan's way of being portrayed and staged as a priest in Jean Delville's painting *Portrait of the Grand Mas-*

³⁷¹ See for instance: Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, New York 1993 [1978], p. 369.

ter of the Rosicrucian in Choir Dress, *Joséphin Péladan* (1895), which was exhibited at the fourth *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in the spring of 1895 (fig. 33).³⁷² This full-length portrait depicts Péladan in a white clergy robe and a dark red velvet-like shorter cape that is loosely placed on his shoulder. Through the combination of robe and cape—similar to the figure’s fashioning in *Aphorism*—as well as through the hand gesture and eyes, both directed towards heaven, Péladan is staged as a creative subject with contact with another immaterial world, to which Stjernerchantz’s portrayal of the young androgynous boy with his insightful gaze and enigmatic hand gesture also alludes.



Fig. 33. Jean Delville, *Portrait of the Grand Master of the Rosicrucian in Choir Dress, Joséphin Péladan* (1895). Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nîmes.

3.3. The ideal androgynous creative artist

Stjernerchantz’s *Self-Portrait* from 1892, as well as her *Aphorism* from 1895 appear to display not only a creative artist with an androgynous appearance but might also reflect the Symbolist idea of an ideal androgynous creative artist. This might also apply to Thesleff’s *Self-Portrait* from 1894 and 1895 as a self-staging of Thesleff as a female creative artist with spiritual and inspirational abundance.

Within, amongst others, the Rosicrucian order and *Les Nabis*, there existed the concept of the ideal male creative artist who is capable of receiving cosmological insights or insights into hidden knowledge such as esoteric religious knowledge through his androgynous mental state. An androgynous mental state was equated with having the best requirement for spiritual transcendence as the means of male creative productivity within

³⁷² Vivien Greene, New York 2017, p. 65.

Symbolist circles, at the same time that an androgynous state was ranged as the highest and most elevated state of spiritual refinement, as explained in the second chapter.³⁷³ Drawing from A. J. L. Busst's article "The Image of the Androgyne in the 19th Century" from 1967, the spiritual progression into the androgynous attitude of mind was a self-refinement into an elevated, virtuous person, which implied the overcoming of voluptuous desire and moral desire in order to attain a virginal state of mind.³⁷⁴ This restoration of the androgyne through asexuality was a state of mind that the creating male artist was meant to seek, as for instance advocated by Péladan.³⁷⁵ The *fin de siècle* notion of the ideal androgynous creative artist presupposed exclusively the male artist. This was often mirrored through an androgynous strategy of acting one's body, which meant a feminised appearance of the male artist as well as his appropriation of features that were coded feminine such as intuition, emotionality, and sensitivity.³⁷⁶ This is, for instance, evoked in Desboutin's earlier discussed portrait of Péladan from 1891 (fig. 30). Whereas the male creative mind could obtain spiritual transcendence as the necessary condition for the creation of ingenious art, the female was excluded from the possibility of developing spiritual and creative capabilities as explained in the second chapter.³⁷⁷

Stjernerantz's *Aphorism* from 1895 employs with regard to the style of dress, the prepubertal age, the androgynous stylisation of the body, the profoundly insightful gaze and the enciphered hand gesture as well as the Cogito argument several references to male spiritual transcendence that were symptomatic of the Symbolist concept of the ideal creative artist. The enigmatic hand gesture as well as the pink cheeks and red lips resemble an elevated state of spiritual insights and revelation that the androgynous pre-

³⁷³ The concept of the Symbolist creative subject draws widely upon the early nineteenth-century (German) ideal romantic notion of male creative subjectivity based on subjectivism, inwardness, and intuition, instead of rationalism and empiricism. See for instance: Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 33.

³⁷⁴ A. J. L. Busst, London 1967, p. 69.

³⁷⁵ Per Faxneld, Stockholm 2020, 118f.

³⁷⁶ Patricia Mathews, "Gendered Bodies I. Sexuality, Spirituality, and Fear of Woman", in: Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999, p. 74; Christine Battersby, London 1989, p. 3, p. 103.

³⁷⁷ Patricia Mathews, Chicago 1999, p. 71ff.

pubertal male figure appears to communicate with the beholder. As an oscillation between a spiritually insightful and creatively active male subject, the portrait suggests a form of spiritual transcendence, which—in contrast to Stjerschantz's *Self-Portrait* from 1892 and Thesleff's *Self-Portrait* from 1894–95—does not collide with the concept of the ideal male Symbolist art.

By intermingling the role of the creative artist with the role of a clerical person like a priest or artist-monk, this portrait represents the central Symbolist concept of the male artist. Since Symbolist circles like the Rosicrucian order or *Les Nabis* were centred around re-establishing a close relationship between art and religion, the idea of artistic creativity as stemming directly from spiritual or religious revelation—as the Symbolists imagined it to be the case with the medieval artist—was largely adopted to the Symbolist concept of the male creative artist.³⁷⁸ Péladan's Rosicrucian Brotherhood and its members fashioned themselves, for instance, as either the medieval artist-monk or medieval priest as Delville's *Portrait of the Grand Master of the Rosicrucian in Choir Dress, Joséphin Péladan* (1895) exemplifies (fig. 33). The members of the group *Les Nabis* declared themselves as medieval artistic 'prophets.' The *fin-de-siècle* fascination with the imagined medieval artist also expressed the advocated renouncement of the mundane and the material. Thereby, the employment of the mindset of the imagined medieval artist in French Symbolist art was largely built upon a nineteenth-century construction of medieval genius that was based upon selective appropriations and that was not always accurate.³⁷⁹ Stjerschantz made notes on a discussion of Symbolist theories, taken from the Danish journal *Taarnet* and inclusive of a quote by Baudelaire, about the artist's supernatural state of mind and his decoding of symbols behind reality as an access to an eternal reality and the art's task of decoding the eternal, similar to a hieroglyph. These notes indicate Stjerschantz's interest not only in Symbolist aesthetic

³⁷⁸ See for instance: The following three constructions of the medieval artist were prevalent in the nineteenth century: the *Primitif*, the *imagier*, or the *painter-monk*; Elizabeth Emery & Laura Morowitz, Aldershot 2003, p. 37ff.

³⁷⁹ The construction of the medieval artist as 'naif' and his lack of acquired skills was for instance an inaccurate ascription: *ibid.*, p. 37, p. 54.

theories but also the immaterial and the Symbolist artist's spiritual resources and mediation.³⁸⁰ In the light of this, I regard Stjernerantz's *Aphorism* as an embodiment of the creative artist and his religious inspiration and insights as the creative-spiritual conception of the ideal of the Symbolist artist.

I argue this prepubertal male's androgynous appearance and elevated state of spiritual insights and revelation can be regarded as the epitome of the re-creation of the primordial androgyne and, thus, the ideal, powerful and total human condition through asexuality. In this sense, the depiction of the thirteen-year-old, feminised male also relates clearly to the Symbolist ideal of the third gender as the prepubertal male, who through his liminal state between childhood and adulthood and his not yet fully developed masculinity and sexually ambiguous appearance has insights into divine and cosmological higher knowledge. Because of Stjernerantz's thorough studies of philosophical and literary sources in the early 1890s, upon which Symbolist theory about the ideal state of androgyny was based like her reading of Plato's *Symposium* in 1892,³⁸¹ it is possible to assume her acquaintance with the third gender and the androgynous attitude of the mind.

³⁸⁰ "(Baudelaire:) "In certain almost supernatural states of soul, the virtue of life manifests itself in the random sight one perceives with one's eyes—it would be so mundane, that is, that reality is transformed into a symbol."—These states of soul are the artistic moments, to which any true gift is known. These are the moments when the eternal reality behind the things seems on the verge of bursting with the illusory reality of Him; [...] These ecstatic moments' visions are what art says to reproduce. It thus becomes a pictorial language which in earthly hieroglyphs will proclaim the Eternal. And here springs from the artist's satisfaction, from his feelings..." // "(Baudelaire:) "I visse nästan overnaturliga Sjaelstilstande aabenbarer Livets Dygde sig i det tillfaeldige skue, man har for Øje – det vaere saa hverdags, det vil, Vikerligheden förvandlas till ett symbol." – Disse Sjaelstilstande er de kunstneriske Øjeblikke, dem enhver aegte Begaavelse kendes. Det er de Øjeblikke, da den evige Virkelighed bag Tingene synes på Nippet til at spraeenge den illusoriska Realitets Ham; [...] Disse exktatiske Øjeblikkes syner er det, Kunsten säger att gengive. Den bliver saaledes ett Billedsprog, som i jordiske Hieroglyfer vil udsige det Evige. Og her udspringer af Kunstnerens tilfredshed, af hans Fölelse af ...": BS_paris_1892_086.tif, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 15th of August 2018.

³⁸¹ BS_paris_1892_084, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 15th of August 2018.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the Cartesian aphorism “Cogito, ergo sum” or “I think, therefore I am” in the painting’s lower left corner, together with the name of Descartes, also further enhances the adolescent’s immaterial and thinking being. This Cogito argument is about the use of reason for seeking truth instead of merely the senses, at the same time that it is perhaps the only one thing that cannot be doubted to exist, namely the thinking subject.³⁸²

The portrayed male adolescent’s profoundly insightful gaze and his enigmatic hand gesture and also the Cartesian aphorism and its emphasis on a thinking subjective position contribute to the conveyance of an intellectual and immaterial active state. Furthermore, the male adolescent imparts spiritual insights to the viewer as the gaze and the hand gesture testify to. The hands are joined together through the two meeting index fingers while the other fingers of the right hand, joined with the thumb, create a circle-like shape which reminds of the Lemniscate-sign, “∞” as the sign of infinity. Being first and foremost discernible for the viewer, the sign of infinity might be addressed as a message to the viewer as a mediation of the portrayed figure’s contact with a higher metaphysical world. One sketch sheet that is included in Stjernerchantz’s Parisian sketchbook of 1892 might, due to its different sketches of mouths with shut and sensual lips and especially of two right hands, that with their faced-up position and the almost meeting index finger and thumb are strikingly similar to the right hand of the portrayed young adolescent in Stjernerchantz’s *Aphorism* from 1895, have functioned as preparatory sketches for this portrait.³⁸³ The gesture of the sign of Lemniscate does not accord with Christian iconography as a religious gesture.³⁸⁴ Thus, in comparison to other important visual representations of spiritually abundant and insightful young male bodies with an androgynous appearance and mind like Leonardo da Vinci’s *Saint John the Baptist* (1513–1516) (fig. 34) or *Bacchus* (1510–1515) (fig. 35), which

³⁸² We cannot doubt that we doubt when in doubt. Nevertheless, the Cartesian dualism draws on the combination of the mind and the senses for seeking truth.

³⁸³ BS_paris_1892_028, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

³⁸⁴ For worldly and religious hand gestures in the fifteenth-century Italian art see for instance: Michael Baxandall, Berlin 1999 [1972], p. 99ff.



Fig. 34. Leonardo da Vinci, *Saint John the Baptist* (1513–1516). Louvre Museum.



Fig. 35. Leonardo da Vinci, *Bacchus* (1510–1515). Louvre Museum.

functioned as the point of origin for Symbolist male spiritual transcendence, Stjernerantz's portrayal of the young male makes use of a rhetorical rather than a Christian gesture, further increasing its enigmatic and enciphered meaning. Although the merging of the two hands into the sign of infinity appears to address the figure's infinite or unlimited access to hidden knowledge or cosmological insights, the concrete meaning of the mediated sign is still rather unclear due to its incongruity with a well-known iconographical gesture. Because of the mediation of something that remains to be deciphered, as in an unsolved riddle, the depicted figure's way of communicating with the viewer resembles esoteric means of mystical initiation. This initiation into secret knowledge took place between master and disciple through long and complicated chains as well as through

the use of concealed signs, rituals, and symbolic pictures.³⁸⁵ In this sense, the figure's enigmatic clue and its expressed contact to a higher truth clearly agrees with the Symbolist art theoretical principle of using references to mythology, spiritual symbols or 'higher worlds'. This was related to the Symbolist aim of not only expressing a spiritual transcendence within the image, but also of raising the creative artist and the viewer, who is able to approach the higher truth, to refined spiritual levels.³⁸⁶

Thus, only the viewer willing and able to understand the concealed symbol can be initiated into a religious-mystical world of thoughts and into some sort of secret knowledge beyond the physical world. Several documents from Stjernerantz's estate records indicate her developing interest in spiritual refinement and esoterism from 1892 and onwards, something that is assumed within previous research.³⁸⁷ In the early 1890s, she studied both fiction and non-fiction which dealt with theosophical matters as demonstrated by her notes on the 'overman' and his state of full power through self-mastery and self-refinement from her reading of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883)³⁸⁸ or her notes of the essay *Roman Days* (1877) by the Swedish writer Viktor Rydberg, in which his theosophical belief and interests are expressed in relation to the figure of Antinous' cosmological and divine powers.³⁸⁹ Also worthy of mention are her notes on her reading of the Swedish translation of Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia or the Great Renunciation* from 1888 on the doctrine of karma,

³⁸⁵ One of four central and recurring characteristics, upon which Antoine Faivre's definition of esoterism from the 1990s is based. Moreover, the secret gesture is also relatable to another of the four characteristics defining esoterism and esoteric practice, namely the use of an inward look in combination with concealed signs, rituals, symbolic pictures, and communication with the spirit for the purpose of attaining the world beyond the physical world; Per Faxneld, Stockholm 2020, p. 17ff.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 118f.

³⁸⁷ See for instance: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 224.

³⁸⁸ "Man is something that shall be overcome." // "Människan är något som måste övervinna.": BS_paris_1892_051-BS_paris_1892_053, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

³⁸⁹ BS_paris_1892_056, BS1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018. Stjernerantz's notes of Rydberg's *Roman Days* comprise three sheets in her notebook from 1892.

including Rydberg's foreword.³⁹⁰ Notes, taken from this book, are all included in her sketchbook from 1892 and indicate her interest in transcendental mystical truth and esoteric insights. Furthermore, her letter to the Finnish female sculptor Sigrid af Forselles, who herself was greatly interested in esoterism, from July of 1893 gives testimony to Stjernerantz's preoccupation with spiritualist sessions for the purpose of spiritual refinement and insights.³⁹¹ Erkki Anttonen's contribution to the anthology *Spiritual Treasures. Esotericism in the Finnish Art World 1890–1950* from 2020 also highlights Stjernerantz's thorough acquaintance with theosophy and occultism.³⁹² In the light of this and the earlier mentioned notes by Stjernerantz on the Symbolist artist's capability of decoding a higher world behind reality, a mediation of an enciphered esoteric and occult practice may be reflected by the displayed figure in her portrait.

In contrast to staging the young effeminate male artist, Stjernerantz's self-staging as a female masculinised creative subject expresses an antithetical perspective to the male-defined idea of the artist and his feminised appearance and androgynous refined attitude of mind. The comprehension of her self-portrait as a subversive contribution to acknowledging a female subjective creative perspective might also involve the female artist's androgynous mental state and spiritual insights as another attempt to chal-

³⁹⁰ BS_paris_1892_070–BS_paris_1892_072, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

³⁹¹ “I think I'm too bound to all that is earthly. I feel all-too-lividly both joy and pain over things which perhaps have too little meaning for our spiritual perfection. [...] You write ‘il faut avoir l'instruction spirite’. But how? (....) How can I raise my spiritual knowledge, [...], if I persist in reading many testimonies about spiritual sessions then I will be well-strengthened in my faith [...]” // “Jag tror jag sitter för hårdt fast vid allt jordiskt. Jag känner alltför livligt både fröjd och smärta öfver saker som kanske hafva för liten betydelse för vårt andliga fullkomnande. [...] Du skriver il faut avoir l'instruction spirite. Men huru? [...] Huru kan jag höja mitt andliga vetande, [...], om jag läser fast huru många vittnesmål öfver spiritistiska seanser så blir jag väl styrkt i min tro ...”: Beda Stjernerantz to Sigrid af Forselles, 17.07.1893, SLSA 1368, folder 2, accessed on the 13th of August 2018. This letter is very difficult to read due to the slightly faded lead pencil and some crossed out words or passages, that have been moved somewhere else. This is why I cannot fully guarantee to quote the letter correctly.

³⁹² Erkki Anttonen, “Finnish Artists and Their Connection to Theosophy Before the Second World War”, in: Nina Kokkinen & Lotta Nylund (eds.), *Spiritual Treasures: Esotericism in the Finnish Art World 1890–1950*, Parvus, Helsinki 2020, p. 55f.

lunge the male-defined Symbolist genius. This might also be the case regarding Thesleff's self-portraiture, which—as discussed above—through its bold manifestation of female (artistic) creativity is also a subversive inscription into the tradition of the artist. The conveyance of a spiritually receptive female artist identity and Thesleff's self-concept as someone with possible access to hidden or higher knowledge appropriates and challenges the idea of spiritual transcendence, that was exclusively connoted with the male Symbolist artist through his androgynous mental state.

During their first Parisian period between 1891 and 1892, both Stjernerchantz and Thesleff thoroughly studied literary and philosophical sources such as Emanuel Swedenborg, Plato, Plotinus and Charles Baudelaire, on which Symbolist theories were based.³⁹³ Stjernerchantz, in particular, developed an interest in neo-platonic thinking. As mentioned above, she read and took notes of Plato's *Symposium*, where the myth of the primordial androgyne as a state of perfect totality is included.³⁹⁴ In the light of this and her theosophical interest, it is not unlikely that Stjernerchantz's self-staging as an emancipative appropriation of the male artist's portrait tradition not only sought to negotiate a more visible position for herself as a female creative subject, but possibly also actively works with and reverses the idea of the ideal androgynous mental condition as another subversive appropriation of male-defined Symbolist spirituality and creativity.

Although less archival material about Thesleff's theosophical and transcendental mystical interests could be found than about Stjernerchantz's, it is proposed within recent research that Thesleff's art during the early 1890s also drew largely upon theosophical influences.³⁹⁵ Her reading of amongst others Plato's and Plotinus' theory of ideas, Swedenborg and Baudelaire was closely related to the Symbolist art theoretical principle of accessing a spiritual world beyond the mundane.

³⁹³ See for instance: Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 74f.

³⁹⁴ BS_paris_1892_084, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 15th of August 2018.

³⁹⁵ See for instance: Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, "Picturing the Immaterial—Ascetic Palette, Tonalist Musicality and Forman Indistinctness in Ellen Thesleff's Early and Late Works", Tahiti Vol. 9, nr. 3 (2019), pp. 5–21, <https://doi.org/10.23995/tht.88662>; Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 164f.; Erkki Anttonen, Helsinki 2020, p. 55f.

Instead of perceiving female androgyny as perverse, as it was presumed by many male Symbolist artists such as Péladan,³⁹⁶ I consider Stjerschantz's androgynous self-fashioning and its possible conveyance of an ideal androgynous attitude of mind as an attempt at placing herself as a female creative artist on the same level as male artists. The frictions this caused may be understood as a subversive strategy for destabilising the asymmetrical Symbolist conception of male ingenuity, creativity, and spiritual refinement. In addition, Stjerschantz possibly comments critically through her self-staging on the Rosicrucian favoured subject matter of the 'expressive noble head'³⁹⁷—as it was designated in the *Manifesto de la Salon de la Rose+Croix* from 1892—and the large number of portraits of Symbolist male ingenuity that were shown at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, which she visited in March 1892, such as Félix Vallotton's portraits of Richard Wagner, Charles Baudelaire and Paul Verlaine or the above-mentioned portrait of Péladan by Alexandre Séon (fig. 29).

Thesleff's self-portrait from 1894 and 1895 can be considered to be a similarly subversive intervention into the Symbolist concept of the male genius and its spiritual refinement. As discussed above, her self-conception as a female creative subject is not androgynous in terms of her physical characteristics but in terms of her expressed spiritual insightfulness. Since she stages herself as a female creative subject with spiritual capabilities as the precondition for creative inspiration, ingenuity, and originality, she appropriates and inscribes herself within this male-gendered artistic idea of obtaining spiritual transcendence and possibly positions herself also to the androgynous elevated attitude of mind as the vehicle for spiritual insights. Due to her acquaintance with Symbolist theories, she must have been familiar with the Symbolist artist concept and, through her visits at the Rosicrucian salon, also possibly with the androgynous mental ideal for the male creative artist. Furthermore, Thesleff wrote a short poem or meditation on the constitution of the self and its multiple layers or 'persons' as she

³⁹⁶ See for instance: Joséphin Péladan, *La Décadence Latine (Éthopée)*; vol. 9, *La Gynandre* (1892).

³⁹⁷ Robert Pincus-Witten, New York 1976, p. 208.

refers to it in the poem. It is unknown when she wrote this poem, Lahelma suggest between the late 1890s and the early 1940s.³⁹⁸

Three persons in one (myself)

- 1. The primal man in me that has always existed
- 2. That which feels and lives the living life
- 3. Genie the one who can go outside itself and see inside itself. God is inside oneself³⁹⁹

As this meditation indicates—which, however, was not necessarily written during the time of the production of her self-portrait, Thesleff was interested in the exploration of the human soul and the concept of the self as a unity of multiple layers. Regardless of the unclear year of origin, this meditation echoes prevalent scientific and esoteric discussions about the multiple layers of the self that circulated at the turn of the twentieth-century as it was assumed within medical psychology by Sigmund Freud but also within theosophy by, for instance, Helena Blavatsky and Édouard Schuré.⁴⁰⁰ Moreover, this textual reflection on the threefold constitution of herself also accords with the Symbolist creative-spiritual concept, as was explained above in relation to Stjernerchantz's *Aphorism*. By not only identifying herself with the human being who experiences and lives the physical and sensual world, but also with the 'primal man' and the 'genius', her self-reflection implies not only layers of herself which transcend the mundane and material, but also layers which possibly position her multiple self to the Symbolist ideals of the primordial androgyne and the artist-genius as a direct link to God and as the initiate into religious or esoteric insights.⁴⁰¹ This meditation on

³⁹⁸ Marja Lahelma, London 2017 [2015], p. 63.

³⁹⁹ Ellen Thesleff, *Dikter & Tankar*, Konstsalongens förlag, Helsinki 1954, p. 29.

⁴⁰⁰ Marja Lahelma, Helsinki 2014, p. 163f.

⁴⁰¹ Although made almost twenty years after her self-portrait was realised, Thesleff's own statement "I paint like a God", which is included in her letter from the summer of 1912 to her sister Thyra Castrén, may point to an artistic self-perception, that not necessarily first evolved in the 1910s. By assessing her painterly practice with that statement, she equates her creative process with the symbolist idea of the male artistic genius as stemming directly from religious revelation. Thus, this constitutes another sign of her subversive appropriation of the male symbolist artist tradition; Ellen Thesleff to Thyra Thesleff

her selfhood also resembles contemporary late nineteenth-century esoteric notions. Thesleff's threefold constitution of man recalls the esoteric doctrine of the mortal body of this world, the spirit as the immortal and indivisible and the soul as the linkage between body and spirit that, for instance, the French poet and theosophist Édouard Schuré proposed in his widely-read *Les Grands Initiés* (1889), as Lahelma demonstrates.⁴⁰² It is particularly the layer of the genius in Thesleff's self-exploration that accords with the theosophical basic concept of the soul as the contact with the divine world as the spark of divinity. In addition to the way this meditation has been linked by Lahelma in 2014 and 2015 to Thesleff's self-portrait from 1894–1895 as an indicator of conveyed esoteric notions, I would also suggest its possible reflection of the neo-platonic idea of the powerful androgynous ideal. Based on Thesleff's interest in neo-platonic theory that evolved from the early 1890s and onwards, the eternal 'primal man' as one constituent of the self in her meditation might reflect the neo-platonic idea of the androgynous attitude of the mind as an ideal, perfect and powerful human condition and the source of cosmological insights. In this way, the eternal 'primal man'—as Thesleff puts it—can also be an expression of her continuous female capability of spiritual refinement through an androgynous mentality and, thus, another way of challenging the Symbolist concept of the male genius. Hence, as in Thesleff's self-exploration in her meditation, I regard the expression of her elevated spiritual selfhood in her self-staging in her drawing from 1894 and 1895 as being informed by both theosophical and neo-platonic ideas and possibly also upon the spiritual strength of mental androgyny. In this sense, I argue, her self-portraiture figures as an idealised union with a cosmic oneness.

In the light of Stjernschantz's and Thesleff's preoccupation with esotericism and neo-platonic ideas, their discussed subversive interventions into the concept of the Symbolist artist through their respective staging of the ideal female creative subject might also draw upon the notion of the mental

(Söderhjelm/Castrén), 4th of July 1912, SLSA 958, folder 16, accessed on the 24th of August 2019.

⁴⁰² See for instance: Marja Lahelma, London 2017 [2015], p. 63.

powerful androgynous state as a vehicle for their female spiritual transcendence, antithetical to the exclusively male-gendered comprehension of transcendence. This might be another layer of attempting to establish a female artist position in the male-gendered Symbolist movement. In this way, they represent by their critical comments and renegotiations of the Symbolist exclusion of female creativity from a spiritual transcendence and refinement important Finnish contributors to the transnational Symbolist movement.

3.4. The spiritually withdrawn male and female body

Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* (1894), Sager-Nelson's *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* (1895), Sager-Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* (1890s) as well as Ellen Thesleff's *Thyra Elisabeth* (1892) all express in different ways the spiritually active, but withdrawn, body.

The portrayal of a young spiritually withdrawn male in Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* with an androgynous appearance and internal properties might also possibly relate to the androgynous state of mind as a spiritually refined condition. Enckell had a great interest in Symbolist art's philosophical and neo-platonic sources and was particularly influenced by Péladan and his art programme.⁴⁰³ His enrolment at the Académie Julian, where a synthetist style and neo-platonic thought developed and where *Les Nabis* were also founded in 1888, gives reason to assume his evolving interest in Symbolist art and theory.⁴⁰⁴ This makes a visual exploration of

⁴⁰³ Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 74f.; Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 82.

⁴⁰⁴ See for instance: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 71. Furthermore, Enckell's residence in Brittany, which took place in autumn 1891, also contributed to an increased philosophical interest as well as a sort of religious and spiritual awakening; Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 62f. Brittany was the rural region in which the artist colony Pont-Aven School, centered around Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard and their post-impressionist and symbolist-synthetist landscape painting, developed in the late 1880s. Due to Paul Sérusier, a member of *Les Nabis*, and his acquaintance with Gauguin in Brittany in 1888, the style of the Pont-Aven School also soon influenced the art of *Les Nabis* at the Académie Julian, who continued to spend their summers in Brittany in the early 1890s, in the same way that Enckell—affiliated to the Académie Julian—did in autumn 1891.

the idea of the powerful and insightful androgynous mental state possible. While Enckell's portrait of Bruno Aspelin as a male feminised head corresponds clearly to the traditional Symbolist notion of the male-connoted transcendental spiritual activity, Sager-Nelson's two portraits as well as Thesleff's two portraits, as discussed above, illustrate—on the contrary—female spiritually active bodies and minds, which is why they will be focused on below.

According to several letters to Fürstenberg, Sager-Nelson's artistic pursuit in Paris was largely centred around exploring the human soul and inspired by his own religious and spiritual feelings and thoughts.⁴⁰⁵ In his letter from the 20th of February 1894, which was already mentioned in the discussion of his *A Girl's Head II* (1890s) and in relation to his critical attitude towards the *Rose+Croix*-order, he explained his portraits as a way of studying 'soul life'.⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, he demonstrates the expression of the psychological human nature as his driving force for his artistic approach⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ See for instance: Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 25.12.1893, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 198: "The religion that I have found thus far, [...], misunderstood has made a remarkable impression upon me now that I realise its influence and feel deeply its great meaning in art. [...] related spirit but which I find lives in exchange of understanding and development of every little thought [...] a high, ideal coexistence with a freely seeing, great and nobly feeling and thinking human shell. Michel-Ange, Rafael, or Bastien-Lepage, and others, have all had support for their higher purpose. The love, the sublime in their art." // "Religionen som jag hittills, ..., missförstått har nu gjort ett märkligt intryck på mig nu då jag skönjer dess inflytande och djupt känner dess stora betydelse i konst. [...] beslägtad ande med hvilken jag finge lefva i förståelse utbyta och utveckla hvarje liten tanke [...] ett högt, idealt samlif med ett fritt seende, stort och ädelt kännande och tänkande menniskosjäl. Michel-Ange, Rafael el. Bastien-Lepage m.fl. alla hade de stöd för sitt höga mål. Kärleken, den sublimes uti sin konst."

⁴⁰⁶ Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 20.02.1894, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 200: "At home I have only shown studies of landscapes which do not impart consciousness as a means of expression. [...] but I have, nevertheless, always occupied myself with people as an expression for what I'm seeking, [which is] the study of the spiritual soul." // "därhemma endast visat landskapstudier vilka inte delger medvetandet som uttrycksmedel, [...] men jag har dock alltid mest sysselsatt mig med människorna som uttrycksmedel för hvad jag söker, studiet af sjäslifvet."

⁴⁰⁷ "Back home people believe that I keep to a modern course. This is quite the mistake, for my technique is differs wildly from all young painters and stargazers. I have not yet seen someone who understands that the technique is familiarity with the psychological understanding of human character and that the colour of this developmental temperament

and perceives his own artistic production as purely individual⁴⁰⁸ in different letters to Engström from spring 1894 and as a way of going back to his idea of the artistry of the Old Masters and their spiritual insights instead of being relatable to a contemporary art movement in the letter to Fürstenberg from February 1892.⁴⁰⁹ His interest in the human soul and the expression of psychological human nature as a driving force becomes apparent in both his *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* (1895) and his *A Girl's Head II* (1890s) as portrayals of a female spiritually explorative mood. The staging of Jeanne Eriksson as a historicised female who is in contact with spiritual insights employs, but at the same time also extends, the transnational Symbolist topic of referring to the art of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance for the purpose of creating an enhanced spiritual or religious mood, as explained above. Sager-Nelson was familiar with Symbolist theories and philosophical and theosophical sources, to which his contact with Enckell and his enrolment at the Académie Julian strongly contributed.⁴¹⁰ His portrayal of feminine spiritual transcendence can be seen in relation to both his reluctance towards the *Rose+Croix*-order and its fixed art programme and his familiarity with Symbolist theories. It can be considered as a crucial Swedish contribution to the transnational Symbolist movement that actively works with including the female in the Symbolist traditional concept of spiritual agency as only restricted to the male. This applies also

is where I find myself for the moment.”: Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, Paris, 3.05.1894, Signum Ep. E 17:25, nr. 132; The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 2nd of August 2018.

⁴⁰⁸ Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert Engström, 23.04.1894, Paris, signum Ep. E 17:25, nr. 130, The National Library of Sweden, accessed on the 22nd of February 2018.

⁴⁰⁹ Olof Sager-Nelson to Pontus Fürstenberg, Paris, 20.02.1894, in: Axel Gauffin, Stockholm 1945, p. 200: “Then I shall go from this hollow, frivolous present to the Louvre, to Delacroix, Poussin, Da Vinci, Champagne, and others, and their divine greatness and nobility which nobody could ever diminish and which I rejoice in, I become humble and beseeching and go strengthened to my own quiet work.” // “Då går jag ifrån denna ihåliga lättsinniga nutid till Louvre, till Delacroix, Poussin, Da Vinci, Champagne mfl. och deras gudomliga storhet och ädelhet som ingen lyckas förringa och det jublar i mig, jag blir ödmjuk och bedjande och jag går stärkt till mitt eget stilla arbete.”

⁴¹⁰ See for instance: Jeff Werner, ““I won’t be here long...”. On Olof Sager-Nelson’s life and art”, in: Johan Sjöström (ed.), Gothenburg 2015, p. 21f.

to his *A Girl's Head II* from the 1890s and the young female's masculinisation as an androgynous stylisation of the body that was antithetical to the Symbolist ideal of the male's feminine appearance and the young masculine girl's concentrated spiritually active and withdrawn body. The young girl's androgynous appearance and spiritual absorption might also allude to her androgynous mental condition as a liberated and reversed account of the traditionally male-defined androgynous mental state. As a young adolescent rather than a child, the depiction of the masculinised female head and the focus on the girl's active and insightful mind might also draw upon the Rosicrucian ideal of the third gender as an emblem for mystical union with the cosmos, which—however—is readapted and modified into a reversed female equivalent. By exploring a female androgynous adolescent and her transcendental powers and cosmological insights, Sager-Nelson's portrait represents an innovative and independent Symbolist expression, which clearly positions itself with regard to Symbolist theories and aesthetic ideals, but at the same time also renegotiates them. In this way, Sager-Nelson's two portraits may be considered as expressions of a relational and mutual exchange of Symbolist ideas and aesthetics and demonstrate the importance of contributions of artists from European peripheries to the transnational Symbolist movement.

In addition to this, Thesleff's *Thyra Elisabeth* as an expression of female spirituality and sensuality represents another extended account of the Symbolist idea of male-defined spiritual transcendence, but also of the nineteenth-century polarised representations of women within Symbolist transnational art as either oversexualised or asexualised. Thesleff's portrayal of the young female leaves room for a more complex, dynamic and versatile female representation, which also might express a more powerful and unrestricted range of spirituality. Through the connection with the Madonna, this portrait evokes possessed miraculous power and the product of divine conception, at the same time that the sensual body language also appears to emphasise the female's agency and self-determination. In this way, I argue, Thesleff's *Thyra Elisabeth* (1892) might reflect a female spiritual transcendence that is not weaker than male spiritual potential, but

that possibly exceeds male spiritual resources. Hence, this portrait and its way of both drawing on and renegotiating Symbolist ideas and a Symbolist visual language constitutes additionally an innovative and crucial contribution to the transnational Symbolist movement made by a woman artist from a European periphery.

3.5. Conclusions

In the light of the above discussions, in the examined works spiritual transcendence is expressed through diverse modes such as an androgynous appearance, the spiritually withdrawn but active female and male body, a defocused gaze or closed or half-closed eyes, hand gestures and insightful gazes as signs of being in contact with or conveying a higher immaterial truth, the allusion to practices of initiation into secret knowledge, references to clerical or artistic clothing or the evocation of an androgynous mental state as the ideal condition for spiritual-creative activity. Either the mode of making the materiality and corporeality elusive or the mode of a historicised staging of spirituality and creativity is at play in the examined portraits and self-portraits. In addition to this, I argue, five of the seven discussed portraits express female spiritually explorative and active bodies as extensions and in some cases subversions of the male-gendered Symbolist artist concept and the Symbolist male-connoted capability of an enhanced spiritual transcendence.

By depicting a female masculinised and spiritually active body, both Olof Sager Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* and Stjernerantz's *Self-Portrait* make use of a reversed account of the androgynous stylisation of the body of the male artist. A reversed evocation of the androgynous mental ideal condition of the male artist may also be expressed in both Stjernerantz's *Self-Portrait* and Thesleff's *Self-Portrait* as a subversive appropriation of the male Symbolist artist self-representation and, thus, form important contributions to Symbolist artistic self-portraiture. Moreover, Sager-Nelson's *Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Eriksson* and Thesleff's *Thyra Elisabeth* represent through

their respective amalgamation of either the historicised and spiritually insightful female or the spiritual and sensual female crucial contributions to transnational Symbolist topics, which revolved around male spiritual transcendence.

4. Motifs from classical myths and legends & Arcadia

In the following, the exploration of classical Greco-Roman myths and legends as well as Arcadian landscapes in the art production of Enckell, Stjernerchantz and Kleen at the turn of the twentieth century will be studied as contributions to a transnational Symbolism.

Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) (fig. 36) as well as his *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897) (fig. 45), Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) (fig. 46) and Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse* (1903) (fig. 47), which I will pay attention to in this chapter, all draw upon classical Greco-Roman themes. In addition to Enckell's and Kleen's depiction of the topic of Narcissus or Echo and Narcissus, which their respective titles also make explicit, a crouching and bent-over Narcissus at the riverbank can also be recognised in the middle ground of Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)*. Furthermore, the figures of Echo and Pan are also included in the foreground of Stjernerchantz's spring landscape painting.⁴¹¹ Moreover, a young male nude figure that reminds of Orpheus amidst the animals can be recognised in Enckell's *Fantasy*. Since I understand the figure of Orpheus in Enckell's *Fantasy*, the figure of Narcissus in both Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* and Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse* as interlaced with the figure and legend of Antinous—the Bithynian youth and beloved of the Roman emperor Hadrian—this chapter pays regard to

⁴¹¹ Based on Stjernerchantz's own use of the alternative title *Pastoral. Pan and Echo* for her *Pastoral (Primavera)* in a listing of her own works, the figures in the foreground can be certainly identified as a pipe-playing Pan and a flower-picking Echo; see: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Helsinki 1989, p. 263, in: Marja Lahelma, "Tiden, evigheten och tillvarons mysterier i Beda Stjernerchantz verk *Pastoral (Primavera, 1897)*", in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), Helsinki 2014, p. 140.

both Greco-Roman mythology and to Greco-Roman history. As examples of works by Swedish and Finnish artists with ancient Greco-Roman themes, they differ from many other examples of Swedish and Finnish Symbolist art that deal with Nordic mythologies or the Finnish national epic, *the Kalevala*, as in Akseli Gallen-Kallela's painting *Lemminkäinen's Mother* (1897) or Ernst Josephson's painting *Strömkarlen* (1884) and, thus, national themes.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. After providing an overview of both the popularity and peculiarity of Greco-Roman mythology and history as transnational Symbolist late nineteenth-century subject matters, the first part of this chapter deals with the Greco-Roman figures in the selected works. How are transnational Symbolist ideas on androgyny and a higher, immaterial truth expressed? The second subchapter deals with the depicted landscapes as the natural settings for the figures and the way these settings express the idea of an Arcadian landscape. Thereby, linkages between the concept of Arcadia and androgyny as an ideal paradisiac state will be explored. How do the visual depictions of classical myths and legends as well as Arcadian landscapes in the selected artworks contribute to and actively work with a Symbolist transnational visual language and theory? Within previous research, no contributions exist to my knowledge that examine the four selected artworks and the portrayed figures thoroughly in relationship to androgynous, esoteric and spiritual Symbolist ideals or, additionally, ideas like the ideal of the third gender and the access to higher, hidden truth. This will be particularly focused on in the following.

4.1. Classical Greco-Roman myths and legends as themes within Symbolism

Within Symbolism in general and the Rosicrucian order in particular, classical Greco-Roman mythology was largely favoured. As Guy Cogeval points out, "ancient myths made a triumphant reappearance at the turn of the century, when various schools of thought rejected the modern world, [...], and harked back to an idealised Golden Age or an idyllic Middle

Ages”⁴¹² Within Symbolist circles, profane pre-Christian myths were particularly explored.⁴¹³ Hybrid creatures from classical mythology like the Medusa and the sphinx as in Franz von Stuck’s and Fernand Khnopff’s art, young male mythological figures like Narcissus and Orpheus like in Gustave Moreau’s, Jean Delville’s, Alexandre Séon’s or John William Waterhouse’s art, and satyrs and fauns as in the art of Arnold Böcklin or Max Klinger were widely explored as Symbolist subject matters. The exploration of classical Greco-Roman themes within Symbolism was closely tied to the Symbolist movement’s withdrawal from modernity and its industrial, urban, technological and secular features as well as to the *fin-de-siècle* notion of a degenerated cultural and spiritual climate at the turn of the twentieth century. Thus, instead of exploring the contemporary physical world and contemporary phenomena, classical Greco-Roman themes were favoured Symbolist motifs as reflections of an ideal and utopian origin. Since classical mythological and historical themes were explored throughout Europe, they functioned as transnational Symbolist subject matters.

*Symbolist reflections of ancient myths and legends
as amalgamations and modifications*

The exploration of classical myths within Symbolism was often characterised by a liberate treatment instead of an accurate representation of a traditional classic myth. As, for instance, Dorothy Kosinski points out, narrative mythological details were often deemphasised within Symbolism⁴¹⁴ and particular mythological figures were in many cases not easy to recognise due to their representation without traditional attributes, characteristics or outside of their typical narrative plot. The preoccupation with mythological subject matters within Symbolism served first and foremost as a mere reference point for the Symbolist purpose of alluding to something intangible and immaterial and was often realised with a deliberately vague and ambiguous conveyance of the mythological subject. Thus, modifications,

⁴¹² Guy Cogeval, Montreal 1995, p. 25.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴¹⁴ Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989, p. 90.

reinventions and amalgamations of mythological figures are often apparent in Symbolist paintings. This is, for instance, asserted by Riikka Stewen who in her article on Enckell's mythological topics employs the term "paraphrase" to describe Enckell's mode of using elements of legends, myths, allegorical images, dreams, and poems etc. in an allusive and fragmentary way that alters and transforms their meaning.⁴¹⁵ Thereby, Stewen even argues that this mode of 'paraphrase' was particularly applied within the aesthetics of the *Rose+Croix*-order and the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, which Enckell visited in spring 1892.

By merely drawing upon instead of explicitly illustrating mythological topics, Symbolist artists were able to thematise the timeless and placeless at the same time that the liberal treatment left room for a wide range of associations and several parallel layers of multifaceted meanings. Thereby, accounts of ancient myths or legends were also often intermingled with biblical themes as, for instance, was the case in the art of Gustave Moreau. In his polyptych *La vie de l'humanité* (1886) at the Musée Gustave Moreau, the second row depicts the Greek myth of Orpheus whereas the rows above and below depict stories of Genesis, of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel. As Kosinski argues, this sort of syncretism between ancient paganism and Christian-Jewish religion was characteristic of nineteenth-century investigations of myth, religion, and history in general and the Symbolist treatment of mythology in particular.⁴¹⁶ In this way, Symbolist works of art were often syncretic accounts of mythology, classical legends, religion, philology, philosophy, and occultism at large.

Against this backdrop, the exploration of the possible meaning of the mythological figures in Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) as well as in Kleens's *Écho et Narcisse* (1903), Enckell's *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897) and Beda Stjernschantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) will be examined. To what degree did these abovementioned artworks accord with a liberal treatment of Greco-Roman mythology and history as a typical Symbolist feature?

⁴¹⁵ Riikka Stewen, Helsinki 2000, p. 49.

⁴¹⁶ Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989, p. xiif.; religious, mythological, and cultural syncretism are important for the intellectual fabrics of Symbolism.

4.1.1. The motif of Orpheus-Antinous

Magnus Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895), gouache, chalk and pencil on paper (fig. 36), depicts a nude young male figure in a seated position in the very foreground of a pond amidst swans. By being equipped with a lyre, placed in a sublime pond-grove landscape and encircled by swans, he reminds of Orpheus, who charms all living things and even inanimate nature with his divine song. This figure was also identified as Orpheus by Riikka Stewen's in her articles from 2000 and 2020 as well as by Dorothy Kosinski through including Enckell's *Fantasy* in her comprehensive study from 1989 on the topic of Orpheus within Symbolist art.⁴¹⁷

Even though the classical myth about Orpheus is complex and dynamic,⁴¹⁸ the basic mythological story is traditionally comprised of three successive episodes.⁴¹⁹ Enckell draws upon the first of these three popular episodes, that is, the one that embraces Orpheus as the ideal poet-musician and magician with his divine music calming man and beast. According to traditional accounts, Apollo endowed Orpheus with the lyre as well as with magically powerful music with which Orpheus calms primitive man. The second most prevalent episode concerns Orpheus' descent to Hades and the underworld and his unsuccessful attempt to bring his beloved Eurydice back alive after he has looked back on her. The third popular episode embraces Orpheus' death by dismemberment, executed by the Maenads. Even after Orpheus' death, his severed head and his instrument, the lyre, floating in the river Hebrus to the islands of Lesbos, play song. These three episodes are, for instance, included in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.⁴²⁰ Another

⁴¹⁷ Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989, p. 242; Riikka Stewen, Helsinki 2000, pp. 114–121; Riikka Stewen, Helsinki 2020, pp. 68–76.

⁴¹⁸ A huge variety of sources such as Rhodes' *Argonautica*, Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, Aeschylus' lost play *The Bassarai*, Euripides' play *Rhesus* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, deal with the story of Orpheus, and can be mentioned here.

⁴¹⁹ See for instance: Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989.

⁴²⁰ The Descent to Hades and the loss of Eurydice is narrated before the episode of the singing Orpheus in book 10 & 11; Michael von Albrecht, *Ovid, Metamorphosen*, Reclam, Ditzingen 1994, pp. 289–321. Orpheus sings amongst others about Hyacinthus, Pygmalion, Myrrha, Adonis, Hippomenes and Atalanta, and, thus, love stories.



Fig. 36. Magnus Enckell, *Fantasy* (1895).
Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

mythological episode is Orpheus' severed head's function as an oracle. Orpheus also has a sort of similar priestly function in *Argonautica*.⁴²¹

Besides these accounts of the mythological Orpheus, Orphic religious cults—or a so-called Orphism—emerged in the sixth century B.C.E. centred around the historical Orpheus as their leader or deity. This historical or religious Orpheus was the author of poems that expounded a cosmology.⁴²² Thereby, this Orphic cosmology aimed at the “ultimate release from the cycle of rebirth and leading to reunification with the godhead”, which is a purpose which largely overlaps with mythological accounts of Orpheus.⁴²³ Thus, the mythological accounts of Orpheus and historical accounts of Orphism, that have been intermingled with each other since antiquity, are both emphasising Orpheus as a magical poet-musician, the civiliser, the heroic intruder in Hades, the lamenting lover and the victim of Dionysian fury as well as the priest and initiate.

Within Symbolist art, Orpheus with his lyre and his magical-divine music was a popular subject matter and was explored by, for instance, Gustave Moreau, Odilon Redon, Alexandre Séon, Pierre Amédée Marcel-Béronneau, the Pre-Raphaelite John William Waterhouse and Jean Delville. The popularity of Orpheus within Symbolism was closely tied to this figure's function as an oracle and magical-musical power as a suitable emblem for the Symbolist aim of exploring spiritual transcendence.

Orpheus in Enckell's *Fantasy* rests his lyre in his lap, which also is highlighted by a little piece of a semi-transparent light blue veil that surrounds but scarcely covers his genital area. However, no genitalia can be recognised, to which his sitting position also contributes. Enckell did seemingly not want to show Orpheus' male genitalia, which points to the unimportance of Orpheus' biological sex and his sexuality and which can in this way be understood as a first reference to the ideal of the third gender.

However, Enckell's young male nude figure is adorned with a sketchily rendered but still discernible red floral wreath on his head, which is an

⁴²¹ Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989, xii.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 1f.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

attribute that does not accord with the traditional iconography of the poet-artist Orpheus as crowned with a laurel wreath, which makes the identification of this figure not very clear.⁴²⁴ Due to the integration of the attribute of the red floral wreath on the figure's head, a reference to the legend of the Bithynian young adolescent Antinous and the conventions of depicting him with a red lotus flower or a lotus flower wreath on his head might also be incorporated.⁴²⁵

There are different versions of the legend about Antinous, the Bithynian Greek youth who was the favourite beloved of the Roman Emperor Hadrian and who drowned under mystical circumstances in the River Nile at the age of eighteen in 130 C.E. Various suggestions have been transmitted regarding the premature death of Antinous ranging from a pure accident, a committed suicide, or the sacrifice of his short life to save the fifty-year-old Hadrian from a hideous fate, of which the last soon became the standard view.⁴²⁶ After the ephebe's death, Hadrian founded an organised cult devoted to the worship of Antinous that spread throughout the whole Roman Empire but that was especially practiced in eastern parts of Greece. The centre of the cult was the city Antinoöpolis, which Hadrian built close to the place of Antinous' death on the east bank of the Nile. Within the cult, Antinous was either worshipped as a god or as a hero. In this way, the image of Antinous became widely produced and spread within the Roman Empire in the form of statues, busts, reliefs, paintings, gems and coins etc. Those preserved objects are evidence of the depiction of Antinous as the

⁴²⁴ As Dorothy M. Kosinski shows, the depiction of the laurel wreath-crowned Orpheus was common in classical antiquity and can be found, amongst other examples, on vessels from the 5th century B.C.E., or for instance included in an Italo-Etruscan sculptural group from the late 2nd or early 1st century B.C.E.; Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989, p. 3ff.

⁴²⁵ The young Bithynian Antinous was often depicted with a flower wreath as seen in the Antinous-relief from the Villa Albani, or the statue of Antinous-Dionysos in the Sala Rotonda of the Vatican, or with a simple ribbon in the curly hair like in the Delphi statue of Antinous; see: Royston Lambert, *Beloved and God: The Story of Hadrian and Antinous*, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1984, p. 77ff.; Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989, p. 3ff.

⁴²⁶ Royston Lambert, London 1984, p. 6.

idealised young beauty with the characteristics of a swelling chest, long and tousled curls, a broad face and a devout downcast gaze.⁴²⁷

In her exhibition article “Circles of Love: The Mythologies of Magnus Enckell” from 2000, the Finnish art historian Riikka Stewen gives an in-depth discussion about the ambiguity of the young male figure in Enckell’s *Fantasy* (1895), that—according to her—incorporates the Apollonian and Dionysian in the figure of Orpheus.⁴²⁸ Although this figure itself is reminiscent of Apollo as the god of sun, purity, rational thinking and order at the same time that Orpheus in the classical mythological narrative is closely linked to Apollo, the overall scene of the figure’s setting in the natural ideal scenery and encircled by the swans reminds more, I argue, of the topic of Orpheus amidst the animals as the magical musician.⁴²⁹ Therewith, my comprehension of the figure in Enckell’s *Fantasy* is more in line with Stewen’s later published article “Orpheus as an Artist: Magnus Enckell and Péladan’s Salon Rose+Croix” from 2020, in which she stresses Orpheus as the founder of ancient mystery religions as the central character of Enckell’s *Fantasy*.⁴³⁰ I consider the figure as Orpheus with some vague references to Antinous, which makes Enckell’s work a suggestive and ambiguous exploration of diverse ancient Greco-Roman themes and in this sense a typical Symbolist mode of drawing on, but at the same time reinventing or amalgamating, themes from ancient classical history. The Greek temple with the Doric columns and the tympanum in the background is another reference to classical antiquity.

Enckell began to produce subject matters with ancient mythological and pagan themes such as his *Fantasy* during his first Italian sojourn between autumn 1894 and spring 1895, which he mainly spent in Florence. In addition to his mixed-media work *Fantasy* from 1895, his oil on canvas *Faun* and his gouache and watercolour *The Cult of Venus* (fig. 37) can be

⁴²⁷ Royston Lambert, London 1984, p. 1.

⁴²⁸ Riikka Stewen, Helsinki 2000, p. 51ff.

⁴²⁹ Like Kosinski demonstrates, “Orpheus identified with both Apollo & Dionysus”, which is why Orpheus’ Appolline-Dionysian-character is quite confusing; Dorothy M. Kosinski, Mich. 1989, p. 2.

⁴³⁰ Riikka Stewen, Helsinki 2020, p. 69.



Fig. 37. Magnus Enckell, *The Cult of Venus* (1895). Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

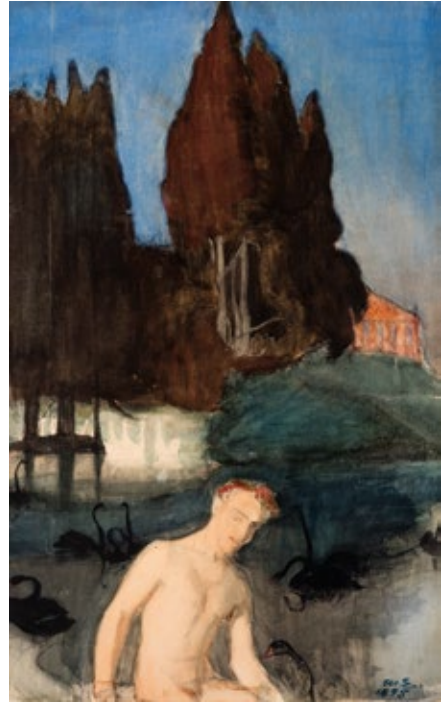


Fig. 38. Magnus Enckell, *Fantasy* (1895). Mikkeli Art Museum, Airio Collection.

mentioned, that were also made in 1895 in Italy, as well as his oil on canvas *Narcissus*, which was produced in either 1896 or 1897 between his first and second Italian sojourn and which will also be looked at in this chapter. Besides these works, Enckell made another version of his *Fantasy* in 1895 as a sketchy gouache painting, which today is included in the Mikkeli Art Museum (fig. 38). Even though the composition is, on the whole, the same in these two different versions of *Fantasy*, the sitting young male figure is in the more sketchy version not equipped with a lyre, has no veil on his lap, but is still crowned with what can be an allusion to a red floral wreath. At the same time, he is displayed with pointy ears, reminiscent of a satyr or faun. Due to the rough and very sketchy depiction of the figure's

nude body, his facial expression is almost impossible to recognise. Furthermore, this version's male figure bends his upper part of the body forward towards the black swan besides him that is so close that his beak seems to touch the nude figure's arm. This interaction between the black swan and the sketchily rendered nude male might hold a sexual connotation. While Riikka Stewen assumes in her article from 2000 that the two versions unfold a narrative meaning together, even though their chronological order remains unclear,⁴³¹ I consider the sketchy version to be just that, a sketch, which is why I will not pay much regard to it in my discussion in the following.

Moreover, Enckell's production of ancient mythical and pagan themes from 1895 and onwards was accompanied by a concentration on male nude adolescent bodies and, thus, older male bodies with more muscular anatomy than he earlier focused on in works like *Reclining Boy* (1892), *Two Boys*, (1892) or *Boy With a Skull* (1893).⁴³² By exploring idealised young male bodies instead of naked boys, Enckell's mythological production around the turn of the twentieth century correlates with the ideal of the third gender.

In Enckell's painting held in the Finnish National Gallery, Orpheus is encircled by black swans with red beaks while a group of stylised white swans in the background appear to approach the seated Orpheus in the foreground. While the black swans, right behind and next to Orpheus, swim in shadowy parts of the pond, the group of white swans in the background is encircled by light.

Although Orpheus is not captured in the moment of striking the strings of the lyre on his lap, a certain musical density is still evoked in Enckell's work. Orpheus' upright torso, which is slightly turned to the side, and his tranquil, dreamy and enraptured facial expression with his mouth half-open and his eyes staring in space indicate his captivation of listening to

⁴³¹ Riikka Stewen, Helsinki 2000, p. 118.

⁴³² Enckell's painting *The Awakening* (1894), which depicts a young naked male adolescent's full-body and probably also refers to his sexual awakening, can be considered to exemplify this shift from the exploration of boys to male adolescents.

a sound, which probably comes from his magical lyre. It is Orpheus himself as well as the swans, either those already gathered around Orpheus or those that are depicted as coming from behind—approaching the charming music, that are deeply affected by the enchanting effect of the music. In this way, a dense musical atmosphere permeates the scenery of Orpheus amidst the swans.

Enckell's sketches, that functioned as pre-studies of his painting *Fantasy* (1895), give testimony to his study of the depiction of the lyre.⁴³³ They also indicate that the lyre, the wreath and the swans next to Orpheus were central details from the beginning. However, the idea of the interaction between Orpheus and one swan to his left, still discernible in at least two sketches⁴³⁴ as well as in his other version of *Fantasy*, that I rather regard to be a sketch, was not finalised. Instead of a bent-forward Orpheus who caresses the curved neck of a swan right next to him, as is depicted in Enckell's lead sketch, Orpheus does not interact with any of the swans in the finalised artwork. The swans still encircle him but are more distanced and more absorbed in the immaterial musical quality. The curved swan's neck, that is caressed by the figure reminiscent to Orpheus in the pre-studies, is possible to regard as a phallic symbol. By expressing Orpheus in the moment of musical captivation and possible contact with a higher truth in the finalised version, the homosexual connotations—that are still noticeable in the sketches—are no longer emphasised.

Orpheus' ecstatic spiritual state and his isolation from instead of his interaction with the swans suggests his mental androgyny as an asexual state, as I understand it, to which the non-representation of his genitalia also gives support. This makes him an expression of the Symbolist ideal of the third gender, for which mental androgyny was a precondition of spiritual refinement.

Moreover, the landscape scenery, in which the nude Orpheus is placed, is due to its sketchy character difficult to discern in all its detail. It is, in

⁴³³ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/496739>, accessed on the 9th of April 2021.

⁴³⁴ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/492412> & <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/489481>, accessed on the 9th of April 2021.

particular, the pond's bank, which unfolds in the background, but also the green detail in the left bottom corner, that is rendered in a sketchy, stylised and almost abstract way. The white swans in the background, framed by a small group of three sketchily-painted black trees, the hill, the Greek temple with the Doric columns are especially stylised, suggestive and two-dimensional. This stylisation and simplification might partly be traced back to Enckell's technique of using gouache. Beyond that, it can also be understood as a stylistic and technical choice of connoting the landscape scene as rather a dreamy, hardly graspable and suggestive scenery—enchanted by the magic music of Orpheus. The kind of illumination that emanates from the group of white swans in the background might also be an expression of the enchanted character of the sublime landscape scene.

The illuminated white swans can perhaps also be understood as a sign of higher truth that is traditionally associated with the figure of Orpheus and his magically powerful music as the initiate of mysteries and sacred secrets. Hence, besides the ecstatic facial expression of Orpheus as a sign of access to a world of immaterial absolute truth, the illuminated white swans can maybe also be understood as a reflection of Orpheus' divine and spiritual quality.⁴³⁵ The multifaceted symbol of the swan was widely prevalent within late nineteenth-century art and literature; it carried associations of the beauty of nature, idyllic harmony, the ideal of art as well as of the mysteries of life and death.⁴³⁶ Due to the black and white swans, the association of the mysteries of life and death appears to be central in Enckell's work. In this way, they may mirror Orpheus' priestly and magician qualities of accessing secret knowledge.

Thus, I understand Enckell's *Fantasy* as a reference to both Orpheus as the magical musician, who charms flora and fauna, but also to Orpheus

⁴³⁵ Riikka Stewen suggests the white swans to be an emblem of Apollo; Riikka Stewen, Helsinki 2000, p. 118.

⁴³⁶ See for instance: Marja Lahelma, "The Lure of the Abyss: Symbolism and Depth on Edvard Munch's *Vision* (1892)", in: Marja Lahelma (ed.), *Between Light & Darkness. New Perspectives in Symbolist Research*, The Birch and the Star, Helsinki 2010, p. 62. However, her argumentation is applied to Munch's *Vision* (1892) and Axel Gallén's *Lemminkäinen's Mother* (1897).



Fig. 39. Gustave Moreau, *Thracian Girl Carrying the Head of Orpheus on His Lyre* (1865). Musée d'Orsay.



Fig. 40. Jean Delville, *The Death of Orpheus* (1893). Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium.

as an initiate to higher truth capable of deciphering a transcendent truth. The stylised and suggestive quality of the landscape scenery can be regarded as a way to emphasise an enchanting atmosphere itself caused by Orpheus' magical-musical power. Enckell's account of Orpheus amidst the swans evokes a musical and enchanting atmosphere, of which Orpheus himself is enraptured. Thereby, Enckell's display of Orpheus accords well to the common use of the motif of Orpheus within Symbolism as a vehicle for the poet-artist's priestly function as the recipient of divine inspiration.

However, while the depiction of Orpheus' severed head after his death and its function as an oracle as a sign of complete transcendence was especially often explored within transnational Symbolism as illustrated by, for instance, Gustave Moreau's *Thracian Girl Carrying the Head of Orpheus on His Lyre* (1865) (fig. 39), Odilon Redon's charcoal drawing *Head of Orpheus Floating on the Waters* (1881), Jean Delville's oil on canvas *The Death of Orpheus* (1893) (fig. 40) and John William Waterhouse's oil on



Fig. 41. John William Waterhouse, *Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus* (1900). Private collection.

canvas *Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus* (1900) (fig. 41), Enckell's employment of the episode of Orpheus amidst the animals is, to my knowledge, far lesser explored. One of the few other Symbolist paintings with this episode is Luigi Bonazza's triptych *The Legend of Orpheus* from 1905. In this way, Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) and its incorporation of not only the allusion to the myth of Orpheus but also to the Bithynian legend of Antinous can be considered as an important, innovative and independent contribution to the exploration of ancient classical literature and history within a transnational Symbolism, which is characterised by a vague and ambiguous exploration of classical Greco-Roman themes, as explained above. By exploring the popular Symbolist topic of Orpheus and his poet-artist's priestly function but still finding an independent approach to this topic, Enckell's

Fantasy functions as an active Finnish contribution to a transnational Symbolism, which must have been developed on the basis of a relational and mutual artistic exchange, as I argue, with other Symbolist works by Belgian, French and English artists. Enckell's way of drawing on Orpheus amongst the animals is in this way an innovative and original contribution, alluding to the Symbolist notion of the artist as the priest and the Symbolist concept of artistic creativity as stemming from spiritual or religious revelation. Joséphin Péladan appealed, for instance, to the initiate-artist to worship the cult of Orpheus and others in his *Comment on deviant mage: etique* from 1892,⁴³⁷ a writing by Péladan that Enckell might have been fa-

⁴³⁷ "Initié, tu voureas un culte à Pythagore comme à Phidias, à Léonard comme à Orphée, à Fabre d'Olivet comme à Delacroix" // "Initiate, you will worship Pythagoras as well as Phidias, Leonardo as well as Orpheus, Fabre d'Olivet as well as Delacroix"; Joséphin Péladan, *Amphithéâtre des sciences morte* [1], *Comment on deviant mage. Éthique*, Paris 1892, p. 127. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k62926v/f124.double.r=comment%20en%20deviant%20mage>, accessed on the 25th of February 2022.

miliar with. In addition, the dense musical atmosphere in Enckell's *Fantasy* also suggests the Symbolist notion of music as the highest ideal due to its immaterial qualities, which is one of the reasons why the visual trope of Orpheus—not only the dead Orpheus and the still playing instrument but also Orpheus amidst the animals as Enckell's work shows—was a popular transnational Symbolist motif. In this way the painting also embodies the Symbolist principles of synaesthesia and art synthesis as well as the main principle of expressing something intangible through the tangible.

4.1.2. The motif of Narcissus and Narcissus-Antinous

The topic of the young, beautiful and self-absorbed Narcissus was prevalent within Symbolist art and *fin-de-siècle* literature, which the three selected works of art by Enckell, Stjernschantz and Kleen exemplify and contribute to.⁴³⁸ The meaning of the depiction of Narcissus within Symbolism will be further explained after the background of Ovid's original myth of Narcissus and Echo is given.

The myth of Narcissus and Echo is included in the third book of the Roman poet Ovid's Latin narrative poem collection *Metamorphoses* (completed 8 C.E.).⁴³⁹ The well-known epic story is about the beautiful young hunter Narcissus, son of the nymph Liriope and the river god Cephissus, and his rejection and contempt of the many men and women who desired him and his desire for himself.⁴⁴⁰ Narcissus is described as a sixteen-year-old boy, who could count to be a man or still a boy, and with physical characteristics such as eyes like a starry sky, curly hair like Bacchus' or Apollo's, beardless cheeks, a neck as if made out of ivory, a graceful face, and a mixture of white and red colours.⁴⁴¹

In Ovid's epic poem, the mountain nymph Echo encounters the hunting Narcissus in a rocky and wooden terrain and immediately falls in love

⁴³⁸ See for instance: Ralph Gleis, "Zwischen Todessehnsucht und Dekadenz. Der belgische Symbolismus", in: Ralph Gleis (ed.), *Dekadenz und Dunkle Träume. Der belgische Symbolismus*, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin 2020, p. 28.

⁴³⁹ Michael von Albrecht, Ditzingen 1994, p. 587.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87ff.

with him. Due to a curse that the goddess Iuono had put upon Echo, the mountain nymph was only able to reply to someone else's words and not able to appeal to someone by herself while she, at the same time, was only able to repeat someone's last words. When the hunting Narcissus was eventually shouting after his hunting companions, Echo was finally capable of approaching Narcissus. However, her attempts remained unrequited by Narcissus, who told her that he wanted to die rather than belong to her.⁴⁴² Due to despair and lovesickness, Echo's body dispersed; her bones transformed into stone while only her voice remained left.

After Narcissus' many rejections, one of the rejected put a curse on him that he should not get what he loved either.⁴⁴³ So he fell in love with the reflection of himself in the water when drinking from a quiet mountain spring. His attempts to embrace or kiss his subject of desire, which he—in the beginning—did not know to be the reflection of his own body, remained unsuccessful. Even after realising that he desired the unsubstantial, bodiless and unapproachable reflection of himself, his desire did not diminish. His wish of detaching himself from the subject of his desire remained unrequited. Not fearing death while wishing to prolong the life of his beloved, Narcissus realised that he would die together with the subject of his desire.⁴⁴⁴ While being in despair, he violated himself, could no longer bear the mirror image and pined away while a daffodil flower still reminds of him. Although Michael von Albrecht's German translation from 1994, which I drew on, does not explicitly mention Narcissus' suicide, other versions or translations of Ovid's myth outline more directly Narcissus' act of committing suicide.

⁴⁴² Michael von Albrecht, Ditzingen 1994, p. 88.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁴⁴⁴ "Doch der Tod ist mir keine Last, denn der Tod wird mir die Schmerzen nehmen. Nur wünschte ich, der Geliebte lebe länger! Jetzt werden wir zu zweit als ein Herz und eine Seele sterben.;" *ibid.*, p. 91.

"Nor is death sad for death will end by sorrow;

Would he I love might live a long tomorrow!

But now we two—one soul—one death will die.;"

Ovidius Naso, Publius & Melville, A. D., *Metamorphoses*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1998, p. 65.



Fig. 42. John William Waterhouse, *Echo and Narcissus* (1903).
The Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

Besides few traditional accounts of the classical myth of Narcissus and Echo, for example that of the Pre-Raphaelite painter John William Waterhouse and his *Echo and Narcissus* (1903) (fig. 42), the figure of Narcissus became mostly explored as a solitary figure within Symbolist European circles, isolated from Echo, and as a passive and contemplative figure, which invited the viewer's gaze to rest upon him. This applied for instance to the French painter and precursor of the Symbolist movement Gustave Moreau and his way of revisiting the topic of Narcissus in his undated watercolour *Narcissus* (fig. 43), in which Narcissus is depicted half-sitting and half-recumbent, or in his oil on canvas *Narcissus* from c. 1890 (fig. 44).⁴⁴⁵ There were also more implicit ways of drawing upon the topic of Narcissus through the increased integration of mirroring surfaces and reflected objects in late nineteenth-century painting as in the art of the Belgian paint-

⁴⁴⁵ Other examples are the Belgian sculptor Juliette Samuel-Blum and her marble sculpture *Narcissus*, after 1909, Letter Stiftung Köln, and to the Belgium sculptor Georg Minne's *Jünglingsbrunnen* (c. 1898), Museum voor Schone Kunst, Gent. Another example is Léon Frédéric's *The Rainbow* (1895), charcoal and pencil on paper, private collection, Bruges, which accords to a more liberate account of this topic.

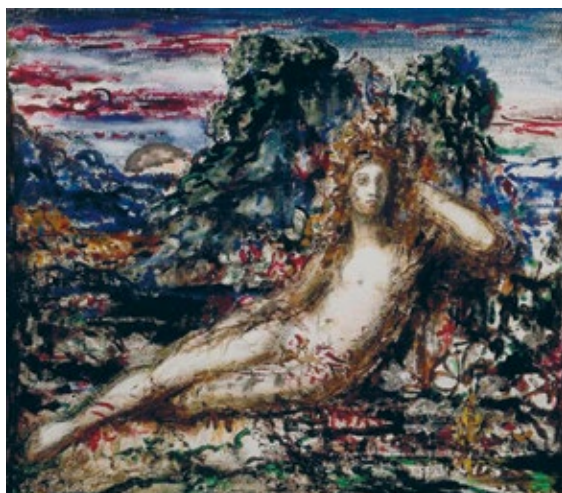


Fig. 43. Gustave Moreau, *Narcissus* (undated).
Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris.



Fig. 44. Gustave Moreau, *Narcissus* (c. 1890). Private collection.

er Fernand Khnopff and his *With Grégoire Le Roy. My Heart Cries for the Past* (1889) for instance.

While the increased interest in the topic of Narcissus was very likely a vehicle for scientific claims about the crisis of the self, which were made at the turn of the twentieth century in the new scientific discipline of psychology,⁴⁴⁶ the figure of Narcissus also incorporated self-reflection and introspection and was, thus, well-suited for Symbolist interests in subjectivity and self-centredness.

Moreover, as an epitome of the liminal state between a boy and a man and his self-admiration, the figure of the sixteen-year-old beautiful Narcissus incorporated or was at least suitable for the Symbolist idea of male spiritual transcendence that, due its sexual self-sufficiency, entailed homoerotic and homosexual tensions, which further increased male spiritual power and insights, as explained in the second chapter. At the same time, Narcissus' sexual self-sufficiency can also be considered as a form of asex-

⁴⁴⁶ Ralph Gleis, Berlin 2020, p. 28.

uality due to his sexual disinterest in everybody else and his impossibility of approaching his object of desire.

Thus, although the importance of the figure of Narcissus within Symbolist art has—to my knowledge—been explored only scarcely, the figure appeared to have been closely associated with Symbolist ideas of male androgyny and the male asexual, spiritually refined body, as it was explained in the second chapter. Against the backdrop of this, an in-depth analysis of the use of the visual trope of Narcissus in Enckell's *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897), Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897), and Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse* (1903) will be given in the following. How is the story of Narcissus or Echo and Narcissus employed in those artworks and in which ways do these works contribute to the expression of Symbolist transnational philosophical, theoretical and thematic ideas?

The restoration of the primordial androgyne

Enckell's oil on canvas *Narcissus* was made in either 1896 or 1897 between his first and second Italian sojourns (fig. 45). Besides this painting, the motif of Narcissus reappeared at least one more time in Enckell's oeuvre in 1915, when he painted his second oil on canvas with the title *Narcissus*, and possibly also implicitly further times. However, the following analysis will only deal with his first Narcissus painting, since the other work as an example of his colouristic period that developed around 1910, relates rather to vitalist ideas than to Symbolist ideas at the *fin-de-siècle*. Important contributions to the comprehension of Enckell's nude male figures have been made by the Finnish art historian Juha-Heikki Tihinen.⁴⁴⁷ In his exhibition catalogue article “Thinly Veiled Desire—Magnus Enckell's Portrayal of Men” from 2000, Tihinen mostly considers Enckell's mythological figures like Narcissus as passive, objectified men and as reflections of homoeroticism. However, his argumentation does not take into consideration the Symbolist ideal of androgyny as a recreation of a lost totality and perfection, which this project will mainly deal with.

⁴⁴⁷ Juha-Heikki Tihinen, Helsinki 2000, p. 126ff.



Fig. 45. Magnus Enckell, *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897).
Joensuu Art Museum (collection Olavi Turtiainen).

This painting depicts the nude Narcissus, lying on a stone on a shore of a spring, and the reflection of his body on the water surface. He is displayed in the moment of observing his reflection, which the position of his head, which protrudes above the stone, and his gaze, which is directed downwards and almost makes his eyes look like shut, point to. Whereas the stone he rests his body on, as well as the smooth water surface on which his reflection is cast, is positioned in the lower part of the painting, the upper part of the vertical scale of the oil on canvas lays in almost total darkness. Standing out against the dark night, dusk or dawn scenery, the pale, smooth, and slightly muscular flesh of Narcissus is, together with his mirror image and the oval circle shape, that is created, the dominating detail in this painting. Only a few floral details of a magenta-coloured flower directly next to Narcissus' left arm and hand, on which he rests his head, as well as the grass at the shore and some yellow water flowers are other details in this painting. However, none of these flowers is similar to the daffodil flower that Narcissus transforms into in Ovid's myth. In this sense, the simple composition is characterised by a colour reduction that mainly consists of different subdued shades of brown and beige.

Moreover, the display of the nude Narcissus in this particular prone body position emphasises the bent right arm, which as the most tensed part of the body reveals the most well-defined muscles. The right hand, made into a fist, contributes to this and it is in this hand that he, at the same time, holds a tiny purple-like flower. In addition to this, the light that is cast on the right upper arm and shoulder also contributes to highlighting this body part. Although this work was first made in 1896 or the year after, Enckell had already made a lead pencil sketch of a young nude male figure in 1890 in exactly the same lying and bent position and depicted from the same angle that the figure of Narcissus became displayed in.⁴⁴⁸ Thus, the compositional idea of this painting of Narcissus must have already developed by 1890. Besides this main sketch of the nude boy's full body, there can be discerned several other sketches on the same sheet, with which Enckell appeared to have practiced the display of the right shoulder and the right up-

⁴⁴⁸ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/408835>, accessed on the 16th of April 2021.

per arm in less muscular or more muscular versions. In comparison with these minor sketches, the right arm and shoulder is more muscular in both the full-body sketch and the finalised painting, which contributes to emphasising the liminal state of the male adolescent between a boy and a man.

Furthermore, Enckell's display of Narcissus' body is with its elaborate creation of three-dimensionality and depth characteristic of Enckell's sculptural treatment of form that started to dominate his art production throughout his second Parisian sojourn between 1893 and 1894 as his *The Awakening* (1894) (fig. 71) exemplifies. A letter from his Finnish art companion Albert Edelfelt from September 1893 gives testimony to Enckell's pursuit of expressing "the purely sculptural" in a drawing and also includes Edelfelt's advice for elaborating a sculptural technique through trying to understand and think like a sculptor while drawing rather than modelling in clay.⁴⁴⁹ Enckell's practice of frequently making croquis of sculptures at the Louvre during this Parisian sojourn, which was another recommendation that Edelfelt addressed in this letter, also points to his sculptural interest. This evolving interest for the sculptural properties included not only his drawing but also his painting technique and was, I argue, developed further during Enckell's Italian sojourn between autumn 1894 and spring 1895, when he in 1895,⁴⁵⁰ amongst other things, spent time sketching Michelangelo's *Day Sculpture* at the Medici Chapel in Florence as well as a sculpture of a Greek goddess.⁴⁵¹ In addition to this, Enckell's great fascination for Leonardo da Vinci's Renaissance painting since the early

⁴⁴⁹ "Paint and draw at the Louvre or in some painting atelier while you wait for the studio, you must draw a lot and constantly anyway – this is everything in art, and the purely sculptural in drawing, which you thought to acquire by modelling in clay, I believe, one gets just as much by trying to understand and to think like a sculptor about that which one draws." // "Måla och teckna på Louvren eller i någon målarateljé medan du väntar på ateljén, du måste ändå teckna mycket och alltjämt – det är allt i konsten, och det rent skulpturala i teckningen, som du tänkte förvärfva dig genom att modellera i lera, tror jag, man får lika mycket genom att försöka förstå och tänka som en skulptör under det man tecknar.": Letter from Albert Edelfelt to Magnus Enckell, 17th of September 1893, Haiks; KNUT MAGNUS ENCKELL COLL. 471, The National Library of Finland, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

⁴⁵⁰ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/497894>, accessed on the 19th of April 2021.

⁴⁵¹ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/497210>, accessed on the 19th of April 2021.

1890s, which also included his copying of the angel of da Vinci's *The Annunciation* in 1895 at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence⁴⁵² and his copying of da Vinci's *Madonna Litta* in 1896 in St. Petersburg at the Hermitage Museum⁴⁵³ must have been closely related to his development of a sculptural technique, which was itself a central characteristic of da Vinci's painterly style. A sculptural treatment of form is particularly apparent in Enckell's *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897), but even in Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) which makes the young nude male body's flesh more lively, idealised and noble.

In Enckell's *Narcissus*, the emphasis on the slim and well-defined anatomy with the pale and even skin puts forward the age of adolescence of this idealised male body. Being in the liminal and ambiguous phase of becoming an adult and still being a child, Narcissus' body—as he is displayed in Enckell's painting—is not only characteristic of the sixteen-year-old ideal young beauty of the classical Greek myth with features such as his beardless cheeks, a graceful face and a beautiful pale skin, but recalls also the ideal of the third gender, which will be dwelled in a later subchapter. This is also closely tied to the homoerotic tension that the nude harmonious ideal body and its mirror image evoke in Enckell's painting.

While the downward tilted head and gaze of Narcissus still make him look as if he is observing his mirror image on the water surface, he looks with his harmonious, tranquil, introspective and satisfied facial expression, rather absorbed in his own thought. This goes also hand in hand with his physical position in relation to his reflection. Although the circle-like shape, that he creates together with his water reflection, highlights his union with its mirror image, he keeps a certain distance to it and does not seem to have to get any closer to it or even touch it. Thus, in comparison with the pictorial tradition of displaying Narcissus in the moment of bending over his water reflection as in Caravaggio's *Narcissus* (1579) or in John William Waterhouse's *Echo and Narcissus* (1903) (fig. 42), Enckell's *Narcissus* appears to be not so desperately physically desiring his mirror image. In this sense, it is first and foremost a harmonious and introspective state of Nar-

⁴⁵² <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/392524>, accessed on the 2nd of February 2022.

⁴⁵³ <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/sv/object/396417>, accessed on the 2nd of February 2022.

cius that is expressed and not the devastating physical desire of the story of Narcissus. His downward tilted gaze, which makes his eyes look like almost shut, and the created ambiguity between observing his reflection and being withdrawn into mental activity also give support to the introspective harmonious mood. This is why I understand Enckell's display of Narcissus as focusing mostly on the intellectual condition of (sexual) self-sufficiency, which makes him appear physically asexual. His mental imagination of the union with his mirror image is sufficient. The oval circle shape of the mirrored and doubled Narcissus and the emphasis on a mentally active and harmonious state alludes to the dual-sexed human beings of the primordial androgyne as an epitome of totality, completeness and wholeness.

Therefore, I argue that Enckell's interpretation of Narcissus epitomises the ideal of restoring the primordial androgyne through the expressed intellectual satisfaction and self-sufficiency as a form of asexuality. The neo-platonic idea of the primordial asexual androgyne was a common Symbolist idea, to which Symbolist displays of male bodies often related, as I contend, and which Enckell as a painter, who was well familiar with Symbolist theories and its neo-platonic and philosophical sources, likely drew upon. The homoerotic tension of the figure and story of Narcissus in general and of Enckell's Narcissus in particular⁴⁵⁴ also reminds of the male pre-sexual adolescent and, in other words, of the ideal of the third gender, which will be further discussed below.

The display of different groups of naked male adolescent figures in a forest lake landscape in Enckell's oil on canvas *Youth* (1897), has been regarded by Sarajas-Korte as Enckell's way of revisiting the theme of the story of Narcissus.⁴⁵⁵ However, in this study, Enckell's painting *Youth* is rather understood as a vehicle of sexuality instead of asexuality and self-sufficiency and will be therefore discussed in the fifth chapter which deals with physical and spiritual unions as the second mode of the restoration of the primordial androgyne.

⁴⁵⁴ Juha-Heikki Tihinen relates this homoerotic tension in Enckell's *Narcissus* first and foremost to the beholder's interaction with the object of this painting, which, however, presumes and is restricted to a male beholder; Juha-Heikki Tihinen, Helsinki 2000, p. 125ff.

⁴⁵⁵ Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 159.

Within previous research, Enckell's *Narcissus* has also been regarded as the incorporation of both Narcissus and the Bithynian youth Antinous, who often were intertwined in late nineteenth-century literary accounts as in Viktor Rydberg's essay on Antinous from 1877. This interlinkage was a relatively popular way to revisit and shed new light on these two beautiful young male figures from ancient Greco-Roman time, their premature death and homoerotic connotations. Sarajas-Korte regards Enckell's production around 1895 and 1898 in general and his work *Narcissus* in particular to be influenced by Rydberg's essay on Antinous/Narcissus, which she also assumes to be the case with Enckell's draft of a poem on Antinous which Enckell himself wrote during his first Parisian residence between 1891 and 1892.⁴⁵⁶ However, I do not consider Enckell's painting *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897) as either clearly influenced by Viktor Rydberg's essay nor as necessarily epitomising the double perspective of Narcissus and Antinous. This becomes, I argue, on the contrary more apparent in Stjernerantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) (fig. 46), which is why Rydberg's essay will be studied as a literary source of influence for Stjernerantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)*.

Antinous-Narcissus and the access to higher truth

While both Pan and Echo are displayed in the foreground of Stjernerantz's oil on canvas *Pastoral (Primavera)* immersed in their respective activity of playing the pipe or picking pastel-blue flowers, a young, male, crouching and bent-over figure on a riverbank is placed in the middle ground. By being absorbed with looking at its water reflection, the figure draws upon the pictorial tradition of the depiction of Narcissus. Stjernerantz's inclusion of the figure of Narcissus in her spring landscape scenery is displayed with stylised grey-white hair and simplified black clothing. Moreover, he

⁴⁵⁶ "Antinous! // Jag känner dig väl, Fast länge du hvilat, i Nilgudens slott. // Fast sekler förgått, sen din offerdöd, den saga du lemnat, har ikväll mig nått. // Han kejsarn blef din, du begärde mer, men (det) du begärde, blef aldrig förstått. // Men du går igen, och du skall förstås, Jag är ock af din slägt, och jag ger dig min ed: // Vid ditt minne, mystiskt, gåtfullt, evigt, besjunget, förhånadt, heligt, vid alt hvad du drömde, om lif uti skönhet, om lif uti enhet, kärlek, offer, helhet, så svär jag: trohet åt fanan, vår fana förstår mig, vägen skall finnas, den sanning du drömt dig, skall klarna en gång."; Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 156ff.



Fig. 46. Beda Stjernschantz, *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897).
K. H. Renlunds Museum.

becomes crowned with a pink flower wreath by a young female figure. By recalling a red lotus flower wreath and, in other words, the iconographical attribute of Antinous, the act of getting crowned with those flowers is a first indicator of understanding the male crouching figure at the riverbank as an interlinkage of Narcissus and Antinous. This interlinkage is also central in Viktor Rydberg's above-mentioned essay on Antinous, which functioned as a literary source of reference for Stjernerantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)*, I argue, which will be explained further below.

Besides this female figure's interaction with the crouching Narcissus-Antinous, both Narcissus-Antinous as well as Pan and Echo are isolated from each other and immersed in a contemplative and serene mood. While this landscape painting by Stjernerantz draws on and interlaces the myth of Narcissus and Echo with the myth of Pan and Echo, the figures and traditional mythological stories appear to be liberally treated and deployed. The interlinkage of the myth of Narcissus with the legend of Antinous in itself also contributes to the untraditional exploration of Greco-Roman themes. Since Echo does not interact with Narcissus-Antinous, a separate analysis of this figure at the riverbank in relationship to transnational Symbolist ideas will be conducted in the following.

Stjernerantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* was produced during her Italian sojourn between autumn 1897 and autumn 1898, which was enabled through a travel grant ('Hovings resestipendium'), and which she spent mainly in Florence.⁴⁵⁷ Both the title as well as the idyllic spring landscape itself refer to the idea of a Golden Age and Botticelli's *Primavera* (c. 1477–1482) (fig. 56), which will be discussed later in the subchapter on Arcadian landscapes. To my knowledge, this oil on canvas by Stjernerantz has scarcely been explored within previous research. To the few contributions which dealt with this central work in Stjernerantz's *oeuvre* belong Marja Lahelma's article "Tiden, evigheten och tillvarons mysterier i Beda Stjernerantz verk *Pastoral (Primavera, 1897)*" and Juha-Heikki Tihinen's article, which are both included in the first published anthology on Stjernerantz's art from 2014.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ Tuomas Laulainen & Itha O'Neill, "Biografi", in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), Helsinki 2014, p. 250f.

⁴⁵⁸ Marja Lahelma, "Tiden, evigheten och tillvarons mysterier i Beda Stjernerantz verk *Pastoral (Primavera, 1897)*", in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), Helsinki 2014, pp. 136–158; Juha-Heikki

Marja Lahelma relates the idealised landscape in Stjernerantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* convincingly to an androgynous paradisiac origin of human-kind.⁴⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the mythological figures and their potential of incorporating androgynous and theosophical Symbolist ideals has not been introduced by her or other contributions within previous research, that are known to me. This will be discussed in the following.

As her estate records give testimony to, during her Parisian residence in 1892 Stjernerantz studied carefully the Swedish writer Viktor Rydberg's essay "Antinous", which is included in his essay series *Romerska Sägner (Roman Days)* from 1877 on ancient Roman culture, history and archaeology.⁴⁶⁰ Rydberg's essay on Antinous has, in previous research, been assumed to be a literary source of reference for Stjernerantz's production of her *Pastoral (Primavera)* as stated by Marja Sakari⁴⁶¹ and Juha-Heikki Tihinen.⁴⁶² However, no earlier research contribution, known to me, studied and unfolded the relationship between Rydberg's essay and Stjernerantz's painting in depth, which is why this will be made here.

Viktor Rydberg's essay on antique statues of the Bithynian youth Antinous interlinks Antinous with Ovid's poem on Narcissus, which is an interlinkage that Stjernerantz's notes of Rydberg's essay also evolve around.⁴⁶³ Rydberg's essay dwells mainly on the premature death of these young males as an access to cosmological and divine powers and, thus, constitutes not only an amalgamation of Greco-Roman mythology and history but also an untraditional interpretation of the respective stories of Antinous and Narcissus, similar to the treatment of ancient themes within Symbolism as mentioned above.

Tihinen, "En handgriplig ouppnåelighet – förverkligade och oförverkligade konstnärliga idéer i Beda Stjernerantz konst", in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), Helsinki 2014, pp. 91–106.

⁴⁵⁹ Marja Lahelma, in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), Helsinki 2014, p. 141ff.

⁴⁶⁰ Viktor Rydberg, "Antinous", in: *Romerska Sägner*, Albert Bonniers, Stockholm 1877, pp. 231–254.

⁴⁶¹ Marja Sakari, "Stjernerantz, Beda", in: *Biografiskt lexikon för Finland*; <https://www.blf.fi/artikel.php?id=4129>, accessed on the 21st of April 2020.

⁴⁶² Juha-Heikki Tihinen, Helsinki 2014, p. 94.

⁴⁶³ BS_paris_1892_055, BS_paris_1892_056, BS_paris_1892_057, BS1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018.

I found three pages of citations, taken from Rydberg's essay, in Stjernschantz's notebook from 1892. Stjernschantz noted down, amongst others, Rydberg's quotation from Ovid's account of Narcissus as well as Rydberg's interpretation of the meaning of the figure:

Ovidius, Narcissus: In the morning of life I perish; yet to me death is not hard, for sorrows are stilled by death.⁴⁶⁴

The reflected image [...] was the ideal and the spring, the cold wave of reality, which every one encounters when he would take that ideal to his heart. The expression, in Narcissus, is therefore that of wasting away. He cannot approach the ideal before decay has consumed everything earthly in his being.⁴⁶⁵

These notes deal with Narcissus' unafraid attitude towards death and impossibility of reaching the ideal of his mirror image as an earthly living being, which, however, in Rydberg's interpretation of the myth of Narcissus, becomes approachable after he pined away. Stjernschantz appears, in this sense, to have paid regard to the afterlife-existence of Narcissus that Rydberg's essay also explored.

Furthermore, Stjernschantz noted also down the following section of Rydberg's essay about his interpretation of the spiritual capability of Antinous:

Antinous [...] grieves over the annihilation that inevitably comes to every single thing, and asks with anxiety: whence and whither? until every question is resolved into dreams that flow on with the stream.

⁴⁶⁴ BS_paris_1892_056, BS1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018: "I ålderns morgon jag slocknar. Dock är ej döden mig tung, ty kvalen stillas af döden.", copied from Viktor Rydberg, *Romerska Sägner*, Stockholm 1877, p. 249.

My English translations are taken from Alfred Corning Clark's English translation from 1879; Viktor Rydberg, *Roman Days*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York 1879. This can cause some shifts in content, caused by, for instance, the ambiguity which the Swedish word 'trånad' exemplifies.

⁴⁶⁵ BS_paris_1892_056, BS1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018: "Spegelbilden [...] var idealet, och källan verklighetens kalla bölja, som möter, när man vill fanna det. Uttrycket hos Narcissus är fördenskull trånad. Idealet når han icke, förrän trånaden förtärt allt jordiskt i hans varelse", copied from Rydberg, *Romerska Sägner*, Stockholm 1877, p. 249.

After his apotheosis, he has, through the loving sacrifice of himself, found the key to riddle of life and death, and secure in its possession, looks down with imperturbable calm into the flood of hollow seeming that hurries past him.⁴⁶⁶

While this note also deals with the existence of Antinous in the afterlife, it also equates Antinous' apotheosis with having received the key for solving the riddle of life and death. These sentences pay regard to Antinous and Narcissus in relationship to their death and the cosmological and divine power of access to higher truth that is released after their death. In this way, their existence in the afterlife as something admirable and sublime is highlighted instead of the devastating aspects of their premature death. It is their spiritual refinement and metaphysical continuance that is emphasised and not their premature death as the end of their physical existence. This spiritual powerful immortality, knowledge of higher truth and ideal beauty of Antinous is also expressed in the poem that Stjernschantz copied in full length, particularly in the fifth verse:

Into the azure depths his glances thrown,
The riddle search, that race on race hath known
And pondered on, but left unsolved, as done
Its task, it vanished with the setting sun.⁴⁶⁷

Hence, I consider Antinous' act of looking into the river as a sign for his access to hidden insights. As a writer who was interested in theosophy and affiliated to the Swedish Theosophical Society, Rydberg's interpreta-

⁴⁶⁶ BS_paris_1892_056, BS1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018: "Antinous [...] sörjer förgängelsen, som drabbar allt enskildt och frågar med ängslan: hvarifrån och hvarthän? Tills hvarje sorg och hvarje spösmål löser sig i drömmar, som flyta med strömmen. Efter apoteosen har han, genom det kärleksfulla offret af sitt jag, fått nyckeln till lifvets och dödens gåta, och trygg skådar han med orubblig frid ner i skenets flod, som jagar honom förbi.", copied from Viktor Rydberg, *Romerska Sägner*, Stockholm 1877, p. 250.

⁴⁶⁷ BS_paris_1892_055, BS1, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 14th of August 2018; "Han genomspanar i det djupa blå Den gåta hvarje släkte grubblar på och hvarje släkte ännu olöst fann, när det vid solnedgången bryn försvann.", copied from Viktor Rydberg, *Romerska Sägner*, Stockholm 1877, p. 253.

tion and amalgamation of Antinous and Narcissus served as a vehicle for their spiritual guidance and initiation, as I understand it. As her thorough study of Rydberg's essay indicates, the connotation of these two figures with theosophical meaning was also central for Stjernerantz, who was herself acquainted with theosophy and strategies of spiritual refinement.⁴⁶⁸

Since Stjernerantz's deployment of the crouching Narcissus-Antinous at the riverbank as well as the spring landscape in general in her *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) clearly recall Rydberg's essay, the inclusion of the crouching figure at the riverbank in her painting seemingly relates to exploring alternative and esoteric interpretations of these Greco-Roman mythological and historical figures. As Stjernerantz's display of the figure of Narcissus-Antinous is characterised by its serenity instead of a desperate or devastating mood, this figure suggests likely esoteric connotations as an expansion and syncretic amalgamation of the traditional mythological and historical accounts. The river can be understood as the source of hidden and mystic knowledge and this figure's looking and being mirrored in the water as a key to enigma and higher truth. The depiction of mirrors or water surfaces in many artworks from the late nineteenth century often convey doubled realities or allusions to a foreign, hidden world as exemplified in the art of Fernand Khnopff,⁴⁶⁹ an allusion that also Stjernerantz made use of in her painting, as I argue. As a visual expression, Stjernerantz's painting also allows generally more ambiguity than the textual source of reference that she drew on, which is why I understand her inclusion of the figure of Narcissus-Antinous as a deliberate ambiguous exploration of traditional and new contemporary theosophical takes of interlacing these two figures. Nevertheless, the spiritual initiation into cosmological insights and a higher truth of this figure and its looking into the river appeared to be a central idea for Stjernerantz. By highlighting the cosmological powers of these adolescent male figures, the figure of Narcissus-Antinous and its sexual self-sufficiency or homosexuality also relates to the ideal of the third gender, as discussed below.

⁴⁶⁸ See for instance: Boda Stjernerantz to Sigrid af Forselles, 17.07.1893, SLSA 1368, folder 2.

⁴⁶⁹ See for instance: Ralph Gleis, Berlin 2020, p. 28f.

Moreover, the landscape composition, characterised by a river and spring flora in her painting, echoes the fourth verse of Rydberg's poem, in which an imperishable spring as well a shore that forever blooms is described as the place in which Antinous lingers.⁴⁷⁰ While the winding river as the current of time stands still, the idyllic spring scenery and the harmonious state of the mythological figures also appear to epitomise an eternal paradisiac Arcadia (see 4.2.2. below).

*The unfortunate and devastating love and the impossibility
of a paradisiac totality*

Tyra Kleen's lithograph *Écho et Narcisse* represents both Echo and Narcissus in a mountain landscape encircling a spring (fig. 47). The nude Echo, depicted in profile, sits on a rock in the foreground to the extreme right side of the scene and is turned towards the nude Narcissus, who sits bend-forward on the other side of the spring shore in front of rocky cliffs. Echo is depicted in the moment of shouting with her hands placed around her mouth, while Narcissus' left arm penetrates the water and causes ripples on the water surface. His face is filled with disappointment and suffering with a mouth wide open.

Two different chronological actions of Ovid's myth are simultaneously represented in Kleen's graphic print. While Echo appears to try to catch Narcissus attention, Narcissus appears to attempt to touch his mirror image. Both figures' action remains unsuccessful; Echo gets rejected by Narcissus and Narcissus' discarnate object of desire disappears as soon as he tries to touch it. Although Narcissus' open mouth can be read as verbally interacting with Echo, his body bespeaks with the hand inside the water and the disruption of the smooth water surface, together with his aggrieved facial expression, rather the scene of realising the unapproachability of the object of his desire. Thus, Kleen's display of a simultaneity of two different

⁴⁷⁰ Viktor Rydberg, *Roman Days*, New York 1879 [1877], p. 208:

“For where he stands, eternal blooms the shore,
Around him laughs the Spring for evermore;
But through the Spring their way, beyond a dark
Autumnal world, leads tow'rd a hidden mark.”

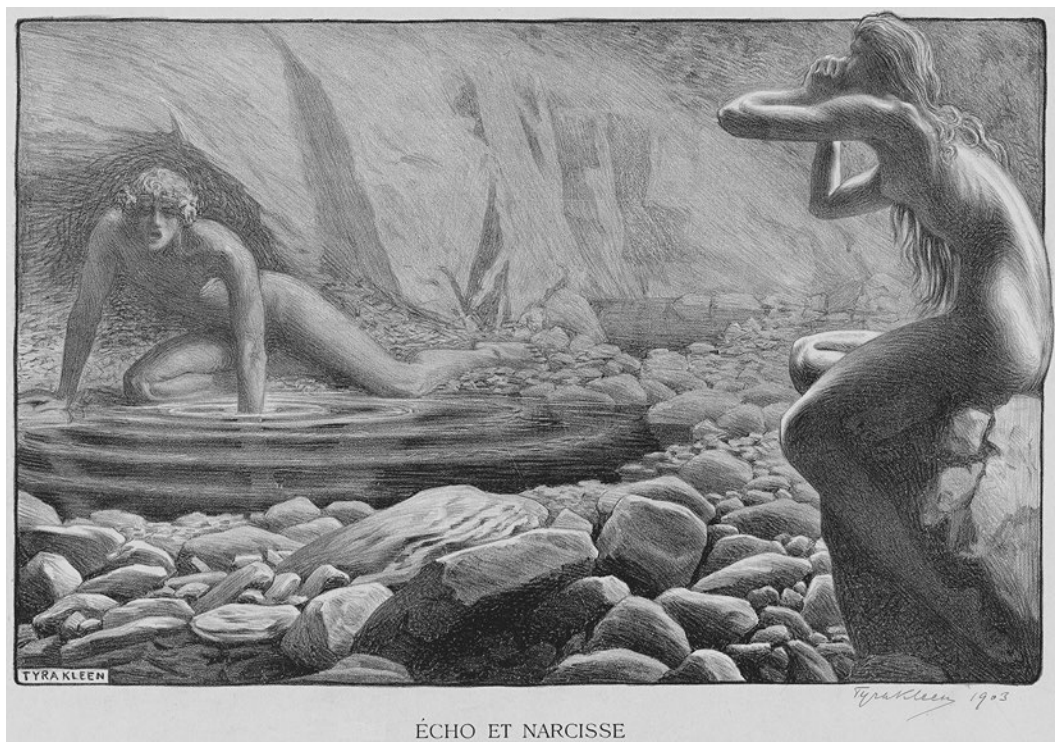


Fig. 47. Tyra Kleen, *Écho et Narcisse* (1903).
The National Library of Sweden, Stockholm.

chronological actions of Ovid's myth highlights the unrequited or unapproachable and devastating love of Echo and Narcissus. Instead of representing a paradisiac and harmonious state, the graphic print expresses the mythological figures' despair and unfortunate desire.

Whereas the position of Echo in the very foreground and to the very right directs the viewer's gaze to Narcissus in the middle ground, Narcissus' crouching body stretches along the spring. This compositional choice emphasises the centrality of Narcissus and his connection with the spring. Furthermore, the placement of the young boy on the back bank of the spring also increases his isolation from Echo and his occupation with himself.

Tyra Kleen produced this lithograph during her Italian period between 1898 and 1906, which she mainly spent in Rome. Following lengthy peri-

ods in Germany—that is Dresden, Karlsruhe and Munich—in the early 1890s and a sojourn in Paris between October 1895 and May 1897 spent studying art, Kleen left for Rome in 1898.⁴⁷¹ While being based in Rome around 1900, Kleen began to both produce lithographs—a technique that dominated her art production until around 1910—and to explore classical mythological topics. Her illustrated novel *En Psykesaga* (1902), her lithographs *Psyche and Pan* (1904), *Homo Sapiens* (1904) and *Satyr* (1904) can, together with her lithograph *Écho and Narcisse* (1903), be mentioned as examples of classical mythological themes in her art production. Kleen had a special interest in German Symbolist artists and their mythological subject matters during and after her artistic apprenticeship in Germany between 1891 and 1895. Besides her visit to the German painter Franz von Stuck's studio in Munich⁴⁷² and study of the Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin's art in, among others, October 1900 and September 1902 at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm⁴⁷³, it was in particular Max Klinger's graphic Symbolist art that functioned as an important source of reference for Kleen's choice of working with a graphic print technique from around 1900 and onwards and her exploration of mythological topics and figures like satyrs, fauns and Psyche. While travelling between Sweden and Italy at the turn of the twentieth century, Kleen had shorter sojourns in Germany, which often were used for studying Klinger's art as in September 1898, December 1900, June 1901, November 1901, June and November 1902,⁴⁷⁴ as she also did in

⁴⁷¹ Karin Ström Leander, Uppsala 2018, p. 47ff. After 1906, other sojourns in Rome and Paris followed.

⁴⁷² Niclas Franzén, "Tyra Kleen som symbolist", in: Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin, Niclas Franzén, Karin Ström Leander & Elisabet Lind, *Tyra Kleen*, 1. uppl., Linderoths tryckeri, Björkvik 2016, p. 62.

⁴⁷³ Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 5th of October 1900 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård: "Nationalmuseum and looked at Klinger and Böcklin." // "Nationalmuseum och såg Klinger och Böcklin." Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 23rd of September [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård_ "Was then at the the Nationalmuseum and saw Böcklin." // "Var därefter på Nationalmuseum och såg på Böcklin."

⁴⁷⁴ Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 23rd of September 1898, 1st of December 1900, 11th of June 1901, 21st of November 1901, 5th of June 1902 and 27th of November 1902, Valinge gård. Her longer sojourn in Berlin between December 1907 and spring 1908 was likely also used to study Klinger's art.

Sweden in August 1898, September 1899 and October 1900.⁴⁷⁵ However, she did not exclusively produce mythological themes around 1900, but also dark fantasies, dreams and biblical scenes that often referred to a Decadent and Symbolist literary source like Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* (1845) or Stanislas de Guaitá and his *Rosa Mystica* (1885).

According to a diary entry from the 15th of December 1903, the figure of Echo is based on Kleen drawing herself in front of the mirror.⁴⁷⁶ Other diary entries from April and May 1902 give testimony that Kleen's male artist companion Krohol, with whom Kleen had close contact in 1902 and 1903, sat for the figure of Narcissus.⁴⁷⁷ Although Kleen drew upon her own figure and a male sitter, Echo's and Narcissus' nude bodies appear to be with their remarkable slim and fine-limbed features and long extremities both stylised and similar to each other. The fact that the figure of Echo does not recall Kleen's physical characteristics such as her facial features or hair makes it also reasonable to assume a certain degree of idealised stylisation (fig. 48 & fig. 49). Besides Echo's breasts, their lean musculature, proportions, and body shapes are similar. Thereby, Narcissus' body posture with his slightly twisted and bent-over upper body and his stretched out left leg makes his body look like a long, elegant and effeminate S-shaped line, to which his seemingly extraordinary slim body with almost no defined musculature also contributes. In addition to this, Narcissus' genitalia are omit-

⁴⁷⁵ Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 18th and 26th of August 1898 in Stockholm, the 29th of September 1899 in Stockholm and the 5th October 1900 in Stockholm, Valinge gård.

⁴⁷⁶ Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 15th of December 1903 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 31: "I drew myself in the mirror for Echo" // "Ritade mig själv ur spegeln för Eko."; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 18th of April 1902 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 13: "In the morning, Krohol came and sat for me with his hands and arms." // "Fm kom Krohol och satt modell för mig med händer och armar"; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 15th of May 1902, [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 16: "Krohol lay as a model for Narcissus." // "Krohol som låg modell för Narcissus."; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 16th of May 1902 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], p. 16: "Krohol nude modelled." // "Krohol låg nakenmodell."

⁴⁷⁷ Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 18th of April 1902, 15th of May & 16th of May, Valinge gård, p. 16.



Fig. 48. Photograph of Tyra Kleen in her studio in Rome at 27 Via Gesù e Maria (1904). Valinge gård/Tyra Kleen's private artist estate.



Fig. 49. Photograph of Tyra Kleen in Rome (undated). Valinge gård/Tyra Kleen's private artist estate.

ted or at least hidden behind his bent right leg at the same time that he is depicted with a flower wreath on his head. The stylisation of his body does in this way not only look effeminate but even androgynous.

The fact that Kleen put more time and effort into developing and depicting the figure of Narcissus based on her male model, who sat for her in April and May in 1902, as mentioned above, might emphasise the figure's complicated body posture and its central position for this work. The depiction of the nude Narcissus, in particular, but also the nude Echo remind of the late nineteenth-century ideal of a slim, soft, fine-limbed and elongated body, that differentiated itself from the prevalent male ideal of the modern athletic type, characterised by a well-trained male body with agility, mobility and sharp and clearly prominent muscles, and that also stood in contrast to lush female bodies, as Patrik Steorn described it.⁴⁷⁸ Kleen herself wrote about contemporary ideal body shapes in her essay *Form* (1908), whereby her demonstration of the male ideal body recalls Narcissus' slim and elongated body. In the chapter on beauty, she argues that 'body strength' and 'muscle mass' are no longer important male traits or an important physical ideal for the heterosexual woman at the same time that she deplores an exaggerated athletic and wrestling cult and the cult of swelling muscle mass.⁴⁷⁹ In the same way as the cult of athletes and wrestlers was obsolete, Kleen also regards the classical Greek ideal of human beauty as not conformable with contemporary early twentieth-century ideas of beauty, that instead required slim, elongated body types as a physical counterpart to humankind's intelligence and refined culture as well as its emotional and spiritual development. This male body ideal, advocated by Kleen in 1908, has, I argue, already been deployed in an exaggerated way in her depiction of Narcissus' slender, unmuscular, and even androgynous male body in her lithograph *Écho et Narcisse* from 1903. In

⁴⁷⁸ Patrik Steorn, Stockholm 2006, p. 76ff & p. 201ff.

⁴⁷⁹ Tyra Kleen, *Form*, Sandbergs bokh., Stockholm 1908, p. 41ff. Tyra Kleen's essay *Form* (1908) with its presented reformist ideal strongly reminds of the Swedish reform pedagogue Ellen Key's educational pamphlet *Beauty for All* (1899), who was a close friend to Kleen. This applies especially to Kleen's promotion of functional and at the same time simple and organic shapes, home interior, and design.

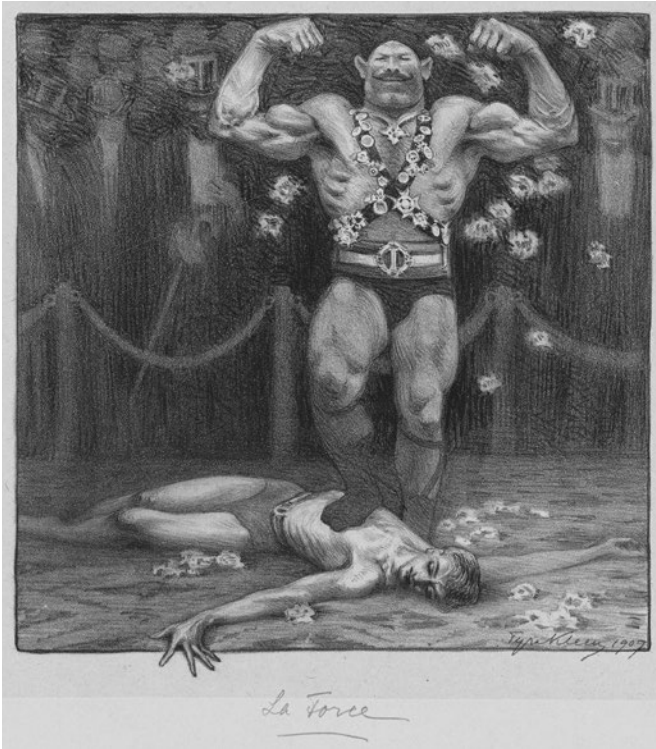


Fig. 50. Tyra Kleen, *La Force* (1907).
The National Library of Sweden, Stockholm.

comparison with Kleen's male figure in her *Sed Non Satiati* (1902) (fig. 57), which will be discussed in the following chapter, Narcissus has less musculature and appears to be androgynous, whereas the male figure in *Sed Non Satiati* is slim and athletic instead of effeminate or androgynous. In Kleen's lithograph *La Force* (1907) (fig. 50) a similar more exaggerated elongated and fine-limbed male young body, lying on the ground and defeated by a strong and extremely muscular man, is depicted with a more exaggerated effeminate body language.

Therewith, Kleen's display of a young, male, androgynous Narcissus positions itself in relation to other late nineteenth-century Symbolist male artists and their frequent depictions of young, beautiful and male figures with



Fig. 51. Aubrey Beardsley, *Siegfried*, Act II (c. 1892–1893).
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

effeminate traits and body postures as in the graphic art of the English illustrator Aubrey Beardsley (see for instance fig. 51), the Pre-Raphaelite Simeon Solomon's painting or Gustave Moreau's painting and his biblical subject matters. However, although Narcissus' and Echo's physiques are similar in their slenderness while Narcissus' effeminate body posture makes his appearance androgynous, these nude figures are still distinguishable as being a male and a female, to which the artwork's title and the clear reference to the well-known figures and fates of Echo and Narcissus also contribute.

Besides Narcissus' androgynous bodily appearance, his isolation from Echo and unapproachable desire of his mirror image also stresses his sexual self-sufficiency as a form of asexuality, due to the impossibility of ap-

proaching his object of desire. Therefore, Narcissus' display also reminds of the attempt of the restoration of the primordial androgyne as a dual-sexed human being with sexual self-sufficiency. However, by capturing the moment of the disruption of Narcissus' doubled visual representation with his mirror image, the impossibility of the restoration of the primordial androgyne and of a lost paradisiac totality is rather stressed in Kleen's work, as I argue, in contrast to Enckell's *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897) and its harmonious union with its mirror image.

During her Parisian sojourn between October 1895 and May 1897, Kleen became well-acquainted with both theosophy and Symbolist theories, which makes it reasonable to comprehend the figure of Narcissus as a possible reflection of the neo-platonic idea of the primordial androgyne. She enrolled at the private art academies Académie Delécluse, Académie Colarossi, Académie Vitti and Académie Julian in Paris,⁴⁸⁰ whereby she, at the latter, as the academy where neo-platonic theory evolved, likely came in contact with Symbolist theories. Her visits to the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in March 1897⁴⁸¹ as well as her visit to another Symbolist exhibition in autumn 1895⁴⁸² must have also contributed to her familiarity with Symbolist aesthetic and theoretical ideas.

Moreover, as mentioned above, Narcissus is also adorned with a floral wreath on his head. A flower on both sides of his face can be discerned, which is why a possible allusion to Antinous and his attribute the lotus flower might be evoked. By possibly intermingling the figure and story of Narcissus with Antinous, Kleen employs connotations to young beautiful male bodies and their homoerotic tensions. Therefore, the depiction

⁴⁸⁰ Karin Ström Leander, Uppsala 2018, p. 28.

⁴⁸¹ Diary entries from the 19th of March 1897 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård: "In the afternoon, I have been with Cora ? to a symbolist exhibition, George[s] Petit" // "Em var med Cora ? på Symbolistisk utst. George[s] Petit"; and from the 28th of March 1897: "Lay abed a long time. At 11:30 am, Yngström came and picked me up and we went together to a symbolist exhibition, George[s] Petit." // "Låg länge, kl ½12 kom Yngström och hämtade mig och vi gingo tillsammans på symboliska utställning, George[s] Petit." Even though the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* is not mentioned explicitly, the mentioned Galleri Georges Petit, where this salon was held in 1897, gives testimony to the *Rose+Croix*.

⁴⁸² See her diary entry from the 2nd of November 1895, Valinge gård.

of this figure and the possible amalgamation of Narcissus with Antinous accords well with the Symbolist ideal of the third gender, which will be explained further in the subchapter on this subject. By drawing as a woman artist upon the visual phenomenon of the young effeminate male that flourished within Symbolist and Decadent male circles, Kleen's figure of Narcissus and its possible interlinkage with Antinous does not point to a projection of a male artist's homosocial or even homoerotic interest, but to her employment of a visual trope from the male-gendered artist world and her establishing and positioning within this artist world.

In addition to this, Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse* is with its simultaneity of two different chronological actions of Ovid's myth as well as with Narcissus' possible allusion to Antinous also reminiscent of the Symbolist way of treating classical mythological themes liberally with amalgamations, modifications and reinventions as explained above. This way of combining and modifying a mythological or literary narrative is also central in other works by Kleen. Her illustrated novel *En Psykesaga* (1902), written and illustrated by herself, represents a combination and alteration of several traditional mythological accounts and corresponds also to a syncretism of ancient mythology, Christianity, and ancient Egyptian mythology. By drawing mainly upon Lucius Apuleius' original myth of Eros and Psyche, that is included in his *The Golden Ass* from the second century C.E., but at the same time modifying the plot to a large degree, her illustrated novel *Psykesaga* with its devastating end deals with the tragic aspects of love and sexuality in contrast to the original myth's plot and happy end, centred around overcoming the obstacles of love between Eros and Psyche and their wedding in heaven. In this way Kleen's *Psykesaga* is similar to her *Écho et Narcisse* as explorations of unfortunate love and desire with devastating and violent effects.

Against the backdrop of the analysis of Enckell's, Stjernschantz's and Kleen's exploration of the topic of Narcissus, I understand the motif of Narcissus in their works as a relatively liberal treatment of the original myth, to which the interlinkage of Narcissus and Antinous in Stjernschantz's painting and possibly also in Kleen's graphic print amongst others contribute. Whereas

Stjernerchantz's incorporation of the figure of Narcissus-Antinous implies alternative theosophical interpretations of the myth of Narcissus and the legend of Antinous through emphasising these figures' initiation and insights into a higher truth and foreign, hidden world, Enckell's interpretation entails homoerotic tensions and focuses instead of the restoration of the primordial androgyne as an emblem of a paradisiac lost totality. In contrast to both Enckell's and Stjernerchantz's harmonious and ideal accounts of Narcissus, Kleen focuses on not only Narcissus' but also Echo's unfortunate and devastating love and relates possibly, thereby, with her androgynous bodily display of Narcissus to the impossibility of the union and restoration of the primordial androgyne and the third gender, as I argue. This is why I understand the examined works as important contributions to neo-platonic and theosophical Symbolist ideas, that were centred around the sexual self-sufficiency and spiritual transcendence of Narcissus.

4.1.3. Pan's and Echo's harmonious asexuality

While the figure of Narcissus-Antinous and its connotation of cosmological and theosophical insights in Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) has been discussed above, the pipe-playing Pan and flower-picking Echo will be paid attention to in the following.

The depiction of Pan in Stjernerchantz's painting, who stands in a classical *contrapposto*, is so unconventional and idiosyncratic in comparison to the pictorial tradition of this mythological figure, that he would not be able to be clearly recognised as Pan without knowing about the alternative title *Pastoral (Pan and Echo)* of Stjernerchantz's work. Echo would be not easy to identify either without this alternative title. By deploying an unconventional iconography, Stjernerchantz's incorporation of both Pan and Echo accords with the Symbolist feature of dealing with mythological subject matters untraditionally and liberally.

Furthermore, although the figure of Echo is the linking connection in Stjernerchantz's painting through interlacing the myth of Narcissus and Echo with the myth of Pan and Echo as stories about unrequited love or unrequited sexual desire, this topic and its devastating consequences is not expressed in Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)*. Stjernerchantz's way

of drawing upon these mythological figures as well as on Narcissus-Antinous is instead a peaceful and harmonious take, which as a reinvention or at least a liberal treatment of Greco-Roman stories is characterised by another Symbolist feature. Stjernerchantz's way of connotating the figures of Echo and Pan with new meaning and connotation will be explained after providing the background about the classical myth of Echo and Pan.

The story about the encounter between Echo and Pan is included in the Greek author Longus' novel *Daphne and Chloe* from 2 C.E.⁴⁸³ In contrast to Ovid's account of Echo, Echo is in Longus' story half woman and half nymph and, thus, mortal. Nevertheless, she consorts with the nymphs and Muses and learns to dance and to play music. Desired by Pan, a desire which remained unrequited of the virgin Echo, and by gathering with the nymphs and Muses, Echo caused Pan's wrath. Therefore, Pan provoked the anger of several shepherds who tore Echo apart and scattered "the still singing fragments of her body across the earth".⁴⁸⁴ In addition to this, classical accounts of the figure of Pan himself associate the deity of countryside, mountainsides, and shepherds with his unrequited desire for nymphs like Echo or Syrinx, like for instance in *Pan & Syrinx* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book 1).⁴⁸⁵

The crouching Echo in Stjernerchantz's painting is immersed in her activity of picking light-blue meadow flowers and characterised by a harmonious and dreamy state of mind. Besides the light-blue spring flower *Anemone nemorosa* that she already has gathered, the yellow spring flower cowslip grows on the meadow around her and Pan to her right. Because of her white, loose-fitting dress, that conceals her whole body, her crouching body posture and her tranquil, serene and contemplative activity of picking spring flowers, she is strongly reminiscent of Maurice Denis' cen-

⁴⁸³ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Echo-Greek-mythology>, accessed on the 24th of April 2021.

⁴⁸⁴ Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe. Xenophon of Ephesus. Anthia and Habrocomes*, Book III, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2009, p. 131ff.; https://www.loebclassics.com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/view/longus-story_daphnis_chloe/2009/pb_LCL069.131.xml?result=3&rskey=zXivte, accessed on the 18th of February 2022.

⁴⁸⁵ Michael von Albrecht, Ditzingen 1994, p. 33ff. Pan played jeremiads with his Pan-flute; <https://mythologysource.com/pan-greek-god/>, accessed on the 24th of April.



Fig. 52. Maurice Denis, *April (Picture for a Girl's Room)* (1892).
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands.

trally placed crouching figure in his oil on canvas *April (Picture for a Girl's Room)* from 1892 (fig. 52). Exhibited together with, amongst others, three other works by Denis as a season cycle in 1892 in Paris at the *Salon des Indépendants*,⁴⁸⁶ it is likely that Stjernschantz became familiar with this work during her Parisian sojourn and drew upon it for her depiction of the figure of Echo. Even Stjernschantz's display of the spring landscape's meadow as a large homogenous colour field and her decorative treatment of the surface regarding the river and meadow, in particular, point to Denis' painting as a source of reference. However, instead of a pathway, a river runs through the landscape and the figures in Stjernschantz's painting are more detailed and carefully painted. This gives reason to assume a relational artistic and literary exchange and reciprocal communication between artistic

⁴⁸⁶ Besides Maurice Denis' *April (Picture for a Girl's Room)*, his *July*, *September* and *October* as the other parts of the season cycle were exhibited at *the Salon des Indépendants*, as well as six additional works: Dubois-Pillet, *Catalogue de la 8me exposition [1892]. La Société des Artistes Indépendants [Catalogue du Salon des Indépendants]*, Paris 1892; <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1269951h/f25.double>, accessed on the 13th of May 2022.

expressions from the centres and the peripheries regarding Stjernerantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)*, whereby Denis' art was one point of reference but also, amongst others, Viktor Rydberg's writing, as explained above.

The motif of the serene young woman or women amongst flowers became a popular Symbolist motif during the 1890s and was, for instance, frequently employed by *Les Nabis* as in the art of Maurice Denis, or the Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler as in his *What The Flower Says* (1893) (fig. 53), who also exhibited at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*.⁴⁸⁷ It stood for a pure, sacred and angelic womanhood instead of a sexualised and dangerous woman as one variety of the innocuous, passive and purist woman. At the same time, Stjernerantz's display of Echo in this white dress recalls on the one hand the reform dress as alternative female fashion at the turn of the twentieth century, which Ferdinand Hodler's female figures are also dressed in, and refers as a mythological subject matter, on the other hand, also to a timeless and sacred fashion. By deploying contemporary alternative female fashion and the visual trope of the woman amongst flowers for her depiction of the mythological figure of Echo, Stjernerantz emphasises Echo's peaceful, harmonious and asexual existence instead of putting forward her tragic fate and demise, caused by unrequited love to Narcissus or her rejection of Pan.



Fig. 53. Ferdinand Hodler, *What the Flower Says* (1893). Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland.

⁴⁸⁷ Debora L. Silverman, Baltimore 1991, p. 144.

This sort of interlinkage between an asexual and harmonious existence applies also to the most centrally-placed figure, Pan, and his immersion into playing the pipe, which is why I understand Stjernerantz's display of Echo and Pan as a modification of the devastating end of Longus' myth. The unconventional iconography of Stjernerantz's Pan involves that Pan's pipe is rather reminiscent of the primitive pipe as the attribute for a shepherd in a pastoral landscape than of the Pan-flute or syrinx with its seven reeds of unequal lengths. In addition to this, the figure of Pan is displayed as a slim, gracile, androgynous adolescent human being instead of the conventional depiction of Pan as a hybrid between man and goat. This is why I argue the figure of Pan is also interlinked with a shepherd and his rural but noble life. By depicting Pan with short grey hair, dressed in an ancient chiton—that was worn both by men and women, in an elegant *contrapposto*, graceful fingers and arms and with soft and relatively effeminate facial traits instead of deploying Pan's masculine traits like his strong and massive body or his long beard, Stjernerantz's display of this figure emphasises a young male androgynous body. This androgyny relates not only to the bodily appearance but also to the mental state of Pan, which through his total immersion into playing music and non-interaction with Echo conveys asexuality, as I argue. Instead of indicating sexual desire, Pan's absorption into the immaterial quality of music refers also to a possible spiritual refinement, which is why the young and androgynous Pan goes hand in hand with the ideal of the third gender, which will be summarised in the following. Thus, the unconventional iconography of Stjernerantz's Pan puts forward Symbolist ideas of mental asexuality and spiritual refinement as I understand it.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁸ As Juha-Heikki Tihinen argues, this figure of Pan in Stjernerantz's painting is also unconventional due to his accordance with the Apollonian instead of the Dionysian creative concept; Juha-Heikki Tihinen, Helsinki 2014, p. 99.

In addition to this, Stjernerantz's Pan reminds also of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones' painting *The Garden of Pan* (1886–1887), and the young nude flute-playing Pan that is effeminate to a certain degree. Due to Stjernerantz's interest in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, this painting may have functioned as a visual reference.

4.1.4. Narcissus, Orpheus, Antinous, and Pan and the ideal of the third gender

In the context of the above-made discussions, the display of Enckell's Orpheus-Antinous, Enckell's Narcissus, Stjernerchantz's Narcissus-Antinous and her Pan as well as Kleen's Narcissus with a possible intermingling with Antinous all address the ideal of the third gender, as I argue.

The depiction of these young, beautiful, and contemplative male Greco-Roman mythological figures and their partial interlinkage with the legend of the Bithynian adolescent beauty Antinous emphasises these figures' mental asexuality as a tool for transcendental or spiritual power or the longing for this. This implies in the case of Stjernerchantz's Pan and Kleen's Narcissus even an androgynous bodily appearance body, at the same time that Enckell's two discussed works contain homoerotic tensions, to which the interlinkage with Antinous in Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) contributes. Asexuality is closely tied to a paradisiac and harmonious state or the longing for it in the examined works. This is why I contend that these works actively employ and work with the ideal of the third gender, that flourished within European Symbolist circles. This ideal evolved around the male prepubertal adolescence and his asexuality or pre-sexuality, which was equated with his mental androgyny, as the emblem for contact with the cosmos or higher truth. The pre-sexual young male figure and his transcendental powers implied at the same time also homoerotic tensions, which highlighted even more the spiritual refinement, that was exclusively male-connoted.

Furthermore, Enckell's choice of referring to classical mythological young male figures and the asexual/pre-sexual/self-sufficient concept that they embodied might perhaps also be a way of hinting at Enckell's homosexuality without breaking against moral, social, medical, and legal rules that prevailed in the late nineteenth century.

4.2. Arcadian landscapes

As the discussion above on the mythological figures themselves has shown, the expression of a bodily and spiritual state of paradise, harmony and totality or the longing for this ideal state is apparent in the examined artworks. Although the above discussion paid regard to a certain degree to the landscape sceneries for the comprehension of the figures' act and mental state as in the section about Orpheus-Antinous in Enckell's *Fantasy*, the significance of the landscape itself as well as the significance of the mythological figures in such natural surroundings in total has not yet been studied in depth. This is why the display of the natural scenery in Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) and Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) will be examined in the following. The respective two landscapes are given much pictorial space in these two works and appear to represent paradisiac natural settings for the mythological figures and their harmonious state. Therefore, these two displayed landscapes will in the following be examined as possible expressions of Arcadian landscapes instead of concrete time- and place-specific landscapes. Thereby, the linkages between the concept of Arcadia and androgyny as an ideal paradisiac state will be given attention to and how this is expressed through both the depicted landscape and the displayed figures. Since the representation of the natural surroundings in Enckell's *Narcissus* is minimised, this painting's natural setting does not strongly contribute to and enhance Narcissus' harmonious condition, which is why it will not be taken into consideration in the following. Similarly, since the rocky spring landscape in Kleen's lithograph *Écho et Narcisse*, which is closely orientated to Ovid's traditional myth and its setting, does not contribute strongly to making sense of Echo's and Narcissus' action and function as the longing for a harmonious state in this work, neither will it be taken into consideration. Before examining Enckell's and Stjernerchantz's employment of natural sceneries, an explanation of the concept of Arcadia itself will be given as well as the importance of the concept of Arcadia within Symbolism.

4.2.1. The concept of Arcadia and the employment of the Arcadian concept within Symbolism

The concept of Arcadia goes back to ancient Greece and was later also appropriated in ancient Rome where it embodied a fascination for a remoteness from the civilised society and a nostalgia for a simple rural life in harmony with nature in contrast to the emergence of a civilised and urbanised society. The term derived from the ancient province in the Peloponnese region with the same name; a mountain area which was inhabited by sheep and goats as well as pastoralists, that is, shepherds. Soon it developed into a utopian ideal of an unspoiled wilderness and a peaceful harmony between man and nature. It is traditionally represented by the figure of a shepherd whose life and work and, thus, his peasant existence is in harmony with the seasons and nature at large. Thus, by referring to a vision of pastoralism, Arcadia and pastoral functioned at large as synonyms.⁴⁸⁹ In addition to this, within Greek mythology, Arcadia was the home of the deity Pan—the god of the forest, the shepherds, their flocks, fields and glens—and his court of spirits of nature such as dryads, nymphs and other spirits of nature, who together embodied the nostalgic dream of a simple life between man and nature. The simple but moving music played by Pan on his syrinx, that is a flute with seven reeds of unequal length, or by the shepherds on their primitive pipes was closely tied to the Arcadian vision.

The topic of Arcadia was explored both visually, poetically and philosophically.⁴⁹⁰ It figured as something lost and unattainable and symbolised the Golden Age before the Fall instead of being the emblem of the afterlife. Similar to the Edenic form of life, although it had its origin in the pagan ancient Greece, it figured as a nostalgic dream. Thereby, it was not only a physical place, but was also a metaphysical state.⁴⁹¹ The idea of Arcadia had remained a popular trope since antiquity and classical Arcadian visions were revisited by many painters and writers as, for instance, during the Renaissance in Titian's *The Pastoral Concert* (c. 1509). Thus, the concept

⁴⁸⁹ See for instance: Allan R. Ruff, *Arcadian Visions. Pastoral Influences on Poetry, Painting, and the Design of Landscape*, Windgather Press, Oxford 2015, p. 13.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3ff.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

of Arcadia embraces Pan as the presiding divinity of Arcadia, a pastoral vision as well as the utopian ideal and metaphysical state of an idyllic nature.

The motif of Arcadia became a popular motif during the nineteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, the increasing interest for this certain trope was closely tied to the Symbolist rejection of industrial and technological progress as well as the critical attitude towards Darwinism, positivism, secularism and civilisation at large, which were all considered to be symptoms of the degeneration of society. By praising the pre-industrial age as a contrast to modern civilisation and drawing upon ancient pagan myths or biblical themes, Symbolist subject matters also often involved the reflection of an Arcadian concept. The increasing exploration of Arcadian visual tropes within Symbolism was thereby closely tied to the Symbolist idea of attempting to restore the origin of humankind as the total and paradisiac state and as being united with the cosmos again according to both ancient mythological and Christian-Jewish cosmology. Moreover, one cornerstone of Symbolist neo-platonic ideology was the idea of the existence of an eternal, unchangeable and timeless truth beyond the physical world that was imagined to be highly like Arcadia—the lost paradise,⁴⁹² which late nineteenth-century Arcadian visions also often sought to refer to. As one of the most important precursors of Symbolist painters and his frequently made allusions to the Sacred Grove or the Land of Tenderness, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's way of revisiting the topic of classical Arcadian vision was greatly employed within Symbolist aesthetics and Symbolist art such as within the *Rose+Croix* order or *Les Nabis*.⁴⁹³ Hence, Symbolist Arcadian visions often implied serenity, harmony, fortune, and contemplation of the meaning of life while frequently being set in an imaginary Greek ancient culture.

⁴⁹² Marja Lahelma, in: Itha O'Neill (ed.), Helsinki 2014, p. 141.

⁴⁹³ Constance Norbert-Riser, "VI) Towards Regeneration", in: *Lost Paradise. Symbolist Europe [The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from June 8 to October 15, 1995]*, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal 1995, p. 458.

4.2.2. Stjerschantz's Arcadian spring landscape

Stjerschantz's artistic production during the 1890s and the early 1900s included many landscape paintings or landscape studies. Amongst the wide variety of produced landscapes, her *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) together with her *Everywhere a Voice Invites Us...* (fig. 54) and her *Flute Player*, which were both made in 1895 during Stjerschantz's residence on the Estonian island Vormsi, distinguishable from other landscape paintings. While landscape paintings with no inclusion of human figures like her *Winter Landscape* (1893), *Landscape from Impilax* (undated), or *Landscape, Portö* (1902) give testimony to a fixed setting of time and place both in terms of the season, the time of the day and the place,⁴⁹⁴ both her *Pastoral (Primavera)* and her two other above-mentioned paintings are rather unfixed in time and place and inhabited by children or adolescents.

This is closely tied to the employed stylistic means, characterised by simplification, stylisation and a decorative treatment of the surface in these three paintings, which make the natural sceneries appear as quite elusive and vague settings for the figures, as I argue. When it comes to *Pastoral (Primavera)*, the extensive homogenous surface of the meadow, Echo's dress and Narcissus-Antinous' cloth create a shadowless two-dimensionality rather than the creation of light, shadow and depth. This makes the figure of Echo and Pan in the foreground to have only loose contact with the meadow, which increases their immersion into their respective contemplative activity. In addition to this, the decorative, two-dimensional and transparent depiction of the meadow flowers in the foreground in comparison to the bushes and trees in the middle and background with clear outlines and colour fields does not accord with illusionistic means and the rules of perspective. There can be also discerned blue-grey nuances on the meadow as in the left foreground to the right of the flute-playing Pan or in the background close to a bush and on the other shore of the river, which do not accord with illusionistic means either. The depiction of the meadow as a homogenous surface with different nuances of darker green in the foreground, grey-light-green tones in the background and these idiosyn-

⁴⁹⁴ See for instance: Itha O'Neill, "Bakom Gallergrinden", Helsinki 2014, p. 71ff.



Fig. 54. Beda Stjernschantz, *Everywhere a Voice Invites Us...* (1895).
Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

cratic blue and grey spots, in general, and the depiction of the flowers in the foreground in particular, reminds of the imitation of a fresco painting through the stylistic means of the *couleur crayeuse* and its dry, pale, matte and greyish tonality as already explained in the third chapter in relation to Thesleff's *Thyra Elisabeth* (1892). This stylistic approach was characteristic of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's painting, which Stjernschantz studied carefully during her Parisian sojourn in 1891 and 1892.⁴⁹⁵ This makes both Puvis de Chavannes's painterly style, characterised by the *couleur crayeuse* and a decorative treatment of surfaces, and his exploration of Arcadian land-

⁴⁹⁵ See for instance the following letter, which was already mentioned above: "Yesterday we were at the old & new Sorbonne, adorable paintings; in particular the decorations of "Puvis de Chavannes" have struck, he also has a wall in the Pantheon, Anna and Ellen are so captivated and I claim that they are attacked by Puvanisme Chavannisme." // "Igår voro vi på gamla och nya Sorbonne, bedärande målningar, i synnerhet dekorationerna av 'Puvis de Chavannes' har slagit an, han har även en vägg på Pantheon, [...]": Beda Stjernschantz to her mother Alma Stjernschantz, Paris, 18.12.1891. BS2_140520PK014, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018.



Fig. 55. Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *The Sacred Grove, Beloved of the Arts and Muses* (1884–1889). The Art Institute of Chicago.

scapes as a recurring motif into a point of reference, which Stjerschantz drew largely upon in her *Pastoral (Primavera)*, as I argue. With regard to the harmonious and serene state of the depicted figures, their placement in an Arcadian-like landscape and the decorative and two-dimensional treatment of the surfaces of the natural surroundings, Stjerschantz's painting is especially reminiscent of Puvis de Chavannes's *The Sacred Grove, Beloved of the Arts and Muses* (1884–1889) (fig. 55). By deploying stylistic means like the *couleur crayeuse* as a fresco painting imitation and a decorative treatment of the surface, which refer to the art of the ancient past, and referring to the ancient topic of Arcadia itself through amongst others Puvis de Chavannes's art, Stjerschantz's work can, I contend, be both thematically and stylistically understood as an allegorical and emblematic idea of an idealised spring scenery, which lasts forever similar to the Golden Age or an utopian Arcadian vision. Similar utopian ideas of an Arcadian landscape are also expressed in the two other aforementioned paintings by Stjerschantz. At the same time, Pan's classical chiton and the classical mythological-historical subject in itself are other references to the Greco-Roman ancient period in *Pastoral (Primavera)*, which also contribute to making the landscape into an Arcadian utopian ideal. Nevertheless, the

setting of Stjernerchantz's painting can still not clearly be placed in the ancient period due to the clothing of Echo, Narcissus-Antinous and the girl at the shore, which rather vaguely alludes to alternative late nineteenth-century fashion, as I argue.

Moreover, Itha O'Neill suggested that Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* can be considered as one part of a season cycle, that Stjernerchantz worked on but never finalised.⁴⁹⁶ Thereby, the eternal and idealised spring scene was the first part of the season cycle, which she made, followed by a finalised painting from 1908 with the season autumn as the subject, a finalised but lost painting from 1908 with the season winter as the subject, as well as pre-studies for a summer coastal landscape. The idea of the season cycle as a popular late nineteenth-century artistic concept, with which, amongst others, Maurice Denis dealt in the early 1890s, gives further reason to consider Maurice Denis as a source of reference.

In addition to this, Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* from 1897 is characterised by a dense musical atmosphere in which the figures appear to be immersed, which also applies to the two other paintings themselves and their respective titles. Due to the centrally placed figure of Pan playing his pipe and his interlinkage with a shepherd, as I argued above, Stjernerchantz's spring landscape refers to both Arcadia as the home of Pan within Greek mythology and the simple and rural but noble herdsmen playing his primitive pipe as a pastoral vision. This is also supported through the title and the direct reference to a pastoral idyll. Thus, the ambiguity of the pipe-playing and centrally placed figure also implies a variety and interlinkage of the different layers of Arcadian connotations in Stjernerchantz's painting. While this ambiguity, amalgamation and interlinkage is a typical Symbolist feature, as explained above, it also densifies the utopian or paradisiac ideal of the landscape.

Moreover, the title also refers to Sandro Botticelli's Italian Quattrocento painting *La Primavera* (c. 1477–1482) (fig. 56), which Stjernerchantz had very likely seen in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, where this work was exhibited during her Italian sojourn during which she also produced

⁴⁹⁶ Itha O'Neill, "Bakom gallergrinden", Helsinki 2014, p. 63.



Fig. 56. Sandro Botticelli, *La Primavera* (c. 1477–1482). Uffizi Gallery.

her *Pastoral (Primavera)*. Although Botticelli's Italian Quattrocento painting *La Primavera* is with regard to stylistic means such as the creation of three-dimensionality, rules of perspective, the treatment of the surface with clear outlines and the domination of a dark colours of the natural scenery different to Stjernerantz's painting, I argue that it functioned as a point of reference with regard to the mythological subject matter and the spring landscape. As another source of reference besides the painting of Puvis de Chavannes and Denis, she thereby drew on but at the same time altered the mythological and Arcadian topic of Botticelli's *La Primavera*, especially with regard to the meaning of the adolescent figures in this spring scene. Whereas Botticelli's allegory of spring displays Venus' sacred grove in a lush of growth and blossoms, Stjernerantz's spring landscape is more barren. Equally, whereas the blooming flora in Botticelli's painting is mirrored through the mythological figures such as Venus, Flora-Chloris and Cupid and their functions of love, desire, sex, beauty, and fertility, Stjernerantz's composition reflects a simile between the mythological figures' asexuality and androgyny and the not yet completely leafed out forest flora.

This makes Stjernerchantz's still quite barren ideal spring landscape into a painting in which the Arcadian landscape as a popular Symbolist subject matter is intertwined with Symbolist ideas on androgyny and a paradisiac state. Hence, her work draws upon the allegorical simile between the season of spring and adolescence, which not only within Renaissance painting but also within late nineteenth-century art was a popular visual trope, and connotes it with asexuality and androgyny as contradictory to the topic of young love, which allegorical spring scenes often embodied.

In the late nineteenth century, Botticelli's art underwent a revival or re-discovery and became more well-known due to the fact that his art was made accessible for a broader audience as in his *La Primavera* and his *The Birth of Venus* were transferred in 1815 from the Medici Villa di Castello to the Uffizi Gallery and displayed at the Galleria dell'Accademia for a period until 1919 when they were moved again to the Uffizi Gallery.⁴⁹⁷ Thereby, Pre-Raphaelite painters such as Edward Burne-Jones and Simeon Solomon were strongly fascinated by Botticelli's art in general and his *La Primavera* in particular, and often drew upon Botticelli's art for the exploration of sexually ambiguous or androgynous figures, as Elizabeth Prettejohn argues.⁴⁹⁸ This fascination for and employment of Botticelli's art applied also in general for the transnational Symbolist movement, as I argue, which Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* and her innovative take on an Arcadian spring landscape exemplifies. By drawing upon Botticelli's painting *La Primavera*, Stjernerchantz's painting partakes in the late nineteenth-century Symbolist interest in revisiting and liberally deploying classical mythological subject matters.

⁴⁹⁷ See: Aby Warburg, *Sandro Botticellis "Geburt der Venus" und "Frühling": Eine Untersuchung über die Vorstellungen von der Antike in der italienischen Frührenaissance*. [Doctoral thesis, . Strassburg.], Doctoral thesis in Art History, [Frankfurt am Main], 1892, p. 22f.; Susan Sloman, *Botticelli*, Chaucer, London 2004, p. 115 & p. 118.

⁴⁹⁸ See for instance Edward Burne-Jones' *Phyllis and Demophoön* (1870) and its similarity to Botticelli's figures of Flora-Cloris and Zephyr to the right in his *La Primavera* (c. 1477–1482) or Simeon Solomon's *Love in Autumn* (1866) and its similarity to Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1845); Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Modern Painters, Old Masters: the Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2017, p. 151f.

Furthermore, letter correspondences between Stjerschantz and her sister Gerda Stjerschantz as well as between Stjerschantz and the Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf during the 1890s give testimony to her attitude towards the display of landscapes. In a letter to her sister, written in the summer of 1893, which Stjerschantz spent painting *en plein air* in the Finnish countryside together with the Finnish woman painter Anna Bremer, she expressed her reluctance towards painting meaningless landscapes and portraits and her dissatisfaction with not being able to create what she would like to create.⁴⁹⁹ At the same time that she criticises these subject matters for not being capable of expressing her soul, she also urges her sister Gerda Stjerschantz to be her model and be involved in developing ideas together, which points to Stjerschantz' painterly production as a mutual and reciprocal exchange between her and her sister Gerda and possibly also to Stjerschantz's idea of landscape paintings as subject matters that need to be inhabited by human figures in order to express her soul.⁵⁰⁰ Thereby, Stjerschantz might draw upon Amiel's notion of a landscape as a state of mind, which she made notes of in 1892 when reading Johannes Jørgensen's article on Symbolist aesthetics in the Danish Symbolist journal *Taarnet*.⁵⁰¹ In the light of this, her rich production of pure landscape

⁴⁹⁹ Beda Stjerschantz to Gerda Stjerschantz, 19.07.1893, Impilaks, BS2_140526PK005, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018: "Now I have not been allowed to do what I wanted and thought about all summer, and if you do not come immediately, when I get home, it will once again be too late. I cannot begin and exhibit meaningless landscapes and portraits forever. I despise myself for such work. It doesn't contain anything of my soul and what then is its value." // "Nu har jag hela sommaren ej fått göra det jag velat och funderat på, och kommer du ej genast, när jag kommer hem, så blir det igen för sent. Jag kan ej börja och ställa ut betydelselösa landskap och porträtt i evighet. Jag föraktar mig sjelf för sådant arbete. Inte innehåller det något af min själ och hvad har det då för värde."

⁵⁰⁰ Beda Stjerschantz to Gerda Stjerschantz, 19.07.1893, Impilaks, BS2_140526PK005, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 16th of August 2018: "If you come, I'll freely elaborate on my ideas for you and let you read what I myself have read so we can work together. One has a vital need for a model who understands and grasps what one wants. Only then are they of great help!" // "Om du kommer skall jag rikligt utveckla mina idéer för dig och låta dig läsa saker, som jag läst så att vi må kunna arbeta samfällt. Man behöfver nödvändigt en modell som förstår och uppfattar hvad man vill. Då först äro de en till stor hjälp!"

⁵⁰¹ "Un paysage, c'est un état d'âme": BS_paris_1892_086, Ateneum Research Library, ac-

paintings without human figures was perhaps rather a sign of not always being able to work together with her sister and of the difficulty in finding and paying other appropriate models to sit for her.

Moreover, Stjernschantz contacted and proposed to the Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf in January 1895 that she make the illustration of a new edition of Lagerlöf's novel *Gösta Berling's Saga*, originally published in 1891.⁵⁰² This was followed by a letter correspondence between Stjernschantz and Lagerlöf, which reveals interesting insights into Stjernschantz's and Lagerlöf's different ideas about how fixed in time and place those illustrations were supposed to be. Whereas Lagerlöf in her reply to Stjernschantz's request presents her idea of the illustrations as the result of local studies—conducted in Värmland, where the novel takes place—and as illustrations that clearly mirror realistic places,⁵⁰³ Stjernschantz, on the other hand, demonstrates her idea of the illustrations to be time- and placeless in her reply from June 1895:

Too much bound by the place one must never become, the essential thing in the work is obviously that which stands beyond time and space anyway. I have found so much independence in the text and the illustrations must first and foremost be done in the same style, [and] be spiritually equal in order to coalesce.⁵⁰⁴

cessed on the 15th of August 2018. Her notes of the article include also the idea of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's landscape as a state of mind.

⁵⁰² Beda Stjernschantz to Selma Lagerlöf, Helsinki, 20.01.1895; The National Library of Sweden, L 1:1., accessed on the 22nd February 2018.

⁵⁰³ Selma Lagerlöf to Beda Stjernschantz, Landskrona, 27.01.1895, SLSA 1368, folder 1, accessed on the 13th of August 2018: "[...] all of Gösta Berling's mentioned places exist in reality but under different names and I think you have to do local studies, otherwise, the sketches would seem too foreign to the many who know which places are meant." // "[...] alla i Gösta Berlings omnämnda lokaler finnas i verkligheten fast under andra namn och jag tror att ni måste idka lokalstudier, eljest skulle skisserna verka för främmande på de många som veta hvilka ställen som menas." Interestingly, even though acknowledging a dislike for the phenomenon of the illustrated book in general (or at least for the Swedish ones in her reply), Lagerlöf, however, asserts that she knows "that we are living in the time of the illustrated books and that this is very appealing to the readership" // "Jag vet nog att vi lefva i de illustrerade böckernas tidevarf och att detta är mycket tilltalande för publiken."

⁵⁰⁴ Beda Stjernschantz to Selma Lagerlöf, 12.06.1895, Helsinki; The National Library of Sweden, L 1:1., accessed on the 22nd February 2018: "För mycket bunden af platsen får man icke vara, det väsentliga i arbetet är väl ändå det som står utom tid och rum. Jag har fun-

Although Stjernerchantz's way of arguing for time- and placeless illustrations first and foremost mirrors her comprehension of the novel, her expressed interest in going beyond time and place in her reply still appears to indicate a more general preference for the depiction of landscapes unfixed in time and place with an allegorical and emblematic function. This becomes apparent in her depiction of an idyllic and eternal spring landscape in her *Pastoral (Primavera)* as an expression of an Arcadian concept. The sum of the depicted flora with spring flowers like the cowslip and a blue *Anemone nemorosa* as well as a white-blooming *Sorbus aucuparia* behind Echo and Pan can be found throughout large parts of Europe, especially in mid, west and southern Europe, and represents in other words a general European vegetation, which gives further support to considering the question of the place as unimportant and the flora as a sign of the advent of spring as important.

Moreover, in the summer of 1895, during which she made her *Everywhere a Voice Invites Us...*, Stjernerchantz also expresses her disinterest in painting national costumes or in a folklike style in a letter to her sister Gerda Stjernerchantz.⁵⁰⁵

Based on this archival material, her interest in the visual exploration of time- and placeless landscapes as a setting for human figures with a rather ambiguous than time- and place-specific style of dress, becomes more apparent. This appears to be realised in her spring landscape from 1897 as an Arcadian vision of a paradisiac state.

nit så mycket oberoende i texten och illustrationerna måste framförallt gå i samma stil som denna, vara samma andes barn för att sammansmälta.”

⁵⁰⁵ Beda Stjernerchantz to Gerda Stjernerchantz, Vormsi, 13.07.1895, BS2_140526PK23, Ate-neum Research Library, accessed on the 15th of August 2018: “But if you paint national costumes, you have to paint in a folksy style, and that interests me very little.” // “Men målar man nationaldräkter så skall man måla folkligt och det intresserar mig så litet.”

4.2.3. Enckell's Arcadian grove

Enckell's depiction of a sublime pond-grove landscape in his *Fantasy* (1895) is first and foremost characterised by its simplification and stylisation as explained above. Stylistic means like the two-dimensionality of the grove, the hill and the Greek temple in the background, abstract colour fields, that interrupt the illusion of a landscape instead of supporting it as seen in the low left corner, as well as the different blue hues of the sky enhance the natural scenery's elusive and emblematic quality. Together with the musical serene atmosphere, that is evoked, the landscape is to be understood as a suggestive and metaphysical state, which mirrors Orpheus-Antinous' enraptured state and its contact with cosmological insights. The visionary character of the landscape is also put forward through the title.

While I comprehend the landscape as a suggestive, dreamy and sublime evocation of Orpheus-Antinous' spiritual activity, the depicted topic of Orpheus-Antinous amidst the swans alludes to Greek antiquity, which the natural grove-like setting with the Greek temple in the background also reflects. Although the pond-grove landscape in Enckell's *Fantasy* is depicted with relatively dark colours and shadowy parts in the water, an enchanted and sublime harmony between Orpheus-Antinous, the swans, and nature is still expressed. As the ancient rural setting for Orpheus who charms all living nature and even inanimate nature, the emblematic and elusive landscape recalls an Arcadian grove as a metaphysical state of ideal harmony between man and animals as a union between the cosmos and Orpheus-Antinous' cosmological insights. Thereby, the Greek temple with the Doric columns is a reference to ancient mystery and also enhances Orpheus-Antinous' magical-musical power. This is why Enckell's stylised landscape as an expression of Orpheus-Antinous' magical-musical powers can also be comprehended as a utopian Arcadian idea of harmony and union between living and inanimate nature. However, the Arcadian ideal of cosmological connection and union in Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) with its ancient pagan setting is different to Enckell's *The Golden Age* (1904), as an Edenic paradise, and in this sense emphasises more the ancient Greek idea of Arcadia as a rural, simple and harmonious place.

Furthermore, within both published and unpublished archival material on Magnus Enckell, several indications of his artistic pursuit and his exploration of landscapes can be found. According to a quote by Enckell, made during his first Parisian sojourn, he “no longer want[ed] to be captivated by the landscape” and considered nature with its cycle as mocking us.⁵⁰⁶ What he instead aimed to express was “personality which shines from within”. Although this quote by him is rather difficult to interpret due to its ambiguity, I consider it to point to the idea of exploring landscapes within his art on a stylised and abstract level without seeking to explore real nature and its changing cycles and weather. This quote by Enckell gives support to the assumption that the pond-grove landscape in his *Fantasy* (1895) acts as an emblem for Orpheus-Antinous’ enraptured mental state instead of a representation of the physical world. Furthermore, by April 1891—when Enckell had recently moved to Paris—the idea of pure art had aroused his interest, which he differentiated from a national and patriotic art that he, on the contrary, did not have much appreciation for.⁵⁰⁷ In addition to this, Enckell’s art production during his second Parisian sojourn was also praised by Albert Edelfelt for not “going the old usual national way” in his letter from October 1893.⁵⁰⁸ Thus, Enckell’s interest in the visual exploration of

⁵⁰⁶ Magnus Enckell, unknown date & place, in: *Ellen Thesleff [Ateneum Art Museum, Helsingfors, 27.2.-24.5.1998, Tammerfors konstmuseum, Tammerfors 13.6.-13.9.1998]*, Helsinki 1998, p. 31: “I no longer want to be captivated by the landscape. Nature with its cycle mocks us... Personality which shines from within and does not change with the weather, that is what I seek.” // “Landskapet vill jag ej mer låta mig fångas av. Naturen med sin kretsgång hånar oss...Personlighet som lyser inifrån och ej skiftar varje väder, den söker jag.”

⁵⁰⁷ See: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 69; “Enckell first believed in Paris that he had learned to understand what art was. Paris’ young art did not know national boundaries. It [Paris’ young art] perceived man as part of the cosmos and art as an expression of these contexts. Patriotism and nationalism were not part of pure art.” // “Enckell åter trodde sig först i Paris ha lärt sig förstå vad konst var. Paris’ unga konst kände inte några nationella gränser. Den uppfattade människan som en del av det universella världsalltet och konsten som ett uttryck för dessa sammanhang. Fosterländskhet och nationalism hörde inte till den rena konsten.” Sarajas-Korte paraphrases Enckell’s words in a letter by Magnus Enckell’s to his parents from the 26th of April 1891, which I have not found myself in his estate records at the National Library of Finland.

⁵⁰⁸ Albert Edelfelt to Magnus Enckell, 24.10.1893, Helsinki; the National Library of Finland, Knut Magnus Enckell COLL. 74, accessed on the 19th of August 2019: “I am especial-

subject matters beyond national topics becomes apparent in his *Fantasy*, I argue, since the stylised landscape expresses a metaphysical and serene idea of a landscape at the same time that this idea alludes to Greek antiquity and an Arcadian grove. In this sense this work by Enckell relates and contributes clearly to a transnational Symbolism and its exploration of landscapes as a vehicle for a distance in time and for a greater union with the cosmos.

4.2.4. The concept of Arcadia and androgyny

Against the backdrop of the previous discussions on the mythological figures themselves and their placement in the different natural settings of the four studied works of art, the concept of Arcadian landscapes are referred to in multiple ways. Although it is most clearly expressed in Stjernschantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* as a pastoral vision, the mythological place of Pan and its courts and a utopian Arcadian vision of an eternal spring, the other works also relate to the idea of Arcadia as a state of harmony and union with the cosmos as the recreation of the primordial androgyne or the longing for it. This is why the respective landscapes especially in *Pastoral (Primavera)*, but also in Enckell's *Fantasy*, his *Narcissus* and Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse*, appear to interlink the idea of an Arcadian and, thus, harmonious and paradisiac state with the neo-platonic idea of androgyny as a paradisiac asexual and total state, as I argue. In this way both the mythological-historical figures themselves and the Arcadian landscapes allude to a harmonious condition or the longing for it.

Arcadia within neo-platonic theory and the way it drew on Plato's myth of the primordial androgynous humankind epitomised the paradisiac state before sexual division and before the origin of sex and sexual longing, as was explained in the second chapter. The primordial androgyne had special cosmological powers and insights that are alluded to by the mentally refined state of the figures of Orpheus-Antinous and of Narcissus in Enckell's

ly pleased to see someone who in our young art doesn't go the usual old nationalistic ways. Otherwise, there is an abundance of green-grey landscapes and rosy-red, sweet, and pale girls." // "Det gläder mig speciellt att se någon som inom vår unga konst icke går den gamla vanliga nationella vägen. Det är annars en uppsjö på gröngrå landskap och rosenrödt/södt bleka flickor."

work, the figure of Narcissus-Antinous in both Stjernschantz and Kleen's work, as well by as the figure of Pan-shepherd in Stjernschantz's work, as I understand it. This neo-platonic idea of the recreation of the primordial androgyne functioned as an important theoretical cornerstone within Symbolism in general and the *Rose+Croix*-order in particular, as I explained in the second chapter. During the production of their respective works, Enckell, Stjernschantz and Kleen were well-acquainted with Symbolist theory and its neo-platonic sources. Enckell and Stjernschantz studied, for instance, Plato's *Symposium* thoroughly as well as Emanuel Swedenborg, Plotinus, and Charles Baudelaire.⁵⁰⁹

Against the backdrop of the made visual analysis and by taking into account Enckell's, Stjernchantz's and Kleen's artistic approaches and visual and literary references, that were possible to access, the above-discussed artworks with Greco-Roman themes and Arcadian landscapes can be understood, as I argue, as vehicles for the androgynous origin of humankind as a paradisiac, total and perfect condition with particular cosmological insights.

4.3. Conclusions

From the arguments presented in this chapter, I understand Enckell's, Kleen's and Stjernschantz's work as Symbolist contributions that draw upon neo-platonic theories of androgyny as a form of asexuality as an emblem of a utopian paradisiac condition or the longing for it. This, I contend, is also mirrored in the Arcadian landscapes themselves in Enckell's *Fantasy* and Stjernschantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)*. By either alluding both to the idea of the third gender and the primordial androgyne at the same time or to one of these neo-platonic ideas of a powerful androgynous spiritual state, the mythological-historical figures in the examined works express a certain connection to cosmological and transcendental truth or the longing for this and in this way make active use of Symbolist neo-platonic theories.

⁵⁰⁹ See BS_paris_1892_084, Ateneum Research Library, accessed on the 15th of August 2018; or Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 74f.

This mental androgynous powerful state is in the case of the depiction of Narcissus in Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse* (1903) and in the depiction of Pan in Stjernerantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) also mirrored through an androgynous physical appearance. When it comes to Enckell's depiction of Orpheus-Antinous in his *Fantasy* (1895) and his depiction of Narcissus in his *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897), the mental androgynous powerful state is enhanced by homoerotic connotations.

Furthermore, the discussed works do all in their own way through amalgamations, modifications or reinventions of classical Greco-Roman themes accord with the Symbolist way of drawing upon those subject matters. This also implied an untraditional iconography, a created ambiguity, and an isolation of the depicted figures from their typical narrative plot. The interlinkages of the figures of Narcissus and Antinous in Stjernerantz's, and possibly also in Kleen's work, of Orpheus and Antinous in Enckell's *Fantasy*, and the possible interlinkage of Pan with a shepherd of a pastoral vision in Stjernerantz's work indicate a liberal treatment of Greco-Roman themes through amalgamations. Simultaneously, these amalgamations also enhance young male idealised bodies and their access to higher truth or their longing for it. Stjernerantz's way of exploring and interlacing the myth of Narcissus and Echo with the myth of Pan and Echo and at the same time modifying the traditional accounts of unfortunate and devastating love into a harmonious and serene (asexual) existence of those figures also constitutes a liberal treatment, to which the ambiguity of Narcissus-Antinous and its connotation of alternative theosophical meaning also contributes.

I therefore consider the discussed artworks, through their liberal exploration of classical Greco-Roman themes and their allusions to androgyny as a spiritual or cosmological power as important contributions to a transnational Symbolism.

5. Scenes of intimate interpersonal encounters.

The longing for the perfect spiritual state through love

This chapter deals with (homo- and hetero)sexual unions or the desire for spiritual and physical closeness as a way to attain a powerful and total androgynous state in contrast to the previous chapter and its focus on asexuality as the other model for attaining such a powerful and perfect androgynous state. It examines Tyra Kleen's three graphic artworks *Sed Non Satiati* (1902), *La Chevelure* (1905) and *Nevermore* (undated) as well as Magnus Enckell's painting *Youth* (1897) as expressions of intimate interpersonal encounters in relation to neo-platonic and esoteric ideas of a recreation of an androgynous condition through the union of body and soul that was central within transnational Symbolism.

It is structured thematically into two different subchapters. By dealing with Kleen's *Sed Non Satiati* (1902) (fig. 57) and *La Chevelure* (1905) (fig. 60), the first subchapter revolves around concrete heterosexual unions and love as a (genderless) perfect spiritual state. The second subchapter revolves, on the contrary, around the longing for a spiritual and (physical) closeness as examined in Kleen's *Nevermore* (undated) (fig. 66) and Enckell's painting *Youth* (1897) (fig. 68). Besides focusing on the interpersonal sexual approaches or unions themselves as possible ways to recreate a mental androgynous perfect condition, the figures' physical appearance and body types will also be studied. Thus, both mental and physical aspects of androgyny, that were prevalent within Symbolist art, will be taken into consideration. How can the four selected works be understood as contributions to a transnational Symbolist art and which Symbolist theories do they actively work with? This is followed by a conclusion subchapter.

Since Kleen's selected graphic prints not only conform to artworks that

draw on Decadent and Symbolist literature, but also combine literary and visual elements explicitly and, thus, represent formal media combinations, the interplay of these textual and visual elements will be taken into consideration in the following. Although I largely take into account the literary references and argue for a meaning-production that is engendered through an innovative and liberate interplay of textual and visual elements, the respective images of Kleen's multimedia works themselves are the focal points of my analysis.

5.1. Physical and spiritual unions.

Love as a genderless perfect spiritual state

This subchapter deals with the topic of heterosexual unions in the graphic art of Tyra Kleen in the early 1900s. Whereby Kleen generally frequently depicted scenes with naked male and female figures as in her lithographs *La Peur* (1901) and *Homo Sapiens* (1904), her *Sed Non Satiati* (1902) and *La Chevelure* (1905) will be examined in the following as examples of concrete physical heterosexual unions. Whereas these two multi-media works will be first examined separately, they will be discussed together in the second part as possible visual reflections of the recreation of the primordial androgyne through love.

5.1.1. The ephemeral moment of ideal love

Kleen's lithograph *Sed Non Satiati* from 1902 (fig. 57) depicts a naked man and woman on a roof terrace engrossed in a passionate kiss.

In contrast to the version, that is included in Kleen's private estate record at Valinge gård as well as the version from the Gothenburg Museum of Art,⁵¹⁰ the version from *The National Library of Sweden*⁵¹¹ consists of a coloured orange sky and the detail of an orange setting sun in the image's

⁵¹⁰ <http://emp-web-34.zetcom.ch/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=27605&viewType=detailView>, accessed on the 26th of May 2021.

⁵¹¹ <http://libris.kb.se/bib/11790263?tab2=toc>, accessed on the 26th of May 2021.



Fig. 57. Tyra Kleen, *Sed Non Satiati* (1902).
The National Library of Sweden, Stockholm.

background as well as the first ten of in total fourteen lines of the English poet Robert Browning's poem *Now* (undated), that have been added with a lead pencil in the lower right corner of the graphic print. Whereas the name of the author Robert Browning himself has also been added, the actual title of the poem has not. Kleen did not only often sign and date her graphic works after printing them, she also often continued to edit her lithographic prints after printing them through colouring them or adding literary excerpts as a handwritten detail on the paper as the last-mentioned version of *Sed Non Satiati* or the version of *Nevermore*, that is included at Valinge Gård, demonstrate. Furthermore, the title *Sed Non Satiati* is a literary reference to Charles Baudelaire's poem *Sed Non Satiata*, included in *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857).⁵¹² This is why two different literary references are included in this edited printed version, which will be studied in depth

⁵¹² The poem *Sed Non Satiati* is both included in the first edition from 1857 and the expanded second edition from 1861 of *Les Fleurs du Mal*.

in the following.⁵¹³ The poetry of both Charles Baudelaire and Edgar Allan Poe was held in high esteem by Kleen who praised these two authors for their capability in finding the right (literary) expression for the kinds of impressions they sought to evoke, as she puts it in her essay *Form* in 1908.⁵¹⁴ Baudelaire's as well as Poe's poetry was also frequently visually explored by Kleen.

Since both the added coloured details in the image and the literary references in coexistence with the actual image similarly contribute to and emphasise the depicted subject of the heterosexual couple's physical union, this multi-media version will be used in the analysis.

As mentioned above, the image itself depicts a naked man and woman engaging intimately with one another. Depicted in profile, they are lying on the floor between a reflective water mirror and a length of iron railings, whose opening aligns with the positioning of the upper part of the couple's bodies. With eyes shut and lying either stretched out on the stomach or recumbent with bended knees on a carpet, the man and woman are engrossed in a passionate kiss holding each other's hands over the woman's chest. United in an embrace, the couple's faces are the focal point of the composition and are further highlighted by the colourful sun in the background, which sets immediately behind their heads and casts their shadow in the water before them. Slightly in shadow, their heads and arms appear somehow conflated. Whereas the roof terrace's architectural space of the scene dominates by right-angled shapes such as the horizontal and vertical lines of the black-and-white tiled floor, the water mirror in the foreground, the iron railings, the organic shapes and lines of the couple loosen together with the visible half-circle of the setting sun and the clouds in the sky the otherwise geometrically strict arrangement of this composition. The fact that the couple's linked arms, hands and faces as well as the setting sun

⁵¹³ With the exception of Patrik Steorn's Doctoral thesis from 2006, in which Charles Baudelaire's as well as Robert Browning's respective poems have been shortly brought up in relation to a concise discussion on Kleen's *Sed Non Satiati* and the depicted body types, the poem's interplay with the actual image has—to my knowledge—not been explored further; Patrik Steorn, Stockholm 2006, p. 202.

⁵¹⁴ Tyra Kleen, Stockholm 1908, p. 69.

and the mirror image are not directly placed in the centre of the pictorial space makes the composition also less symmetrically strict. The man's outstretched legs enlarge the displayed pictorial space to the right of the water mirror, while the woman's bent legs reduce the displayed pictorial space to the left of the water mirror. The couple's different body postures give their profile itself also a more lively and dynamic form. By displaying the scenery from the viewpoint of the couple's meeting faces somewhere high up on a rooftop's outdoor space, the cloudy and colourful evening sky dominates the panoramic view in the background. The only indicator of the couple's surrounding are the spires and roofs in the far distance in the right background. Besides the impression of being placed far away from somewhere else with a small city in the distance, the scene is, however, unfixed rather than fixed in time and place. Moreover the meeting of the man's and woman's bodies is highlighted in different ways. Being framed by the setting sun in the background and the water mirror in the foreground, the linked faces, arms and hands create together, with the sun behind the couple, a circle-like condensed shape, to which even their bodily reflection in the water mirror contributes. At the same time, the couple's kissing lips in the middle of the created circle-like shape constitute also the vanishing point of the spatial depth, which enhances the meeting of their bodies even more.

Although the depicted naked male body and the naked female body are due to their slim and athletic anatomy quite similar, they do not, I argue, represent an androgynous strategy of staging their bodies, in contrast to the description of their bodies as androgynous within previous research contributions.⁵¹⁵ The female figure is with her physical characteristics such as the long and loose hair, which extends in strands to the water mirror, and through her chest, on which the interlocked hands of her and the man rest, depicted with feminine traits. The male figure's muscular buttocks, legs, and back make his physical appearance accord with the male modern athletic body type, that evolved in the late nineteenth century. As already mentioned above in relation to the discussion of Narcissus' body in Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse* (1903), a modern athletic male body type emerged at the

⁵¹⁵ Patrik Steorn, Stockholm 2006, p. 201ff.; Patrik Steorn, Gothenburg 2015, p. 64.

turn of the twentieth century, which was characterised by a well-trained male body with agility, mobility, and sharp and clearly prominent muscles instead of the earlier prevalent ideal of a well-trained, large and heavy male body.⁵¹⁶ The female figure mirrors through her slim instead of voluptuous body this athletic body type as well without, however, transgressing feminine gender norms. Thus, it is, as I argue, first and foremost the man's and woman's heterosexual union in Kleen's *Sed Non Satiati*, that reflects androgyny and hardly their physical characteristics. This will be dwelt on in the following. Nevertheless, Kleen's display of a heterosexual couple with such a physical likeness was still uncommon and daring considering the late nineteenth-century feminine and masculine normative expectations as being fundamentally different as Patrik Steorn has also pointed out.⁵¹⁷ A similar physical alikeness between the opposite sexes and similar athletic body types are also discernible in Kleen's *La Peur* (1901).

In addition to this, the depiction of young nude male bodies, which correspond to the modern athletic body type, also appears, for instance, within the graphic art of Max Klinger and his mythological subject matters. As her diary entries demonstrate, Kleen studied Max Klinger's graphic art very frequently in Stockholm, Berlin, Munich, and Dresden around the turn of the twentieth century.⁵¹⁸ When comparing, for instance, the depiction of

⁵¹⁶ See for instance: Patrik Steorn, Stockholm 2006, p. 76ff & p. 201ff.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

⁵¹⁸ Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 21st of January 1895, Berlin [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 2; "Been to the Kupfer[s]tichkabinett and saw Max Klinger's?" // "Fm var i Kupfer[s]tich kabinett o såg Max Klingers?"; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 26th of August 1898, Stockholm [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 15; "I was at the National Museum [...] and saw Lundgren's oriental watercolours and Max Klinger's exhibition" // "Var på Nationalmuseum. [...] och såg å Lundgrens orientalska akvareller och Max Klingers utställning"; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 23th of September 1898, Dresden [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 16; "Before noon I was at the gallery and saw Max Klinger" // "Fm var i galleriet och såg å Max Klinger"; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 29th of September 1899, Stockholm [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 17; "I was at the National Museum and saw Klinger." // "Voro i Nationalmuseum och sågo Klinger."; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 5th of October 1900, Stockholm [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 15; "National Museum and saw Klinger and Böcklin." // "Nationalmuseum och såg Klinger och Böcklin."; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 1st of December 1900,

nude males with muscular buttocks, legs and backs in Klinger’s “The Kidnapping of Prometheus” or “The Liberated Prometheus”, included in his *Brahms-Phantasia* (fig. 58 & fig. 59), with Kleen’s depiction of a hard, slender and athletic naked male body in her *Sed Non Satiati* (1902) or in other lithographs like in her *La Peur* (1901), the modern and athletic male body type is employed in a similar way by Klinger and Kleen. However, instead of displaying a mythological topic as Klinger did, Kleen’s depiction of the naked female and male body is not set in a mythological frame, which makes their nakedness more controversial and *Sed Non Satiati* into a daring subject matter. I contend this gives reason to regard the graphic art by Klinger and Kleen as an example of relational artistic exchange.



Fig. 58 & 59. Max Klinger, *The Kidnapping of Prometheus* and *The Liberated Prometheus*, illustrations of *Brahms-Phantaisie* (1894). Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Sammlung Kunstbibliothek, Sammlung Grafikdesign.

Berlin [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 18; “Before noon we were at ? and saw Max Klinger.” // “Fm voro vi i ? och såg Max Klinger.”; Tyra Kleen’s diary entry from the 11th of June 1901, Munich [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 18; “...then at Ku[pf]erst. Nab. and saw Max Klinger.” // “...sedan I Ku[pf]erst. Nab. och såg å Max Klinger.”; Tyra Kleen’s diary entry from the 21st of November 1901, Berlin [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 27; “I was [...] at museums and saw Max Klinger.” // “var [...] på museerna och såg på Max Klinger.”; Tyra Kleen’s diary entry from the 5th of June 1902, Munich [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 17; “Before noon I was at the Kupferstic[h]kabine[tt] and saw Max Klinger.” // “Fm var I Kupferstic[h]kabine[tt] och såg på Max Klinger.”; Tyra Kleen’s diary entry from the 27th of November 1902, Berlin [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 27; “With the countess at the [Ku]pferstic[h]kabinett and saw Max Klinger // “Med grevinnan på [Ku]pferstic[h]kabinett och såg på Max Klinger.”

Moreover, although the selected title for the artwork clearly refers to Baudelaire's poem *Sed Non Satiata*, included in *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), the title is not a mere adoption but a modification with a radical shift in content. Kleen changed the original title of the poem from "Insatiable lust" or "She is not satisfied"—as Baudelaire's poem can be translated—to "They are not satisfied". By removing the female denotation of the Latin expression for one's insatiable lust and turning it into a plural denotation, Kleen's title for the above-described image highlights a mutually equal sexual desire in the displayed scene of heterosexual intimacy. On the contrary, Baudelaire's poem *Sed Non Satiata* conforms to a male subject's perception of a *femme fatale*-like object and represents in this way a male-voyeuristic and a female-objectified perspective.⁵¹⁹ The poem's male perception of a female object will be discussed in the following, which—however—is complicated by the fact that this so-called poem of scents, centred around the olfactory, is characterised by a fragmentary and enigmatic language.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹ "XXVI: Sed Non Satiati

Bizarre déité, brune comme les nuits,
 Au parfum mélangé de musc et de havane,
 Œuvre de quelque obi, le Faust de la savane,
 Sorcière au flanc d'ébène, enfant des noirs minuits,

Je préfère au constance, à l'opium, au nuits,
 L'élixir de ta bouche où l'amour se pavane;
 Quand vers toi mes désirs partent en caravane,
 Tes yeux sont la citerne où boivent mes ennuis.

Par ces deux grands yeux noirs, soupiraux de ton âme,
 O démon sans pitié! verse-moi moins de flamme;
 Je ne suis pas le Styx pour t'embrasser neuf fois,

Hélas! et je ne puis, Mégère libertine,
 Pour briser ton courage et te mettre aux abois,
 Dans l'enfer de ton lit devenir Proserpine!";

Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal: Édition de 1861*, Gallimard, Paris 1975, p. 57.

In addition to the French original, the following English translation has been used for my analysis; Roy Campbell, *Poems of Baudelaire. A translation of Les Fleurs du Mal*, The Harvill Press, London 1952, p. 34.

⁵²⁰ See for instance: Bernd Oei, "Prolog: Sonnenaufgang", in: *Baudelaire und die Moderne: "Meine Blumen sind nichts als bittere Tränen"*, Tectum Wissenschaftsverlag, Baden-Baden 2020, p. 1ff.

Sed non Satiata

“Strange goddess, brown as evening to the sight,
Whose scent is half of musk, half of havanah,
Work of some obi, Faust of the Savanah,
Ebony witch, and daughter of the night.
By far preferred to troth, or drugs, or sleep,
Love vaunts the red elixir of your mouth.
My caravan of longings seeks in drouth
Your eyes, the wells at which my cares drink deep.

Through those black eyes, by which your soul respire,
Pitiless demon! pour less scorching fires.
I am no Styx nine times with flame to wed.
Nor can I turn myself to Proserpine
To break your spell, Megera libertine!
Within the dark inferno of your bed.”⁵²¹

The male first-person narrator reflects on his ambiguous feeling for a female object that oscillates between love and disgust. The male perspective describes the female object as a dark goddess and as a product of witchcraft and ponders on her scents of Moschus and Havana. Her kiss is experienced as mesmerising by the male subject, who calls the subject of his sexual desire a merciless, licentious and self-indulgent seductress whose courage is impossible to exhaust and whose vigour is impossible to break. In this way, the female subject becomes both mystified, exotified, demonised and sexualised by the male object.⁵²² Her sensuality is expressed, in particular, through the male narrator’s lingering on her exotic and aphrodisiac scents. Thereby, her insatiable lust is morally denounced and condemned as something deviating and pathological by the male. This is why this poem conforms well to male perceptions of women as *femme fatale*-like creatures with dangerous powers over the male, which proliferated in *fin-de-siècle* art and literature.

⁵²¹ Roy Campbell, London 1952, p. 34.

⁵²² By comparing her to Proserpina or the Styx as the deity between Earth and the Underworld, she is demonised as well.

In contrast to the male voyeuristic perspective of Baudelaire's poem, Kleen's lithograph is not concerned with the male perception and condemnation of female sexuality. The heterosexual couple in Kleen's artwork seems to be a sign of female and male desire on an equal level and with equal gender dynamics, something that is enhanced by the title "They are not satisfied". No hierarchic subject-object relationship operates in Kleen's artwork. The woman in Kleen's image does not represent an oversexualised and dangerous object as is the case in Baudelaire's poem. The female sensual longing is neither contested, pathologised, nor exoticised in Kleen's artwork, but is as legitimate and natural as male longing. This is emphasised by the physical likeness of the male and the female bodies. Hence, Kleen's media combination destabilises the trope of the *femme fatale*, on which Baudelaire's aforementioned poem dwells, as I argue. Instead of according to a male perception of an oversexualised, perverse, and vicious woman, which was a prevalent male projection within Decadent and Symbolist art and literature as mentioned above, Kleen's multimedia artwork depicts female (hetero)sexuality without being perceived and judged by the male and not as something dangerous or disastrous. Besides that, male sexuality and sexual desire is, of course, also expressed. By drawing upon Baudelaire's poem and altering its meaning drastically, Kleen's graphic print is to be understood as a critical subversive perspective considering male perceptions of female sexuality.

Besides the literary reference to Baudelaire's *Sed Non Satiata*, Kleen also added the first ten lines of Robert Browning's poem *Now* (undated), included in his *Asolando: Fancies and Facts*, to this particular coloured print as mentioned above.⁵²³ The image's topic of heterosexual physical intimacy is echoed in the included lines of Robert Browning's poem. The added lines deal with one single and ephemeral moment of loving union.⁵²⁴ The

⁵²³ Robert Browning lived between 1881–1889.

⁵²⁴ "Out of your whole life give but a moment!

All of your life that has gone before,
 All to come after it,—so you ignore,
 So you make perfect the present,—condense,
 In a rapture of rage, for perfection's endowment,
 Thought and feeling and soul and sense—

poem in general ponders on the notion of merging and condensing one person's life into one perfect moment, in which both past, present and future and feeling, thought, sense, and soul are merged and in which, at the same time, the physical and spiritual union with the beloved one is made perfect. This union is especially expressed in the eighth line, which Kleen also wrote down with a modified preposition:

You around me [at] once, you beneath me, above me

Thereby, this ideal and perfect moment of union is, in other words, perceived as a moment in which the first person-narrator's body and soul are blurred with the beloved one's existence and the beloved's body and soul. This is especially apparent in the two last lines of the poem that Kleen, however, hasn't written down, but that—yet—echo concisely the moment of total physical presence and intimacy of the depicted man and woman in Kleen's lithograph:

When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core
While cheeks burn, arms open, eyes shut and lips meet!

Furthermore, this captured moment of proximity, intimacy and mutual love to one another is imagined to be eternal by the first person-narrator and so suspended from time as something out of time. At the same time that the poem enhances the ephemerality of ideal love, it also portrays the narrator's attempt to turn that ephemerality into a compressed eternal condition. Thus, in coexistence with the actual image of a passionate moment of heterosexual union, the cited poem by Browning highlights the difficul-

Merged in a moment which gives me at last
You around me for once, you beneath me, above me—
Me—sure that despite of time future, time past,—
This tick of our life-time's one moment you love me!
How long such suspension may linger? Ah, Sweet—
The moment eternal—just that and no more—
When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core
While cheeks burn, arms open, eyes shut and lips meet!";

See for instance: Robert Browning, *The Complete works of Robert Browning: with variant readings and annotations*. Vol. 17, Ohio Univ Pr, Athens, Ohio 2011, p. 11.

ty and longing for ideal love and the longing for ideal love as something enduring rather than something ephemeral, as I argue. Furthermore, the added lines of Browning's poem also influence the way in which the title can be understood. In conjunction with Browning's poem, the title "Sed Non Satiati" or "They are never satisfied" can rather be understood as the difficulty or even impossibility of a lasting ideal love and union than an insatiable desire, which the image as this one moment of ideal intimacy is contrasted against.⁵²⁵

The quoted poem of Browning strongly contributes in this way to putting emphasis on the heterosexual union as such in the image instead of on the individual female or male sexuality, which also is enhanced by the linked bodies which almost appear conflated. Thus, androgyny is, thereby, linked to the physical and spiritual union rather than to physical characteristics.

5.1.2. Love as the conflation of soul and spirit

Kleen's lithographic print *La Chevelure* or *The Hair*, which is to be found in *The National Library of Sweden*, was made in 1905 as Kleen's added date under the image in the left corner records (fig. 60).⁵²⁶ The title is a clear reference to Baudelaire's poem of scents with the same title, that is included in the second edition of *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1861), which is a literary reference that is made even more central through the French cited lines of Baudelaire's poem *La Chevelure*. Kleen added the second to the fifth line of the second verse as a graphic textual feature instead of a handwritten detail; in that sense it is a literary reference that was already integrated before printing and that, in other words, appears on all of the graphic prints.⁵²⁷ This

⁵²⁵ With regard to innovative and untraditional text-image-relationships in Tyra Kleen's art and the Symbolist conception of illustration, see for instance: Birte Bruchmüller, "The Symbolist Conception of Illustration and Tyra Kleen's *Nevermore*", in: *the Edgar Allan Poe Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2021), Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.

⁵²⁶ <http://libris.kb.se/bib/11790263?tab2=toc>, accessed on the 1st of June 2021.

⁵²⁷ All the prints of this lithograph, which are known to me, contain the printed quotation of Baudelaire's *La Chevelure*, for instance the one at Valinge gård or at Gothenburg Museum of Art; <http://emp-web-34.zetcom.ch/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=27604&viewType=detailView>, accessed on the 1st of June 2021.

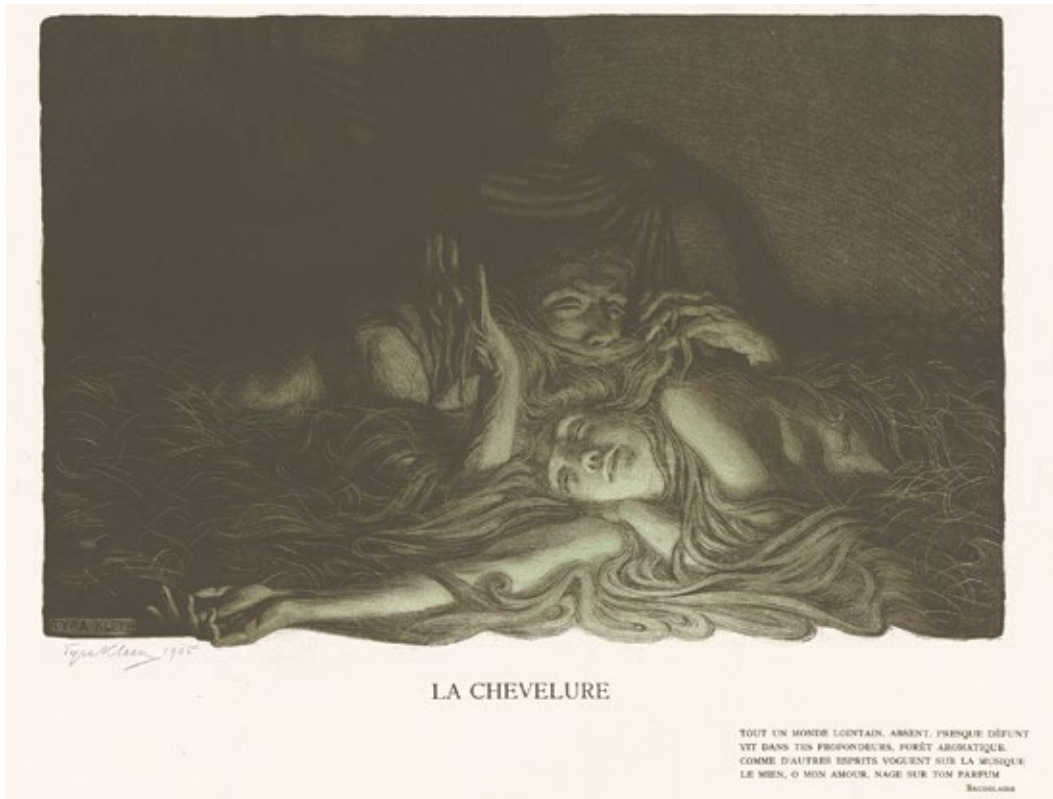


Fig. 60. Tyra Kleen, *La Chevelure* (1905).
The National Library of Sweden, Stockholm.

integration from the beginning enhances the importance of these lines for the comprehension of the image.

Tout un monde lointain, absent, presque défunt,
Vit dans tes profondeurs, forêt aromatique!
Comme d'autres esprits voguent sur la musique,
Le mien, ô mon amour! nage sur ton parfum.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁸ Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal: Édition de 1861*, Gallimard, Paris 1975, p. 54f. In addition to the French original, the following English translation has been used as well for my analysis:

“(An absent world, defunct, and far away)
Within that scented forest, dark and dim.
As other souls on waves of music swim,
Mine on its perfume sails, as on the spray.”;
Roy Campbell, London 1952, p. 30.

In contrast to the above-discussed multimedia artwork *Sed Non Satiati* and its complex interplay of several textual and visual elements, the included visual and textual elements in Kleen's *La Chevelure* all draw on Baudelaire's poem *La Chevelure*.

Kleen's image displays the upper part of a recumbent woman and her loose and extraordinarily abundant hair that both covers her otherwise naked body and is spread out through the undefinable dark pictorial space of the image's foreground and middle ground. The female figure is accompanied by a recumbent male figure diagonally behind her, who is passionately smelling on a couple of strands of the woman's hair that he lifts up with his two hands. With his eyes half-closed, he appears to be completely immersed in inhaling and exploring the scent of the woman's hair, which appears to put him in an intense sensual state. In this way, the depicted intimate scene between the female and male conforms to a large degree to the subject and setting of Baudelaire's poem *La Chevelure*, which is set in a dark room in the evening as expressed in the first verse—similar to Kleen's image of an undefinable dark pictorial space. The woman in Kleen's graphic print lies on her side, rests her head on both her bent left arm and stretched out right arm and gazes with half-closed eyes and a half-open mouth towards the beholder. Both the woman and the man's body language indicate with their half-closed eyes and delighted facial expressions an immersion into a dreamy state at the same time that they appear to be sensually pleased.

Baudelaire's *La Chevelure*, a so-called poem of scents, portrays a male first-person narrator's memories, dreams, and associations that are triggered by the curly, flowing, fragrant hair of the woman he desires.⁵²⁹ By according to an introspective mood and by, in other words, giving an account of the male narrator's inner world or his realm of imagination, it is centred around the female subject of the narrator's sexual and sensual

Thereby, the French version with expressions like a 'far away world, absent, almost defunct, living in your depths with the fragrance of forests' and 'my [soul], o my love, floats in your perfume' will be mostly emanated from.

⁵²⁹ This narrative perspective is not outspokenly male. Nevertheless, the presented angle goes hand in hand with contemporary nineteenth-century gender binary conceptions as well as with male perceptions of the female.

longing. The overall poem is characterised by a high density of given allusions to all the senses and especially the sense of smell but also the intangible sense of hearing like the aromatic forest, music, voices, scents, sounds and light, which trigger the narrator's sexual desire.⁵³⁰ Thereby, the narrator becomes somewhat intoxicated by the scent of the hair of his beloved and describes the flowing and fragrant hair as something both exotic and mystical. Furthermore, an absent far-away world with the aroma of a forest is imagined to live in the female's depth, which is expressed in the first two lines that Kleen has added to her graphic print. In addition, the other cited lines render the male narrator's envision of his spirit as something that is merged with the smell or perfume of his beloved one in comparison to other spirits' connection with music. A similar kind of emblem of the merging of the narrator's spirit and intellect with the addressed female's spirit reappears in both the fifth and sixth verses.⁵³¹ By implying a deeper connection with the ocean, which the narrator plunges into, as well as with the sky, these verses dwell on the encounter and caresses of the male narrator's and his beloved female's spirit in nature. Thus, the poem epitomises frequently the desired conflation with either the beloved's scent

⁵³⁰ Kleen's short novel "The unconscious" ("Det undermedvetna") with the subtitle "Perfume" ("Parfym") as well as her lithograph *Perfume* (also called *Parfum orientale*) are other works, in which Baudelaire's poems of scents and their focus on intangible senses of smelling and hearing functioned as a source of reference, as I argue further; "Parfym", in: *IDUN. Illustrerad Tidning för kvinnan och hemmet* 21.02.1909, pp. 96–97; lithograph *Parfum orientale* (1907), KoB Portfölj 8:1–20, the National Library of Sweden.

⁵³¹ "I'll plunge my head in it, half drunk with pleasure

—
 In this black ocean that engulfs her form.
 My soul, caressed with wavelets there may
 measure
 Infinite rockings in embalmed leisure,
 Creative idleness that fears no storm!" (5th verse)

"Blue tresses, like a shadow-stretching tent,
 You shed the blue of heavens round and far.
 Along its downy fringes as I went
 I reeled half-drunken to confuse the scent
 Of oil of coconuts, with musk and tar." (6th verse);
 Roy Campbell, London 1952, p. 30f.

or the beloved's soul and spirit, whereas the physical union is made less immediate.

The motif of the merging of souls is, therefore, I argue, also of central importance in Kleen's *La Chevelure* both considering the intimate and ecstatic heterosexual scene of the image itself and considering the above-mentioned cited lines. The abundance of the female's hair both conflates the male and female figure physically and spiritually and makes their bodies almost look like a single entity rather than two clearly distinguishable bodies. Although clearly referring to Baudelaire's poem about the scents of the desired woman's hair, Kleen's image extends the one-sided male narrative perspective, on which the poem is based, and makes it possible to read the depicted scene of sensual pleasure from both the male and the female perspective.⁵³² Kleen's image is to be read openly as the depiction of mutual female and male desire without taking a particular male narrative perspective and without an operating male gaze, as I argue. In addition to that, Kleen's image gives more space to the woman and her hair in the fore- and middle ground and highlights her face, arms and curly hair through illuminating these body parts. A source of light, which comes from the lower right, creates an interplay of light and shadow—a so-called *chiaroscuro*—and accentuates the female figure, whereas only a few accents of light are cast on the male figure's lifted arms as well as his eyes and nose, while the rest of his body remains in darkness. In addition to this, the light source casts the shadow of the man's body on the wall diagonally behind him. The male body's shadow on the wall distorts his body proportions and creates a silhouette of his body that is remarkably reminiscent of a Pan-like or satyr-like mythological creature due to the elongated hands—almost reminiscent of claws and large pointy ears. Even though the elongated man's shadow on the wall appears somewhat threatening at the same time that the female body is more emphasised than the male one, I still do not comprehend the intimate encounter of the man and woman as a male voyeuristic subject-position and female objectification. The shadow unites the woman's hair and the man's distorted body into a merged visual representation

⁵³² However, a male perspective is still apparent in the cited lines.

and can, in that sense, be regarded as an emblem for the man's and woman's spiritual and physical union, as I argue. I contend that since both the man's and woman's ecstatic and almost somnolent state of mind indicates their sensual and spiritual pleasure in each other, the scene expresses their mutual relaxation and enjoyment of being intimate with the other sex. Therefore, my comprehension of the depicted heterosexual encounter as an expression of the man's and woman's sensual and spiritual union can be seen as an enriching alternative contribution to the few previous analyses of this work, known to me, for example, Niclas Franzén's short account. Niclas Franzén regards *La Chevelure* as one example of several works by Kleen, that are reflections of the male gaze and point of view, whereby he also highlights his argument as being in accordance with Elin Wägner's assessment of Kleen's art, which she gave in her article "Linjer och symboler. Några ord om Tyra Kleens konst" from 1909, published in the journal *IDUN (Illustrated Journal for Woman and Home)*.⁵³³

Furthermore, Kleen's display of and emphasis on a passive recumbent female figure with masses of hair and a languorous gaze, that meets the beholder, is also an example *par excellence* of the iconography of women within Art Nouveau. The female figure in her *La Chevelure* draws both in terms of subject matter and style upon predominant Art Nouveau works of art and makes Kleen's work a clear expression of this movement. It is, in particular, the decorative, stylised display and linear treatment of the curly hair in the very foreground of the pictorial space, that is characterised by a typical Art Nouveau visual language. A similar decorative depiction of female hair is apparent in Kleen's lithograph *Homo Sapiens* (1904), in which the female figure's hair shape is merged with the representation of a bonfire next to her. The billowing and wavy lines of this illuminated strand of curly hair in Kleen's *La Chevelure* are at the same time also making the lower image frame into an organic and irregular instead of a straight

⁵³³ Niclas Franzén, Björkvik 2016, p. 83; Elin Wägner, "Linjer och symboler. Några ord om Tyra Kleens konst", in: *IDUN. Illustrerad Tidning för kvinnan och hemmet*, 21.09.1909, Stockholm 1909, p. 94. According to Wägner, a male trait is sometimes prominent in Kleen's art like in her *Homo Sapiens* (1904) or her *A Mountain Dream* (1903–04). However, I do rather not consider this assessment by Wägner as being related to the deployment of a male gaze in Kleen's *La Chevelure*, which is the way Franzén puts it.



Fig. 61. Tyra Kleen, illustration to “Lifvets gåfvor”, in Olive Schreiner’s *Drömmar* (1897).

line, to which the woman’s stretched out right arm, that goes diagonally through the foreground, also contributes. The loose and long hair of a recumbent, half-naked, sensual woman in one of Kleen’s illustrations of Olive Schreiner’s short story “Life’s Gifts” (“Lifvets gåfvor”), included in the Swedish version of *Dreams* (1897), extends in the same way as in Kleen’s *La Chevelure* the image frame (fig. 61). Hence, due to Kleen’s use of organic and billowing lines and shapes as well as Kleen’s chosen technique for her black-and-white-lithographic print and this multi-media work’s accordance with graphic art and book design as the most prevalent expression of Art Nouveau,⁵³⁴ Kleen actively worked with typically stylistic and technical features of Art Nouveau in her *La Chevelure*.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ See for instance: Robert Schmutzler, *Art Nouveau (Art nouveau—Jugendstil 1962)*, Abrams, New York 1878, p. 11f.

⁵³⁵ Kleen’s *La Chevelure* and its way of making use of a European-wide applied stylised and decorative Art Nouveau style goes hand in hand with Daniel Prytz’s assessment of this graphic work of art as one of the foremost Swedish examples of art nouveau; Daniel Prytz, Stockholm 2015, p. 122.

Moreover, by drawing upon the topic of the profusion of female hair and the man's fascination for female hair, Kleen makes also use of a subject matter that was very characteristic of Art Nouveau.⁵³⁶ The depiction of masses of women's hair as an almost obsessively often used motif by Art Nouveau and Symbolist male artists often implied erotic suggestiveness and was closely allied to a woman's sinful attributes of her sex. The recumbent woman's ecstatic gaze and the abundance of the woman's hair in Kleen's *La Chevelure* reminds of the frequent display of the mythological figure Medusa and her serpent-hair within Symbolism and Art Nouveau as in Franz von Stuck's art. The decorative treatment of the hair is also reminiscent of Alphonse Mucha's lithograph *Zodiac* (1896) while the woman's long and loose hair and its way of linking the woman with the man also reminds of Edvard Munch's oil on canvas *Vampire* (1895) (fig. 62). Since Kleen visited Franz von Stuck's studio in March 1895 during her artistic apprenticeship in Munich⁵³⁷ as well as Alphonse Mucha's studio in Paris in March 1900,⁵³⁸ she must have been well-acquainted with these artists and the profusion of female hair in their art. In addition to that, Kleen also met Edvard Munch during her Italian sojourn in Florence,⁵³⁹ which makes it likely that both the display of abundant female hair in Mucha's, von Stuck's and Munch's art was a source of reference for her *La Chevelure*.

However, even though the female figure in Kleen's graphic print is undoubtedly portrayed as being quite sensual and tempting, this artwork still neither stresses the female figure's dangerously seductive power and decadent depravity nor condemns the female figure's sensual longing as something deviating, as mentioned above. Kleen's *La Chevelure* is rather expressing a physical heterosexual encounter of mutual enjoyment, in which the spiritual union is highlighted and welcomed, as I understand it. Thereby, the use of hair as a way of conflating the male and female body is reminis-

⁵³⁶ See for instance: Jan Thompson, "The Role of Woman in the Iconography of Art Nouveau", in: *Art Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Winter 1971–1972), p. 160ff.

⁵³⁷ Niclas Franzén, Björkvik 2016, p. 62.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁵³⁹ Karin Ström Lehander, Uppsala 2018, p. 38.



Fig. 62. Edvard Munch, *Vampire* (1895).
Munch Museum, Oslo.



Fig. 63. Peter Behrens, *The Kiss* (1898),
in: *Pan*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (Jul–Aug–Sept
1898).

cent of Paul Behrens' graphic print *The Kiss* (1898) (fig. 63), in which two kissing faces are framed by their intertwined hair. Hence, at the same time that Kleen's *La Chevelure* is a clear expression of Art Nouveau in terms of subject, style and medium, it is also through the display of heterosexual mutual desire for and enjoyment in each other an original and innovative contribution.

Hence, I argue, as a female Symbolist and Art Nouveau artist, Kleen both positioned herself deftly within the typical Art Nouveau and Symbolist iconography of women and the male-coded imagery conventions, but reversed at the same time misogynist male artistic projections of women as it becomes obvious in her *La Chevelure*. Women artists at the turn of the twentieth century often found themselves in a paradoxical situation; when elaborating on motifs that did not relate to contemporary male pictorial conventions, their art was not regarded to be of such a great quality as that of their male counterparts. When, on the other hand, they made use of conventionally male imagery, they often were judged for unoriginality and for

copying contemporary male artists.⁵⁴⁰ By drawing upon male-coded pictorial Art Nouveau and Symbolist conventions and transforming them to her own mode of expression, Kleen inscribed herself with this lithograph and multi-media work clearly within a transnational Symbolist and Art Nouveau movement.

5.1.3. The restoration of the primordial androgyne through love—androgynous spirituality

As became obvious in the discussions above, both Kleen's multimedia artworks *Sed Non Satiati* (1902) and *La Chevelure* (1905) deal with their different pictorial and literary layers remarkably candidly with the physical and spiritual union of two lovers. Their respective heterosexual couple's bodies are linked and appear to a certain degree even conflated. At the same time, the included literary references increase the expression of not only a physical encounter, but also of a spiritually intense moment that is caused through physical union and the desire for physical union. Whereas *La Chevelure* can be read as a physical union, in which, however, the spiritual union matters first and foremost, *Sed Non Satiati* reflects the longing for an ideal and true love as something enduring and not as something ephemeral.

This is why these two graphic works of art by Kleen appear to not only mirror the subject of heterosexual physical and spiritual love, but possibly also the notion of attaining a state of a spiritual 'genderlessness' or, in other words, androgynous spirituality through the merging of the souls of two loving human beings into a single androgynous individual. This idea of true love between two human beings as a means of becoming spiritually androgynous or genderless was a notion that circulated within late nineteenth-century neo-platonic and theosophical circles, which the transnational Symbolist artistic movement was largely informed by.

Initially, Tyra Kleen developed a great interest in theosophy during her first Parisian sojourn between 1895 and 1897 and onwards. Her friendship with the Swedish theosophical authors Anna Maria Roos and Princess

⁵⁴⁰ Bram Dijkstra, New York 1986, p. 208f.

Mary Karadja, which started 1898 in Stockholm,⁵⁴¹ her registration as a member in the Theosophical Society in Rome in January 1904⁵⁴² and later on her membership in a similar theosophical society in Stockholm as well as her participation in theosophical art exhibitions in Stockholm in 1913 and 1915⁵⁴³ are only some of the many indications that point to Kleen's theosophical conviction that basically lasted throughout her whole life. Her diaries between 1895 and 1903 give testimony to such a theosophical interest for the first time in December 1902.⁵⁴⁴ At the same time, she was also well familiar with theosophical literature such as the writing of the Parisian occultists Joséphin Péladan, Stanislas de Guaita and Papus (Gérard Encausse).

As I have noted several times before, the Symbolist visual language and theory were closely linked and based upon theosophical ideas. As a movement

⁵⁴¹ Niclas Franzén, Björkvik 2016, p. 69.

⁵⁴² "Tyra Kleen 1874–1951. Liv och verk", in: Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin, Niclas Franzén, Karin Ström Leander & Elisabet Lind, *Tyra Kleen*, 1. uppl., Linderoths tryckeri, Björkvik 2016, p. 134.

⁵⁴³ Per Faxneld, Stockholm, 2020, p. 147. Thereby, Faxneld argues convincingly that Kleen very likely during her German period of art apprenticeship between 1891 and 1895 must have already come in contact with discussions on esoteric art, like the Polish novelist Stanisław Przybyszewski's study of esoteric tendencies in Edvard Munch's art, which was published in 1891 and was discussed especially in the German Empire.

⁵⁴⁴ Different diary entries by Kleen from December 1902 as well as several from winter and spring 1903 give insights into her engagement in theosophical networks in Rome together with, amongst others, her Swedish friend Roos, her participation in theosophical receptions and her visit of theosophical lectures of i.e. Mr. Deed: Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 7th of December 1902 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 28: "I was invited for dinner by the countess. We talked for a long time about theosophy." // "[...] bjuden på dinner hos grevinnan. Pratade länge om teosofi."; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 23rd of December 1902 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 29: "In the afternoon I was with Märta at Roo's place and later with Mrs Coproakley, where I met agreeable theosophists." // "Em var med Märta hos Roos och sedan hos Mrs Coproakley där jag träffade trevliga teosofier."; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 27th of December 1902 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 30: "In the evening with Märta and Roberto at a theosophical meeting with Mrs Coproakley." // "På kvällen med Märta och Roberto på teosofisk sammankomst hos Mrs Coproakley."; Tyra Kleen's diary entry from the 21st of March 1903 [transcribed version of Kerstin Gullstrand Hermelin], Valinge gård, p. 9: "I was at Mr Deed's theosophical lecture." // "Voro på Mr Deeds teosofiska föredrag, Via di Petri."

that prevailed in the late nineteenth century simultaneous to the foundation of the Theosophical Society in 1875 by, amongst others, Madame Blavatsky, the Symbolist movement in general and the *Rose+Croix* order in particular was strongly influenced by esoterism and integrated esoteric thinking in their art programme. Against the backdrop of not only Kleen's occupation with theosophy but of the Symbolist movement's general intertwinement with esoterism, it appears reasonable to relate both *Sed Non Satiati* and *La Chevelure* to the theosophical belief of the human being as a fundamental genderless centre, which had been lost when each human being had been adapted to earthly conditions. By attaining a state of balanced development, that is a balanced embodiment of both 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics, each individual was regarded within theosophy to return to a genderless or androgynous state both physically and mentally.⁵⁴⁵ This pursuit of balanced embodiment was also strongly evocative of the Decadent notion of the neutered being as the highest refinement, in which 'masculine' and 'feminine' and high and low are inseparable.⁵⁴⁶

The theosophical idea of the human being as a genderless conscious centre was also closely linked to the notion of the 'divine androgyne' within alchemy, which was a symbol that embodied the union of all opposites and contrasts.⁵⁴⁷ Although not explicitly involving sexual unions, the creation of the androgyne in alchemy was regarded to be the result of the synthesis of the dualistic alchemical worldview and, thus, of natural principals such as red blood and white milk or sulphur and mercury. Thereby, the idea of the dissolution of all contrasts and opposites and the creation of a higher wholeness stood both for the undivided origin of nature as something 'pre-sexual' and for synthesis of everything as the goal of all striving. With alchemy drawing heavily on Jewish esoterism, the alchemical symbol of the androgyne was informed by the Jewish biblical account of the undivided human being.⁵⁴⁸ Like theosophy, alchemy is generally considered to

⁵⁴⁵ Patrik Steorn, Gothenburg 2015, p. 64.

⁵⁴⁶ Barbara Spackman, Ithaca 1989, p. 22.

⁵⁴⁷ See for instance: Per Faxneld, Stockholm 2020, p. 41; or Hans Biedermann, Berlin 1986, p. 57ff.

⁵⁴⁸ Hans Biedermann, Berlin 1986, p. 59. Jewish esoterism or gnosticism, that alchemy draws

be included in the entire field of esoterism, which, in other words, makes it possible to assume that Kleen was not only familiar with theosophy but also with alchemy. Symbolist artists whose art was influenced by esoterism and alchemy were, for instance, the Belgian painters Jean Delville and Fernand Khnopff, as I argue, who both frequently exhibited at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* and who Kleen must have been acquainted with.⁵⁴⁹

Jean Delville's oil on canvas *The Love of the Souls* (1900) (fig. 64) and the displayed scene of the physically and spiritually united heterosexual couple relates visually to Kleen's *La Chevelure* (1905), but also to her *Sed Non Satiati* (1902), at the same time that it visualises alchemical and theosophical principles, as I argue. The shape of the embrace between the naked male and naked female figure in this painting by Delville is remarkably similar to the letter "Y", which within alchemy was a letter glyph that functioned as a stenographic abbreviation for the androgyne and, hence, the embodiment of all pairs of opposites.⁵⁵⁰ This is also supported through the inclusion of the four elements of fire, water, air and earth. Although Kleen has not integrated clear alchemical signs or references such as Delville did in his *The Love of the Souls*, the focus on the visual representation of the conflated and merged heterosexual couples in her two graphic works—emphasised through either the setting sun in her *Sed Non Satiati* or the abundant female hair in her *La Chevelure*—might not only involve theosophical ideas on an androgynous state but also references to the 'divine androgyne' within alchemy and its close relationship to Judeo-Christian cosmological accounts of the undivided and paradisiac origin of humankind.

on, consists also of a biblical account that is very similar to Plato's myth of the primordial androgyne and the undivided, dual-sexed being.

⁵⁴⁹ Fernand Khnopff exhibited five works at the *Salon de la Rose+Croix* in 1897, which Kleen visited, namely *Britomart dans la forêt*, *L'Espérance*, *De la Subtilité*, *La Défiance* and *Les Lèvres rouges*, while Delville did not participate; *Ordre de la Rose+Croix du Temple et du Graal, Sixième Salon Catalogue (VI. Geste Esthétique)*, Imp. Georges Petit, Paris 1897, p. 19. Nevertheless, Delville's art in general was likely known by Kleen, who visited other symbolist exhibition in Paris in autumn 1895, and who was generally well-acquainted with symbolist artists.

⁵⁵⁰ The androgyne in alchemical sources is often depicted as the body of a human being with one female and one male head, which together form the shape of the letter "Y". Sometimes even the literal letter "Y" is added; Hans Biedermann, Berlin 1986, p. 67, p. 73.



Fig. 64. Jean Delville, *The Love of the Souls* (1900). Musée d'Ixelles, Belgium.

The merging of the souls of two loving human beings into an androgynous spiritual state was one way of restoring the dual-sexual primordial androgyne and, hence, a condition of totality, perfection and asexuality, which both Plato's myth about the paradisiac origin of humankind as well as Christian-Jewish religious accounts on an Edenic paradise before the Fall of man emblematised. In the same way as asexuality or pre-sexuality as the first model of the recreation of the primordial androgyne, the sexual union and spiritual unity as the second model of the recreation of the primordial androgyne was also a central basis of Symbolist theories as was explained in the second chapter.

Kleen's two graphic works, with their focus on either the perfect love or the spirituality of love are, in this sense, also reminiscent of the notion of the spiritualisation of love as a Symbolist concept, which within previous research has been summarised with androgynous love. As an included component of Péladan's philosophy of the androgyne,⁵⁵¹ as summarised in the second chapter, the spiritualisation of love was largely based upon Péladan's interpretation of Genesis and his conception of Adam as complete and happy but unable to procreate in his original androgynous state, which, due to its bisexuality/androgyny, also represented a state of unconscious unity.⁵⁵² In order to progress and reach a conscious condition, Adam was divided from his reflex, which became Eve, and developed a desire for woman, which—according to Péladan's interpretation—was necessary for man's general progress towards consciousness. On the basis of this interpretation of Genesis, Péladan formulated his theory of the spiritualisation of physical love as the means to restore the primordial androgyne. Thereby, since sexual desire was not considered to be satisfied by sexual pleasure in reality, which implied that the restoration of the androgyne was only possible in a momentary and artificial way, the progress into the androgyne was—according to Péladan's theory—only made possible when sexual de-

⁵⁵¹ Péladan's philosophy of the androgyne was set forth, amongst other examples, in his *Amphithéâtre des sciences mortes* [2], *Comment en deviant fée. Érotique* (1893) as well as in his *La Science de l'amour* (1911); <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k81592q.r=comment%20oan%20devient%20of%C3%A9?rk=21459;2>, accessed on the 8th of June 2021.

⁵⁵² A. J. L. Busst, London 1967, p. 67ff.

sire was transmuted to moral and spiritual desire. In this way, the reunification in consciousness of man and woman or, in other words, the unity of the spirit was made possible. In this sense, an androgynous spiritual state could be attained through physical chastity and ‘cerebral lechery’, as it was called by A. J. L. Busst. The idea of attaining an androgynous spiritual state through physical chastity has already been applied in the third chapter with regard to the androgynous creative artist. However, instead of emanating from an asexual and therefore androgynous state of mind, this chapter—as the chapter that deals with the second model of the restoration of the primordial androgyny—deploys the notion of a sexual state of mind.

Hence, love within Symbolist theory was regarded to be first and foremost a spiritual vehicle, which in its pure form beyond a physical sexuality had the potential of becoming—together with the loved one—spiritually androgynous. Although mostly theorised by Péladan, the spiritualisation of love became a general Symbolist concept.⁵⁵³ This general Symbolist concept about the becoming of a single androgynous individual through the union of love stemmed largely from Plato’s ancient mythological myth on the primordial androgyny and, in that sense, involved both heterosexual and homosexual unions, that is, unions of man-woman, man-man, and woman-woman as the different versions of the dual-sexed primordial human being that existed according to Plato’s myth. Kleen’s representation of first and foremost spiritual but also physical heterosexual unions appear to relate to the neo-platonic source of the restoration of the primordial androgyny and the spiritualisation of love, as I argue. Furthermore, spiritual love was also equated with obtaining redemption on earth.⁵⁵⁴

The spiritualisation of love seems to be remarkably apparent in the above-mentioned painting, *The Love of the Souls* (1900) by Jean Delville, as well as in the Belgian painter William Degouve de Nuncques’ oil on canvas *Angels of the Night* from 1894 (fig. 65). By including two coupled angels, hovering in the air, whose bodies are merged into one single body while they still have one female and one male head, William Degouve de

⁵⁵³ See for instance: Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 154; or Francine-Claire Legrand, Berlin 1986, p. 78f.

⁵⁵⁴ Francine-Claire Legrand, Berlin 1986, p. 78.



Fig. 65. William Degouve de Nuncques, *Angels of the Night* (1894).
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands.

Nuncques' work displays the topic of love in its purest and celestial form, at the same time that the angelic bodies are reminiscent of the alchemical symbol "Y"—as in the heterosexual union seen in Delville's painting. One of these couples is embracing with a kiss and, thus, depicted as an emblem of the merging of the soul. In the same way as in the paintings of Delville and de Nuncques, I argue the scenes of heterosexual encounters in Kleen's discussed two artworks are an expression for the meeting of the couples' mind and spirit. This is especially enhanced in Kleen's work through the neo-platonic, theosophical and possibly also alchemical allusions to a spiritual androgynous unity and, thus, a perfect and paradisiac state between the heterosexual couples. Thus, Kleen's discussed graphic works do actively work with the idea of heterosexual spiritual unions and contribute to the Symbolist transnational topic of the spiritualisation of love.

Since within Symbolist theory only a spiritualised love was regarded as being able to recreate the ideal of an androgynous spiritual undivided state, whereas physical sexual unions as such were believed to restore the primordial androgyne only momentarily, the subject of the longing for ideal and true love as something enduring rather than something ephemeral in Kleen's *Sed Non Satiati* also appears to allude particularly to the couple's pursuit and challenge of attaining a genderless or androgynous spiritual and mental state.

Although Kleen was critical of Joséphin Péladan's staging as the front figure of the Symbolist *Rose+Croix* order with a priest-like function as well as the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*' exclusion of women artists based on the order's disapproval of the female creativity,⁵⁵⁵ Kleen's produced art recalls the Symbolist art that was shown at the *Salons de la Rose+Croix*. Hence, although Kleen was critical about the Rosicrucian Symbolist art programme, Kleen's two discussed works as well as other works by her, still give testimony to the similarity of Kleen's and Péladan's theosophical and neo-platonic artistic approach.

5.2. The longing for spiritual and physical closeness

In the following, Kleen's lithograph *Nevermore* (undated) and Enckell's painting *Youth* (1897) will be studied as expressions of the longing for spiritual and physical closeness as an extended idea of the union of body and soul and the restoration of the primordial androgyne. Whereas Kleen's work will be discussed in relation to a desired reunion in the afterlife, Enckell's painting will be discussed in relation to homoerotic desire and utopia.

⁵⁵⁵ See for instance: Tyra Kleen, "Symbolism för alla", in: *Aftonbladet*, 24.09.1910, Stockholm 1910, p. 7; or Karin Ström Lehander, "Tyra Kleen. Artist and religious seeker", in: *Approaching Religion*, Vol. 11 No. 1 (2021): *Seekers of the Spiritual Art and Higher Wisdom: Encounters between Art and Esotericism*, <https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.100479>, p. 176f., accessed on the 5th of July 2021.

5.2.1. The desire of a reunion in the afterlife

Kleen's lithograph *Nevermore* (fig. 66), that is to be found in her private artist estate at Valinge gård, is undated but—according to the Swedish art historian Karin Ström Lehander—the first prints of *Nevermore* were made in spring 1904 by Kleen during her long sojourn in Rome.⁵⁵⁶ Besides the title, Kleen's *Nevermore* includes a series of handwritten excerpts from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* (1845) as well as some withered roses that cross the main image frame. The roses and the burning candle in the framed image as well as the depicted person's visible arms and hands are details that have been coloured.

Due to the added handwritten lines and the title, two different references to Poe's poem *The Raven* are made. The cited poem lines do not, in fact, represent complete verses, but instead selected lines from the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth verses. Kleen wrote them down in this way:

[...] Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthé,
from my memories of Lenore
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."
[...] Is there—is there balm in Gilead? tell me—
tell me—I implore!
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."
[...] Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within
the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the
angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom
the angels name Lenore...
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore".

Thereby, the cited lines of the fourteenth verse were partly noted down incompletely by Kleen and in a slightly changed order; at the same time "thy

⁵⁵⁶ In April and May 1904, Kleen made this lithograph and coloured the prints; Karin Ström Lehander, Uppsala 2018, p. 55. In addition to this, a preparatory sketch of the male figure's hand, dated with the 13th of April 1904, and included in Daniel Prytz's article from 2015, also gives testimony to the assumption that this graphic print was produced by Kleen in spring of 1904; Daniel Prytz, Stockholm 2015, p. 120.

memories” was replaced with “my memories” without, however, otherwise changing the content.⁵⁵⁷ Furthermore, Kleen’s way of copying Poe’s *The Raven* is also characterised by splitting some of the cited lines of the sixteenth verse into two different lines and, thus, does not adhere to Poe’s chosen rhythm of lines. Thus, the added poem excerpts can be considered to be read quite freely.

In Poe’s *The Raven*, a man whose beloved Lenore has recently passed away is suffering deep sorrow and despair. Around midnight in December, whilst studying some books without being able to relieve his melancholy over the loss of his beloved Lenore, a raven taps at his windows and flies into his chamber to keep him company.⁵⁵⁸ The selected poem lines, used in Kleen’s graphic artwork, reflect some of the questions and concerns uttered by the mourning man as well as the word “Nevermore” that the raven recurrently replies. By emphasising the raven’s replied “Nevermore”, Kleen’s chosen excerpts from Poe’s poem concentrate on the signs of impossibility regarding the mourning man’s ability to forget and be cured of the loss of his beloved Lenore as well as his reunion with her in heaven. Thereby, the male narrator’s hope of reunion in the afterlife, that is taken away through the raven’s reply, and the narrator’s disillusion of not getting reunited with his beloved again in heaven is particularly focused on. Interestingly, although the added handwritten lines are an expression of the male narrator’s encounter with the raven, the image itself does not reflect this sort of interaction. The raven is not displayed here in any way. Instead, the image represents a male figure, dressed in black, who cowers on the stairs in front of a sarcophagus on which an almost completely covered,

⁵⁵⁷ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Raven and Other Poems by Edgar Allan Poe. Reproduced in facsimile from the Lorimer Graham copy of the edition of 1845 with author’s corrections, with an introduction by Thomas Ollive Mabbot*, New York 1942, p. 4f.

⁵⁵⁸ “Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore —
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—
‘Tis the wind and nothing more!” (6th verse);
Edgar Allan Poe, New York 1942, p. 2.

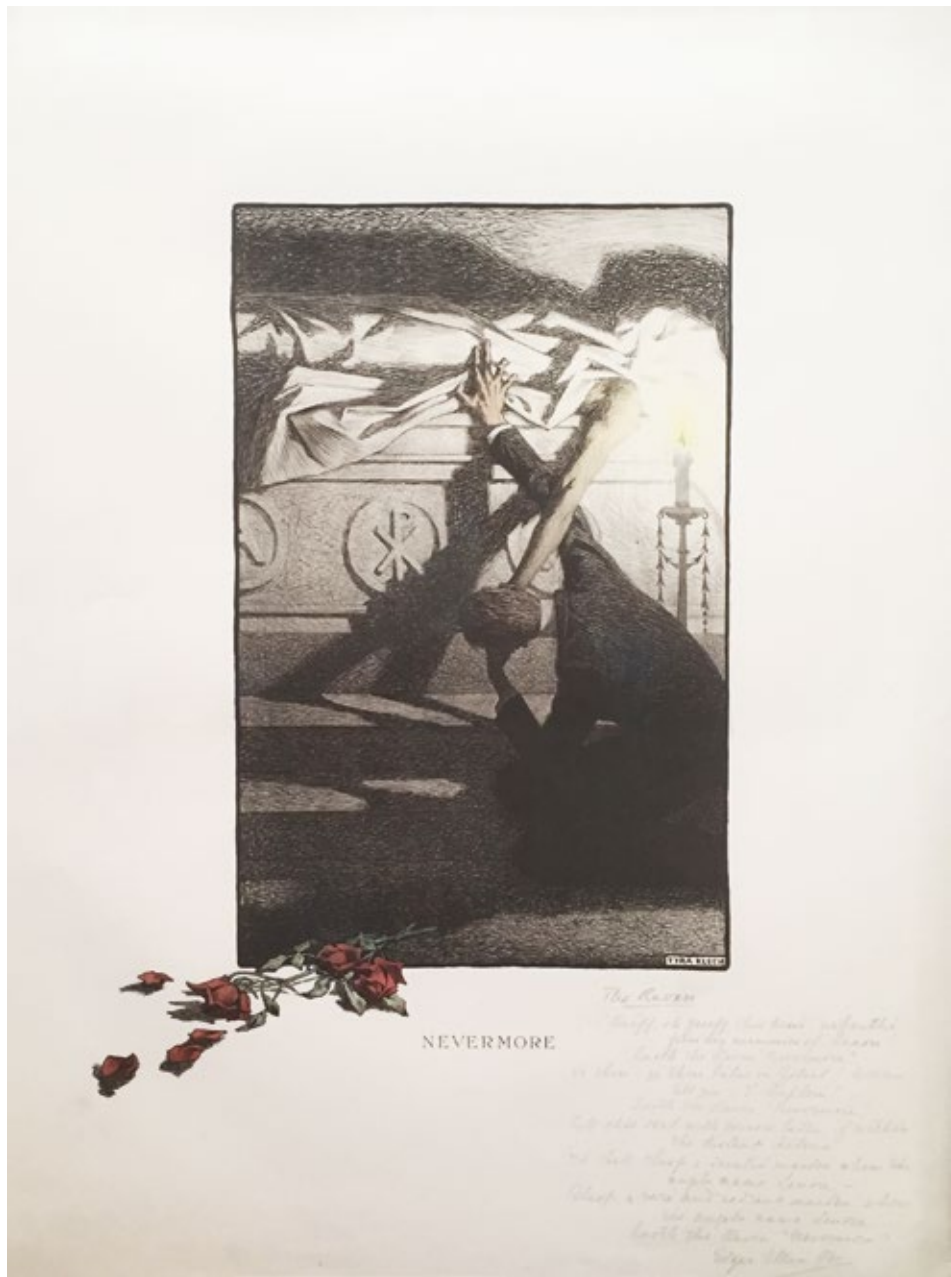


Fig. 66. Tyra Kleen, *Nevermore* (undated).
Valinge gård/Tyra Kleen's private artist estate.

seemingly female, corpus is placed. While turning his back to the beholder, the cowering male figure reaches out with his right hand to the covered female corpus, which is placed above him on the sarcophagus-like stone coffin, whereas his other hand rests on his head. Thereby, his resting head and his stretched-out right arm and his tensed and almost cramped right hand, that tries to grab hold of the deceased covered body, indicate his loss and sorrow for the death of the female. Through the male and female body's shadows that are either cast on the sarcophagus or on the wall in the background, the scene is dramatically charged at the same time as spatial depth is created. In combination with the included textual references to Poe's poem, the imagery is to be understood as a reflection of the loss of the man's beloved and, hence, of the male narrator's lost Lenore, as I understand it. However, instead of depicting the raven approaching the bereaved or their interactions that the included poem lines deal with, Kleen's image expresses the male narrator taking farewell of his Lenore or the memory of his last contact with his beloved, that the narrator brings to mind, and, thus a memory of something that had preceded the actual poem's plot.

Poe's *The Raven* had been illustrated many times before Kleen approached the subject. Prominent examples include the French illustrator Gustave Doré's works from 1893 and the French painter and graphic artist Édouard Manet and his four black-and-white lithographs as well as his title-vignette and *ex-libris* to accompany Stéphane Mallarmé's French translation in 1875.⁵⁵⁹ In contrast to Kleen's *Nevermore*, these more well-known illustrated publications are all to a large degree centred around the narrator's encounter with the raven and the visions that appear in the narrator's mind. The raven becomes even more unimportant regarding the interaction between the sorrowing man and the deceased woman that is displayed in Kleen's image. While the crouching man's arm reaches out to the deceased, her left arm, as the only body part which is revealed—and which appears seemingly tensed and alive—extends downwards in the

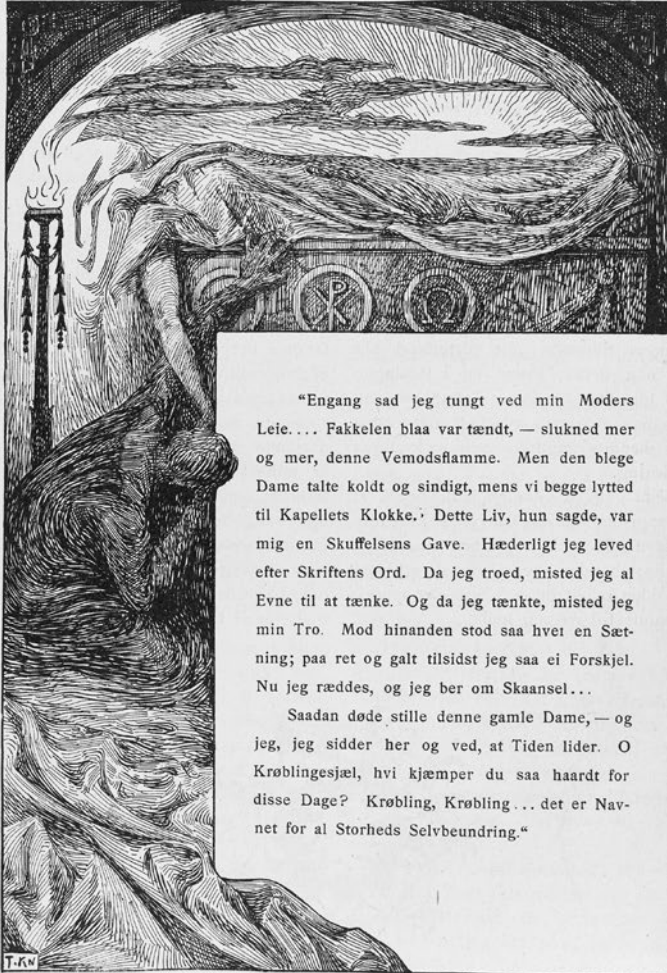
⁵⁵⁹ See for instance: Elizabeth Anne Prelinger, *The Symbolist print. Volume I and II*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Harvard University, 1987, p. 114f.

direction of the man's head and appears to try to make contact with him. Thereby, the woman's hand disappears behind the man's head which creates the impression of constituting an extension of the man's hand that he rests his head on, which makes the two figures more conflated. The arm of the female corpus and its quality of becoming alive again and reaching out for the male figure makes this image to a sort of vision that appears to reflect the couple's longing for a continuing union or a reunion with each other after death, as I argue. The crossing of the man's and the deceased woman's arms and the sort of corporeal contact they thereby establish is highlighted in different ways. By being lit by the burning candle to the right of the male and in front of the sarcophagus, the crossing arms are especially accentuated. At the same time, the shadow that is cast on the stone coffin takes up the gesture of the crossed arms again, which is reiterated through the Chi Rho-symbol (☩) as the symbol of Jesus Christ, with which the coffin is embellished to the left of the actual crossing arms. Even the fact that the crossing arms are coloured details enhances the importance of this gesture and, thus, the bodily and spiritual contact between these two figures, as I understand it.

The analogy of the crossing arms to the Chi Rho-symbol can be understood as a counterbalance to the raven's uttered "Nevermore" regarding a reunion that is expressed in those poem lines added by Kleen. The Chi Rho-symbol, symbolising the Christian God's protection, appears to allude to the idea that the possibility of getting reunited in the afterlife is not forever gone. By being in discrepancy with the pessimistic and disillusioning perspective of the poem regarding the union with the beloved that is referred to, the focus on the gesture of the crossing arms and the analogy to the Christian Chi Rho-symbol in the image alludes to a more optimistic outlook regarding the bereaved's reunion with the beloved in the afterlife, as I argue. This is why the image challenges the raven's pessimistic "Nevermore" or at least adds another layer and, thus, generates a different meaning through the interplay of text and image, that is quite liberated from the poem. In this sense, in Kleen's work the scene of the death of the beloved—a popular topic within Gothic fiction and Symbolist art—expresses not only a scene of farewell but also a scene of reunion in the afterlife.

TRE TECKNINGAR
TILL "DØDENS VARSEL" AF MONS LIE.

AF TYRA KLEEN.



“Engang sad jeg tungt ved min Moders
Leie. . . . Fakkelen blaa var tændt, — slukned mer
og mer, denne Vemodsflamme. Men den blege
Dame talte koldt og sindigt, mens vi begge lytted
til Kappellets Klokke. Dette Liv, hun sagde, var
mig en Skuffelsens Gave. Hæderligt jeg leved
efter Skriftens Ord. Da jeg troed, misted jeg al
Evne til at tænke. Og da jeg tænkte, misted jeg
min Tro. Mod hinanden stod saa hver en Sæt-
ning; paa ret og galt tilsidst jeg saa ei Forskjel.
Nu jeg ræddes, og jeg ber om Skaansel. . .

Saadan døde stille denne gamle Dame, — og
jeg, jeg sidder her og ved, at Tiden lider. O
Krøblingesjæl, hvi kjæmper du saa haardt for
disse Dage? Krøbling, Krøbling . . . det er Nav-
net for al Storcheds Selvbeundring.“

Fig. 67. Tyra Kleen, drawing for Mons Lie's *Dødens varsel* (*The Death's Warning*),
in *Ord och Bild* nr. 10, Stockholm 1901, p. 654.

Moreover, the image that Kleen used in her lithograph *Nevermore* in 1904 is very similar to the one that she deployed for her first illustration of the Norwegian Mons Lie's short story *The Death's Warning* (*Dödens varsel*) (fig. 67), that was published in the Swedish journal *Ord och Bild* in 1901.⁵⁶⁰ Even though laterally reversed, the main motif is the same, depicting a man sorrowfully cowering next to a deceased female's grave and resting his hand on his head. However, in Mons Lie's short story, the bereaved male is grieving the death of his mother, not that of his beloved. Since Kleen made this image accompanying Mons Lie's short story before she produced her lithograph *Nevermore* in 1904, the image in *Nevermore* is the re-used one. In combination with the title, the added lines as a clear reference to Poe's *The Raven* and the coloured red withered roses, that cross the image frame, the use of the image in Kleen's *Nevermore* unfolds a different meaning, namely that one of the grief over the death of the male figure's loved one. Hence, the re-use of the visual trope of the grieving man in front of a female's grave bears witness to Kleen's production of multimedia graphic artworks that were developed in relation to literary sources of reference, but that engendered different meaning instead of being dependent on those same literary sources.

By highlighting the topic of grief for the loss of one's beloved and, at the same time, suggesting the spiritual union with the loved one in the afterlife as something possible rather than something forever gone and impossible, Kleen's multi-media graphic print can also be linked to Symbolist theories on the longing for becoming a spiritual single unity together with the loved one. The desire of union in the afterlife, that is expressed in the cited poem lines and that the crossing arms of the male and female might give hope for, is due to its pure, unphysical, ethereal and mere spiritual character remarkably well in accordance with the Symbolist purpose of the spiritual-

⁵⁶⁰ The first illustration for Mons Lie's *Dödens Varsel* (*The Death's Warning*); Tyra Kleen, "Tre teckningar till *Dödens Varsel* af Mons Lie", in: *Ord och Bild*, nr. 10, Stockholm 1901, p. 654: <http://runeberg.org/ordochbild/1901/0712.html>, accessed on 7th of June 2021. *Ord och Bild* (meaning "Word and Image"), founded in 1892, is a Swedish cultural journal which published literary works with illustrations, vignettes, and many other visual typographical details at the turn of the twentieth century.

isation of love, as it was explained above. In this way, the reflection of the union of the beloved souls in the afterlife reminds also of the Symbolist pursuit of the restoration of the primordial androgyne, which largely drew upon neo-platonic and theosophical ideas. Since Kleen was well familiar with both Symbolist theories, as described above, the topic of the loving spiritual union in heaven in Kleen's *Nevermore* is possible to comprehend as an emblem of the longing for becoming a single genderless or androgynous soul together with the loved one as a state of totality, perfection and origin of humankind. Although not directly portraying a re-established union of heterosexual love as an angelic and desexualised form in heaven, but merely suggesting the man's and woman's desire for this reunion, as I understand it, the topic still reminds to a certain degree of the above-mentioned William Degouve de Nuncques' *Angels of the Night* from 1894 (fig. 65) and its representation of pure and angelic love.

5.2.2. Naked men, desiring gazes and desirable objects—the homoerotic utopia

Enckell's painting *Youth* (fig. 68) portrays a homosocial community of adolescent naked men at the shore of a watercourse in a forest. This oil on canvas with small dimensions was produced in 1897 after Enckell's first Italian sojourn in 1894 and 1895. In comparison to Enckell's exploration of ancient themes as in his *Narcissus* (1896 or 1897) or his *Fantasy* (1895), which dominated his production in the middle of the 1890s, this scene of six naked young men is less reminiscent of classical mythological or historical motifs. Neither does it clearly refer to a biblical account. This is also supported through the title which highlights the depicted male bodies' adolescence instead of their understanding as mythological nude or biblical figures. At the same time that the sexual awakening appears to be a central topic, the desiring gazes of the naked men amongst themselves is another important theme in this painting, as I argue.

The either standing or sitting naked men are depicted in a green glade in the middle ground of the painting, which is surrounded by a dark and calm body of water in the foreground and a dark forest in the background. Set against the dark fore- and background, the naked male bodies stand



Fig. 68. Magnus Enckell, *Youth* (1897). Private collection.

out. Through the reflections of the male figures' legs and feet on the smooth water surface, their bodies are highlighted in another way. Instead of being engaged in practical activity, all of the displayed naked men are either absorbed in thought or looking at one of the other men, which gives their displayed bodies a certain passivity and staged or posing quality.

Three naked male groups can be identified. Although not interacting with each other, two young men stand so close to each other to the left that their feet and arms appear to almost touch, which evokes a certain familiar intimacy between them. In addition to them, one single man stands in a classical *contrapposto* in almost the middle of the composition with his back turned towards the beholder. By folding his arms in front of his chest and gazing downwards, he seems to be in the same way as the man to the very left, who is depicted in a similar body posture, immersed in thought. Additionally, two male adolescents sit next to a tree on a heightened meadow spot to the right in the image, at the same time that they are observed by another young man, placed in the very right, who is leaning against a tree. By holding each other's hand and sitting so close to each other that their legs meet, their interaction with each other emphasises an intimacy between them. The seated young man to the left timidly watches the one

to the right, who is lost in thought. Together they seem to be deeply involved in reflecting on something, which gives them the impression of a strong spiritual bond and closeness at the same time as a certain kind of melancholy is evoked. Due to their mutual interaction the seated men differ from the other men and are also emphasised by being observed by the man to the very right and the slim pale man with the raised arms to the left. I therefore argue that bringing attention to the seated couple through these gazes, the sitting male adolescents and their physical and spiritual intimacy are of particular importance in this composition.

The display of desiring gazes in Enckell's *Youth* is also assumed to be of central importance by Juha-Heikki Tihinen. Tihinen's article "Thinly Veiled Desire—Magnus Enckell's Portrayal of Men" from 2000 is one of the scarce research contributions, known to me, that deals with this small and lesser well-known painting by Enckell. Besides regarding this scene as the artist's way of indirectly revisiting the story of Narcissus—which is an observation that Sarajas-Korte also made in 1981, Tihinen additionally points out the homoerotic atmosphere and the reference to a homoerotic Arcadia beyond heterosexual socio-historical contemporary conventions, that is created through the passive character of the displayed male naked figures and their way of becoming desirable objects.⁵⁶¹ Similarly to Tihinen, I consider the exclusively male community in Enckell's forest landscape and the depiction of their desiring gazes, which are directed at desirable objects, as a vehicle of a homoerotic utopian place similar to a classical Arcadia as well as of the awakening of (homo)sexuality.

In the late nineteenth century, the portrayal of naked men was still a daring theme, which is why explorations of the male naked body were often kept within the context of ancient and classical subject matters. Nevertheless, classical visual references were, thereby, more and more combined with references to the modern contemporary time.⁵⁶² Shepherd boys or fishing boys as classical motifs and reflections of a young and soft masculinity as well as the awakening of an innocent sexuality were frequently

⁵⁶¹ Juha-Heikki Tihinen, Helsinki 2000, p. 125ff; Salme Sarajas-Korte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 159.

⁵⁶² See for instance: Patrik Steorn, "Nakna män, blickar och begär. Kristian Zahrtmann i nordiskt perspektiv", in: *Perspective*, July 2019, SMK Copenhagen, p. 3ff.

explored and were less daring ways of portraying the male nude throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁶³ The English painter Henry Scott Tuke explored, for instance the subject of (nude) fishing boys in the 1880s. However, in contrast to these kinds of fishing or shepherd boys, Enckell displayed older young men, which actually increases the homoerotic tension in his *Youth*, at the same time that he did not employ traditional attributes, poses or body postures except for that of the *contrapposto*. In addition, by being portrayed with individual physical traits such as different hair colours or skin tones, the displayed male bodies seem to represent naked rather than idealised male nude bodies. The naked men's haircuts and their slim, compact and athletic bodies accord with late nineteenth-century male body types rather than with classical Greek ones.⁵⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the absence of moustaches as a popular male nineteenth-century fashion feature as well as of pubic hair still makes them only to vague allusions of modern male bodies.

At the same time, Enckell's depiction of the naked men at the shore of a forest lake recalls the motif of naked bathing men that emerged within visual art at the turn of the twentieth century. A bathing culture and a new athletic cult within nature were symptoms of 'outdoor vitalism' or 'naturalism' and were especially explored by German and North European male visual artists like the Swedish painters J.A.G. Acke and Eugène Jansson, the Danish painter Jens Ferdinand Willumsen, the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch and the German artist Fidus (Hugo Höppener).⁵⁶⁵ This physical culture of outdoor vitalism around 1900 did not only involve the emergence of the new topic of the bathing, well-trained, naked or hardly dressed man within visual art, that had hardly been explored before, this new topic also favoured a homoerotic male culture without being of so obvious kind that it broke the law or social conventions. This appears to be expressed in

⁵⁶³ Patrik Steorn, Copenhagen 2019, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁴ See for instance: Patrik Steorn, Stockholm 2006, p. 76ff & p. 201ff.

⁵⁶⁵ See for instance: Lill-Ann Körber, *Badende Männer. Der nackte männliche Körper in der skandinavischen Malerei und Fotografie des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, Doctoral thesis in Art History, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, transcript Verlag, Berlin 2013, p. 39f.; or Patrik Steorn, Stockholm 2006, p. 214.

Enckell's work and its ambiguity between alluding to a homoerotic utopian Arcadia and modern male vitalist bodies, as I argue.

Furthermore, the oil on canvas *The Swimming Hole* (1884–1885) (fig. 69) by the US-American painter Thomas Eakins, photographs of swimming boys by the French painter and photographer Jules-Alexis Muenier as well as the oil on canvas *The Bathers* (1881) by the English painter William Stott of Oldham, explored swimming boys or adolescents in the 1870s and 1880s and can be considered as predecessors of the motif of bathing men. With regard to the way various angles and body postures of the naked male bodies are staged in *The Swimming Hole*, the implied homoerotic tensions through the depiction of desiring gazes and the employed colour palette with dominating dark green and dark brown hues, it is remarkably similar to Enckell's *Youth*. In particular, the only standing central adolescent boy, depicted diagonally from behind while standing in a broad *contrapposto*, bent hips and resting his hands on his hips, reminds of the centrally-placed single man and his angle of depiction and body posture in Enckell's painting. This back view of a naked young male body emphasises in both the respective works of Eakins and Enckell the body's musculature and, in particular, the buttocks and makes the respective male, passive body into a posing and staged one, which increases the homoerotic tension. However, since Eakins' painting was only exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy's Fall exhibition in 1885 and two other US-American exhibitions, and kept in private position by Eakins himself until he died, it is unlikely that Enckell was familiar with this work.⁵⁶⁶ It is rather the fact that Eakins, Muenier and Stott of Oldham had all been taught by the French painter Jean-Léon Gérôme in Paris during the 1870s or 1880s and that the emergence of the motif of young male bathers was closely tied to the Parisian late nineteenth-century art world, that makes it likely that Enckell became familiar with this visual trope during his Parisian sojourns in the 1890s, as I argue. It is those visual sources of reference that he might have drawn on in his *Youth*.

⁵⁶⁶ Laura Fravel, "Reconsidering Swimming: Thomas Eakins and the Changing Landscapes of Modernity in Late Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia", Masters dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill 2011, p. 7.



Fig. 69. Thomas Eakins, *The Swimming Hole* (1884–1885).
Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, TX, US.

Moreover, I argue that Enckell's way of capturing staged and posing young male bodies from several angles in his *Youth* (1897) draws also upon Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's oil on canvas *Inter Artes et Naturam* (*Between Art and Nature*) (c. 1890–1895) (fig. 70). This work by Puvis de Chavannes depicts several barely dressed men and boys in different body poses and angles, whereby especially the two male figures, who are not involved in practical activity, namely the adolescent boy to the left with a tray of ceramics balancing on his head and the man in the background who stands behind the two other men who excavate architectural fragments, remind of Enckell's staged and contemplative adolescent bodies, in particular of the body poses of the group to the left. In addition to this, the placing of the depicted figures on the large green meadow surface is also similar to the compositional choices employed by Enckell. Since Puvis de Chavannes's art was generally one relevant visual point of reference for Enckell from his



Fig. 70. Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *Inter Artes et Naturam* (*Between Art and Nature*) (c. 1890–1895). The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

first Parisian sojourn between 1891 and 1892 and onwards and since Enckell likely had seen a preparatory study of Puvis de Chavannes's mural painting *Inter Artes et Naturam* (*Between Art and Nature*)—that is another work with the same motif—at the *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* in spring 1891,⁵⁶⁷ Puvis de Chavannes's display of the nude male figures might have functioned as a source of reference for the production of the discussed painting. Nevertheless, Enckell's displayed male figures represent more modern body types, placed in a time- and placeless natural setting, instead of Puvis de Chavannes's subject matter of an imagined ancient past.

The landscape in Enckell's *Youth* becomes time- and placeless through their simple, sketchy and stylised treatment. While landscape details like the dark green grass, the soil near the seated male couple and the dark watercourse are painted as simplified, homogenous, large, and smooth colour fields that create flatness rather than spatial depth in the fore- and middle ground, the stylised rendered small tree trunks in the background create a certain spatial depth. Nevertheless, the depiction of the young male figures is painted with more accuracy. Even though not all details of the six depicted male bodies are carefully rendered, the linked hands and the facial expressions of the two seated adolescent men as the most important

⁵⁶⁷ Salme Sarajas-Karte, Jakobstad 1981, p. 76.

male figures are depicted in detail. While darkness dominates the forest scenery, a faint ray of light can be discerned in the right corner of the forest, which also is reflected in the watercourse in the bottom right corner. However, the treatment of the accents of light are executed in an idiosyncratic and non-illusionistic way, which becomes especially obvious through the water reflection, that is a lighter blue accent than the actual ray of light in the forest background. Placed behind and in front of the seated, physically-linked couple, these vague accents of light also appear to contribute to emphasising this couple. The ambiguous representation of light and darkness and the quite unclear time of day makes the scene together with the simple and abstract treatment of nature into an evocative and emotionally charged landscape rather than a natural scene, that mirrors the physical world and a certain kind of time and place, I argue. This also goes hand in hand with Enckell's statement on his use of a landscape in his art production as an emblem of 'personality' instead of the representation of real nature that he made during his first Parisian sojourn, as was discussed in the fourth chapter.⁵⁶⁸ The evocative landscape creates the impression of reflecting the inner life of the portrayed young men, according to the Romantic and Symbolist principles of the landscape as the mirror of a state of mind, that was a notion that, for instance, was proclaimed by Henri-Frédéric Amiel in the middle of the nineteenth century. This is also supported by the analogies that can be recognised between nature and the portrayed male figures; the dark but still quite unclear time of day in Enckell's *Youth* can be comprehended as an analogy to the portrayed six male figures' adolescent age and their liminal stage between childhood and adulthood. Thus, the placement of these young passive, posing and naked men in this sug-

⁵⁶⁸ Magnus Enckell, unknown date & place, in: *Ellen Thesleff [Ateneum Art Museum, Helsingfors, 27.2.-24.5.1998, Tammerfors konstmuseum, Tammerfors 13.6.-13.9.1998]*, Helsinki 1998, p. 31: "I no longer want to be captivated by the landscape. Nature with its cycle mocks us... Personality which shines from within and does not change with the weather, that is what I seek." // "Landskapet vill jag ej mer låta mig fångslas av. Naturen med sin kretsgång hånar oss...Personlighet som lyser inifrån och ej skiftar varje väder, den söker jag". Magnus Enckell, unknown date & place, in: *Ellen Thesleff [Ateneum Art Museum, Helsingfors, 27.2.-24.5.1998, Tammerfors konstmuseum, Tammerfors 13.6.-13.9.1998]*, Helsinki 1998, p. 31.

gestive, stylised and time- and placeless dark forest scene creates a homoerotic intimate atmosphere far removed from reality.

The homoerotic utopia and the (homo)sexual awakening

The display of intimacy, desire, and closeness amongst young men and the created homoerotic tension in Enckell's *Youth* goes hand in hand with the allusion to the men's sexual awakening and recently-reached sexual conscious state.

The seated couple, to whom the other young men direct their attention, epitomises the moment of sexual awakening, as I understand it. The watercourse's lighter colour close to the seated couple and the faint ray of light behind them can be understood as the special moment of sexual revelation or awakening of these two seated, male adolescents. The moment of the advent of sexuality is also emphasised by the title, which refers to the liminal age between childhood and adulthood. In comparison to Enckell's earlier-produced oil on canvas with the title *The Awakening* (1894) (fig. 71) and the displayed naked adolescent as a straightforward representation of his sexual awakening, the portrayed sitting and linked adolescents are about the same age, which gives support to the assumption of a depicted allusion to their sexual awakening. Whereas the men's genital organs to the left are fully visible, the seated male adolescents' private areas are not, which may be a sign of a not yet fully explored but emerging sexuality. A homoerotic desire is also expressed by the solitary observing young man to the right, whereas the male dual group to the left might be an emblem of an already found homosexual identity.

Even though the forest scene surrounds the male figures with darkness, it is an intense and contemplative rather than a melancholic atmosphere that is evoked. The eternal forest scene as a reflection of the sexual awakening is due to its suggestive and time- and placeless character, also to a certain degree reminiscent of the Arcadian landscape as an utopian ideal, as mentioned above. Nevertheless, this is not as clearly expressed as in Enckell's *Fantasy* (1895) or in Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)* (1897) that were discussed in the fourth chapter. By being far removed from reality, Enckell's depicted reflection of homoerotic intimacy or the longing for that



Fig. 71. Magnus Enckell, *The Awakening* (1894).
Ateneum Art Museum: Finnish National Gallery.

intimacy appears to be set in a homoerotic utopia or homoerotic Arcadia beyond current late nineteenth-century socio-historical discussions of the recently coined term ‘homosexuality’ and its use as something abnormal, pathological and strictly illegal in the context of medical, psychoanalytical and juridical discourses around 1900.⁵⁶⁹ This is also suggested by Tihinen in his article from 2000.⁵⁷⁰

Magnus Enckell himself was sexually orientated towards men and quite open about it.⁵⁷¹ In consideration of this fact, his painting *Youth* (1897) might also suggest a homoerotic desire that he himself identified with without being too explicit due to the distance, that is kept to the contemporary socio-historical context. In that way, he does not depict homoeroticism as deviating from the social norm as it was treated in first and foremost the juridical context but also in the medical and cultural context in the nineteenth century. Bourgeois homosexual—called *invertis* in nineteenth-century France—or unmarried men were considered as betraying the middle class’ social duty of constituting families by disturbing bourgeoisie men’s sexual function that was destined for procreation.⁵⁷²

I consider Enckell’s *Youth* as a reflection of a longing for a restoration of the primordial androgyny through love between men and, thus, of the neo-platonic theory, to which especially the spiritual and physical intimacy of the two sitting men relate. By largely drawing on Plato’s ancient mythological cosmology about the dual-sexed spherical creatures, which implied man-man primordial human beings, homosexual love and union between two men was an elevated way of re-establishing a state of an utopian paradisiac condition. The man-man spherical dual-sexed creature was considered to be of particular strength and nobleness since the masculine was

⁵⁶⁹ See for instance: Patrik Steorn, Stockholm 2006, p. 54. Homosexuality was prohibited between 1864 and 1944 in Sweden and the term homosexuality itself was introduced in late nineteenth century.

⁵⁷⁰ Juha-Heikki Tihinen, Helsinki 2000, p. 125f.

⁵⁷¹ Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 99.

⁵⁷² Tamar Garb, “Maskulinitet, muskler och modernitet i Caillebottes manliga gestalter”, in: Patricia G. Berman & Anna Lena Lindberg (eds.), *Den maskulina mystiken: konst, kön och modernitet*, Studentlitteratur, Lund 2002, pp. 87–116, p. 97.

associated with the mind.⁵⁷³ In this sense, only the male-male union could embody pure spiritual love according to Aristophanes' presented speech in Plato's *Symposium*, which itself is addressed to a group made up exclusively of men. Thus, as the noblest search according to Plato's account on the origins of human sexuality, the neo-platonic notion of a male-male union as the most elevated way to restore the primordial androgynous powerful state must have been especially appealing for Enckell.

Against this background, Enckell's way of alluding to a homoerotic utopian Arcadia can be read, first and foremost, as a reference to the neo-platonic idea of an Arcadian paradisiac, androgynous and powerful condition. By having been very interested in Symbolist theories and the *Rose+Croix* aesthetic principles, by having read, amongst other authors, Plato and Plotinos⁵⁷⁴ and by having attained his artistic apprenticeship at the Académie Julian in Paris in 1892 and, thus, being involved in neo-platonic circles, as it was mentioned earlier, it is likely that Enckell had known theories about the restoration of the androgynous spiritual state through love.

5.3. Conclusions

My comprehension of these scenes of physical and spiritual union or the longing for this as works that allude to the androgynous, powerful, paradisiac state and the neo-platonic primordial androgynous make both Kleen's several graphic prints and Enckell's oil on canvas Symbolist contributions, that both in terms of the respective subject matters and the employed neo-platonic and theosophical sources actively work with Symbolist aesthetic ideas and Symbolist theoretical sources. In addition to this, Kleen's *La Chevelure* is both an innovative and original Symbolist and Art Nouveau contribution with a transnational topic, which reverses or at least does away with stereotypical male Symbolist artistic projections of women. The expression of mutual female and male desire for each other, whereby the

⁵⁷³ Kari Weil, Charlottesville 1992, p. 24.

⁵⁷⁴ Hanna-Reetta Schreck, Helsinki 2019, p. 74f.

female's sensual pleasure is not condemned, makes Kleen's *Sed Non Satiati* and *La Chevelure* enriching Symbolist contributions, which in that sense enhance neo-platonic and esoteric ideas on attaining spiritual androgyny through heterosexual love. Such a longing for a spiritual single androgynous unity in the afterlife is also reflected in Kleen's *Nevermore*, as I argue. Furthermore, Enckell's *Youth* emphasises through its ambiguous way of both alluding to modern outdoor vitalism and a homoerotic utopian Arcadia, the longing for the restoration of the neo-platonic androgyne and, thus, a paradisiac Arcadian condition through love between men as the most enhanced perfect state.

6. Conclusions

This study has shown that there exists a wide range of vital Swedish and Finnish contributions to the transnational Symbolist movement. By being centred around the exploration of spiritually active human bodies, I highlighted in this study genres, visual tropes, subject matters, stylistic and technical means as well as theoretical and philosophical ideas of a European *fin-de-siècle* culture, to which the studied Swedish and Finnish artists clearly positioned themselves through their art.

On the basis of a thematical structure, I examined portrait paintings, motifs from Greco-Roman literature and history as well as depictions of interpersonal intimate encounters as distinct examples of a transnational Symbolist language. Thereby, my analyses demonstrated that works by Magnus Enckell, Olof Sager-Nelson, Ellen Thesleff, Beda Stjernschantz and Tyra Kleen actively work with, deploy, freely interpret and renegotiate Symbolist aesthetics and theories regarding the spiritually enhanced human body and mind. As the overarching topic of all the selected and analysed works of art, the representation of the spiritual human body and spiritual transcendence was, thereby, expressed in multiple ways through an androgynous stylisation of the body and/or the allusion to an androgynous perfect mental condition, references to the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance or the classical ancient Greco-Roman time and, thus, a so-called historicism, the connotation of a religious topic or non-illusionistic stylistic and technical means of representation.

As my discussions have shown, the conveyance of physical and spiritual androgyny is a central feature within the studied artworks, which is an important indicator of their active work with the art programme of the *Rose+Croix*-order and their participation within a transnational Symbolist

movement. Both the depiction of male bodies as in Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)*, Stjernerchantz's *Aphorism* and her *Pastoral (Primavera)* and female bodies as in Sager-Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* and Stjernerchantz's *Self-Portrait* made use of an androgynous stylisation of the body, as I argued, and, thus, a subversive strategy of undermining late nineteenth-century gender binary norms, which clearly positions the works in a *fin-de-siècle*-culture and strongly contributes to emphasising the depicted bodies' spiritual abundance.

In addition to this, the allusion to an androgynous mental state as a vehicle for a paradisiac and perfect condition and precondition for a spiritual transcendence was another central aspect within the discussed artworks, as I demonstrated. Both the Symbolist idea of the restoration of the primordial androgyne through pre-sexuality/asexuality as the first model or spiritual loving unions as the second model of attaining a mental powerful androgynous state, based upon neo-platonic and theosophical theories, and the visual trope of the third gender as the pre-sexual adolescent body and mind with a special insightfulness into cosmological and spiritual knowledge is deployed in the studied works. Thereby my discussion has highlighted the active and liberate employment of the traditional male-connoted Symbolist idea of spiritual transcendence in Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)*, Stjernerchantz's *Aphorism*, Enckell's *Fantasy* and *Narcissus*, Stjernerchantz's *Pastoral (Primavera)*, Kleen's *Écho et Narcisse* and Enckell's *Youth*, but also extensions and subversive renegotiations of this traditional Symbolist idea. The examined depictions of female spiritually active bodies in the studied portrait paintings and the exploration of a spiritual female and male refinement through loving unions or the longing for these unions in Kleen's studied works in the fifth analysis chapter all represent the female spiritually refined body and mind and make possibly also use of an allusion to a female androgynous powerful mental state, as I argued. This is also enhanced through an androgynous masculinised appearance of the female body in the case of Sager-Nelson's *A Girl's Head II* and Stjernerchantz's *Self-Portrait*. Both Thesleff's and Stjernerchantz's way of fashioning themselves in their self-portraits as female artists with spiritual insights are, thereby, also bold inscriptions of themselves into the male-gendered

Symbolist movement. In this sense these works constitute through their renegotiation of male-defined Symbolist notions of creativity, ingenuity, spirituality and androgyny and, thus, their integration of the female gender into the idea of spiritual refinement important and innovative Finnish and Swedish contributions to the transnational Symbolist movement.

Moreover, the male and female spiritually enhanced body and mind was also conveyed and emphasised through content-based and stylistic references to the art of the past.

The references made to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance such as a medieval clerical clothing in Stjernerchantz's *Aphorism*, in the historicised stagings in Sjernschantz's *Self-Portrait*, her *Aphorism* and Sager-Nelson's *Portrait of Mrs Jeanne Eriksson* are used, as I argued, in order to evoke a particularly spiritual and religious mood. These art periods were within the late nineteenth-century transnational Symbolist movement as one symptom of the *fin-de-siècle* culture largely favoured since they were perceived as ideal representations of the Symbolist notion of spiritual or religious inspiration as the direct source for Symbolist artistic creativity. By not necessarily evoking a Catholic revival, which was one feature of Symbolism, but rather a general revival of the integration of an increased level of spirituality in life, similar to the perceived image of the early modern period, these historicised stagings represent the typical transnational Symbolist feature of historicism.

In addition to this, the discussed Greco-Roman classical historical and literary themes in the fourth analysis chapter represent another form of historicism, whereby myths, legends and the concept of Arcadia from the Greco-Roman classical period are explored in order to evoke a utopian, paradisiac and androgynous mental state or the longing for such a state, as I argued. Through a liberal treatment of these Greco-Roman classical themes, characterised by amalgamations and fusions of different mythological and historical figures like Narcissus-Antinous or Orpheus-Antinous as well as modifications of the mythological narrative, the four studied works emphasise the represented figures' isolated and spiritually active and refined condition. Asexuality is, thereby, closely tied to a paradisiac and harmonious state or the longing for such a state. This is why the works both

through the non-traditional and liberate way of revisiting these themes and the incorporation of the neo-platonic idea of the androgynous spiritual state through asexuality make use of Symbolist subject matters and androgynous Symbolist theories, which refer to ancient Greco-Roman literature and history. In addition to this, further references to the art of the ancient past are also made through stylistic and technical means as in the case of Stjernerantz's spring landscape and its fresco imitation and decorative treatment of the surfaces. However, stylistic and technical references to the art of the past are not only restricted to these classical historical and literary subject matters, but are also at play in Thesleff's *Thyra Elisabeth* and its fresco imitation and in Thesleff's *Self-Portrait* and its reference to the technique of the chiaroscuro and the sfumato.

Other rather implicit references to ancient ideas in the analysed works of art are the neo-platonic idea of the restoration of the primordial androgyne through spiritual loving unions and intimate encounters, as explained in the sixth chapter, and through further asexual or pre-sexual female and male depicted bodies and minds as examined in the third chapter. A reference to the ancient idea of Arcadia is also conveyed in Enckell's *Youth* as a homoerotic utopia through the time- and placeless character of the depicted landscape and the longing for interpersonal intimacy amongst the exclusively male group, and, thus, through the second model of the restoration of the primordial androgyne.

Since historicism was a typical late nineteenth-century phenomenon and a symptom of a European *fin-de-siècle* culture, which perceived the contemporary society—dominated by positivist sciences, materialism and secularisation—as in a spiritual and cultural crisis, the reference back to the classical Greco-Roman period or the early modern time was within the transnational Symbolist movement a common way of attempting to prevent a decline of the contemporary society and culture. The historicised revival of the past also often functioned, thereby, as a way to re-establish a close relationship between art and religion, which had got lost in the contemporary secularised society. As an apparent feature in many of the discussed works of art, the examined contributions to the transnational Symbolist movement also clearly relate to the cultural historical context of the

fin-de-siècle. Furthermore, the deployment of the androgynous neo-platonic and theosophical theory in all the studied works and possible references to alchemy in Enckell's *Head (Bruno Aspelin)* and Kleen's depictions of loving physical and spiritual unions as sources of alternative transcendental-mystical approaches is another indicator of the examined works of art as important examples of a late nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle* movement. This can also be related to the androgynous female and male appearances in the examined contributions to a transnational Symbolism and their way of undermining late nineteenth-century gender norms.

In addition to this, Kleen's examined graphic artworks in the fifth chapter and their way of drawing on Decadent and Symbolist nineteenth-century literature also point to an active deployment and renegotiation of a *fin-de-siècle* culture, which liberates aspects of female sexuality and spirituality from prominent male projections of female representation within Symbolist art.

As a conclusion of this Doctoral thesis, the discussed Finnish and Swedish works actively deploy and freely interpret literary, artistic, philosophical and theosophical sources of references that were characteristic of the transnational Symbolist movement. As examples of mutual and relational exchange of artistic, philosophical and literary ideas between European centres and peripheries these works represent the importance of the active participation of Finnish and Swedish artists in the transnational Symbolist European movement.

By examining the selected fifteen works of art by the selected Swedish and Finnish artists, the purpose of this study has been to make a relevant contribution to art historiography and transnationalism regarding Swedish and Finnish Symbolism, in particular, and possibly also Nordic Symbolism, in general. In contrast to National Romanticist Swedish and Finnish works of art, which constantly have been and today are still first and foremost regarded as Swedish and Finnish Symbolist expressions—as the presented art historiographical survey has shown—this project highlighted a relatively unexplored Swedish and Finnish Symbolist stance with nationally independent subject matters. Hence, this study generates not only important knowledge on Swedish and Finnish participation in a transna-

tional Symbolist movement, but also contributes to reconsidering and diversifying existing art history writing on Swedish and Finnish Symbolism. Therewith, it has shown that the examined group of Swedish and Finnish artists gives reason to acknowledge nationally independent Finnish and Swedish expressions as not as exceptional as often assumed within art history. In this sense, this study also contributes to a more appropriate inclusion of internationally based Swedish and Finnish artists with transnational subject matters in the Swedish and Finnish art history. However, many other Symbolist Nordic expressions with nationally independent instead of National Romanticist subject matters remain to be further explored and acknowledged. This is why my examination of a group of Swedish and Finnish Symbolist artists and their exploration of the androgynous and spiritual human body functions as an important point of departure for a further exploration and inclusion of other Symbolist Nordic accounts with nationally independent subject matters, as I argue. The landscape painting of Swedish painters such as Pelle Swedlund and Ivan Aguéli as well as the Danish painter Mogens Ballin can, for instance, be mentioned as other relatively unexplored accounts of a Nordic Symbolism beyond national-building processes. The Norwegian graphical artist Olaf Lange and the Finnish sculptor Ville Vallgren and their interlinkage to a European-wide transnational Symbolist movement can also be mentioned in this context.

The transnational Symbolist movement and its exploration of subject matters beyond National Romanticist currents was more extensive than hitherto acknowledged, especially regarding Nordic symbolism, and there are many interesting works of art to highlight.

Svensk sammanfattning: ”Spirituell transcendens och androgynitet inom den svenska och finska transnationella symbolismen”

Symbolistisk konst från sekelskiftet kring 1900 har inom den svenska och finska konsthistorien i dominerande grad behandlats som en nationalromantisk företeelse med fokus på ländernas natur, kultur och historia. Framförallt det så kallade stämningslandskapet har blivit förknippat med att återspegla nationen och att bidra till nationsbygget som en nordisk motsvarighet till den europeiska symbolismen.

I kontrast till denna föreställning undersöker jag en grupp av svenska och finska internationellt verksamma bildkonstnärer som aktiva och viktiga deltagare till en europeisk symbolistisk konstnärlig rörelse. Den svenska målaren Olof Sager-Nelson, den svenska grafiska konstnären Tyra Kleen, såväl som de finländska målarna Magnus Enckell, Ellen Thesleff och Beda Stjernschantz har under och efter deras olika vistelser i Paris under 1890-talet och framåt ägnat sig åt människoframställningar i andligt upphöjda tillstånd i en rad olika motivkretsar i sin konst. Samtidigt kom dessa fem konstnärer i 1890-talets Paris i kontakt med den symbolistiska ockulta *Rose+Croix*-orden och dess salonger. Denna order utgick ifrån ett androgynt och transnationellt konstprogram med fokus på människans spirituella utveckling och grundade sig på teosofiska och neo-platoniska idéer. Därför undersöker jag i detta forskningsprojekt sambandet mellan konsten av de valda svenska och finska konstnärerna och först och främst *Rose+Croix*-orden och dess salonger mellan 1892 och 1897, men även de valda konstnärernas relation till och medverkan i övriga symbolistiska rörelser med ett transnationellt bildspråk.

Konstnärernas nationellt oberoende motivkretsar med fokus på människans immateriella och andliga egenskaper har i vid bemärkelse antingen förbisett eller ansetts som avvikande ifrån de dominerande nationella konstnärliga uttrycken vid sekelskiftet. Studien uppmärksammar svensk och finsk symbolistisk konst bortom det nationella, och vill därmed bidra till en konsthistorieskrivning som inkluderar det transnationella spåret.

Avhandlingens tre analyskapitel är tematiskt uppbyggda och behandlar porträtt, klassiska grekisk-romerska teman och scener av interpersonella intima möten. Analyserna syftar till att undersöka hur de totalt femton valda konstverken kan förstås tematiskt, teoretiskt, estetiskt och stilistiskt som betydelsefulla bidrag till den transnationella symbolistiska rörelsen. Följande frågeställningar behandlas i studien: På vilket sätt bidrog dessa konstnärer till en transnationell symbolistisk rörelse? Vilka symbolistiska teman utforskar konstnärerna i sin konst? På vilket sätt kommer androgyna symbolistiska teorier och estetiska ideal till uttryck i deras verk? Hur iscensätts och förhandlas genus? Hur relaterar de studerade konstverken till dåtidens kulturhistoriska kontext?

Särskilt fokus läggs på konstnärernas förhållande till den symbolistiska förståelsen av spirituellt transcendent som något uteslutande manligt kodat. Detta inbegrep den neoplatonska och teosofiska idén om ett kraftfullt androgynnt mentalt tillstånd som medel för att uppnå spirituellt manlig förfining, och den feminiserade gestaltningen av den manliga kroppen sågs som ytterligare ett tecken på manlig andlig transcendent.

Såväl publicerat som opublicerat arkivmaterial från konstnärernas arkiv, som brevkorrespondenser, dagboksinslägg, skisser, fotografier, anteckningar om konst, litteratur och utställningar m.m. fungerar som viktiga primärkällor för studien. Även symbolistiska manifest och konstprogram som t.ex. Maurice Denis' "Définition du néo-traditionnisme" och konstkatalogerna till *the Salons de la Rose+Croix* tjänar som centrala primärkällor för att redogöra för den symbolistiska rörelsens transnationella konstprogram och dess androgyna ideal.

Projektet utgår ifrån en arkiv- och objektbaserad metod som motsvarar en kvalitativ komparativ studie.

Med utgångspunkt i att en gren av den symbolistiska rörelsen kan förstås som en transnationell rörelse, som ett stort antal av internationella konstnärer ingick i (bland annat de svenska och finska konstnärer i denna studie), bygger detta projekt på Piotr Piotrowskis teoretiska idé om en horisontell europeisk konsthistoria. Denna teori utgår ifrån plurala, heterogena och öppna relationer mellan olika platser i Europa, dess olika center och periferier utan rumsliga hierarkier och lägger samtidigt särskild tonvikt vid de europeiska periferiernas roll inom europeisk konsthistoria. Därmed tillämpar denna avhandling en kritisk konstgeografi som metodologiskt förhållningssätt som utgår ifrån relationellt och ömsesidigt konstnärliga utbyten istället för en ensidig kommunikation från center till periferi. Med hjälp av detta teoretiska och metodologiska ramverk undersöker denna studie centrum-periferi-sammankopplingar samt integrerar konstnärer från europeiska periferier i den allmänna europeiska konsthistorien.

I övrigt är denna studie baserad på Oskar Bätschmanns konsthistoriska hermeneutiska metod, teori och praxis. Detta innebär att de valda konstverken läses som estetiska objekt i sig och inte som biografiska dokument för de specifika konstnärerna. Tillgängligt visuellt och textuellt material om konstnärernas arbetsprocess och visuella och textuella referensskällor ligger till grund för avhandlingens ikonografiska och ikonologiska undersökningar, samt analyser av genre och stil. För att undvika anakronistiska bedömningar, antaganden eller slutsatser gällande först och främst androgynyt utseende och 'fashioning' i de analyserade konstverken drar projektet även nytta av Michael Baxandalls begrepp 'the period eye'. Detta begrepp betonar betydelsen av samtida socio-historiska konventioner för förståelsen av ett konstverk. Detta innebär en redogörelse av könsbinära normativa förväntningar från slutet av 1800-talet och en transgression av dessa som ett underlag för bedömningen av androgyna 'stiliseringar av kroppar'.

Med tanke på förståelsen av androgynitet som en subversiv strategi, som överskrider det sena 1800-talets binära könsnormer, tillämpar detta projekt även Judith Butlers performativa teori om konstitutionen av genus. Genusidentiteten behandlas därmed som något som upprättas genom 'stiliseringen av kroppen' och med andra ord genom en serie av handlingar som kontinuerligt och uppreparande 'görs' genom tiden.

Utöver inledningen, de tre analyskapitlen och en avslutande diskussion innehåller avhandlingen även av ett kapitel om den symbolistiska rörelsens manifest, estetik och konstteori. Detta andra kapitel belyser den socio-historiska kontexten ur vilken den symbolistiska rörelsen växte fram. Kapitlet redogör för rörelsens transnationella och androgyna estetik och konstprogram och som ett resultat av min historiografiska studie presenteras här de dominerande symbolistiska dragen i svensk och finsk konst.

Föreliggande studie visar att det finns ett stort antal betydande svenska och finska bidrag till den transnationella symbolistiska rörelsen. Genom att fokusera på framställningen av andligt aktiva mänskliga kroppar lyfter detta projekt fram typiska genrer, motivkretsar, stilistiska egenskaper samt teoretiska och filosofiska idéer som är kännetecknande för en europeisk *fin-de-siècle*-kultur, i vilken de studerade konstnärerna positionerade sig genom sin konst. Studien visar hur Magnus Enckell, Olof Sager-Nelson, Ellen Thesleff, Beda Stjernschantz och Tyra Kleen aktivt arbetar med, använder sig av, fritt tolkar och omförhandlar det symbolistiska bildspråket och de symbolistiska teorierna om den andligt upphöjda människan.

Det tredje kapitlet undersöker sju porträttmålningar av Magnus Enckell, Olof Sager-Nelson, Ellen Thesleff och Beda Stjernschantz där de porträtterade personernas spirituella och kreativa kraft accentueras. Kapitlet belyser hur porträtten tematiskt, stilistiskt, estetiskt och teoretiskt bygger på den symbolistiska huvudprincipen att gå bortom den fysiska världen och utforska det immateriella.

Detta gestaltas genom en svårgripbar materialitet och kroppslighet eller en historiserad iscensättning av kreativitet och spiritualitet. Analyserna synliggör också att de olika uttrycken för andlig transcendens är nära knutna till användningen av symbolistiska androgyna teorier och en androgyn estetik som Enckell, Sager-Nelson, Thesleff och Stjernschantz kom i kontakt med. I sina porträtt arbetade konstnärerna aktivt både med symbolistiska föreställningar om androgynitet genom en androgyn stilisering av de kvinnliga eller manliga kropparna och/eller en anspelning på ett kraftfullt androgyn mentalt tillstånd genom den uttryckta kontakten med en högre sanning.

Eftersom Sager-Nelsons *Flickhuvud II* (1890-talet) och hans *Porträtt av Fru Jeanne Eriksson* (1895), Thesleffs *Thyra Elisabeth* (1892) och hennes *Självporträtt* (1894-1895) samt Stjernerchantzs *Självporträtt* (1892) representerar spirituellt och kreativt aktiva kvinnliga kroppar och sinnen, utgör de viktiga bidrag till en transnationell symbolistisk rörelse, som omförhandlar manligt definierade symbolistiska föreställningar om kreativitet, genialitet, andlighet och androgynitet. Vidare visar diskussionen om Stjernerchantzs och Thesleffs 'self-fashioning' i självporträtten att de genom en 'subversiv appropriering' av den manliga symbolistiska konstnärens självrepresentation skrev in sig i den manligt definierade symbolistiska konströrelsen. Stjernerchantzs och Thesleffs sätt att iscensätta sig själva som konstnärer, som "geniala" och spirituellt mottagliga subjekt, innebär förmodligen också en anspelning på det androgyna mentala tillståndet, som inom den symbolistiska rörelsen var ett ideal för den manliga kreativiteten.

Analyserna av klassiska grekisk-romerska myter, legender och arkadiska landskap i det fjärde kapitlet visar att Magnus Enckells *Fantasi* (1895) och hans *Narcissus* (1896 eller 1897), Beda Stjernerchantzs *Pastoral (Primavera)* samt Tyra Kleens *Écho et Narcisse* (1903) utforskar antika litterära och historiska teman på ett icke-traditionellt och fritt sätt genom att använda narrativa eller ikonografiska modifikationer eller sammanslagningar av flera historiska eller mytologiska figurer eller berättelser. På så sätt representerar de ett typiskt symbolistiskt förhållningssätt till grekisk-romerska teman som ett populärt symbolistiskt motiv. Samtidigt är de fyra diskuterade konstverkens sätt att ge uttryck för grekisk-romerska teman också nära kopplat till den symbolistiska idén om androgynitet som symbol för ett paradiskt tillstånd eller längtan efter ett sådant.

Den symbolistiska idén om ett androgynt kraftfullt tillstånd kommer till uttryck både genom en androgyn 'stilisering av kroppen' som i fallet med den pipspelande Pan i Stjernerchantzs *Pastoral (Primavera)* och den hukande Narcissus i Kleens *Écho et Narcisse* samt genom de avbildade mytologisk-historiska gestalternas andliga fördjupning. På så sätt uttrycks den neoplatonska idén om ett androgynt andligt tillstånd genom asexualitet.

Berättelsen om Narcissus och hans sexuella självtillräcklighet förefaller vara lämplig för att anspela på ett sådant androgynt tillstånd. Samtidigt ändras den narrativa handlingen för de historiska eller mytologiska gestalterna Narcissus, Orpheus, Antinous, Pan och Echo till en sådan grad att deras traditionella berättelser om förödande eller obesvarad kärlek förvandlades till en harmonisk asexualitet eller längtan efter en sådan. I verken är asexualitet således nära knuten till ett paradiskt och harmoniskt tillstånd.

Genom att antingen anspela på idén om ett tredje genus och det ursprungliga androgyna eller en av dessa symbolistiska idéer, används figurerna och berättelserna om Orpheus, Antinous, Narcissus, Pan och Echo som hänvisningar till kosmologiska och transcendentala insikter och ett spirituellt upphöjt tillstånd. Genom att behandla populära symbolistiska teman, visuella troper, motivkretsar samt att anspela på androgyna symbolistiska teorier fungerar Enckells, Stjernschantz och Kleens verk som originella omtolkningar av symbolistiska föreställningar. Verken kan således ses som nydanande och självständiga bidrag till den transnationella symbolistiska rörelsen.

Det femte och sista analyskapitlet lyfter den teosofiska och neoplatonska idén om återskapandet av ett androgynt kraftfullt mentalt tillstånd genom kärlek i scener av intima mellanmänskliga möten hos både Tyra Kleen och Magnus Enckell.

Tyra Kleens skildringar av heterosexuella föreningar frambringar föreställningen om ett idealt och andligt tillstånd genom kärlek, varvid kvinnans spirituella förfining ges lika mycket utrymme som mannens. Hennes multimediala litografier *Sed Non Satiati* (1902) och *La Chevelure* (1905), som refererar till två dikter från Baudelaires *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1861), kan läsas utifrån ett jämställdhetsperspektiv. Kleen gestaltar kvinnlig sexualitet utan tidstypisk exotifiering, polarisering eller förminskning, vilket ofta var fallet med manliga projektioner av kvinnliga representationer inom symbolistisk litteratur och konst som Baudelaires poesi exemplifierar. Som representationer av både kvinnlig och manlig sexuell och sensuell åtrå utgör Kleens litografier på detta sätt kritiska kommentarer och modifikationer av Baudelaires poesi och symbolistiska kvinnliga representationer. Detta

gör dem till oberoende och berikande bidrag till den transnationella symbolistiska rörelsen. Kleens *La Chevelure* använder sig därtill också av ett ämne och en stil som är typisk för art nouveau.

I Kleens multimediala litografi *Nevermore* (odaterat) kommer önskan om en återförening i livet efter detta till uttryck. Detta kan förstås som en förlängning av den neoplatonska och esoteriska idén om längtan efter att uppnå ett kraftfullt androgynt tillstånd genom andlig förening med den älskade. Genom att referera till Edgar Allan Poes dikt *The Raven* (1845), men samtidigt ge en mer optimistisk syn på återföreningen med den älskade i livet efter detta, utgör detta verk ett ytterligare viktigt exempel på en frigörande och originell behandling av en populär symbolistisk litterär referensälla och av den symbolistiska idén om metafysisk kärlek och androgyna föreningar.

Längtan efter att återställa den ursprungliga androgynen och med andra ord ett kraftfullt androgynt tillstånd genom kärleken återspeglas också i Magnus Enckells olja på duk *Ungdom* (1897). Målningen framställer homoerotiskt begär mellan de avbildade unga männen. Genom att placera en grupp nakna unga män vid stranden av en skogstjärn, som avbildas med begärande blickar eller sökandes efter intimitet med varandra, anspelar detta verk på en homoerotisk utopisk plats som både kan syfta på den symbolistiska neoplatonska teorin om en paradisisk ursprungsmänniska och den grekisk-romerska idén om arkadien. Därmed kombinerar Enckells verk på ett nyskapande sätt tematiska och teoretiska särdrag som är typiska för den transnationella symbolistiska rörelsen.

Mot bakgrund av detta generar föreliggande studie ny kunskap om svensk och finsk medverkan i en transnationell symbolistisk rörelse och omprövar och diversifierar den befintliga konsthistorieskrivningen om svensk och finsk symbolism. Den här studerade gruppen av svenska och finska bildkonstnärer ger därmed anledning till att erkänna nationellt oberoende finska och svenska symbolistiska uttryck som mindre exceptionella än som de tidigare har framställts inom konsthistorien. Fler symbolistiska uttryck med nationellt oberoende motivkretsar hos nordiska konstnärer återstår att utforska. Särskilt intressanta är i detta hänseende de svenska målarna

Pelle Swedlund och Ivan Aguéli, den danska målaren Mogens Ballin eller den norska grafiska konstnären Olaf Lange. Den transnationella symbolistiska rörelsen och dess utforskande av motivkretsar bortom det nationella visar sig vara mer omfattande än vad som hitintills erkänts, särskilt gällande nordisk symbolism.

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Birte Bruchmüller
Gothenburg, August 2022

Appendix I

Tabular overview of the selected artists' places of residence, artistic apprenticeships, exhibition visits etc. (based on archival sources, previous research contributions etc.).

Ellen Thesleff (1869–1954)	Beda Stjernschantz (1867–1910)	Magnus Enckell (1870–1925)	Tyra Kleen (1874–1951)	Olof Sager-Nelson (1868–1896)
<p>1885–87: Adolf von Becker's private painting academy, Helsinki</p> <p>1887–89: The Finnish Art Society's Drawing School, Helsinki</p> <p>1890–April 1891: Gunnar Berndtson's private painting academy, Helsinki</p>	<p>1885–89: The Finnish Art Society's Drawing School, Helsinki</p> <p>1889–91: Gunnar Berndtson's private painting academy, Helsinki</p>	<p>1889: The Finnish Art Society's Drawing School, Helsinki</p> <p>1889–91: Gunnar Berndtson's private painting academy, Helsinki</p>		<p>Autumn 1888–Summer 1889, Gothenburg: – enrolled at The Valand School of Drawing & Painting – enrolled again in 1893</p>
<p>October 1891–June 1892, Paris: – with Beda Stjernschantz, Anna Bremer, Sigrid Granfelt, Jenny Cajander as her travel companions – enrolled at the Académie Colarossi, taught by Gustave Courtois and others</p>	<p>Autumn 1891–August 1892, Paris: – with Ellen Thesleff, Anna Bremer, Sigrid Granfelt, Jenny Cajander as her travel companions – enrolled at the Académie Colarossi, taught by, amongst others, Gustave Courtois, Turvis Blanche, Girardeau – March 1892: visits the <i>Salon de la Rose+Croix</i> Summer 1892: Challeau (France)</p>	<p>March 1891–May 1892, Paris: – enrolled at the Académie Julian, taught by Jules Lefebvre, B. Constant and others – September–October 1891: Brittany – visits the <i>Salon de la Rose+Croix</i> in Spring 1892</p>	<p>1891–1892, Dresden: – enrolled at the Women Artists' School (taught by Dora Hitz) – visits several art exhibitions</p>	

Ellen Thesleff (1869-1954)	Beda Stjernschantz (1867-1910)	Magnus Enckell (1870-1925)	Tyra Kleen (1874-1951)	Olof Sager-Nelson (1868-1896)
<p>1892-1893, Finland: - paints <i>Thyra Elisabeth</i></p>	<p>1892-1895: Finland & Russia - October 1892, Helsinki: paints her <i>Self-Portrait</i> - 1893: exhibits at the Art Society Exhibition in Åbo & at the Finnish Art Society's Spring Exhibition in Helsinki - 1894, Helsinki: exhibits her <i>Self-Portrait</i>, amongst others, at the Finnish Artists' Autumn Exhibition - 1895, Helsinki: paints her <i>Aphorism</i></p>	<p>May 1892-September 1893, Helsinki: - paints <i>Nude Boy, Two Boys, Reclining Boy & Boy With a Skull</i> - 1893: illustrates <i>Finland i 19e sekel</i></p>	<p>1892-1894, Karlsruhe: - enrolled at the Women Painting's School (taught by Borgman, Keller and Ritter)</p>	<p>Autumn 1892, Stockholm: - enrolled at the Artists' Union School - consorts with the Swedish sculptor Knut Åkerberg & Swedish painter Ivan Aguéli</p>
<p>Autumn 1893-January 1894, Paris: - with her companion Jenny Cajander - enrolled at the Académie Colarossi</p>		<p>September 1893-June 1894, Paris: - consorts primarily with Olof Sager-Nelson, Ellen Thesleff, Sigrid af Forselles and Madeleine Jouvray and others - paints <i>The Awakening & Head (Bruno Aspelin)</i></p>		<p>September 1893-1894, Paris: - enrolled at the Académie Julian - the French painter Edmond Aman-Jean as his teacher in 1893 - visits <i>the Salon de la Rose+Croix</i> in Spring 1894 - consorts with the <i>La Plume</i>-circle in 1894 - Spring 1894, Paris: exhibits with 'impressionists' - April 1894, Stockholm: exhibits at the Artists' Union Exhibition</p>
<p>January 1894-May 1894, Florence: - with her companion Ingeborg van Alifthan - March 1894: a short trip to Venice - April 1894: copies works by Fra Angelico together with Helene Schjerfbeck at the San Marco convent, Florence - May 1894: a short sojourn in Rome and Siena - visits Leonardo da Vinci's <i>The Last Supper</i> (1495-1498) at the Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milano on her way back to Finland</p>		<p>Summer 1894: Finland Autumn 1894-Spring 1895, based in Florence: - studies Arnold Böcklin's art in Basel & Leonardo da Vinci's <i>The Last Supper</i> (1495-1498) at the Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milano on his way to Florence - copies a detail of Leonardo da Vinci's <i>The Annunciation</i> (1472) - paints <i>Melancholy, Fantasy, Faun & The Cult of Venus</i> - consorts with the Finnish painter Eero Järnefelt</p>	<p>1894-1895, Munich: - enrolled at the Women Artists' School/ Damenakademie, taught by Herterich, Schmidt and Reuter - 16.03.1895: visits the studio of Franz von Stuck</p>	<p>Summer 1894, Bruges (incl. trips to Antwerp & Amsterdam) September 1894-June 1895: Paris - November 1894, Stockholm: exhibits at the Art Association <i>Gnistan</i> - Spring 1895: exhibits at the Artists' Union Exhibition - March 1895, Copenhagen: exhibits at 'Kleist' at <i>Martsudstillingen</i> - March 1895, Paris: exhibits at St. Jean</p>

Ellen Thesleff (1869–1954)	Beda Stjernschantz (1867–1910)	Magnus Enckell (1870–1925)	Tyra Kleen (1874–1951)	Olof Sager-Nelson (1868–1896)
<p>Spring 1894–Autumn 1895: Finland – exhibits her <i>Self-Portrait</i> at the Finnish Art Society's Spring Exhibition in 1895 (which was exhibited again at the Finnish Artists' Autumn Exhibition in 1895)</p>				
<p>Autumn 1895–Summer 1896: sojourn in Italy, based in Florence: – tour financed by the Senate Artist Scholarship – shorter trips to Venice, Bologna, Rome (enrolled at the <i>Circolo Scandinavo</i>), – Spring 1896: a trip to Naples Summer 1896: Murole (FIN) 1896: exhibition in Russia</p>	<p>Summer 1895, Vormsi (Estonia): – paints <i>Double Portrait & Everywhere a Voice Invites Us...</i> 1895: Murole (FIN) 1895, Helsinki: exhibits her <i>Aphorism & her Everywhere a Voice Invites Us...</i>, amongst others, at the Finnish Artists' Autumn Exhibition</p>		<p>7.10 1895–01.05. 1897, Paris: – enrolled at the Académie Vitti, Académie Colarossi, Académie Delécluse & Académie Julian – engaged in the artist circles of the Café Rouge – 1896, Paris: exhibits for the first time – November 1895: visits a symbolist exhibition – March 1897: visits the <i>Salon de la Rose+Croix</i></p>	<p>June 1895: Bruges August–September. 1895: the Ardennes September 1895, Ghent: exhibits at the Belgian Salon October–November 1895, Paris November 1895: Marseilles November 1895–Jan. 1896: Corsica</p>
	<p>1896, St. Petersburg: – copies the right wing of Perugino's <i>The Crucifixion with the Virgin, Saints John, Jerome, and Mary Magdalene</i> (1485) at the State Hermitage Museum</p>	<p>1896, St. Petersburg: – copies Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Madonna Litta</i> (c. 1490) at the State Hermitage Museum</p>	<p>Summer 1896, Étapes (FRA): – June 1896: illustrates the Swedish translation of Olive Schreiners' <i>Dreams (Drömmar)</i></p>	<p>– January 1896, Brussels: exhibits at the Cercle l'Artiste pour l'Art – February–April 1896, Biskra (Algeria), where he dies on April the 11th</p>
<p>1897, Stockholm: participation in the <i>Allmänna konst- och industriutställningen</i> Winter 1897–March 1898: Florence</p>	<p>November 1897–Autumn 1898: based in Florence: – shorter trips to Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Assisi, Venice – makes copies in the Brancacci Chapel at the Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence</p>	<p>1897, Stockholm: participates in the Artist Congress, consorts with the Finnish painters Hugo Simberg and Akseli Gallen-Kallela</p>	<p>May 1897–Autumn 1898, Sweden: – writes about the <i>Allmänna konst- och industriutställning i Sthlm, 1897</i></p>	

Ellen Thesleff (1869–1954)	Beda Stjernschantz (1867–1910)	Magnus Enckell (1870–1925)	Tyra Kleen (1874–1951)	Olof Sager-Nelson (1868–1896)
<p>March 1898–June 1898: Rome</p>	<p>1899: Finland & Stockholm</p>	<p>1898, St. Petersburg: – participation in the World of Art Exhibition</p> <p>1898, Florence: – copies Masaccio's fresco <i>Expulsion from Paradise</i> situated in the Brancacci Chapel at the Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence</p>	<p>September 1898– 1906, Rome as her base: – travels in 1899 to Tunis & Carthage – travels in 1899 via Florence, Venice, Munich and Berlin to Sweden (where she stays from June– Autumn 1899)</p> <p>– enrolled at the <i>Circolo Scandinavo</i> in 1898, 1899, 1901, 1902, 1903 & 1904 – 1900: sojourns in London & Paris, where she visits Alphonse Mucha's studio – Dec. 1900: back in Rome – 1901, Rome: exhibits at the <i>Mostra degli Amatori & Cultori de Belle Arti</i> – 1902, Stockholm: exhibits together with 'De Frie'; visits the Arnold Böcklin Exhibition at the Nationalmuseum – 1902, Rome: exhibits at the <i>l'Esposizione Internazionale di Bianco e Nero</i> – Nov. 1902: Berlin, visits the Kupferstich- Kabinett, where she studies Max Klinger's art – 1906, Milano: exhibits at the <i>Mostra Nazionale di Belle Arti</i> – 1906, Rome: exhibits at the <i>l'Esposizione Amatori & Cultori di Belle Arti</i></p>	
<p>Autumn 1899–1900, Paris: – Participation in <i>The Exposition Universelle of 1900</i> with 4 paintings, wins a bronze medal</p>	<p>1900, Paris: – participation in <i>The Exposition Universelle of 1900</i> with her <i>Glassblowers</i> (1894)</p>	<p>1900, Paris: – participation in <i>The Exposition Universelle of 1900</i> with 3 works & a Finnish Art Exhibition at the Grand Palais, winning a silver medal</p> <p>1900, Spain: – studies Morale's & Zurbarán's art</p>		

Ellen Thesleff (1869–1954)	Beda Stjernschantz (1867–1910)	Magnus Enckell (1870–1925)	Tyra Kleen (1874–1951)	Olof Sager-Nelson (1868–1896)
<p>1901, Riga: participation in the exhibition of Finnish painters</p> <p>Summer 1902: Florence & Capri</p> <p>Summer & Winter 1903: Finland</p> <p>1903: Brussels & Helsinki</p> <p>Summer 1904: Munich</p> <p>September 1904–February 1905, Rome: enrolled at the <i>Circolo Scandinavo</i></p>	<p>November 1903–April 1905: USA</p> <p>1905, Helsinki: participation in the Women Artists' Exhibition, Ateneum Art Museum</p>	<p>1901: Finland</p> <p>1902, Finland: completes his <i>Gethsemane</i> altarpiece for Savitaipale Church</p> <p>1903, Berlin: participation in a Finnish exhibition</p> <p>1904, Helsinki: completes the lunette painting <i>The Golde Age</i> situated in the Reading Room of the Helsinki University Library</p> <p>1905, ITA (Florence and Pompeii amongst others): – interest in graphic art develops</p>		
<p>Autumn 1906–Oct. 1909: Florence</p> <p>December 1908: exhibition in Helsinki (Art Agency Liberty)</p>		<p>1906–1907, Tampere: paints the fresco <i>Resurrection</i> for Tampere Cathedral</p> <p>1908, Paris: – curates the section of Finnish art at the <i>Salon d'Automne</i></p>	<p>Winter & Spring 1907: Paris</p> <p>Summer 1907: Sweden</p> <p>Summer 1907, London: exhibits at the <i>Modern Gallery</i></p> <p>1907, Paris: exhibits at the 'Paris Salon'</p> <p>December 1907–Spring 1908: Berlin</p> <p>1908, London: exhibits at <i>The Dorés Galleries</i></p> <p>1908, Rome: exhibits at the <i>L'Esposizione Internazionale di Belle Arti LXXVIII</i></p> <p>1909, Stockholm: exhibits at <i>Hallins konsthandel</i></p> <p>1910: translates Ibsens' <i>Brand</i> (1865)</p>	

Ellen Thesleff (1869-1954)	Beda Stjernschantz (1867-1910)	Magnus Enckell (1870-1925)	Tyra Kleen (1874-1951)	Olof Sager-Nelson (1868-1896)
1912-1913: Florence & Rome			1911: India, Sri Lanka 1913, Stockholm: participates in the Congress of the European Section of the Theosophical Society 1913-1914: Rome 1914, Malmö: exhibits at the Baltic Exhibition	
			1916-1917: USA & West Indies 1919: Java & Bali 1923, London: exhibits at the Victoria & Albert Museum 1926: Egypt & Greece	

Appendix II

Swedish and Finnish art history contributions on symbolism in chronological order

Swedish contributions:

- Nordensvan, Georg, *De bildande konsternas historia under 19:de århundradet*, Hugo Gebers förlag, Stockholm 1900.
- Laurin, Carl Gustaf, *Konsthistoria*, P.A. Norstedt & söners förlag, Stockholm 1900.
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- Romdahl, Axel L. & Roosval, Johnny (eds.), *Svensk konsthistoria*, Aktiebolaget Ljus, Stockholm 1913.
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- Laurin, Carl Gustaf, *Konsten i Sverige*, Norstedt, Stockholm 1915.
- Romdahl, Axel L., *Det nya måleriet*, Norstedt, Stockholm 1921.
- Laurin, Carl G., *Nordisk konst, del 4: Sveriges och Finlands konst från 1880 till 1926*, Norstedt, Stockholm 1926.
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- Laurin, Carl Gustaf, *Konsthistoria. Jubileumsupplaga, del 3, Sveriges, Norges, Danmarks och Finlands konst, Jubileumsupplaga*, Norstedts, Stockholm 1929.
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- Strömbom, Sixten, *Konstnärsförbundets historia, del 1: Till och med 1890*, Bonnier, Stockholm 1945.
- Lindblom, Andreas, *Sveriges konsthistoria: Från forntid till nutid, del 3, Från Gustav III till våra dagar*, Nordisk Rotogravyr, Stockholm 1946.
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- Wilmann, Preben (ed.), *Nordisk målarkonst: det moderna måleriets genombrott*, Stockholm 1950.
- Andrenius, Isa, *Det nya måleriet i Norden*, Finlands rundradio, Helsinki 1951.
- Roosval, Johnny & Lilja, Gösta (eds.), *Svenskt konstnärslexikon: tiotusen svenska konstnärers liv och verk, del 3, Hahn-Lunderberg*, Allhem, Malmö 1957.
- Strömbom, Sixten, *Konstnärsförbundets historia, del 2: Nationalromantik och radikalism: 1891–1920*, Stockholm 1965.
- Lindwall, Bo & Sandblad, Nils Gösta (eds.), *Bildkonsten i Norden, del 3, Nordiskt friluftsmåleri*, Prisma, Stockholm 1972.
- Sandström, Sven (ed.), *Konsten i Sverige, 1900-talets bildkonst*, AWE/Geber, Stockholm 1975.
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Olof Sager-Nelson to Albert L. Johannes Engström, signum Ep. E 17:25

Beda Stjernschantz to Selma Lagerlöf, signum L 1:1

Tyra Kleen to various recipients, to Gustaf af Feijerstam, signum Ep. 6 5 a; to Eva Maria

Acke, signum Ep. A 2a:9; to Ellen Key, signum L41:55 & L41:12; to Klara Elisabeth

Johanson, signum L 2:6; to Märta Sofia Janes, signum L 43:34

Ellen Platen's folder with 20 lithographs by Kleen, KoB Portfölj 8:1–20

Valinge gård/Tyra Kleen's private artist estate, Sweden

Transcribed versions of Kleen's diaries between 1895–1903

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